

How did Kano policeman who shot DPO die?

From Jaafar Jaafar, Kano

Last weekend, sporadic gunshots fired by a police sergeant at his Divisional Police Officer (DPO), suddenly stirred the morning quietness of Dakatsalle Village, located on a busy highway 50 kilometres away from Kano.

The figurative sound of the gunshots also resonated at the Kano Police headquarters as radio signals brought the state Police Commissioner, Mohammed Gana and his lieutenants to their feet.

As the transient sound of the gunshots faded immediately, a series of questions that begged for answer refused to fade from the public mind. Why will the sergeant attempt to kill his boss? What precipitated his actions? Is the sergeant mentally sound? Can a father of six commit suicide and leave his family in despair and agony?

Many observers said that such are the questions that beset the minds of people since the incident occurred last week.

Earlier that morning of the fateful day, neither the sergeant nor the DPO had a premonition of the impending tragedy. The late sergeant was in his boss' office that morning and paid compliments, while the DPO responded and engaged him in some informal chat.

Before coming to work, the late policeman had performed his dawn Ramadan rites that would sustain his fast the following morning. His widow said she roused him at dawn to take his meal and pray.

According to a police source, Sergeant Ibrahim Abdullahi pulled the trigger on the DPO of Bebeji Division, DSP Abdullahi Umar, following the DPO's order that he be disarmed and searched.

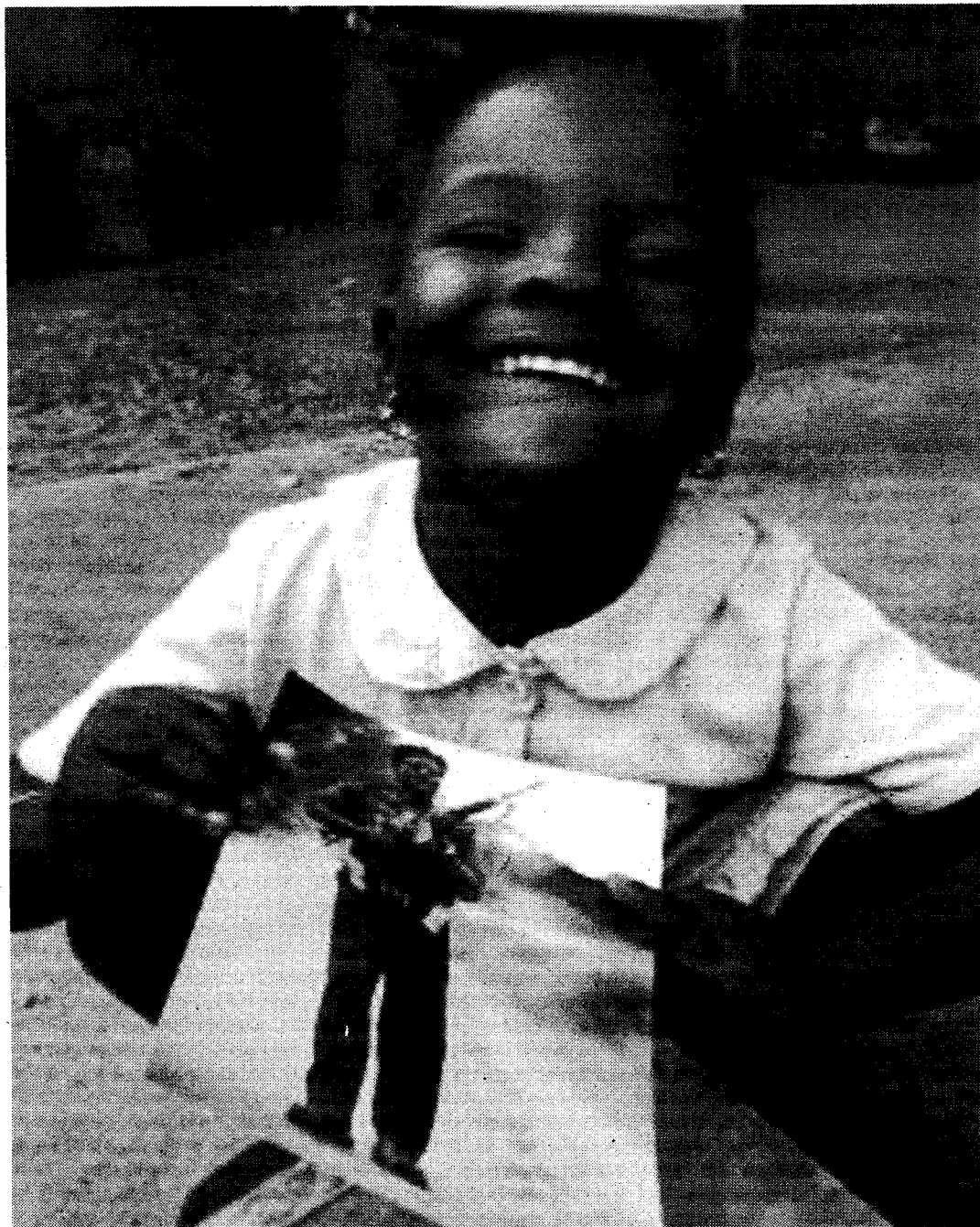
The DPO acted on a complaint by one Dauda Sanusi, a shopkeeper in Dakatsalle village, that the late Sergeant had stolen the sum of N50,000 in his shop when he left his little son to look after the business.

According to a source, no sooner than the DPO shut his mouth had the sergeant began grumbling that the DPO hated him and that he had always accused him of wrongdoings. As he mumbled the protests, the sergeant yanked off his rifle from the upper sling swivel and held the hand guide. Sensing what was about to happen, one of the late sergeant's friends who was standing close to him, inched forward and attempted to wrest the gun from him – but the move appeared too late.

Sergeant Abdullahi had pulled the trigger, opening fire indiscriminately on his colleagues

- **My husband was killed - Wife**
- **He committed suicide - Police**
- **He suffered mental illness – Sister**

The reasons why a police sergeant shot a DPO last weekend in Kano is yet to be established as there are conflicting statements by the police and the family of the deceased sergeant, reports Sunday Trust



OBLIVIOUS of the reality... is Amina, daughter of the late Sergeant Abdullahi

“As the transient sound of the gun shots faded immediately, a series of questions that begged for answer refused to fade from the public mind. Why will the sergeant attempt to kill his boss? What precipitated his actions? Is the sergeant mentally sound? Can a father of six commit suicide and leave his family in despair and agony

who scampered for safety. But one bullet hit the DPO, DSP Abdullahi Umar and pierced his ribcage, leaving a 'minor lung injury'. Thinking that he had killed his main target, Sergeant Abdullahi allegedly placed the gun on his neck and shot through his head.

From one end of the police outpost was the DSP gasping for breath, while from one side was the body of the sergeant wallowing in the pool of his blood. Policemen around the station waited for a while before summoning the courage to come out when they noticed that Sergeant Abdullahi might have shot himself.

Speaking to *Sunday Trust* from his hospital bed, the DPO said he was getting better and responding to treatment. "I am responding to treatment. I feel better as the bullet did not damage my organs," he said.

On the alleged grudges the late sergeant bore him, DSP Umar said there were a lot of complaints against the sergeant, which necessitated him to permanently place him as the Station Guard. The DPO noted that after the deceased served as Station Guard for about two months, he pleaded with the DPO to put him on shift as he was unable to attend some social functions of his relations and friends. "So, considering this plea, I changed his work routine to be on shift basis," he said.

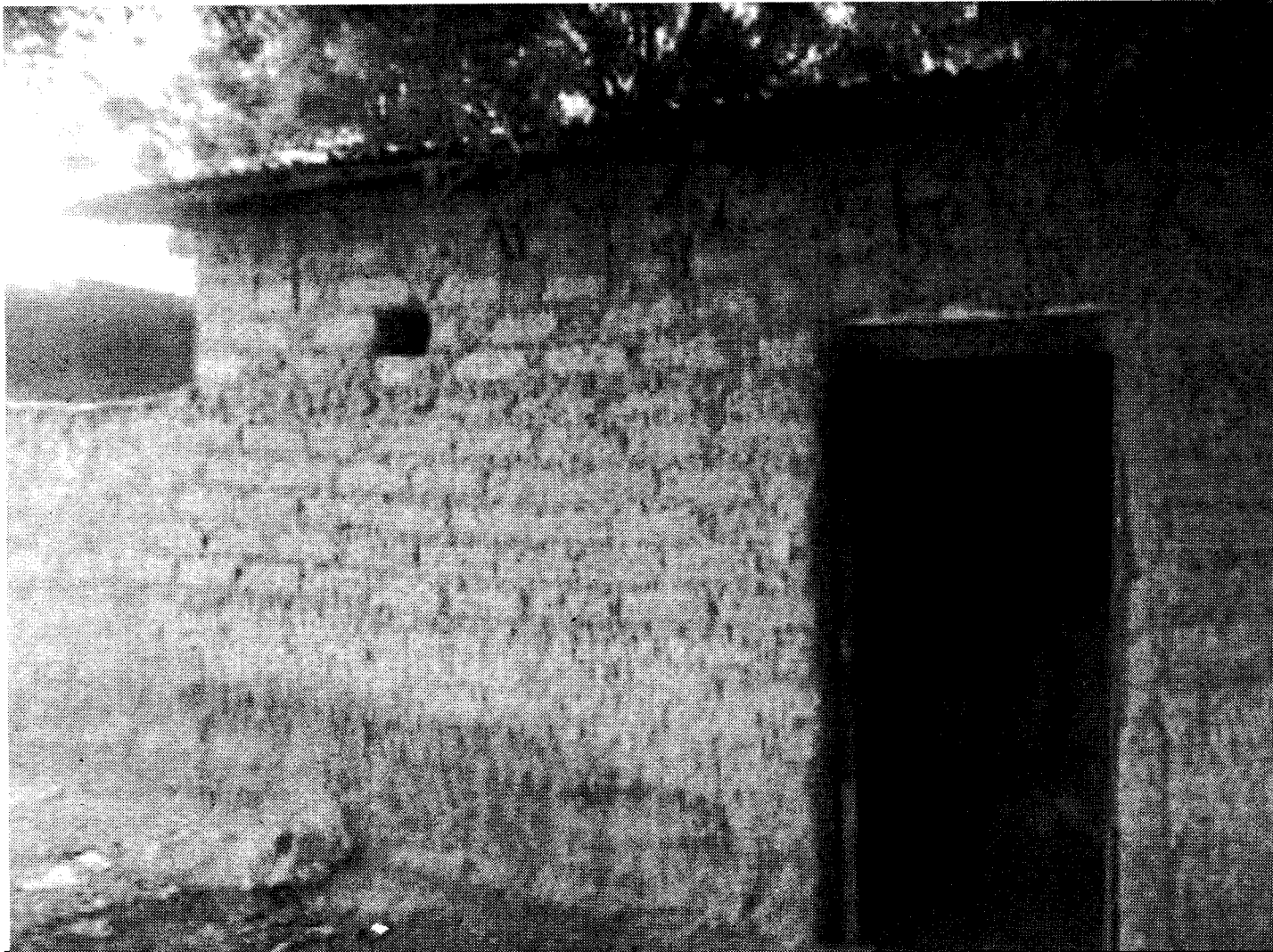
Continuing, DSP Umar said, "I am very surprised at what happened because he had come to me earlier and paid his compliments, and we exchanged pleasantries and threw banter because I tend to respect and dignify my juniors. I'm very friendly with them," he said.

The DPO revealed that at a time, when the late sergeant had an accident, he (the DPO) used his personal money and settled the sergeant's medical bills. "At that time, he was off for two months. He only reported back to work when he understood that his name appeared on the promotion list," he said.

When our correspondent visited the late sergeant's residence at Chikomawa Village, mourners had already left the residence. Apart from two relatives, only the family members of the deceased were met in the mud house.

Contrary to the police's statement, the widow of the late policeman, Tunene Sahura Ibrahim, said her late husband was a trustworthy and religious person who could not kill himself and leave his family in agony and despair. Tunene said she was not backing her late husband but saying the truth.

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THE house where the late sergeant rented two rooms

Cont'd from page 8

According to her, the late Sergeant Abdullahi had been complaining about his DPO and she had appeased her husband whenever he complained to her about how his boss treated him. "On a number of occasions, he would complain to me and I would simply appease him and tell him to leave things to Allah," she said.

She said it was wrong and unfortunate for the police to say that her husband killed himself, saying she was never invited or informed of her husband's death. "When I heard about the incident from my son-in-law, I went to the station, but they neither told me what happened nor interrogated me," she said.

She said the family was cheated and the police's comment that her late husband would be served posthumous dismissal was unfortunate. "You cannot kill my husband and say that he killed himself. You must pay his benefits because he served his country diligently," she said.

According to her, the police had been unfair to her husband for a long time, saying that when her late husband had an accident sometimes ago, they refused to even come to see how he was faring in the hospital.

Tunene argued that it was untrue that her late husband robbed a shopkeeper as robbery or cheating was never his habit. "Go round the town and ask people about his habit. Nobody would ever say that he was a thief or a cheat. I can't believe my husband can kill himself. He was simply killed," she said.

One of the children of the deceased, three-year-old Amina, held her late father's photograph and said, "this is my father." Asked by this reporter where the father was, she smiled and said "he has

gone to work."

But the younger sister of the deceased policeman came with a different viewpoint, saying that even if her brother committed suicide, he might have done so out of his senses. According to her, everyone knew that her brother had mental problems after an accident some six months ago.

"I don't think he could kill himself but even if he killed himself, they should know that he had mental illness. Since he had an accident six months ago, he has never been the same. Even at home, he shows some signs of mental

abnormality," she sobbed.

A neighbour of the late sergeant, Malam Haruna described the deceased as a good neighbour who lived with them peacefully. He said the villagers were shocked to hear that Abdullahi had committed suicide.

Another source who pleaded anonymity, said that the deceased's action was precipitated by the DPO's hostility toward him. He said, "everybody hates undue accusations and this is not the first time the DPO will accuse him of wrongdoing."

But the chairman of Bebeji

Local Government, Alhaji Dankaka Usaini Bebeji, said the late sergeant appeared hostile to him also. He said when the late sergeant was posted to his residence on duty, he complained to the DPO that the late Abdullahi should be swapped with a friendly policeman and the DPO obliged his request.

"When he was at my residence, I noticed that he was very hostile and I became uncomfortable with him around me. So, I reported the matter to his boss, who then swapped him," said Alhaji Dankaka Bebeji.

Conveying the police's position on the matter, the Public Relations

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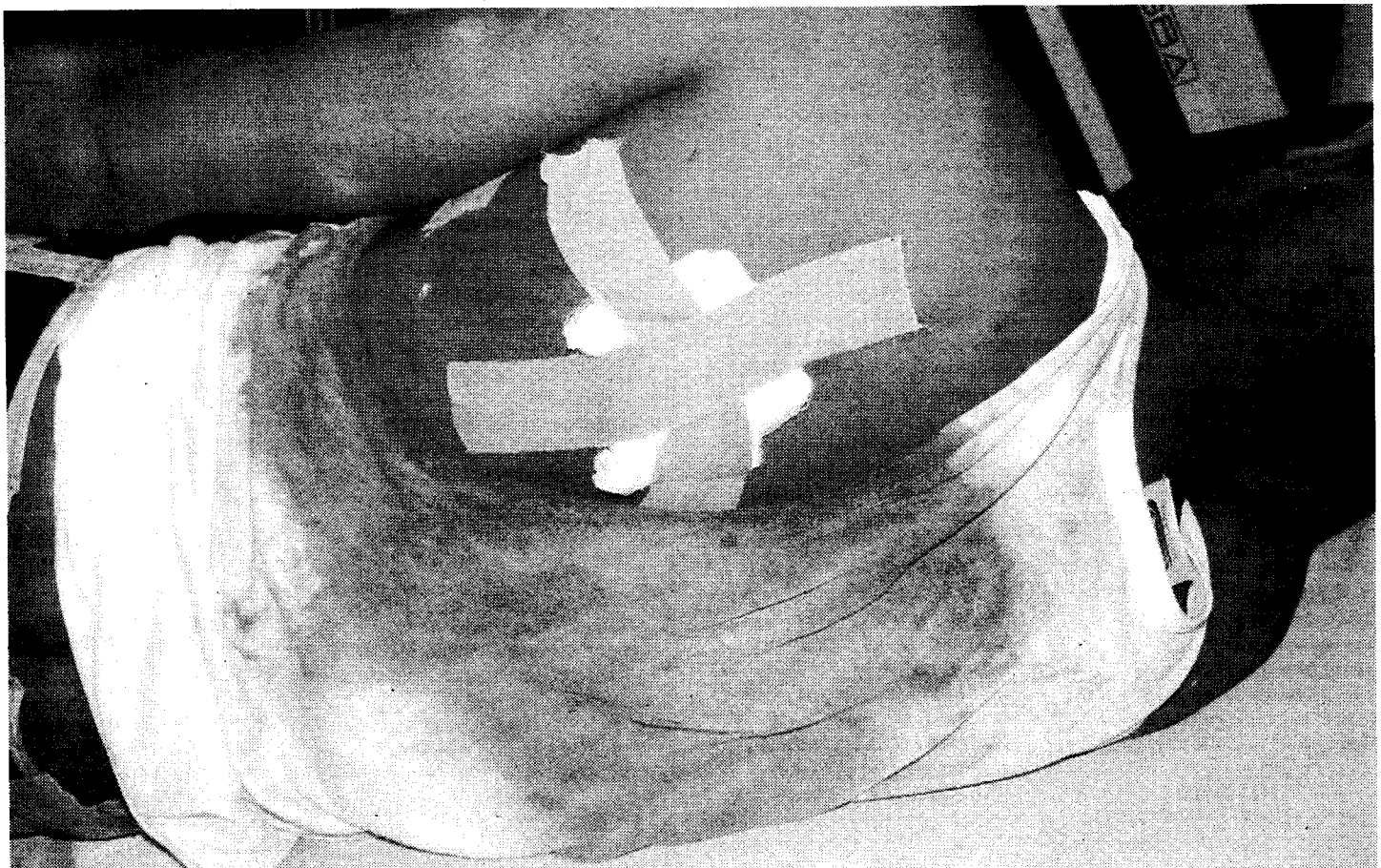
Officer of the Kano Police Command, SP Baba Mohammed Azare, said Sergeant Abdullahi killed himself immediately after opening fire on his boss.

While revealing that the command was still investigating the matter, SP Azare said the late sergeant became angry at the DPO when he summoned him for investigation over the allegation of theft of N50,000 by a shopkeeper in the village.

But a source at the police headquarters told *Sunday Trust* that the late Sergeant Abdullahi will stand a posthumous trial. According to the source, the deceased policeman, who is still a 'suspect', would be dismissed after the trial. The source said the late Abdullahi's boot, belt and cap will symbolise him at the trial.

Going by the law, if the suspect is found guilty, which according to the top source is likely, his family would not be entitled to his benefits.

The late Sergeant Ibrahim Abdullahi hailed from Dayi in Katsina State and was enlisted into the Nigeria Police in 2000. He had been married to Tunene for 18 years and had six children.



THE shot DPO, DSP Abdullahi Umar