



# THE METROSection

## Felled by a killer 'ring'

• Council worker dies after a blow to the chest by assailant wearing a ring

IT has been quite difficult for most people who knew him to accept that someone, somewhere had so much hatred for 45-year-old Ibikunle Afuwape Odunuga.

Whether at his No. 20, Ibrahim Omosokan Street, Ifako-Gbagada residence or at Oshodi-Isolo Local Council of Lagos State office where he worked, Odunuga was well-liked and respected and his fair, good looks and ready smile assured he did not lack friends.

Cordial in manners and humble, older people saw him as a person that could be trusted with matters personal or official.

His neighbours described him as a man one would always want to have around due to his jovial nature even as his colleagues at Oshodi-Isolo Local Council speak glowingly of his dedication to duty, hardly seen among civil servants of nowadays.

"While others saw government work as no man's job, Odunuga had a different attitude. Whatever he did, he did with a cheerful readiness to do it as well as he could", a senior executive officer said last week.

Yet, not everybody liked Odunuga, or he would not have died in the circumstances he did and which the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) of the Police is trying to unravel.

However, his sudden departure to the great beyond started on Tuesday, July 10, when he was attacked and hit on the chest by six men who had trailed him from the office to his wife's shop in Gbagada.

Narrating her story to *The Guardian*, his wife, Kafilat said: "I travelled to Dubai to buy goods and was scheduled to return to Nigeria on Wednesday, the July 11.

"On Tuesday, I called him at about 4.00 p.m. from Dubai and we spoke on phone for almost 10 minutes where we both concluded that he would come and pick me home at the airport on Wednesday.

"After our discussion, I asked about the situation at home, his health and welfare and his response was positive.

"You can imagine my shock when on Wednesday morning a relation called to inform me on phone that my husband had been killed by assassins".

Kafilat added: "My husband left his office at Oshodi-Isolo Local Council on Tuesday and headed to my shop at Ifako Market to see what was going on.

"This was his usual practice even when I was around. He always stopped by to say hello to me whenever he was returning from the office.

"I was told that as he was coming back in the company of his friends. He noticed that a Toyota car with registration number EG 642 EKY was trailing them.

"My husband noticed the vehicle and called the attention of his friends who were said to have waved off his curiosity.

"When they got to my shop, the same car with the six young men on board drove past them. After some minutes, the same car reversed and moved towards where my husband and his friends were sitting.

"My husband then stood up to challenge them, asking whether they needed any assistance and why they were following them.

"Two of the occupants of the car alighted and an exchange of words ensued.

"At that point, one of them was said to have ran back to the car, brought out and put a black ring on his finger and hit my husband in the chest. The force of the blow sent him sprawling on the ground.

"At this point, people around had been attracted and they rushed in and held two of the men. While the other four, realising what has happened, jumped out of the car and took to their heels.

"After some minutes, my husband stood



• Odunuga



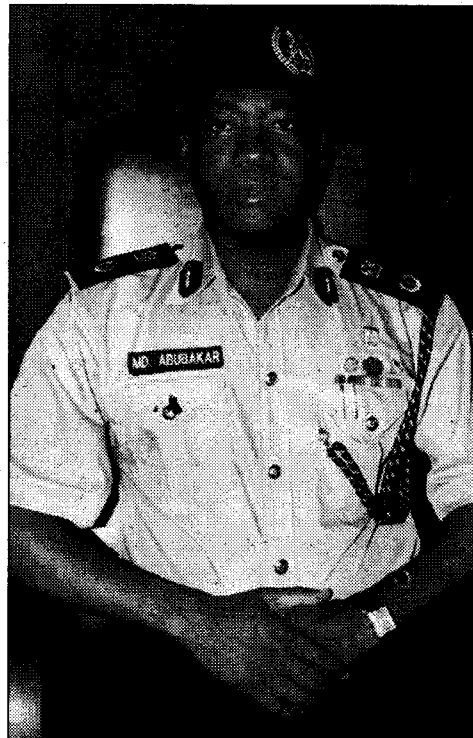
• Acting Inspector General of Police, Mr. Mike Okiro

By Seye Olumide

up but he was no longer physically alright.

"The matter was reported at Ifako Police Post where the two men were detained and other officers detailed to the scene and to seize the red car.

"As they got back to the scene, my husband slumped again and was gasping for breath. He was rushed to Jollad Hospital



• Abubakar

at Gbagada where he was admitted.

"Few hours later, he died.

"By this time, his chest had already swollen up while the area he was hit had turned black", she said last week.

Odunuga's body was moved to Gbagada General Hospital for post mortem.

The Police at Ifako confirmed the incident but added that the matter has been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Panti, Yaba

"since it is a homicide case.

"Two of the suspects are still in detention for further investigation while the other four are still at large", an inspector who sought anonymity, said at the week-end.

But a member of the deceased family, Lt.-Col. A. O. Oyebola (rtd) who told *The Guardian* he was not satisfied with developments since the incident happened, has sent a petition to the Lagos State Commissioner of police, Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar.

He claims that relatives of the suspected assassins were making efforts to pervert the cause of justice.

The petition entitled: *Re-late Mr. Ibikunle Odunuga*: states: "The above named who was my son-in-law was murdered by six men on Tuesday, July 10 instant at about 5.30 p.m. in Gbagada area of Lagos State.

"Two of the assassins were apprehended with the car used to commit the crime and handed over to Anthony, Ikoro Road Police who later incidented the case and transferred it to Panti for further action.

"From the look of things, the relatives of the assassins are now making frantic efforts to pervert the course of justice".

But the State Police Command, while confirming the matter, promised that proper investigations would be carried out to determine the culpability of the suspects.

According to a statement by the Lagos State Police Command: "On July 10, at about 6.00 p.m., a report was received at the SCID, Panti, Yaba that one Ibikunle Odunuga of No. 20, Ibrahim Omosokan Street, Ifako-Gbagada, was beaten to death in his shop at No. 10, Mosalashi, Ifako-Gbagada by six men in (a) Toyota car with number EF 642 EKY in yet to be determined circumstances.

"A team of anti-robbery policemen from the station raced to the scene and arrested two of the assailants: Alade Matthew and Emmanuel Akanza while others escaped".

Tears streaming down her face, Kafilat at their residence in Gbagada on Monday described her late husband as "my own darling given to me by God.

"He was loving, gentle and jovial, friendly and humble.

"Whenever I was disturbed, he knew how to ease my worries and encourage me. I will never, ever forget him", she said.

Odunuga's death yet adds to a growing list of suspected homicides within the Lagos metropolis for reasons that seemingly defy logic.

On Tuesday, January 23, one Clementina Sadiwa was murdered on Apongbon Bridge at about 8.30 p.m. while she was returning from her office.

Also on Friday, February 2, a 25-year-old student of Business Administration at University of Lagos, Femi Faturoti, was murdered by a hired guard in front of a church at Odulami Street, Bajulaiye, Shomolu.

In questionable circumstances as well, Ikechukwu Njoku and his friend, Onyeka Sunday, were killed at Ijesha in February.

Investigations into their deaths are still going on.

But the new Lagos Police boss, Abubakar, has allayed fears of growing insecurity in the state.

He reaffirmed the readiness of the State Police Command to ensure the safety of lives and property, and give criminals in his domain a hard time.

Abubakar who spoke during a visit to Rutam House recently declared his intention to lead patrols of flash points and dark spots noted for criminals activities in the state.