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Thursday, January 03, 2008

## The killing of a hair stylist

By *Bertram Nwannekanma*

**T**HE entire neighborhood of 5th Avenue, Road 511, FESTAC Town, Lagos and its environs on Monday was unusually quiet.

It was a day to Christmas and , in the past the area would have been bubbling with preparations for the festival.

This time it was not so .

The killing of 33-year old, Daniel Ekugbe Iriri had sent shivers down the spines of many residents and robbed them of any interest in merrymaking.

The former student of Festac Grammar School and an engineering graduate of Federal Polytechnic Bida, was before his death , a stylist at Tine 'n' Tino salon, located at Federal Housing Authority (FHA) Shopping Complex at Road 207, 'G' Close .

Said to be easy going and of a friendly disposition, Dan, as his friends fondly called him was killed under circumstances that have stirred controversies and raised many questions.

His was a name and face very familiar in the neighborhood since not only was he born there, but he was a skilled stylist too , a fact that drew many customers to his salon.

That he was very popular was not in doubt.

His sudden death to all of them was a shock to all especially the woman fold, whom, he dresses their head.

But Daniel's death has spike up a controversy between his family and that of his girl friend, who had a son for him about three years ago.

The atmosphere at his residence at House 12, A close, in 511 road was not only moody with friends and relatives thronging in to console Daniel's mother, a mother of five when The Guardian visited on Monday.

Mrs. Iriri, who was sandwiched by friends, was too shaky to speak, but the urge to speak out was there, her husband, who stays at Sapele, was still being expected then, but the shock was still visible.

To her, the son was not killed by unknown assailants but a well-known man, whom she said had threatened to deal with her.

That person was the Banires, whose daughter Funmi, the late Daniel impregnated about three years ago.

She said, "When Daniel impregnated Funmi about three years ago, we wanted to commence the marriage arrangement but the parents turned us down.

" Even when a brother of theirs wanted us to come during the naming ceremony of the boy, they did not consent, rather deciding to go ahead without the consent of the father.

"After that my son was on Saturday, December, 22, my son was severely beaten up some gangs because of the girl and all the father could tell us was he will soon deal with us.

About a week later, my son was shot dead in the after noon in the neighbourhood.

"He had really done what he had threatened to do and Only God will pay them",  
 she added.

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A medical report dated December 23 that was made available to The Guardian by Mrs. Irire and signed by Dr Okonkwo of the Golden Cross Infirmary Hospital and Maternity, Festac showed that Daniel was brought into the Hospital by 2.31pm on Sunday December 23 claimed to have being beaten up by his colleagues.

He was said to be ill looking, pallor anicteric aterbrile, dehydrated. (R) Subconjunctival haemorrhage with Ecchymosis (L) eye, tenderness at the (R) posterior trunk with whiplash laceration (R) posterior trunk.

According to the doctor, an impression of Assault with soft tissue injury was made.

He received T, Toxoid, ATS, Cap Ampiclox, Chymoral Brufeen, Vit C and Butt C/phenicol eye drop on out patient basis.

However, he revisited us by 6.30pm same day, now complaining of fever, vomiting and chest pain.

He was immediately admitted into ward and placed on intravenous fluids, anti malaria and hematinics, while a chest x-ray was ordered.

The report, which was signed by police investigation officer, (IPO) Adewumi Adeniyi also showed a hospital bill of N9, 400 before he was discharged on Monday, December 24.

Mrs. Irire, also dismissed the insinuation that, her son was a victim of robbery crossfire claimed that the assailants especially the one that pull the trigger was a well-known cultist living in the area.

According to her, there was account that the assailants had visited her son's working place and gone back only to met him at the road when he was returning to the salon.

" They targeted my son, who was on top of a commercial motorcycle going back to the salon having gone to collect drugs from a nearby chemist.

"They were not robbers but those sent to kill my son by the man that threaten to deal with me" she added.

But The Guardian gathered from residents in road 207, 'G' close that Daniel might be a victim of robbery gang who had gone to rob a Bureau De change, which shared the same building with the salon where Daniel worked.

A resident, Mr. Okechukwu Anieke, said he watched the six man robbery gang, who came with a bus operate that afternoon and could tell that they could not be targeting Daniel.

He said: " I watched the incident at about 3.30 pm, there was a pandemonium and every body was running helter skelter.

"There were sporadic shootings and as they were coming back from their operation an Okada rider who was carrying Daniel ran into them, they ordered everybody to lie down.

"Then Daniel and the Okada rider lay down, but later Daniel tried to run away then they shot him on the head, the Okada rider was also shot at the arm but he was lucky that he did not die.

Anieke, who said he just parked in to the area last year said, he heard that robbers had visited the Bureau de Change in the same manner two years ago

A fridge repairer that witnessed the incident, who however did not want his name mentioned, said the robbers had shot at the Bureau de Change operator but when he did not die, they gave him a severe beating and after collecting his money, they left not before shattering the whole place with bullet.

According to the man, every body around including those inside the salon where Daniel work were made to lie face down by the robbers.

"But Daniel was unlucky that he ran into the robbers". He added.

When The Guardian visited the shopping complex on Monday, debris of the pieces of the glass still litters the scene.

But the family of the deceased had ever denied the robbery theory by propagated by the police insisting that Daniel was victim of planed killing.

Their insistence was based on the fact that the Banires had threatened to deal with them over the Funmi issue.

Meanwhile, The Guardian could not reach the Banires at their house at 207 rd as apprehension had taken over the family over the incidence, which had led to the

arrest of their daughter Funmi by the police.

There were also fears that Mr. Banire may have been arrested by the police, which explained the apprehension in their home.

The Police at the FESTAC Area command was also not forthcoming with any statement as all inquiries towards the matter was referred to the Lagos state 's Public Relation Officer, Mr. Frank Mba.

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