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Section: FRONT

Page: A1

VANISHED AFTER EIGHT MONTHS, STILL NO SIGN OF MISSING WOMAN

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Up until about eight months ago, Kimberlee Sue Turner's was a familiar face in the small community of Virginia City, a few miles north of Ocean Springs. Since late September, though, no one has seen her or heard from her. Not even a phone call.

Her boyfriend, Joe Donogriche, reported her missing and says he wants her back. Detectives with the Jackson County Sheriff's Department have chased a variety of leads but have all but exhausted their efforts.

They don't know whether she's alive or dead, and they say eight months is an unusually long time for anyone to not turn up, dead or alive.

Donogriche, 33, has been a suspect in her disappearance since the minute he reported her missing, but he's never been charged. Though detectives claim his story has some holes in it, Donogriche denies that he harmed his girlfriend of eight years, an attractive 27-year-old brunette he first met in her home state of Ohio.

Turner Kimberlee Sue was last seen Sept. 28. A worker at a country store called Sheila's saw her there mid-morning, buying a pack of cigarettes and heading out on foot. The trailer she and Joe shared is a short walk from the store.

Donogriche says he last saw her on his way to a construction job.

"I kissed her goodbye and went to work. It was about 6:30 in the morning. I haven't seen her since," he said.

Detectives questioned him once but he and his lawyer would not allow them to search his home.

They've accepted as fact his report that her purse was left behind and that she took no change of clothes, leaving some in the washing machine and others hanging to dry on an outside line.

The investigation has turned up little. Capt. Ronnie Wilson, chief detective with the sheriff's department, said investigators thought they found blood on a seat of a van that was in Kimberlee's Turner's name. The state crime laboratory analyzed it, though, and found that it wasn't blood. They are holding the van in case she returns and wants it back.

The investigators borrowed a helicopter from the Harrison County Sheriff's Department to search for her -- or some freshly turned dirt, Wilson said.

Boyfriend suspected

Wilson said every time he hears of a woman's body being found he thinks of Turner. And, he said, "If her body turns up, (Donogriche is) going to be the first person I talk to."

Wilson said Donogriche was a suspect immediately because "his mannerisms on the phone and his tone of voice led the dispatcher to believe he knew more than he was saying he did. The more he talked, the more things didn't fit."

Donogriche denies that and is critical of their investigation, saying in an interview Wednesday that he thinks the police are keeping information from him.

"I can understand me being a suspect," he said. "The boyfriend's always the suspect, but I didn't have any reason to kill her. I loved her and I miss her."

Donogriche had posted fliers along the Coast asking for information on the missing woman and said he's puzzled as to why a deputy sheriff told two convenience store clerks several months ago that she could take the fliers down because Turner had been found, alive, in Texas.

Wilson and Sheriff Pete Pope said they cannot explain that. Perhaps the deputy sheriff had confused Turner with another missing girl or was passing on a rumor. Neither the clerks nor Donogriche could identify the officer who made the statement.

Some hope left

Donogriche said he believes Turner, who was known to hitchhike, simply got into the wrong car with the wrong person.

Turner's stepsister in Florida holds out a little hope that she's still alive. Like Wilson, she figured Turner would contact family by Christmas but the stepsister, Christine Simonis, said maybe she forgot her parents' unlisted phone number and did not know her stepsister's new married last name.

She said, though, that Turner had complained that Donogriche had abused her and she advised her to leave him. Wilson said he heard the same reports from family members.

Simonis has written a letter to the producers of the television show *Unsolved Mysteries*, hoping they could air the story, but has gotten no reply.

Wilson said he hopes the mystery will be solved. He said Turner's name is listed on a computer network that all police have access to and people on that list usually are accounted for eventually.

In the meantime, investigators will still check out leads. They checked one out a couple of weeks ago after a woman said she heard that two boys had found a woman's body by a pond. It was a false alarm, like many others.