

We twisted our victim's neck to kill her because our gang leader lives in her area —Killers of retired Perm Sec, confess

by **Oluwatoyin Malik** February 18, 2024 in **Crime Reports, Features** Reading Time: 9 mins read

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The four suspects with the two cars of late Ms Gbenle recovered from them. Photo: Oluwatoyin Malik

THE saying that evildoers can only run but not hide forever came to bear on armed robbers who killed a retired Permanent Secretary, Ms. Olaitan Gbenle, in her house in Ibadan, as three of them were arrested by the Oyo State Police Command. Also apprehended was the suspect who bought the vehicles taken from the deceased residence.

The suspects were identified as Olalekan Bello, Bisiriyu Olalekan, Simon Ojei and the buyer of the stolen vehicles, Femi Omisore. Two other suspects who went to the robbery operation with the **gang** are currently at large.

They confessed to robbing the deceased of her two cars and other valuables before they killed her by twisting her neck in order to protect the gang members, as the leader lives in her neighbourhood.

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It will be recalled that one of Tribune titles exclusively reported how Ms. Gbenle's body was found dead on Friday, November 10, 2023, with her hands and legs tied. It was also discovered that after killing the retired Permanent Secretary, the assailants went away with her two vehicles, phones, Automated Teller Machine (ATM) cards and other properties not immediately noticed..

The Commissioner of Police, Adebola Hamzat, who briefed journalists on the arrest of the suspects, said that the Monitoring Unit, led by its Commander, Olusola Aremu, began intelligence gathering which led to the discovery of the robbery gang leader, Bello.

His arrest led to those of Bisiriyu and Simon, and when interrogated, they confessed to committing the crime, telling police operatives that they killed retired Permanent Secretary because Bello was living in the same community with her and she could recognise him. They also told the police about Omisore who bought the two stolen vehicles from them, and he was immediately arrested also.

Recovered from the suspects were two vehicles and a generating set belonging to the deceased.

Saturday Tribune learnt that Bello was the one who told his gang members about Ms. Gbenle living alone in her residence with two cars. He made them to know that they would get money and the two vehicles as their loot. Bello was said to have known about the deceased because he was living close to her at Agbofieti Community, Idi Ishin, Ibadan.

It was learnt that on arrival at the victim's house, the suspects scaled the fence around her residence through the backside, cut the burglary proof of one of the windows, marched in and met her watching TV. They tied her hands to her back and also her legs and collected her ATM cards and car keys. When she shouted to raise alarm, they gagged her mouth with a piece of cloth. They also took her plasma TV and big generating set.

The gang leader, Bello, then reportedly told others that their deed would be exposed to the community if she was left alive. They turned back and twisted the woman's neck, killing her instantly.

They were said to have proceeded to Lagos with the vehicles immediately and sold them to the receiver, Omisore, for N2.3 million.

It was learnt that the suspects had only collected N800,000 out of the money before their arrests. During interviews with the suspects, it was revealed that all of them, except the receiver, had been prison inmates. It was learnt that the command had handled Simon's cases three times in connection with robbery.

Below are the excerpts of the interviews Saturday Tribune had with the suspects:

Simon Ojei

"I'm from Edo State. I am 37 years old and I grew up with my uncle in Jos after my father's death. I only went to primary school and even stopped at Primary Four. I started working as a bus conductor and also learnt arts, bead making and vulcanising.

"I left Jos for Lagos in 2010 and was sleeping under the bridge. I came to Ibadan in 2013 and worked as a labourer with bricklayers and a construction company. I was living at Aba Igbira then."

My first arrest

"A friend, Tunde Issa, whom I first knew in Lagos, told me that there was 'pa papa' (m:d:m) work to do in Ibadan. I asked him the kind of work it was, and he said he would let me know later.

"One day, he told me we were going for the 'pa papapa' work. When we got to a place, he opened up and told me that we would attack passengers in a vehicle and dispossess them of their belongings.

"Two of us carried out the operation at night and collected passengers phones and bags. However, I was caught since I didn't know the terrain very well while Tunde escaped. That was 2013. I was charged to court and remanded in prison for almost two years before I was granted pardon.

"The second time, I stole goods from the company I was working for and landed in prison again. After almost a year, I regained freedom. The third time, I joined one Michael that I met in the prison for robbery. He held a gun and took me to a supermarket to rob a young man in charge.

"Unfortunately for us, the young man raised alarm when we got to him and people rushed to the supermarket. Again, I was the one caught, as Michael was able to escape. This was 2019. I was sentenced to three years imprisonment for armed robbery and came

out in 2022.

"I thought about my life and noticed that anytime I committed crime, I was always caught. I was afraid that I might be killed one day, so I decided to work on the jobs I learnt.

"I got to know Bisiriyu while in the prison. He was the one who introduced me to Bello where we used to meet at Mokola to smoke marijuana with others. He told me that Bello had 'work' that he wanted us to join. I understood the language. Bello told us that we were going to rob a woman who was staying alone. At that time, I needed money to take care of myself, so we arranged our movement."

How we carried out our operation

"We were all five that went for the operation — Bello, Bisiriyu, Tope, Aboki and I. We scaled the fence at almost 10 p.m. We also broke the burglary proof on the window at the back of the house and got in. Bello was surprised when we saw the woman inside because he had told us that we would not meet her at home. We didn't intend to kill her. The cars were our target.

"We met her in the sitting room watching TV. She was shocked when she saw us. We told her to give us money but she said she didn't have. We asked for her car keys and she gave them to us. Bisiriyu collected her phone and ATM cards. We asked her to sit on chair and tied her hands to her back. We also tied her legs. We took the fried pieces of meat she had and started eating them. We also drank the fruit wine we found in the fridge. We took foodstuff from the house too.

"We carried her generator and plasma TV into the cars. We noticed that one of cars didn't have enough fuel, so Bisiriyu and Bello went out to buy it but could not get because it was late. On their return, Bisiriyu said that he was seen by a security man.

"Then, Bello said that since he was known by our victim, things would turn awry. Bisiriyu suggested killing her but I did not agree with them. They went inside and Bisiriyu twisted her neck, leading to her instant death. Tope and Aboki drove the cars out of the compound.

"We took the cars to Omisore, whom I got to know as FM, at Ojodu-Berger area in Lagos State. Bisiriyu was the one who connected us with him. He said he would pay N2.3 million and gave us N100,000 as first payment. We shared it N20,000 each and I returned to Ibadan.

"However, after a week, we didn't hear from FM. Wondering what was happening, we quarrelled with Bisiriyu, thinking that he collected the money behind us. Along the line, FM called us to send our account numbers to him. He sent N200,000 to me and I later learnt that he sent to Bello and Bisiriyu, leaving out Tope and Aboki.

"We had to contribute N60,000 among the three of us and gave the two remaining gang members. Tope said the money was too small and begged us to add to it from what we had, saying that he would not bother to take anything from the rest when paid. I gave him N20,000 from mine, leaving me with N120,000. The two others refused his request."

How I was arrested

"A friend (name withheld) whom I met in the prison was the one who called me and I was arrested. I had already told that I needed a job and he called me to come and see him to discuss the one he got with me. I took a bike to meet him, and we took another bike to where he said we would discuss. He was urinating when we were surrounded by the police."

Olalekan Bello

"I'm from Republic of Togo but I was born in Ibadan. I'm 30 years old. My parents also live in Ibadan but I had my own accommodation. I was a welder and had a shop at Agbofiet. I live in the same neighbourhood with the woman we killed.

"I used to stop at Mokola Roundabout where drinks and small chops are sold. Men used to sit there to enjoy themselves. I used to meet Bisiriyu, Simon, Tope and Aboki there. Bisiriyu and I were together in prison in 2015. He used to pay for my drinks at the relaxation joint and told me not to worry, promising that he would take me to his level.

"He told me he was into breaking into houses to steal. That was how I told him that there was a woman in my neighbourhood who did not usually stay at home. He said that whatever he would get there would be shared among all of us.

"We were five in number who went for the operation. Bisiriyu took care of our entry into the house by using objects he saw around to break in. He said that he was used to doing it. We met fried pieces of meat on a table in the kitchen, took them all and started eating. The woman was surprised at seeing us and started shouting. We asked her for money and she said she only had N22,000 in her account. We removed her TV and generator, and also collected her car keys."

Why we killed her

"She was shouting that we should not take her cars away. We gagged her mouth after her hands and legs had been tied. When we decided to kill her because of my known identity, Simon rejected the idea and we almost fought. Bisiriyu was the one who twisted her neck."

However, Bello did not stop his criminal act after the killing. According to him, "Tope took me and Bisiriyu to a community on Ibadan-Ikire Road where we went to rob some Yahoo guys. Tope's friend, also a Yahoo boy, gave us the job to do, as he told us that his friends did not pay what was due to him. Tope had a gun he brought and we collected a lady's bike, money and phones from them.

"Bisiriyu and I were on the lady's bike on our way back when we were stopped by Amotekun Corps close to Iwo Road. Tope and his friend escaped but his bag in which he kept the gun fell. It was picked by the Amotekun and Bisiriyu and I were apprehended as we tried to also escape because we were not familiar with the area. I was shot and pellets penetrated my buttock and thigh. It was on January 10.

"We were let off after the Yahoo guys said that person who attacked them was their friend and they just had misunderstanding. Bisiriyu and I paid back the N300,000 collected from Yahoo guys by Tope."

Olalekan Bisiriyu

I'm from Epeljebu, Ogun State. I'm 32. I was brought to Ibadan by a friend. I ran away from where I was working in Benin, Edo State, to Ibadan when I had an encounter with soldiers. One of them bought a home appliance that did not work and brought his colleagues to the company to deal with us. I started working in company in Ibadan."

The robbery/murder incident

"I knew Bello in the prison but we were not relating well. We started meeting at a relaxation at Mokola Roundabout and he intimidated me of a woman's house that we could go to rob."

Bisiriyu confirmed that he was into breaking in and stealing even after being a prison inmate. He confessed that the woman's neck was twisted but didn't admit carrying out the act. He said that the woman was killed by Bello.

The fourth suspect, Omisore, confessed to have started buying stolen or snatched vehicles in 2021, just as he said he was informed of the cars brought ahead of the gang's operation. He however said that he didn't know that the victim was killed by the gang after their robbery operation.

His story went thus: "I am 46 years old, from Ile Ife, Osun State. I was into car sales. I used to sell clean Tokunbo vehicles, not only the ones snatched from their owners. I started selling cars in 2016 but started buying vehicles stolen or snatched in 2021.

"I was introduced to buying robbed cars by a friend who is out of the country now. He is in Dubai. He was also selling automobiles legitimately before someone introduced him to the illicit business. People were contacting me through connections to buy cars snatched or stolen from the owners by them.. I knew Bisiriyu through that friend in Dubai.

"Bisiriyu called me one morning and told me that he would call me at night. At about 10pm, he called me again and said he had two cars with him and I told him they should be brought to Lagos. I sent N15,000 to him for fuel purchase and waited for them at Berger. I was there from that night till 4am but did not see them.

"I called him but his line was not going through. I left the place. At 5:30am, they called that they were at Berger So I went back there to meet them. The cars were Toyota Camry 2010 model and Toyota Corolla 2003. A used one is worth N5 million while a Tokunbo is worth N7.5 million. The Toyota Corolla (Tokunbo) is N3.2 million while used one is sold at N1.8 million.

"We agreed on my paying N2.3 million for the two vehicles and I told them I was not having enough cash. Our agreement was I would give them the balance after the sales. I gave them N100,000.

A few weeks after, I sent N700,000 to the gang members, making N800,000. I was to pay the balance of N1.5 million after the sales but didn't get them to sell when I was arrested."

When asked why he was committing such a crime, the suspect replied: "It is the country's situation."

