

CRIME REPORTS

Call of death: Suspects kill cab driver to possess his car

01.Feb.2015 | 0 Comments |



THE inordinate ambition of two young men, Hassan Adamu and Abass Yusuf, to become car owners without buying one has landed them in police net as they have been arrested by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), Ahoada, Port Harcourt in Rivers State over the alleged killing of one Paulinus Echekwu, a cab owner and driver.

The driver was reportedly lured out of his house on November 16, 2014 after he was told that there were

some goods he would convey from Port Harcourt to Akwa Ibom State.

The deceased was said to have received a call from Hassan that the company he was working for had some goods to transport to Akwa Ibom. Unknown to him, Hassan and his friend, Yusuf, had planned killing him, so that they could take possession of his Volkswagen Passat car.

But before going to Hassan, Echekwu was said to have stopped by his sister's house to inform her of the call from Hassan and the purpose, after which he dropped Hassan's number with his sister.

As Echekwu got to the address given him by Hassan, he got ready to load the goods in his car but as he turned towards the direction he was shown, he was shot at close range in the head allegedly by Hassan. As he fell, Yusuf was reported to have picked a shovel with which he hit the shot driver repeatedly just to make sure he was dead. After this, the duo were said to have buried Echekwu under a heap of sand within the premises where he was killed.

Crime Reports learnt that when the case was transferred to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, Ahoada, the Officer-in-Charge, Promise Wosu, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, led his men to start investigation. They were said to have had a breakthrough when Hassan's girlfriend was arrested. She was said to have led the police to her boyfriend who was arrested along with his friend.

When interviewed, Hassan (24) from Adamawa State, admitted killing the deceased, saying his target was the man's car. "I work as a security guard. I came to Port Harcourt in 2009. My friend Abass and I were working as carriers who load goods in a company while I would work as a security man in another company in the evening, so I had two jobs.

"While discussing how to make our life and living better, I brought the idea of getting a car that we could take back to our village in December 2014. We agreed on this and we started planning towards it. I went to work one day and saw a cab driver. I asked him whether he could take goods to far distances and he said yes. We exchanged numbers.

"I explained what transpired to Abass and we planned the day and how we would carry out our intention. What we initially

thought of was to push the man out of the car while on motion but Abass was afraid that we could be seen by the police, so we directed the man to the office where I worked as a security man.

"The man came at about 11p.m. I had already got two guns from a friend and I paid N11,000 for one and N20,000 for the other. I used one of the guns to shoot the man when he turned and he fell. My friend, Abass used a shovel to finish the job by hitting him on the head. We buried him under the sand. I was arrested by the police through my girlfriend. My intention was to use the guns to defend myself against attacks by Boko Haram insurgents when I go to my village. They had once invaded my village where they killed a number of people."

In his narration, Yusuf (23) from Plateau State said: "I was arrested because my friend and I killed someone.

"I was not the one who arranged the killing. It was Hassan. He told me that there was one man who was a driver and whose car he saw and like a particular. It was a Volkswagen Passat car. He suggested that we collect the car from the owner whom I had never met. I agreed with his plans and he said he would arrange a meeting with the man so that we would seize the opportunity to take the car.

"It was Hassan who got the two guns we used for the operation. We held one each but I did not use my own gun. Hassan was the one who shot him. On the day of the operation, Hassan called me on phone at about 10p.m. that our victim was already with him, asking me to come.

"What Hassan told the man was that there were some items that needed to be transported to Uyo, Akwa Ibom State and he would prefer a night journey. When the man came to the premises of the company where Hassan was working as a security man, we tried to engage him in talk about the goods he was to carry. As he turned, Hassan shot him in the head and he fell. I also used a shovel to hit him on the head so that we would be sure that he was dead."

Speaking on how the body of the deceased was disposed of, Abass told Crime Reports: "There was a heap of sand in the premises of the company, so, we scooped it aside, put the body on the sand bed and used the quantity scooped aside to cover the remains."

"By the time the police conducted investigation and unravelled the truth, the body had decomposed when they visited the crime scene, with only the deceased's bones found beneath the heap.

"Hassan took over the steering of the car with the intention to keep it in a friend's place, pending the time we would move it to Adamawa State, but right within the city, he had an accident. It was at the mechanic's workshop that the police recovered it."

Confirming the story, the police image maker in Rivers State, Ahmad Muhammad, said that the suspects would be charged to court after investigations.

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