

Body parts of missing *Okada* rider found in bowls in suspected ritual killer's hideout

NEMESIS appeared to have caught up with a self-styled herbalist, Ibrahim Abubakar, in Omu-Aran, Kwara State penultimate week, as he was caught with the remains of an *okada* (commercial motorcycle) rider, John Olalekan, about three weeks after Olalekan was declared missing.

Our correspondent gathered that Olalekan had mysteriously disappeared on March 26, 2012 without the family suspecting that he could have been killed for ritual purposes.

He was said to have left home on the fateful day to pick passengers, with a promise to return home in the evening to honour an engagement. But when by nightfall the family of the deceased *okada* rider could not ascertain his whereabouts, they informed the Police, the local office of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and the vigilance group in the community.

A search party jointly constituted by the security agencies then decided to comb the different parts of the community in search of the deceased only to find his mangled remains in a bush. His head and arms had been chopped off, fuelling suspicion that he might have fallen victim to ritual killers. Further investigation by the law enforcement agents led to the discovery of a building near the spot where his remaining parts were found.

The building where Abubakar lives was said to double as a joint for hemp smokers and other suspicious characters. The minions of law then raided the building and found in Abubakar's apartment, human parts of various shapes and sizes in bowls.

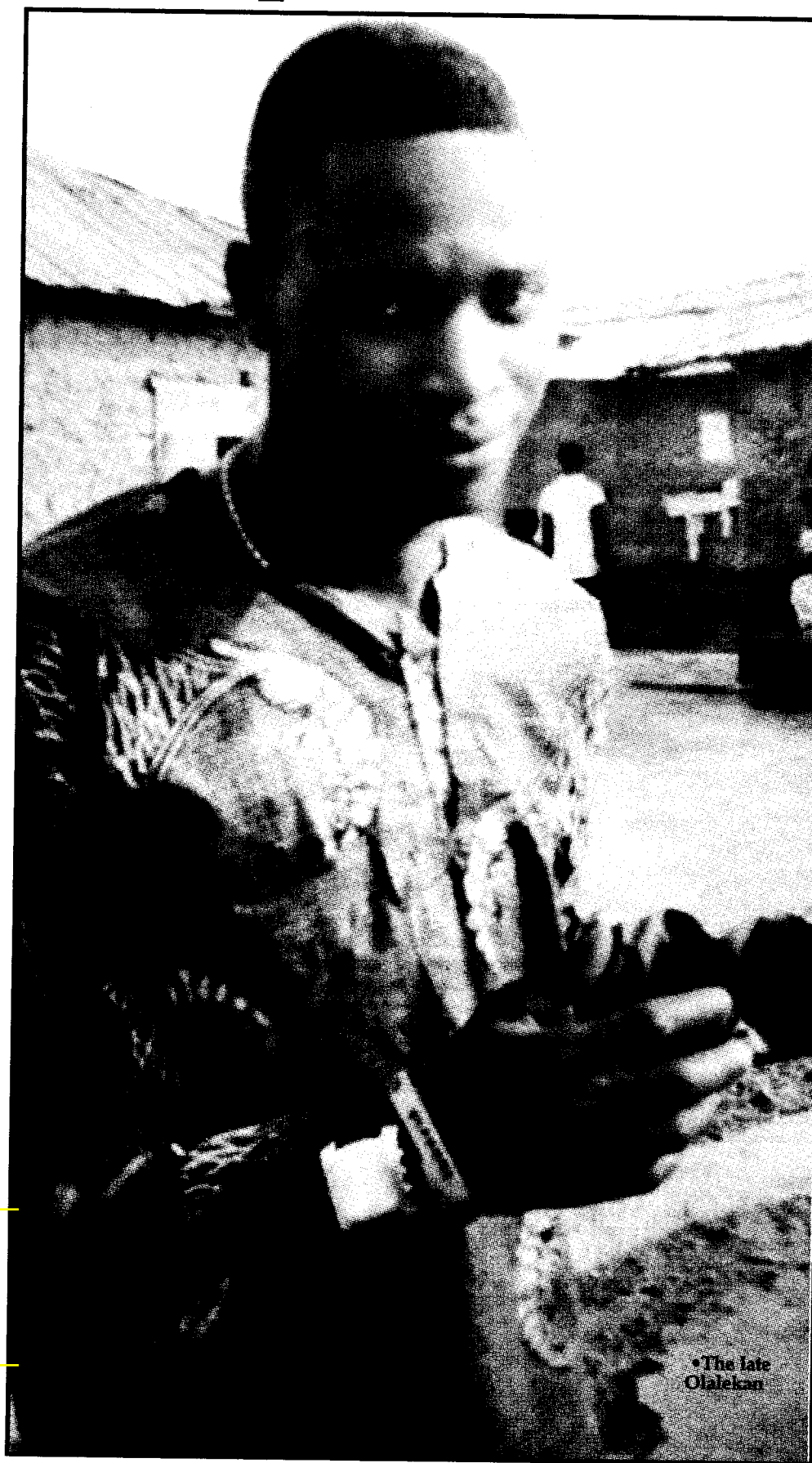
Spokesman of the NSCDC, Mr. Olanrewaju Kadri, explained how the suspect was found in possession of human parts suspected to be those of Olalekan.

He said: "We got information from a source that a certain man was selling hemp in a building near the spot where Olalekan's body was found and that people of questionable character usually gathered there. That was why our men stormed the house with police detectives. It was during the search that we discovered human parts spread in Abubakar's room like an abattoir."

"The whole place was filled with nauseating and repulsive odour. We found human arms in jerry cans, but the suspect lied that they were those of monkeys. But that was proved wrong when the items were confirmed at the Omu-Aran General Hospital to be those of human beings."

Explaining further, he said: "In the course of subsequent raid on the building, we found several other human parts, two guns, assorted machetes, swords and a bowl containing charms and amulets. We have handed the suspect over to the Police."

"I want to implore residents to assist law enforcement agents to rid the state of criminals, because we are not magicians. Because of the rising crime waves in the community, our command has embarked on a 24-hour surveillance." Abubakar was said to have later confessed to the Police



• The late Olalekan



• The suspect with the body parts, arms and other items recovered from him

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■ Kunle AKINRINADE ■

during interrogation that it was the first time he would be involved in crime.

A source, who pleaded that her name should not be mentioned for security reasons, said: "The suspect had initially owned up to the crime during interrogation. But he later tried to twist his explanation, saying it was one of his friends who kept the human parts with him. He even said the items were those of monkeys until a test carried out in a public hospital confirmed that they were human parts."

The incident led to a protest by commercial motorcyclists association in the area who tried to call government's attention to it. The distraught *okada* riders frowned at what they termed "police insen-

sitivity" to the gruesome killing of their member. An eyewitness, who asked not to be named, explained why members of the association staged the protest.

He said: "When the suspect was being taken away, residents insisted that they should release him to them so that they could parade him before the entire community as it is the practice, but the Police turned their request down."

"Ironically, the Police later arrested and detained four members of the association. This was what fuelled the protest by *okada* riders. But those arrested have since been released, following protests by leading members of the community."

A resident, Adeola Musendiku, told our correspondent that the custom in the community is to take criminals round the town before

they are handed over to law enforcement agents. He said the people had been suspicious of Abubakar, and that it was nemesis that caught up with him and his accomplices.

Musendiku said: "The practice has always been to take suspects round the community before they are taken into custody by the Police, like it was done to a robbery suspect called Abore recently. We have been suspecting Ibrahim (Abubakar) for long. How can someone who calls himself a herbalist turn his residence into a joint for hemp smokers?"

"The repulsive sight of human parts in his house and the mutilated body of the *okada* rider are testimonies to the fact that he was the brains behind his death. We want the Police to intensify their surveillance on this community in

order to chase out criminals."

Responding on the telephone, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Kwara State Police Command, Mr. Dabo Ezekiel, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), confirmed the incident, saying the matter had been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) for further investigation.

He added that residents must be vigilant and that security should not be left in the hands of law enforcement agents alone.

Ezekiel said: "It is true that a suspect was arrested in connection with the killing. He was apprehended and brought to the Police by officers of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps. The matter was later transferred to the SCID for proper investigation and the suspect have just been charged to court."