

Seriki, during Minister's factory tour of Omatek new office in Lagos, yesterday.

MIKE IROANYA

# Ritual killings on the rise in Kogi

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THE Criminal Investigation Department of the Nigerian police, Kogi State Command has arrested a 45-old herbalist, Mr. Ejide Ojile in Adupi Egbe, a village near Alloma in Ofu local government area of the state in connection with the alleged ritual murder of two Aluminium builders.

Just a month ago in Anyigba, Dekina local government area, a nurse working with Grimard hospital in the city was found dead in his room with one eye removed.

The artisans, Sunday Abutu, 24 and Ojodale Usman 18 years old met their brutal end on that fateful day at about 4 am when their apprentice and a trusted friend of Ojodale lured them into the hands of the suspected assailant.

The apprentice, Samuel Michael, who is said to be 17 years old was alleged to have entered into a contractual agreement with the herbalist to bring his two masters to him for rituals in exchange for a (Ginsheng) motor cycle.

Nothing in the heaven would have told the victims that Michael, their supposed apprentice and a friend will be the one that will be

instrumented to their un-timely demise.

When the time had reached for the dare-devil, Michael to hatch his plan against the innocent friends and benefactors who were said to have helped him out in the aluminium fabricating business, he deceived them to follow him to a nearby village for a condolence to a neighbour who had lost a relation.

At first, it was learnt that Ojodale declined his invitation and even refused Michael from having a pounded Yam dinner with him in his house, when it became to him that Michael behaviour was becoming very strange.

The undeterred Judah went back home and returned, hoping that his second coming would convince the deceased to following him to Odolbaji, the village he intended to pay a condolence visit.

At last the magic worked and the duo followed him on his motor-cycle to the village at exactly 10 pm that day.

It was on their way back to their own village (Agbaduma) that the smarter Michael now decided to take another road where the assailant and his agents were stationed and

combat ready to strike at the un-suspected Aluminium fabricators.

When the deceased asked him why he had decided to take another road instead of the former one, Michael said the road will make the journey faster since time was running out.

Before they could realise in the ensuing argument they were already in the den of the herbalist at Ojime.

The victims were allegedly rounded up according to a confessional statement made by Michael to police and a powder like substance was sprayed on their faces thereby rendering them powerless before they were brutally beaten to death while some of their parts were removed for the alleged ritual purpose.

Then Michael and his alleged collaborators took their corpses to their village at Agbaduma and dumped them by the road side.

It was few minutes after the corpses were littered on the road that the villagers now got wind that the boys had been murdered by yet to identified ritualist.

Michael who was seen the previous day with them before the incident was later captured by angry villagers to tell them

what happened to his friends.

He was alleged to have accused his own uncle and a junior brother to the former governor of the state to be the brain behind the murder of his two colleagues.

The people were promptly arrested by the police and taken to Lokoja along with Michael who was to serve as witness.

Bubble later burst when the village head, Chief Sule Kolofo and his council of elders wrote a strong worded petition to the police asking them to do proper investigation on Michael as to his level of involvement in the saga.

The petition also exonerated his uncle and the former governor's younger brother of the crime.

Upon receiving the petition the police now intensified their effort to un-cover the secret behind the dastardly act.

When Michael was subjected to serious drilling he now opened up that he had hand in the death of his two friends.

He allegedly said that he was contracted by a herbalist, Mr. Ejide Ojile to bring them for him and he was the one that killed them after he weakened them with the powder substance.