NEWS LESSON

The Body Found When the Lake Fell



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Why do unsolved mysteries hold people's attention?
2. Would you watch a mystery if you already knew the ending?
3. When does curiosity about a crime become intrusive?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**barrel**	☐	A	put in a place where nobody can see it
2	**drought**	☐	B	what is left of a dead body
3	**remains**	☐	C	told someone about a possible problem
4	**detectives**	☐	D	a long time with no rain
5	**murder**	☐	E	the crime of killing a person on purpose
6	**hidden**	☐	F	a link between two things or people
7	**connection**	☐	G	police officers who find out who did a crime
8	**warned**	☐	H	a big round container for liquids, made of metal or wood

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Drought exposed the shoreline of Lake Mead. Inside a rusty barrel were human remains, hidden for about forty years.

1 In May 2022, some people boating on Lake Mead, near Las Vegas, noticed a large rusty barrel beside the water. The lake was unusually low after years of drought. Places that had been underwater were now dry. When the boaters looked more closely, they made a terrible discovery. Inside the barrel were human remains. Someone had hidden a body in the lake many years earlier.

2 Police soon worked out that the person had probably been killed decades ago. The victim had been shot in the head. His clothes and shoes suggested that he died around the late 1970s or early 1980s. But nobody knew his name. Detectives were trying to solve a murder without knowing who the victim was, where he came from or why he had disappeared.

3 The discovery brought back memories of Las Vegas during the years when organised crime had more power in the city. Some people wondered if the case had something to do with the Mafia. Putting a body in a barrel sounded like something from a gangster film. But police warned that there was no evidence proving a connection. It was important not to turn a death into a story without facts.

4 Investigators continued. Specialists studied a sample from the victim's bones and used modern DNA methods to search for possible relatives. This kind of work can help identify people who died long before today's technology existed. Researchers also followed up information about the man's family. Four years after the barrel appeared, they finally found an answer.

5 In October 2026, officials announced that the victim was Edward Lelburian Jackson, known as Buddy. He was from Arkansas and was probably in his fifties when he died. His family had last seen him in the early 1980s. He was known to travel, and nobody had reported him missing at the time. The news finally gave the man his name back.

6 But identifying Jackson did not solve the murder. Detectives still wanted to find out who had killed him and why. The barrel had been hidden for decades, and people who knew what happened may have died or forgotten important details. For Jackson's family, the name mattered, even though many questions remain. What happened to Buddy Jackson before he ended up in the lake?

Sources: Associated Press. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. In October 2026, officials said that the victim was a man from Arkansas. T F NG
2. Jackson's family has spoken publicly about the news. T F NG
3. The boaters saw the barrel because the lake was low. T F NG
4. Police proved that the Mafia was responsible for the death. T F NG
5. Police found out the man's name straight away. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

clue	discovery	evidence	motive	relatives	sample	technology

1. Scientists tested a small _____ of bone to find the DNA.
2. Your aunts, uncles and cousins are your _____ .
3. Without clear _____ , police cannot say who did it.
4. Modern _____ can help to identify people who died long ago.
5. The _____ of an old boat by the water surprised the walkers.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. In May 2022, some people _____ on Lake Mead noticed a rusty barrel. (BOAT)
2. The victim _____ in the head. (SHOOT)
3. Police _____ that the man had probably died many years ago. (SAY)
4. In October 2026, officials _____ the name of the victim. (ANNOUNCE)
5. His family _____ him for the last time in the early 1980s. (SEE)

7 Language focus: prepositions

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Many words go with one small word. Learn them together, for example search for, known as and come from.

as	by	for	from	into	of	with

1. Some people wondered if the case had something to do _____ the Mafia.
2. Detectives continued to search _____ the answer.
3. The man was known _____ Buddy.
4. Buddy Jackson's family came _____ Arkansas.
5. It was important not to turn a death _____ a story without facts.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What do true-crime stories owe the people involved?
2. Should a mystery stay in the news until it is solved?
3. What makes a crime story worth telling beyond the shocking details?

9 Role-play: should an old case stay open?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · a friend who thinks the case should stay open

You read about a very old case. Explain why you think the police should keep investigating. Ask your friend two questions about what they think.

Student B · a friend who thinks the money should be used elsewhere

You think police time and money should go to newer cases. Explain your view politely. Ask your friend what could still be found after so many years.

Useful phrases

I think the police should keep trying.

I see what you mean, but it's been a long time.

What could they still find after all these years?

The family deserves an answer, don't you think?

I'd rather they spent the money on new cases.

Maybe we can agree on one thing.

Afterwards, tell the class: did you agree, and what helped you decide?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 H · 2 D · 3 B · 4 G · 5 E · 6 A · 7 F · 8 C

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 NG · 3 T · 4 F · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 sample · 2 relatives · 3 evidence · 4 technology · 5 discovery

6 Verb forms

1 boating · 2 had been shot or was shot · 3 said · 4 announced · 5 had seen or saw

7 Language focus

1 with · 2 for · 3 as · 4 from · 5 into

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