

Teen stabs man to death with broken bottle

● *'I didn't know he'd die'*

Adie Vanessa Offiong

LAST Sunday at the Jabi Forest unit for mechanics, a teenager, Ahmed Bello, stabbed one Muftau Wasiu, a twenty-year-old mechanic apprentice to death. Shivering and trembling all over, fifteen-year-old Ahmed Bello spoke to our correspondent after the incident. "My friends and I were on our way back from the mosque when a dog rushed at me barking and bit me on my right leg. The owners came out and one of them hit me on the nose with a stick as the second one started beating me up. One broke a bottle which I snatched from him. In self defense I stabbed him twice on the chest. A crowd had begun to gather and I escaped from them. Not long after, somebody came to my place to tell me that my friends and I were wanted by the chairman. We went to him and were taken to the police."

Lamenting over what he had done, he said, "I did not intend to kill him. I don't even know how I ended up with the bottle. We didn't steal anything." In line with the testimony given against Bello is a similar eyewitness account by Lukman Abdulsalam. "I had just returned to the workshop after Sahur (a meal eaten in the early hours of the morning before fast begins for the day) when I heard dogs barking. I looked in the direction of the sound and saw Muftau in a struggle with three scavengers and I immediately rushed to them. I succeeded in separating them and pulled Muftau to me as the three scavengers went their way. Muftau narrated what had ensued before I came in. "He said he was asleep inside one of the taxis when somebody woke him up with a torch. He got out of the car and discovered three scavengers trying to steal items from the boot of a Mercedes Benz in the workshop. He was about to raise alarm when the dogs started barking and almost simultaneously they started struggling with him. It was at that point I came in to separate them."

"No sooner had he finished his narration and left me when I looked over his shoulders and saw Ahmed running towards him with something in his hand which I couldn't identify. In a split

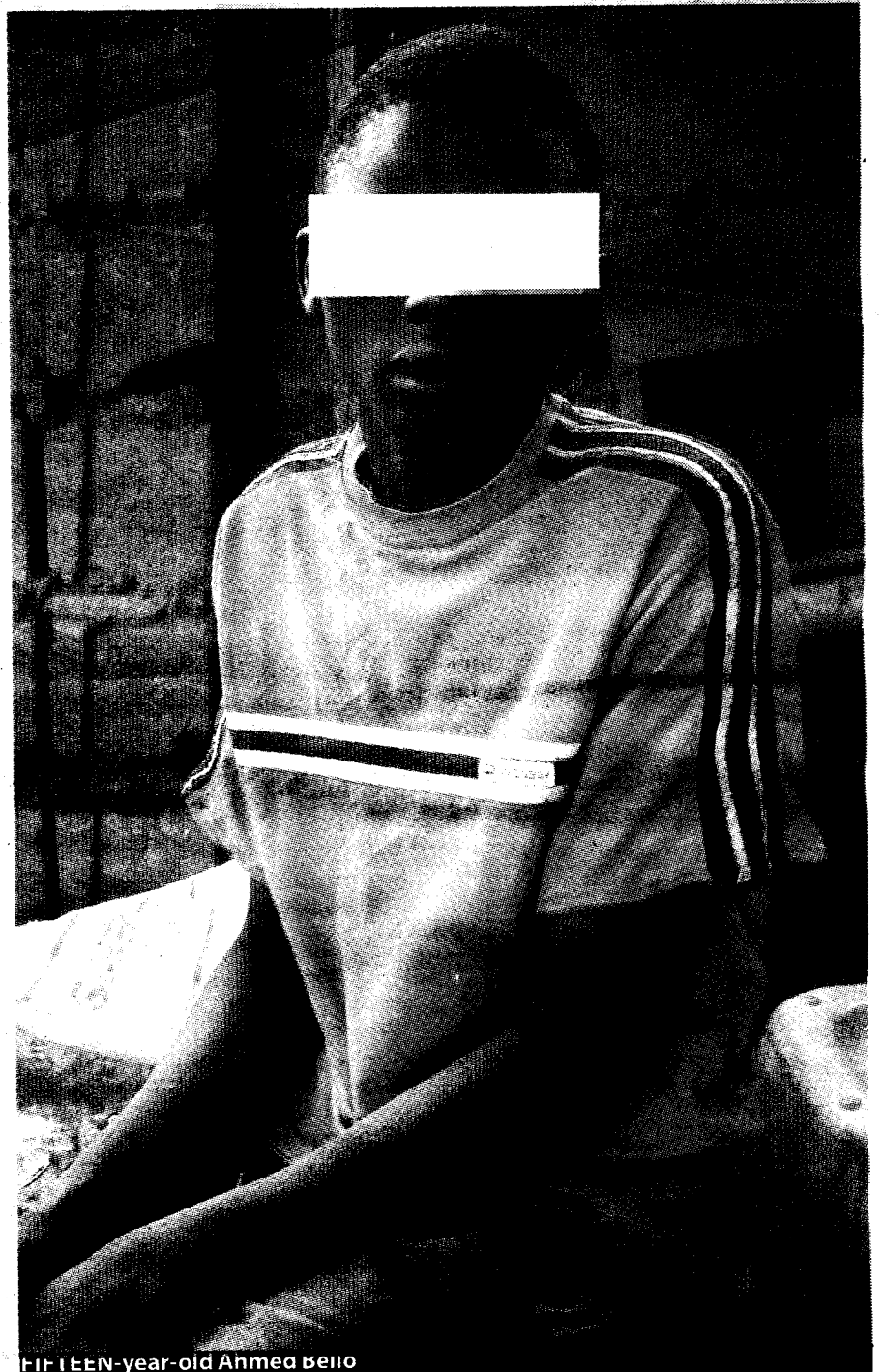
second, he had struck Muftau across his chest down to his stomach and ran away. I rushed to Muftau who cried out, 'Brother, I am dead!' It was only then I saw that Ahmed Bello had struck him deep with a broken bottle. I immediately carried him on my shoulder and boarded a taxi to Wuse General Hospital. As we approached the junction leading to ABC Transport I heard him say, 'Innalilahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Raji'un'. Those were the last words he spoke. As we arrived the hospital and were about to have him admitted, the nurse told us he was dead. So, we made arrangements to put him in the mortuary before returning to the workshop to let the others know what had happened," Abdulsalam narrated.

The Jabi Forest Unit Chairman of the National Automobile Association of Nigeria (NATA), Comrade Joseph Ajayi under which Wasiu was an apprentice also spoke to our reporter. "The Wasiu family requested that the corpse be sent to them in Kwara, which we have done."

"Many of us sleep here because of accommodation and traffic issues and have at some point or the other encountered such situations. About a year ago, one of us, Peter Oladipupo, narrowly escaped death in the exact way Muftau died. He was almost stabbed, but he dodged the knife which bore a hole in the zinc where the scavengers tried to steal from."

"The chairman of the scavenger union was swift to act and immediately brought the three suspects to the police once we made our case before him. We are discussing with him at the moment on how best to control events before they escalate. They attack not only us in this unit but also mechanics in other places. They steal from us even in broad daylight. A few days before the incidence, a food vendor was beaten up by one of them because she confronted them over her plates. In as much as we appreciate that being a scavenger is as a result of unemployment, we would like the authorities to look into their activities and address the situation," Comrade Ajayi said.

As at the time of filing this report, investigations were still underway and no conclusive decision regarding Bello's situation was ascertained.



FIFTEEN-year-old Ahmed Bello



THE deceased, Muftau Wasiu

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