



THE METROSECTION

A street-brawl...unto death

• In Lagos, an apprentice printer stabs another young man to death during a fight

If he had not chased me to my own compound, I would have run away from trouble. I am full of regret now for everything that happened and I wish I had the power to bring him back to life

TWENTY-ONE-YEAR-OLD Tayo Oguntubor might not have known what it meant when he gave himself the nickname, *Atamatase*, which when loosely translated means 'sharp shooter.'

But if he had called himself something that means 'sharp, or fatal-stabber', then it would have been more appropriate.

This is so because Tayo is now being held by the police in Lagos to answer for the fatal stabbing of another youth, Babatunde Fashola, who lived in the same Ramoni Street area of Itire, Lagos Mainland with him.

People are asking whether the nickname, *Atamatase*, the young man gave himself may have somehow predisposed him to the violent actions that have landed him in grave trouble.

But it was a subdued Tayo who appeared before journalists last Thursday, pleading for mercy. All the bravado was gone. What was left was a young man over whose head the hangman's noose could be dangling.

To the Lagos State Police Commissioner, Mr. Marvel Akpoyibo, the position Tayo now finds himself should serve as a warning and deterrent to other street urchins, who at the slightest provocation, reach for dangerous weapons with which to fight.

He said the full weight of the law would apply in the case of the alleged killer.

When he spoke before journalists, a repentant Tayo, who finished his Senior Secondary education in 2006, pleaded that the police should make his punishment milder.

He said he had seen the folly of his ways and would turn a new leaf.

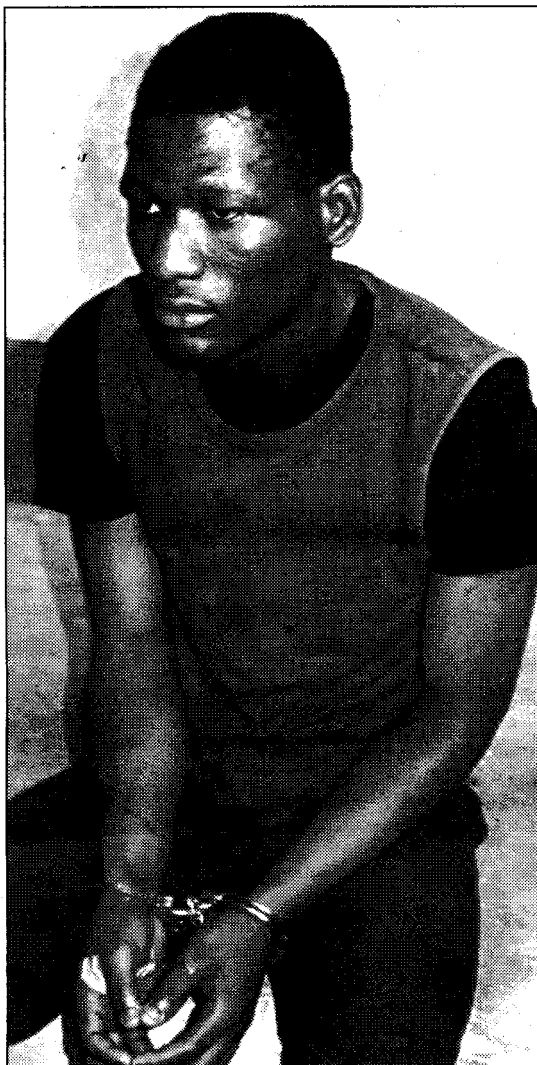
He said; "My name is Tayo Oguntubor, also called *Atamatase*. I finished my secondary school education since 2006 and I am an apprentice in a printing press.

"I was outside where they were preparing food at a roadside food canteen along our street.

"There was also a group of guys who were gambling. All of a sudden, there was an argument and I was accused of doing what I did not do.

So I left there and went elsewhere to buy something from a kiosk, when one of the boys who was gambling still came up to harass me and threatened to inflict injuries on me.

During this time, there was a party going on in our area, so they had taken alcohol and smoked Indian hemp.



The suspect, Tayo Oguntubor

By Odita Sunday

"The boy who was harassing me pulled my clothes and gave me a blow on my mouth. About six of them, including this Babatunde Fashola, who is now dead, rushed and crowded over me, beating and kicking me.

"A man in our area came and begged them to let

me go. They refused and continued to beat me the more."

He continued: "When I shouted that they were going to kill me today, immediately they released me and I ran home. As I was running, the late Babatunde threw a big stone at me and injured me. I ran to my house shouting, but they still followed me to my house with a bottle.

"By this time, I had already taken a knife from our kitchen. When Babatunde rushed at me to take the knife away, we began to struggle.

Others were beating me with sticks.

It was night already and in the fight, I stabbed Babatunde on his neck.

Blood was gushing out as if from a tap.

When I saw what has happened, I ran to Aguda to hide.

On the second day, I went to take some clothes from my house and that was how the police caught me.

"If he had not chased me to my own compound, I would have run from trouble. I am full of regret now for everything that happened and I wish I had the power to bring him back to life.

"This thing that has happened to me is shocking. The late Babatunde was not even my accuser.

He came later to join them and now he is dead. I have not seen my mother since the incident happened, because I ran away from the house."

On how he was arrested, Tayo said:

"I ran away to Aguda and hid.

It was on the second day when I came out from my hideout, that some of the people on our street caught me and called the police.

"This thing that happened has really showed me that it is not good to fight.

We may know the beginning of a fight, but we don't know how it would end.

Well, I do not think I can be saved from this case, but what I can only beg the police is to help make the punishment milder for me, because I am really sorry."

The Lagos State Police spokesman, Mr. Frank Mba, noted that police operatives from Itire had swung into action when the report of the deadly brawl reached them.

"Our operatives at Itire Police Station got a report that the brawl that took place somewhere at Ramoni Street in Itire eventually resulted in the death of one of the parties.

Incidentally this young man, Tayo Oguntubor, was picked up. He actually had a fight during which he stabbed the deceased, Babatunde Fashola", Mba said.

The position Tayo now finds himself should serve as a warning and deterrent to other street-urchins, who at the slightest provocation, reach for dangerous weapons with which to fight. The full weight of the law will apply in the case