

Soldiers Accused Of Killing Student Over Military Short

By Andrew Utulu
SENIOR REPORTER, Lagos

Wale Ajayi was hale and hearty on Sunday April 12, as he was seen in the neighbourhood with friends exchanging pleasantries as part of the Easter festivity.

If anyone had told him or his friends that his joyous mood would be his last on mother earth, they would not have believed, as no one knew that death was lurking in the shadows. An untimely and avoidable death, believed to have been caused by bloodthirsty soldiers.

It was unbelievably shocking when the residents of Akinwale Street, Ogba, Lagos received the news that one of their beloved sons and friends, Wale, a part-time business administration student of the Akwa Ibom State University, Dideolu Court, Ogba-Ijaiye, Lagos Centre, was allegedly murdered by soldiers and his corpse dumped by the road side near Mobil Petrol Station along Oba Ogunjobi Road, near Pen Cinema area of Agege.

The 28-year-old 200 level student, who until his death lived with his parents at Ayodele Babalola Close, Off Akinwale Street, Lagos met his death when he went with his friends to Ogba Bus Stop to buy grilled beef popularly called 'suya' as he was allegedly accosted by three soldiers believed to be attached to Area G Police Command Headquarters, Ogba, Lagos to assist the police in combating violent crimes particularly armed robbery.

The time, according to witnesses, was about 10.30 p.m., and Wale was said to have gone out for the meat with three of his friends, Femi Eniafe, Gbenga and another one who is unnamed. The suya spot was just a stone throw from the Area G Headquarters of the police.

His sin according to his friends and witnesses was that he wore a pair of military camouflage shorts when the soldiers accosted them.

It was gathered that the soldiers did not allow him to explain how he came about the shorts, as they dragged him into the police Area Command premises. The pleas of his friends could not stop the soldiers as one of them reportedly pulled out a dagger and threatened to stab Eniafe, the deceased's friend. But the boys never knew that the matter would degenerate to the level of death even as they followed the soldiers to the entrance of the Command but were prevented from going in. They were said to



• Wale's corpse after it was discovered in Ogba, Lagos

have gone back to alert some of their colleagues about the incident and see how they could release Wale on bail.

According to Eniafe, the soldiers were not carrying guns and they were putting on white and camouflage military trousers, which is why they identified them as soldiers and not policemen.

Eniafe also narrated how both himself and Wale pleaded with the soldiers with the pledge that Wale would not put on the camouflage again, but their pleas fell on deaf ears.

Further investigation showed that when the boys returned to Area G and met with the policemen, who were on duty at the counter to ask after their friend, who was taken into their premises a while ago, they were told that no such person was brought to the counter or arrested. Every attempt by Eniafe to convince the police that he witnessed his friend being taken into the Area G premises by some men believed to be soldiers proved abortive.

The worried friends of the deceased was said to have rushed back to Akinwale Street, to inform the close friends of Wale that the police said he could not be traced.

Five more of the deceased's friends were said to have accompanied him back to the station for more enquiries at about

11.30 p.m. but policemen at the counter were said to have maintained their stand, saying that no such person was brought to the station.

The worried friends were said to have gone home believing that the police and the soldiers wanted to make sure that the young man passed the night at the station as a lesson not to wear the camouflage short another time, prompting them to pretend as if he was not detained at the station.

They continued the search for their friend the following morning, which brought them to the station at about 8.30 a.m. with almost all the youths resident in Akinwale Street in search of their friend.

It was gathered that the youths saw the shoes, which Wale wore on the evening of his arrest in front of Area G.

It was gathered that when the discovery of his shoes was made known to the policemen at the counter, the officers said it could have been blown there by the wind, and insisted that there was nothing they could do about the whereabouts of the person they were looking for.

Some of the youths had no choice than to start looking around the premises of the station to see if they could find the person they were searching for. They were said to have extended their search to the areas around the Area G before information came to them that there was a dead body

on the way to Pen Cinema, Agege.

When the youths got there, behold, it was the corpse of their friend Wale. On close examination, the head, which looked battered, was swollen and blood dripped from his mouth and nose.

The matter was reported at the Pen Cinema Police Station, where a detachment of policemen took away the corpse and deposited it at the morgue for autopsy.

Meanwhile, the news of Wale's death was said to have caused devastating shock on his mother, who expected lost consciousness upon hearing the sad news. The wailing mother is said to have been taken away from the family house to an undisclosed place where she is still in coma.

The deceased's father, Thomas Ajayi, a 70-year-old man, while speaking about his late son, stated that Wale, the first among three children was an easygoing person who was loved by everyone.

He declared that the killers of his son would definitely come to the judgment of the almighty God.

But the police have not been able to come out with what actually happened with the boy or apprehended any person in respect of the death.

When contacted, the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Pen Cinema Police Division, Mr. Okafor, a chief superintendent of

police (CSP) declined comment but referred our reporter to Area G, Ogba, saying that soldiers were not attached to his division.

The Commander, Area G Police Command, Mobolaji Odesanya, an assistant police commissioner told *Saturday Independent* that the circumstances that led to the death of the victim is still under investigation.

A detachment of soldiers is being accommodated in Area G to compliment the effort of the police. These soldiers are under the command of a colonel who not could be reached for comment as at the time of filing this report.

When contacted on the phone with the allegation that policemen killed the victim, the Lagos State Commissioner of Police,



• Wale Ajayi

Marvel Akpoyibo, said that whoever said that "must be mad."

"Tell whoever said so that the person is mad."

Meanwhile, reactions have trailed the death of the undergraduate. While several persons around the suya spot by Urban Cowboy Club, where the victim was allegedly arrested blamed him for wearing a military outfit, they, however, stated that it was not a capital offence that would have resulted in taking his life.

"They would have handed him over to the police and charged him to court rather than resorting to jungle justice," a commercial motorcycle operator, who would not want his name in print said.

Another person, a petty trader said: "The camouflage is sold in an open market with the belts and caps. This makes people to believe that it is now legal to wear it. If the government knows it is illegal, it should stop the traders or nip the sale in the bud by seizing the wares from the sellers."

Meanwhile, members of the deceased family, friends and neighbours are calling on the government to fish out the culprits and ensure the matter is not swept under the carpet as another crime committed by 'unknown soldiers.'

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS OLORUNGBON DORCAS OLU**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. IWALAIYE DORCAS OLU**. All former documents remain valid. Kwara State Polytechnic, Ogun State Teaching Service Commission and the general public please take note.

MISSING DOCUMENT

This is to notify the general public the missing of the land Purchase Receipt issued by **EYITA FAMILY, IKORODU/OGIJO** to **MR. AGBELUSI O. JACOB** for a landed property in Ogijo, Ogun State.

Singed:
Sola Agbelusi