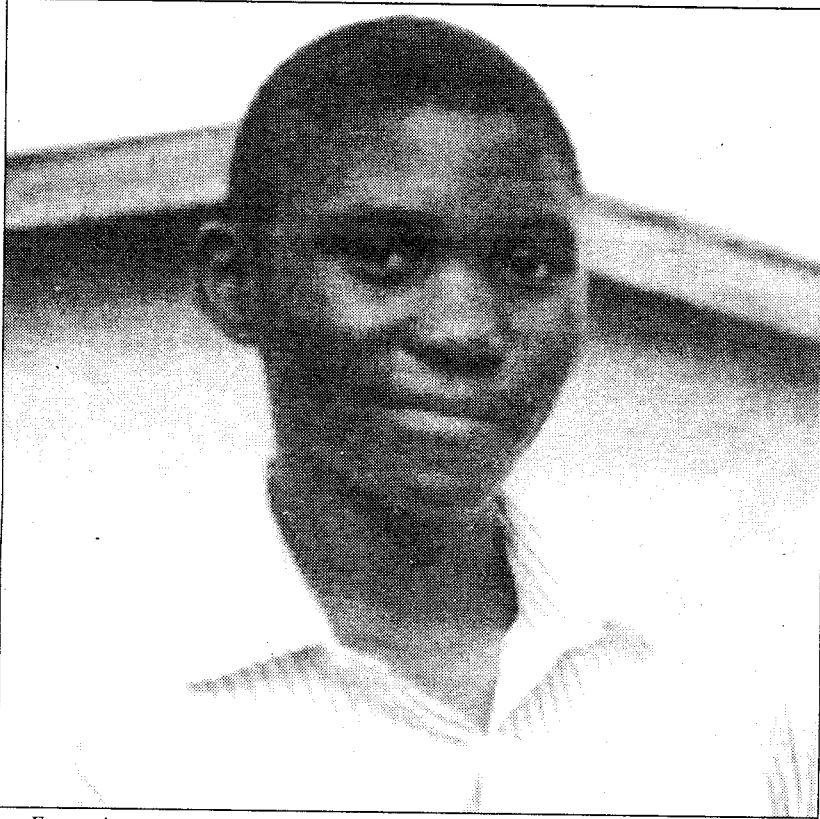




THE METROSection

Murder at *heaven's* gate

• Security guard kills 25-year-old student by a Shomolu church door



• Faturoti



• The entrance to the church where he was reportedly killed

By Temitope Orogun

THE residents of Odunlami Street, Bajulaye, Shomolu in the Lagos mainland thought it a good idea to hire guards, an added security measure that was expected to be in everyone's interest.

It turned out a good idea, at least initially, as incidents of crime, especially robbery, abated.

The security guards started off fine, even making friends with the young people of the area among whom was Femi Faturoti, a 25-year-old Diploma in Business Administration student of the University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, who lived at No. 5, Odunlami Street.

Friday, February 2, started like any other day for Femi, fondly called Opa, who went to visit his friend in Fadeyi and came back to meet a gruesome death.

He was allegedly killed in front of a church by one of the guards hired to protect the residents, who many say, was considered a friend by the late Femi.

The last born of the family, Femi was engaged to pretty Mariam Abdullahi who has been numb with grief since the incident.

A witness, Tundé Idowu, said: "My mother sent me to buy a candle that fateful evening. She does not send me out when it is late.

"People were still outside, chatting in groups because there was no public power supply.

"Suddenly, I heard some noise from the entrance to the church. People were shouting that *mallam*, the security guard, was cutting someone with a cutlass.

"I did not know the victim was Femi, until I moved closer to see for myself.

"The sight before me was too much for me.

The guard had dealt Opa, several machete cuts some so deep as if he wanted to decapitate him.

"Now, the killer has escaped and we want justice to be done.

"The people behind the *mallam* did not do anything, when not too long ago, the same guard attacked some residents. They just gave the victims some money.

"Now, the guard has killed Femi," he said.

Femi's friend, Kolawole Oresanya, said: "That would not be the first time the guard attacked someone, although his previous victims did not die.

"One, Damola who received a chest injury has behaved abnormally till today.

"The security guard uses charms and his cutlass is soaked in it. The other two were Olumide Ogbo and Baba Agoro, a plumber.

"That man is ready to kill. That is what they instructed him to do. The leader of the people who hired him, popularly known as Baba Bimbo, is no where to be found.

"Everything in his house has been destroyed and the tenants chased away".

Oresanya told *The Guardian* there were two guards on duty that evening.

"But this very one called Opa, who did not go. Instead, he told the guard to come out and talk to him where he (Opa) was standing with two friends.

"The next thing was for the guard to walk up to where Femi was standing and gave him a violent shove which sent him sprawling to the ground.

"Everybody was surprised at this action and before they knew what was happening, the *mallam* brought out his cutlass and started to give machete cuts all over Femi's body.

"He was bleeding profusely. The injuries he sustained were in more than 10 places.

"We took him to two hospitals where he was rejected.

"On the way to the University of Lagos Teaching Hospital, he died.

"He was my friend and sold phones in Ikeja.

"He was also my classmate. I cannot believe I will not see him again in class.

"Tell the government, we do not want to see any *mallam* man in Shomolu.

"The tenant's association hired him (guard) to kill. They settled his previous evil deeds amicably instead of chastising him. They commend him, they encourage him to molest and rape our women and now he has killed. We are not going to settle anything, we want justice or else...

"Can you imagine he was supposed to travel to Spain soon and now see what they have done to him?" Mariam, his fiancée lamented.

She continued: "We usually stay till midnight, outside, talking with the guard. I live in the house opposite his (Femi) mother's.

"On this day, I was still fighting him for not coming home on time to eat the food I prepared. He called in the evening telling me to prepare rice and stew. He came back around 9.00 p.m. He started joking and I forgave him when his friend started pleading on his behalf.

"It was evening and no light. Femi was chasing my younger ones outside and playing, joking. When I came out, I saw him with two friends in front of the church making calls and before I knew what was happening, the guard had started cutting him. I ran inside to call my sister to come see what the guard was doing to Femi. We never knew he was using a cutlass. We taught it was stick until we got there and I held him before I knew it was a cutlass he was using".

Mariam continued: "The cuts were just too many and deep. The chest, forehead, arm, kneecap, all were opened. The act was barbaric. A human being should not be slaughtered like an animal. The guard is to protect our lives and not to destroy.

"This was not the first time they had condoned his acts. He killed in Agumbiade Street before he came here and now he has killed and nothing is being done," she added.

"The funny thing was the guard was Femi's friend because he usually gives *mallam* money. They knew each other and talked with each other. I am convinced this act was deliberate.

"The chairman could have rescued him when he ran to his house but he chased him out and told the guard to kill him. They all disappeared when they have been discovered. Justice must prevail. My love must not die unavenged," she cried.

The Femi's brothers were still in shock. As if they were sleeping, they expect to wake up and be told their brother was alive.

Till now, nobody knows what came over the guard. Everybody was saying there was a conspiracy.

Femi's mother, Dorcas, lamented that the boy was a good Christian. She wondered why his son was butchered in front of a church.

"The security guards usually sit in front of the church because of shelter. I am a lead preacher and he (Femi) was a chorister in the church. He was a reliable child that I was always proud of. He took care of me when I was sick in the hospital. I had a surgery not quite long and he was always with me. He is supposed to have travelled before now but because I am sick and his elder ones are not around, he stood in for them. His travelling was postponed till March 5 and see what has happened," she lamented.

She continued: "The mother of the first child that was cut by the guard was given N12,000 so that she should not report the case to the police. Had it been they reported the case, the story could have been different today and my child would have been alive.

"Those that called themselves chief tenants imposed the guard on us, they are nowhere now.

"One of the residents, a retired soldier, might have helped. The boy ran inside his house. Instead of telling the guard to leave him, he pushed him out and told the guard to deal with him.

"Well, the youths in their grievance, burnt his property. But it did not bring back the life of my son.

"That night, we reported the case at Alade Police Station in Shomolu but they could not arrest the guard. The corpse of the boy was rejected in three hospitals because he was already dead. They referred to it for a coroner's inquest, including LUTH where I work. They could not put him in the mortuary. When it was past 4.30 a.m., they accepted him at General Hospital, Lagos where the corpse was unattended to until it was taken for burial.

"The death was intentional because the guard shouted he was going to kill Femi several times and he fulfilled his promise," Dorcas cried.