

One Robbery Too Many

• *Mother Killed, 8 Month-old-baby In Coma, Police Vow To Get Killers*

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It was a gloomy sight at Ebony Private Cemetery, Atan, Lagos on Saturday, March 8, 2008 when the remains of Dorcas Adeyinka Kingsley-James were laid to rest. She had fallen victim to the bullets of daredevil armed robbers who attacked Big Treat Supermarket around 6 p.m. on Sunday, March 2, 2008.

If tears could bring back the departed, sure Adeyinka would be up and doing among her family members and friends by now as they thronged the cemetery to pay their last respect.

As tears rolled uncontrollably down the faces of those who graced the occasion, they could equally not help but recount their experience and the memory of Adeyinka, whom friends and family members describe as affectionate and adorable during her sojourn on the surface of this planet.

One of the sympathisers, who simply identified herself as Bukky, had this to say about the former Corporate Audit and Compliance Staff of United Bank for Africa (UBA) and mother of two: "She was such a loving person. We share things and sometimes, when I don't see her I find it difficult to do anything. She was very adorable and amiable. Just share something with her and you can be sure that you are on your way to getting it solved no matter how difficult. Her death is such a shocking incident."

For her husband, Kingsley-James, Adeyinka was a pillar of support for him and he would miss her dearly.

It was another evening for the family who have had a nice Sunday morning having joined fellow Jehovah's Witnesses to worship at the Kingdom Hall off Akilo Road, Ogba, Lagos. Having fulfilled their spiritual requirement of gathering together with members of the same faith, they went to a restaurant in Ikeja for a family day out. What later played out was a sad story, one they would hate to remember as they fell victim to the fast deteriorating security situation that has become a major characteristic of the Nigerian society, especially Lagos State.

The widower, Kingsley-James gave an account of how it all happened: "It happened around 6 p.m. on that Sunday. We left the house and my wife said she would like to have a drink. So we headed for a bar on Opebi. When we got to Agidingbi, we discovered that people were running up and down. We even noticed that the motorcyclist in front of us with his passenger had fallen down. Apparently, they must have been shot. We moved on and when we got to the front of Big Treat we saw that the car in front of us had slowed down, so we slowed down too. Then, the car attempted to make a turn but I noticed that as it was trying to do this, a short man with long hair shot at all the occupants in the car. The man who had a pump-action gun walked towards my car and ordered me to go back.

"As I hurriedly made to reverse the next thing I heard was a gun shot. He shot at my tyre and fired another shot that broke the glass. The third shot hit my wife on her right arm, which came off immediately. My elder sister who was sitting at the back with my eight-month-old baby girl also shouted that a bullet had hit the baby."

That was the moving confession of how these men of the underworld sent Adeyinka to her early grave.

But she didn't breathe her last immediately. Her husband recounted that immediately after the shots rang out, he moved his family to a nearby hospital where they were told that there was no ambulance neither did they have oxygen to administer on the baby.

"They could not even administer first aid on my wounded family," he bemoaned.



• Dorcas Adeyinka Kingsley-James

With the help of his friends who had arrived in a convoy of cars, he drove to the Lagos State Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) in an effort to salvage Adeyinka's life. But she died before they got there.

At LASUTH the baby was immediately admitted to the Intensive Care Unit, where she was placed on oxygen. Unfortunately, there was no Computed Tomography (CT) Scan, a computerised X-ray equipment that would

have been used to detect the extent of damage on the baby's head. The hospital, however, managed to put her on oxygen while the doctors battled to steady her. An offer to administer blood transfusion on the little girl was rejected by his father on religious grounds.

The next day, Toluwani was moved to a private hospital in Apapa, for treatment. She was yet to come out of coma as at the time of filing this report.

There is no doubt that the rising wave of armed robbery attacks in the Lagos metropolis is increasingly becoming worrisome as lives and property are no longer safe even in broad daylight.

The police spokesperson in Lagos, Frank Mba, when contacted on the incident by our correspondent on Wednesday restated the resolve of the force to get to the bottom of this particular case. He lamented the circumstances under which the robbers operated that day and beat their men to escape.

According to him, the Omole area had long been marked as a black spot. Area C Commander, Mobolaji Oderinde, under whose jurisdiction Omole is, had stationed convoy patrol of three vans around the area that day. But on this fateful day, the Police got a distress call that members of the Odia People's Congress (OPC) and some people were clashing in Agege, which made them leave the spot.

"Not quite 15 minutes after they departed from the spot the armed robbers struck. When our men got wind of what was happening they quickly deployed two of the vans to the spot but before they could get there, the armed robbers had gone. It was actually while the robbers were leaving the spot that they shot the casualties," Mba further explained.

But the police spokesperson said the police was doing everything possible to ensure that the robbers are brought to book. "The police are very passionate about this case, especially as a baby is involved. And then a woman too. We will do all we can to ensure that the robbers are tracked down," he promised.

The police initially denied that there were no casualties, according to him, because no formal report was made. "It was in the media that we first heard that people died. And the husband of the victim didn't come to us until two days after the incident."

Meanwhile, protesters comprising

of about 100 artistes and journalists besieged the Lagos State Secretariat, Alausa on Monday to protest the rising cases of robberies in the state. They blamed the phenomenon on poor security in the state.

The protesters were armed with placards with various inscriptions like, 'Free Us From Robbers, Empower Security'; 'Save Us From Robbers'; 'Save Our Soul'; 'Let's Have a Future, Protect Our Families From Robbers'; And 'Government: Life is Precious'.

Among the protesters were D'banj, Princess, TeeA, Teju Babyface, Kunle Afolayan, Ayo Animashaun, Dekunle Fuji, Jedi, Howie T, Jesse King, Wunmi Obe, Ego Ogbaro and Segun Blessing. They also met with the State Commissioner of Police, Mohammed Abubakar who rededicated himself to the war against robbers.

The group spokesperson, Efe Omorogbe lamented the condition of security in the state, which they described as deteriorating on a daily basis.

"The timing of attack does not matter because people now get attacked in daylight. We are aware of the state government's effort to calm the threatening situation, we also realise the challenges but our appeal is that something has to be done hastily," Omorogbe said.

Adeyinka had her primary education at Trinity Nursery and Primary School, Ijaye, Abeokuta from where she proceeded to Abeokuta Grammar School for her secondary education. She later moved on to the then Ogun State Polytechnic to study Accountancy but before the completion of the programme, she was offered admission into Ogun State University (now Olabisi Onabanjo University), Ago-Iwoye where she obtained a degree in Accountancy.

Before her demise, she worked for seven years as a Corporate Audit and Compliance staff of UBA.



• Artistes and Journalists protesting the high crime wave in Lagos at the Lagos State Secretariat, Alausa on Monday