

Dutch businessman shot dead in Port Harcourt

*From Kelvin Ebiri,
Port Harcourt*

A DUTCH businessman was yesterday shot dead in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Mr. Tonny Kouwenhover, who was married to a Nigerian, was killed in his house at 79, Evo Road, New Government Reservation Area (GRA).

Though the circumstances surrounding his death were still not very clear as at press time, *The Guardian* learnt that it might not be unconnected to a business deal.

The Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Phelix Ogbaudu, has directed homicide experts at the State Criminal Investigation Department to investigate the murder.

A security source who pleaded anonymity disclosed to *The Guardian* that the late Kouwenhoven, who owns a popular bar, the Blues Cafe, was killed by four men who accompanied him home from the bar in the early hours of yesterday.

The Guardian learnt

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that Kouwenhoven returned home at about 1.00 a.m. and was accompanied by the men. His private security guard was however said to have been around but watching a movie along the road.

Kouwenhoven who probably opened the gate himself, the source said, drove into the premises and took the men upstairs amidst altercations with them.

The argument appeared to be over a car deal, which did not sail through.

The private security guard later returned to his duty but without realising that the four men were in his boss' flat. And just as he returned from switching the power source from generator to the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), two men pounced on him and dragged him and tied him with a rope. They also tied the wife of the Dutchman said to be from Abua in

Rivers State, the source said.

Shortly afterwards, Kouwenhoven reportedly came downstairs with the men and walked to his car where he had reportedly kept the key of the container containing a car for which he purportedly collected the sum of \$50,000.

As Kouwenhoven opened his car, he was alleged to have pulled out his pump action rifle and shot at one of the men. The men subsequently wrested the gun from him and shot him.

The source said: "The men after killing the man dropped the cartridge inside his pant. The pump action gun was left on the ground beside the man. They also dropped a note explaining that the man had collected \$50,000 to supply a car from Holland but reneged."

The four men who reportedly did not collect anything from the house, threatened the wife of the deceased that if they did

not get the \$50,000 soon, they would return and raze down the entire buildings owned by the Dutchman in Port Harcourt.

When *The Guardian* visited the place yesterday morning, policemen from the homicide department were already inside the premises to interrogate the deceased's wife. They later took her away.

Visitors, including expatriates, were barred from the premises by the Police.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Ireju Barasua, confirmed the incident and said that the Commissioner of Police had ordered homicide experts to investigate the killing.

She explained: "The Commissioner of Police has ordered a thorough investigation of the murder. The killers did not go there to kidnap him. The gate of the house was intact when we went there. So, the people did not force their way in. The investigation is on all the same."