

Community In Shock As Landlord's Skeleton Is Found In His Room 4 Years After Last Seen

By Oluwatoyin Malik On Sep 9, 2022

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The landlord's skeleton

THE Adeosun/Idi Orogbo Community in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State was thrown into shock on Sunday when they found of one of their landlords, Mr John Aderemi Abiola, in his room, almost four years after he was last seen in December 2018.

The discovery was made after the community decided, with the approval of the police authorities, to go into his compound to clear the bush in his compound which had overgrown his fence into the next house, causing invasion by reptiles.

As 2019 crept into 2020, the residents started wondering where the man could be. Though he told about two of those he used to communicate with of his intention to go to Port Harcourt, Rivers State, and be back for Ileya ceremony in 2018, not seeing him for the festivity and thereafter made them to think he was staying back where he initially came from.



Calls to his phone lines were not going through other. After it was noticed that the weeds in his compound had grown bushy, the community landlords were said to have decided in a meeting to find a means of getting access to the premises to clear the bush.

However, they were said to have jettisoned the idea because of the implication in the law.

From then to 2021, till 2022 is getting to the end, the residents of the community who did not know his whereabouts decided again to go and clear the bush.

Nigerian Tribune learnt the move was made again when the owner of the piece of land beside Mr Abiola's house moved in about two years ago after completion of the construction.

But the invasion of his residence by snakes crawling in from the next compound got him worried about the safety of his family members.

This was said to have made the community to approach Apete police station again, where they were given the nod to do the necessary.



So, on Sunday, the community decided to hire labourers to clear the bush. The house was constructed on the backside of the piece of land while the front side had a thick bush that could not be accessed.

As the labourers got there with some landlords and started the work, they first noticed Mr Abiola's Volkswagen Golf car with registration number AKD 769 DC which had been covered by the bush before the clearing.

As the building came in view, it was noticed that the window of Mr Abiola's room was open, which prompted curiosity.

One of the landlords, Mr Mohammed Ademola, who also worked for and used to interact with Mr Abiola, decided to check what was in the room.

He was however shocked when he saw the skeleton on the bed of the house owner. Mr Ademola raised the alarm which made others to race to the window.

They were all shocked and the news quickly spread. It was learnt that the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Apete, SP Grace Akinsehinwa, was promptly informed, which made her to send detectives to the scene for investigation and action.

On Wednesday, while Nigerian Tribune was at the scene to investigate the incident, police detectives, as well as officials of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and the Ministry of Environment arrived, probably with a plan to evacuate the remains.

However, it has been difficult getting the contacts of deceased's family members as they were unknown to the community members.

It was then decided that more efforts should be made to trace his family members before the evacuation so that they would not feel left out.

Nigerian Tribune saw a bottle of Astymin, packets of Bicarbonate of soda, vitamin C, Coartem (an antimalaria) and herbal tea covered with dust in his room.

It was evident from his skull and exposed teeth that he was gapped-toothed in front. Also, his boxers could still be seen around his waist while the top he must have worn had been eaten by his rotten flesh.

Only a tiny piece remained by his side. Also found with his phones was his laptop.

His plasma TV was still hanging on the wall and his wardrobe still had his clothing and other items. Mr Abiola, whose date of birth was discovered to be October 1, 1955, reportedly moved into the house in July 2017, but was not in close relationship with other residents except formal greetings whenever their paths crossed.

Known as an engineer who was based in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, with his family before moving to Ibadan, he was said to have lived in a couple of areas within the city before constructing the house in Adeosun Community.

He was also known for his frequent travels to Port Harcourt to do his engineering work whenever the need arose.

The central chairman of Adeosun/Idi Orogbu Landlords' Association, Mr Oluwafemi Omilana, who spoke with the Nigerian Tribune, said that late Mr Abiola always paid his dues.

"But we noticed that he didn't associate with others and he came to landlords' meeting just once. His house has a high fence and was constructed at the back with big space in front to the gate.

"We started noticing his absence in the community, although he didn't mostly stay at home. He used to travel to Port Harcourt in Rivers State. He was an engineer. His compound had become so bushy that snakes were just being seen crawling from there into the house beside him. At a point, we had a meeting and decided to go over the fence to clear the bush.

"On Sunday, we came there with the owner of the house beside him, paid some labourers to clear the bush. When they cleared the front of his building within the compound and could see the house clearly, they saw that the window was open. They peeped in and saw that the man had died a long time ago, with only his skeleton on his bed.

"Immediately, I called the Divisional Police, Apete Division. When we got to the entrance to his apartment, we discovered that it was locked from the inside. We forced it open and saw his skeleton on his bed, with his three phones. One was by his left hand, one was at the back of his head and connected to the wall socket and the third one by his right side. The police have tried to source for his contacts so that we can reach his family but the phone lines had become invalid. There was a phone number we found on one of his identity cards and I called it, but the person called and those with him were just laughing. It seemed they found the enquiries we were making strange. We have the feeling that the number has been re-allocated to another person.

"We have not been able to trace any member of his family. We also made efforts to get needed information from those who worked for him as bricklayer, welder, mechanic, but they told us that Mr Abiola was not the type to disclose his family information to anyone. He used to be alone. We learnt that he and his wife had a disagreement in Port Harcourt and separated. That was why he decided to move into the house he built at Adeosun without letting anyone know where he was."

Mr Omilana said that the skeleton had not been removed because the community does not want to risk anything.

“The environmental officials were with us but they said that we should do it but get approval from the environment authorities. Now, we want to try and trace the family as much as we can. Mr Abiola had once told one of those who worked with him that his mother was living at Agugu. We want to go there and trace the area to get his family. If that is not successful, we will get the approval from the Ministry of Environment and do the necessary,” he further said.

The secretary of the landlords’ association, Pastor Olusola Bobade, in his contribution said that the deceased moved to his house in July 2017.

“He was coming from Port Harcourt then to construct the building. We initially exempted him from paying development fee but he started paying in January 2018 and was consistent. In October same year, he paid in advance for the rest of the year. The way I perceived him was that he was quiet and didn’t like to relate. He paid all community dues but used not to attend meetings. When we didn’t see him, we were calling his line but it was not going through,” the secretary stated.

A furniture maker, Mr Mohammed Ademola, who also lives in Adeosun and helped the deceased to do some furniture works, including doors and wardrobe, told Nigerian Tribune: “It was in 2018 I did all the work for him. Even, I was the one who did the carpentry work on the building he started constructing beside the main one for tenants that would be home whenever he would need to travel and also be his companions.

“Shortly before Ileya celebration that year, he said he wanted to travel to Port Harcourt and would not spend more than two weeks. He said that he would be back to celebrate Ileya in Ibadan. We were expecting his return but the day after Ileya, my friend, a plank seller who supplied him the ones used for the building he was constructing, noticed that we didn’t see Mr Abiola. His gate has a key that would not reveal if he was in or out, so we didn’t know if he was back or not. We were thinking that he was further engaged in his work or got sick in Port Harcourt. And none of his family members knew where he was living. He had said he would let them know later.

“After a while, the chairman of our landlords’ association went to the police station but was told to hold on and still watch for his return so that it would not lead to litigation on trespassing.

“It happened that the owner of the land beside his own moved in. Snakes were creeping into his house from Mr Abiola’s bushy side, so he notified the community and we decided to clear the bush. The gate was broken on Sunday and we saw that it was locked from inside.



“That was what raised concern in me that he must have been inside when we thought he was still away. After clearing the bush in front, I noticed that the window of his room was open but the curtain drawn. I prayed silently that the situation would not be negative. I collected a cutlass from one of the labourers and used it to cut off part of his window net. As I peeped in, I was shocked when I beheld his skeleton strewn on his bed. I quickly called others outside to notify them. That was how the news spread.”

Mr Ademola also confirmed that the deceased was not known with any of his family members.

“The little I got from him was because I was doing some jobs for him. He told me his village was at Lalupon area and his mother was in Agugu where he used to go to give her money every month. He was an Ibadan indigene. He also told me his family has a farm but he refused to be active in it so that he would not be seen as wanting to get something from it. He was just telling me that we would know his people very soon. I never thought that we would likely know his family this way.

“He told me two of his children are in the United States of America. He once called one of the children, a female, in my presence and they spoke for a long time while I kept working. So he had people but we don’t know them. He told me he had a storey building with four flats in Port Harcourt where his wife was staying.

“He also told me he had high blood pressure and used to taking his medication. Even while working, he would leave where dust was raised or smoke was coming, saying that at his age, he would not like to breathe such in as his health could not sustained such. So, he used to take care of his health.” Mr Kazeem Raji, another man that had interaction with the late engineer when he was alive, burst into tears when he was about to speak.

After gaining composure, he said: “I used to address the deceased as Brother Biola. I knew him over 20 years ago. I helped him when he was constructing his house at Adeosun. I knew him through the master that I did apprenticeship with. He and his friend then, whom I addressed as Brother Bunmi, used to go to Cotonou, Republic of Benin together. At a time, we didn’t see him again. I saw him again about 15 years after. Even, I was the one who helped him to purchase his Golf car.

“He used to travel a lot and would sometimes drop one of his phones, at home. The last time he travelled and didn’t see him, I thought he was still away. He had obtained visa to travel to the USA and he informed me about It, so I thought he had travelled out of Nigeria. That was my belief until this shocking discovery.”

He said his wife is an Igbo by tribe but that they had separated; it is difficult to trace his family.