

Metro

How four men killed cousin for money ritual, witness recounts

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Federal High Court, Lagos

A prosecution witness and Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Nurudeen Gafa, yesterday, narrated how four men allegedly killed their cousin for ritual purposes.

The four suspects: Daniel Luka, Isaiah Audu, Wavi David and Ayuba Musa were standing trial at a Lagos High Court sitting in Tafawa Balewa Square (TBS), for unlawfully killing of one Isaiah James.

The victim was allegedly stabbed to death with a knife on May 21, 2018, at Flower Garden, Ajah area of Lagos.

Lagos State government had in suit no: LD/10478C/2019 slammed the suspects with three-count charge bordering on conspiracy to commit murder, murder and

misconduct with regards to corpses.

They were arraigned before Justice Yetunde Adesanya, and pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Their offences were contrary to the provision of Section 233, 223 and 165(b) of the Criminal Law Ch.C17, Vol 3, Laws of Lagos State, 2015.

Led-in-evidence by the state counsel, Olayemi Shofolu, Gafar narrated how the defendants unlawfully killed the deceased (Isaiah James), by stabbing him to death with a knife and indecently interfered with the corpse by cutting open his stomach and removing his liver.

He said one Ebenezer, who resides in one of the Estate close to Ajah, introduced the defendants to a native doctor, Tubosun Shofeso, who lives in Ijebu Igbo, Ogun State, for money ritual.

The witness told the court that Shofeso, who had collected money from the defendants, asked them to get human parts for the ritual.

He noted that in the process of getting the human parts for the herbalist, the defendants agreed among themselves with the suggestion of second defendant that they should use his brother for ritual purpose.

Consequently, the second defendant called his cousin on phone to meet him at Flower Garden in Ajah.

“It was their neighbour, who saw James when he was rushing out that asked him where he was going because he was ill. He replied that his cousin called to meet him at Flower Garden, Okenla at Ajah.

“When the deceased got there, he met the defendants, they all moved to one side of the road where they sell fried yam. So, the fourth defendant said he want to eat yam, while the first, second and third defendants told the deceased that they want to smoke Indian hemp. After smoking, they all moved to swampy area.

“The fourth defendant held the deceased on the throat and sliced him.

While the 4th defendant was still holding the throat, the 2nd defendants held the deceased two legs and third defendant held and cut him by the side of his stomach to remove his liver.

“When they brought out the liver, the third defendant held his hand and noticed that the heart was still pumping. They now cut the heart and put inside a nylon bag.

“They hid and took it to Ijebu Igbo to meet the herbalist that told them to bring it for money ritual. All these happened at night. When the deceased was not seen the following day, the neighbour who knew his movement explained to the deceased’s elder brother (Mike) that he left to meet his cousin that called him on phone. They began a search for the second defendant who had already gone to Ijebu Igbo.

“As the search continued, someone notified the deceased elder brother that he saw a lifeless body at Erinle, Ajah. When they got there, he found out that the body was his junior brother’s. They, thereafter, went to the Police Station in Ajah to report,” the witness said.

The witness, who was the Investigating Police Officer (IPO), further told the court that during investigation they discovered that the 2nd, third and 4th defendants are from Chibok Local Council in Borno State.

When the prosecution sought to tender the defendants’ statement, their counsel raised an objection that the statement was taken under duress.

According to him, “It is our contention that the statement was made involuntarily. It was made under duress and torture.”

The court subsequently adjourned to September 26 and 27, 2023 for continuation of trial.

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