

NEWS

'Oga, I can't make it'

•Shot driver tells boss before his death

"OGA/I did not do anything. Please, take the money you gave me to service your car. *Oga*, I will die, I cannot make it."

These were the last words of Felix Osowo, a company driver, who was killed around Sura market on Lagos Island, by a police corporal on his way to his boss's house in Ikoyi.

Osowo, 41, was shot dead by a corporal attached to the Lion Building police station around 7am on September 29, 2007.

It was on sanitation day in Lagos. Osowo, a driver of over 15 years to Chief Abraham Olusegun, a businessman, had left his Ikorodu home on that day, early enough to beat the 7 to 10am movement restriction, usually imposed by the state government to allow residents clean up their homes and surroundings.

He had bid his wife and only son farewell before leaving with a promise to return home with lots of goodies after the day's work.

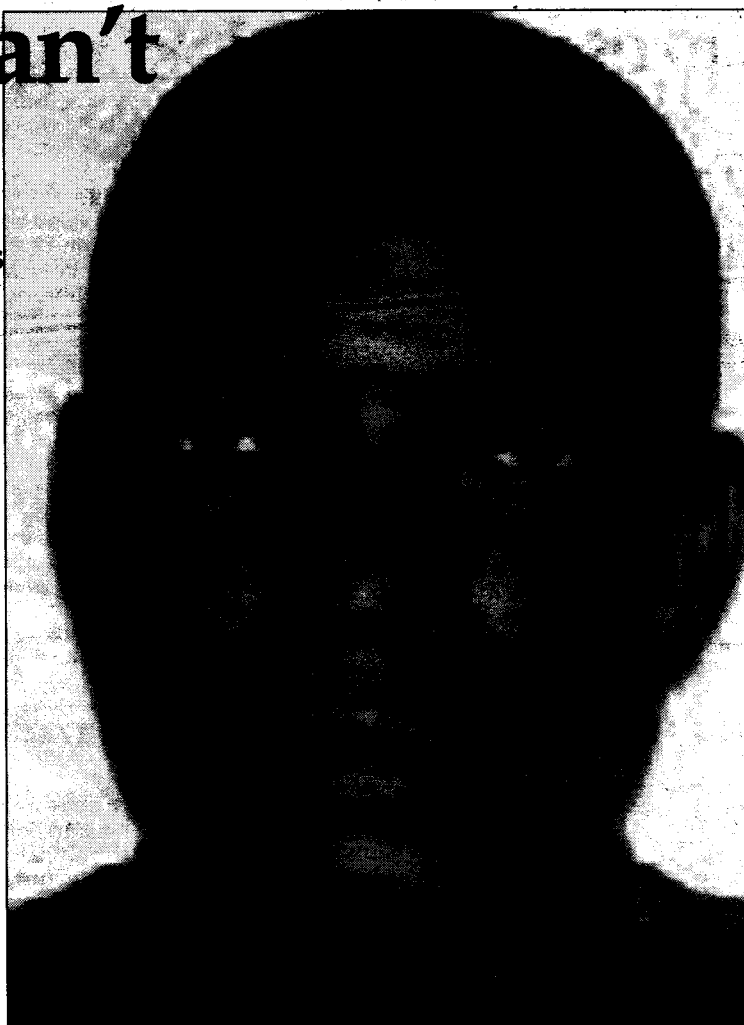
But fate had its plan for the deceased.

While he was getting ready to leave his Agbade village home, his killer was at the police station signing for a rifle. for patrol duties that morning.

Somewhere around Sura Market, Osowo was ordered to stop for a search by the two policemen. The deceased, who was described by his boss as gentle, stopped. But as he was parking his car for the check, the corporal shot him from behind. The bullet hit him in the waist.

The late Osowo did not immediately know that he had been shot. It was when he alighted from the car, clutching the vehicle papers for a check, that he noticed blood dripping from his body.

At that point, Osowo raised the alarm that attracted some youths and traders, who rushed to the



The late Felix Osowo

By Jude Isiguzo

scene, to find out what the problem was.

The sympathisers chased the fleeing policeman, caught up with him, beat him and bundled him into Osowo's car. They were driven to the police station and handed over to the Divisional Police Officer (DPO).

Embarrassed and confused, the DPO took the victim, who had lost so much blood, to the hospital. It was from the hospital that the DPO called to inform the deceased's boss-Olusegun- of the incident.

Olusegun told *The Nation* that he received the news with shock and disbelief.

He said: "He was still alive when I met him. When the DPO called to inform me that my driver had been shot, I was shocked. I asked to find out which of my drivers

and they said Felix. I requested to talk with him, but the DPO refused on the grounds that he was receiving treatment, so I had to dress up and go to hospital to see him.

"When I got there, I met him and he said to me 'Oga, I did not do anything'. He gave me the money that he was supposed to use for servicing of my jeep and later said to me 'Oga, I go die' and he died after about 30 minutes."

Olusegun said he is annoyed because the late Osowo neither argued with the two policemen nor exchanged words with them.

Olusegun said of his late driver: "He has been driving me for over 15 years. He has never scratched a car or involved himself in argument with anybody that I know. He is always smiling and friendly with everybody. I have been looking for another driver who is like him so that I can make him my

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manager since he earns more salary than most of my staff, but could not get. I do not know why the police should waste him in such a manner. It is so sad."

On how the wife of the deceased reacted on hearing the news of her husband's death, Olusegun disclosed that she fainted.

"When the news reached his wife, she fainted and even neighbours at Ikorodu could not believe the story when they were told. Felix was so nice to everybody."

"Police should not tamper with the cause of justice in this case. They should allow the law to take its course. They should not cover up. It could be their children or their wives. Whoever covers up in this case, his children would be killed in their prime. For the policeman, who killed this innocent boy, whatever the law says should be handed down to him. We on our own will continue to fight until we get justice," Olusegun added.

A Police source told *The Nation* that the suspect had already been dismissed from the Force by the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Mohammed Abubakar, after an orderly room trial and handed over to detectives at the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Panti, Yaba, for prosecution.

The suspect, it was gathered, may be charged for murder.