

Octogenarian killed by own artisans after ransom demand in Delta



By Egufe Yafugborhi

ASABA—When 80-year-old Peter Keborkwu hired a building artisan, 32-year-old Alex Kehinde, to renovate one of his properties about a month ago, he had no idea he was digging his own grave.

That seemingly routine transaction cost him his life. Police in Delta State said the incident occurred at Ogwashi Ukwu, the headquarters of Aniocha South Local Government Area, near Asaba, the state capital. A community source, however, placed the tragic event in neighbouring Isele Azagba.



Acting with his accomplice, one Egbon ID, who is still at large, Kehinde, both craftsmen, kidnapped the unsuspecting landlord on his own property. Keborkwu later died of suffocation.

Giving an update on the investigation at the Anti-Kidnap and Cybercrime Unit of the Delta State Police Command, the Police Public Relations Officer, SP Bright Edafe, revealed that Kehinde was arrested in Lagos. He had fled there to squander his N1 million share of the ransom the duo collected from Keborkwu's son even after they had killed the old man.

Devilish act

SP Edafe said the victim was discovered on 3rd February, seated dead in an upstairs kitchen where the suspects had held him in the renovated property.

Drawing from the suspect's confession, the Delta PPRO narrated that about a month earlier in Ogwashi Ukwu, the octogenarian had engaged Kehinde to renovate the property before putting it up for rent.

The PPRO noted: "After negotiations, the landlord mobilised the artisan with N200,000. He then kept pressure on him to engage more hands to deliver the job on time. He got the additional labourers.

"On completion of the job, he (Kehinde) settled the extra hands engaged on the project and needed the outstanding payment to settle himself and the accomplice now at large.

“According to him, because they needed money and their payment was not ready, the accomplice sold him the idea of kidnapping their client so that money could come.

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“One day, Keborkwu visited the site, and they lured him upstairs, saying there was a plumbing issue they needed him to see. After he followed them upstairs, they held the homeowner and forced him to sit down.

“When the abductee tried to raise his voice in alarm, they shoved a piece of work foam into his mouth and tied it, covering his nose to silence him. He suffocated to death.

“Leaving him dead in the building, the partners in crime made away with Keborkwu’s motorcycle and phone and went to Ogbe Ogonogo in Asaba, the state capital. They removed the SIM card, sold the phone for N30,000, and left the bike elsewhere.

“Thereafter, they inserted the SIM card into another phone and called the victim’s son, claiming they had kidnapped his father. They successfully collected a N2 million ransom from the son, even after killing Mr. Keborkwu.”

Kehinde’s confession

Validating the PPRO’s revelations, Kehinde affirmed: “I got connected to the man (the victim) through one engineer. After the work, we desperately needed money. Egbon, the guy that worked with me, brought the idea of kidnapping.

“That day we took him (the house owner) upstairs in the guise of showing him a leaking pipe. Then we held him. He started shouting. Because we didn’t want neighbours to hear, my guy used foam to seal his mouth.

“We didn’t notice he was dead.”

He started shaking before we ran downstairs. Egbon brought his phone to meet me downstairs, then his bike. We sold the phone at Ogbe Ogonogo for N30,000.”

Apparently implying that his partner in crime called the shots, Kehinde further confessed: “I can’t remember how much ransom we demanded from the son. I only know we were given N2 million.

“I and the guy (Egbon) shared the money, N1 million each. I have already exhausted my share. I was arrested in Lagos.”

SP Edafe vowed that there is no hiding place for the accomplice still at large, adding that the Delta Police Command would apprehend anyone involved by any means necessary.

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