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## When drunken policeman killed 'okada' rider in Idi-Araba

WRITTEN BY MOHAMMED SHOSANYA, LAGOS



Inspector General Onovo

Forty-three-year-old commercial motorcycle operator, Ndaliman Usman, who was felled by police bullets on Thursday at Idi-Araba, Lagos, was described as an easy-going, humane and simple person by those who knew him when he was alive.

To his relations and neighbours, Usman was such a mettlesome personage who would never hurt a fellow human being let alone engage in scuffles with anyone.

It was however, a mystery that the late commercial motorcycle operator was cut down in his prime by an alleged drunk mobile policeman,

Corporal Ali Mohammed, popularly called Baba Ibeji, while on duty.

Though he chose okada riding as an occupation, Usman's mien was characteristically different from the rascality and eccentricity displayed by most motorcycle operators in the city of Lagos.

This might have explained why sympathizers continued to throng the Idi-Araba residence of Usman to commiserate with his family two days after his death. One of the wives of late Usman, Fatima was tear-soaked, dejected and surrounded by a horde of sympathizers when our correspondent called at their residence. She barely managed to murmur some indescribable statements and later burst into tears, an indication that she was short of words over the death of her husband.

Ndalima Usman, was a native of Dabban village in Lavun Local Government of Niger State. He had also settled in Idi-Araba where he lived with his wives, Fatima and Amina and their six children: Bilikisu13, Zainab 11, Abdullahi 10, Fatima, three and a three months baby.

One of Usman's friends, who identified himself as Musa, told our correspondent that he learnt about his death yesterday on radio and decided to visit the family to confirm the story.

"I couldn't believe my ears that my friend has gone and gone forever. He was such a peaceful person who never engaged in a fight with anybody since I knew him. I am therefore surprised that he was killed by a heartless policeman".

A neighbour of the deceased who pleaded anonymity, described him as an unassuming and industrious man. According to him, "I burst into tears when I received a call that Usman was killed by a mobile policeman. What kind of country is this?"

While there is a consensus among those who knew Usman that he was the easy going type, the circumstances surrounding his death has continued to beat the imagination of people in the area.

According to a report, a police team was chasing some hoodlums along Idi-Araba road towards the direction of Lagos University Teaching Hospital. In the process, the police officers fired their guns sporadically into the air.

Usman was said to be inside one of the canteens opposite the bank Corporal Mohammed was guarding. The sporadic shots by his fellow policemen, reports said, spurred Mohammed to get his gun and shoot.

"It was one of the shot Mohammed released that killed Usman," Daniel, an okadaman who operates in the area alleged.. "We tried to revive him by giving him water and rushing him to a nearby hospital but before we could say 'jack' he was dead. It was a painful experience, very sad".

However, spokesman of the Lagos Police Command, Frank Mbah, said the action of Corporal Mohammed was caused by an assault on a team of fellow cops who were on patrol by some okada riders.

Mbah who said the okada riders were already having some internal wrangling over the change of guards in their association, said they became uncomfortable as soon as they sighted the policemen. He said the okada riders hauled missiles at the policemen to force them out of view. According to Mbah, the action of the okada riders provoked the policeman who fired to free his colleagues.

Aggrieved passers-by and okada riders, it was gathered, dealt with the policeman who was later rushed to the nearby Lagos University Teaching hospital. He was said to be drunk. Our correspondent gathered that the policeman would have been killed but for the intervention of other policemen from 'Zone D', Mushin.

It was further learnt that more lives may have been lost during the scuffle to free the policeman. But Mbah said only one life was lost. He said the policeman is at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital and will soon be charged to court.

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☐ No

☐ Not Decided

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He said the present police authority in the state will not tolerate acts of lawlessness among its workforce. Some residents of the area have however called on the Commissioner of Police in the state to bring Usman's killer to book.

They alleged that police claimed that Corporal Mohammed has been lynched, adding that such decoy is counter-productive to the image of the police in the state.

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