

Feature

'He plunged his knife into the victim's belly'

•Ritual murder suspect changes story three times

By Oluwatoyin Malik, Crime Editor

PROSECUTION Witness Two (PW2), ASP Aluko Olayiwola, attached to Homicide Section of the Oyo State police command told the court on November 28, 2024 that the first defendant initially admitted severing the victim's head and other parts of his body, but claimed that he found the body along Ibadan-Oyo Expressway after he died in an accident.

The PW2 said that they went with him to the spot where he claimed to have found the victim but found no trace of blood that showed accident and dismemberment. The police also went to surrounding motor parks but were told that no accident occurred. That was when the first defendant confessed that he was the one who killed and dismembered the victim's body. He said that the victim, one Tunde, was on a school field at the Mokola area of Ibadan watching football with him. The PW2 said that the first defendant disclosed that he had been monitoring the victim for long, with the aim of killing him. He told the police that on October 16, at about 7pm, he saw the victim excreting in the bush around the school and also smoking.

"Already, before then, Akinrinola said he had already armed himself with a knife and a bag. Then, he went to the victim and asked him to lend him his lighter. As the victim was about to bring out his lighter, Akinrinola said that he brought out his knife and stabbed him in the stomach. He thereafter covered the victim's mouth with his hand until he was sure that he was dead. Then, he dismembered the body by removing the head, two hands, two legs and flesh from the thigh. After doing this, he brought another bag, put the remaining body parts and threw it in a thick bush within the same area. Akinrinola said it was there he called Alubarika and Afaa Ado. Akinrinola asked him for the two hands while Alubarika asked for the head, two legs and flesh," the PW2 narrated.

Tayo Akinrinola changed his story the third time on Monday, February 17, at the continued hearing of the case involving him and one other man. They were allegedly found with a severed human head and other body parts in Ibadan, Oyo State, at Court 9, State High Court, Ring Road, Ibadan.

Akinrinola, who is the first defendant, at his trial, recanted his confession of killing one Tunde to get the body parts. The accused said that the statement which contained his confession was not written by him, and that he was forced to say that he killed the man whose body parts were found with him.

During cross-examination by the State Attorney General, Mr Abiodun Aikomo, the accused admitted that the story he was telling was the third version of how he came by the body parts found with him.

He also said that the police were untruthful when they said he and two others, Ramoni Opeyemi, a.k.a. Alubarika, and Taofeek Olalekan, a.k.a. K'abelohun, were arrested together. He said that he was the only one seen with a polythene bag containing the body parts, and that he only called Alubarika to come to his rescue when the police demanded money for him to be released.

The two accused are standing trial on a four-count charge of conspiracy, murder, unlawful possession of human head and indecent interference with dead human body. Hearing on the case between the State versus Tayo Akinrinola and Ramoni Opeyemi came up again on Monday,



Tayo Akinrinola (left) and Ramoni Opeyemi a.k.a. Alubarika, when they were first arrested.

February 17, at the Oyo State High Court 9, presided over by Justice M.I. Sule. Akinrinola was docked to state his side of the story.

His Counsel, Mr Ademola Salami, led him with questions:

Tell this court your name.

Tayo Akinrinola.

Where do you live?

I live at the St. Stephen area in Mokola.

What job do you do?

I am a bricklayer.

You have been arraigned on a four-count charge. What led to your arrest?

On the 15th of October, 2023, I went to

a primary school at Veterinary (area). At 4pm, we went to watch football. Shortly after, I felt bowel movement and went to purchase sachet water. Then I went into the bush to excrete. It was while I was doing this that I saw a swarm of flies in front of me. I was unsettled, so I threw a stone at the flies. Then, I moved close to where I threw the stone and saw a dead body. I took my phone and called a friend, Afaa Ado. I told him of what I saw and asked him which part of the human body he would need, but he told me to get off his line and switched off his phone immediately.

I went to Afaa Ado's house and met him. I told him again that I saw a dead body but didn't know if he would need anything from the body. He said I shouldn't have called him like that, and asked for where I was when I called him. I told him I was in the bush where I saw the body smelling. I asked him again if he would need any part of the body. He said if the hands were good, I should cut them and bring to him. He said I shouldn't bring the head but keep it somewhere.

Immediately, I asked for a knife and polythene bag from Afaa Ado but he replied that he had no cutlass. He gave me N2,000 to buy a knife and polythene bag, and I did.

At about 5:30, 6pm, I took the knife, the polythene bag and Bintu (perfume). I went into the school and looked around for people, but I didn't see anyone. Then, I cut the head, two hands and legs, and then poured the perfume on the body. Maggots had covered the hands. I put the hands in a cellophane bag, and head and legs in another. I kept the head far from where the other remains were. I took the hands to Afaa Ado. He asked me to keep the head for 15 days after which it would have become a skull. I went from Afaa Ado's house to mine. My wife and I had issues with our child's school fees and when I saw that she wanted to pick a fight with me over it, I left home.

I thought over the matter over and over, and returned home to sleep. The following morning, I went out to work for a friend and returned in the afternoon. My firstborn was already home and I told him to tell his mother that I had gone out. I went to play snooker until 5pm around the school. I passed through the school again, entered and saw that the remaining body parts I left were intact. I packed them and poured Bintu perfume around the polythene bag and my hands, hoping there would not be putrefying smell.

I passed by the bush to the roadside for onward movement to Eleyele. I planned to get a bike but couldn't. While trekking, I saw a bike rider and I waved him down. He billed me N700 and we moved, but before we got to Golf Club at Sabo, the bike man stopped and said he was no longer taking me to Eleyele. I begged him but he refused to convey me. He asked me not to bother about paying him for the distance he had carried me.

I started trekking and saw another bike. He didn't pick me also. I was still trekking when I saw a police vehicle. Two of the police officers stopped me and asked what was in the bag I carried. I told them it was a puppy that died and I wanted to throw it away. They said I was lying and asked me to open the polythene bag. While I was arguing with them, the police vehicle came behind me. I opened the bag and they saw human head and legs. They asked for the remaining body parts and I said I had given it to Afaa Ado. I told them I would take them to where I saw the dead body. I mentioned Afaa Ado's name and they told me that they knew him and he was their person. They also asked me to settle them with N20,000.

I called some numbers, including that of Alubarika (Ramoni Opeyemi, second defendant). I called him about six times but he didn't pick up. The police told me that someone must stand for me. Later, Alubarika called me back and I told him to send the money he promised me for my child's school fees as I needed it to travel the following day.

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'How I got the head, other body parts I was caught with'

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He asked where I was and I said I was at Onireke. He said he was coming from Iwo Road and passing by the place to collect his cap at Sabo, and would meet me there. Alubarika didn't know I was with the police. He arrived and parked, and I showed his vehicle to the police. They said he's a rich man and asked if he would be able to bail me. I told them he's like a brother to me. Alubarika came with one of his friends, Taofeek Olalekan, and he asked what I was doing with the police. They showed him the polythene bag and asked me to open it and explain to Alubarika. After the explanation, he rained abuses on me. The police told him they were only interested in settlement with N20,000. While on that, another person mentioned N200,000 because of the type of vehicle brought by Alubarika. He refused but they insisted on the amount. Suddenly, someone came and parked. One of the senior police officers went to him and returned to us, asking: 'are you not Alubarika?' The next thing was that they put us in SRS vehicle. We got there and parked outside the station. We talked about the money again. I pleaded on behalf of Alubarika but they refused. He also refused to pay. I was taken inside a cell. I overheard them asking Alubarika for N1 million and he refused to pay. They brought him and his friend (K'abelohun) inside the cell also. Later, they took me to where the polythene bag was placed and asked me to pick it. They poured petrol on the human head to send away flies. They told me to carry the body parts and started taking photo and video shots. They did same for Alubarika and his friend. Someone started beating me with stick. After this, I was taken to Iyaganku. The car that I saw earlier also followed us there. I saw the man in it and he came to us, saying: 'Did I not tell you, Baba Olowo (rich man)?'

I was taken to a cell where I was drilled. They asked about Alubarika's involvement. I told them he was innocent.

During interrogation, one of the police officers took a glass bottle with alcohol in it and smashed it on my head. My head bled from the injury I sustained while my body was bathed with the alcohol in the bottle.

They tightened the handcuffs on my hands and started beating me. They poured water on me and asked me to tell the truth. I told them I was not lying. I also overheard the torture of Alubarika in another room. Later, they asked for my age and where I live, among other things. They said that I was lying. I was listening to all they were saying. They wrote three statements for me. They tied my legs to a chair and handcuffed my hands to the back. They asked me to say that I killed the man but I refused. I was then thrown in a female cell where I spent three days. One of the police officers came to me, brought out a statement and asked me to sign. I couldn't because of the tight handcuffs. Then, he brought me out and asked me to sign.

It was the police at the State CID who took me to the scene of the crime during investigation. When we got to Afaa Ado's house, he had escaped and was untraceable. I guessed he must have been informed. The police never took me to Oyo Road.

After the narration, counsel for the second defendant, Mr Adebola Ogungbe, cross-examined Akinrinola:

Witness, how long have you known the second defendant?

It has been long. I knew him through his brother who taught me bricklaying work. It must have been 10 to 12 years.

How did you know him?

He used to come to his brother's place. It was his brother that introduced us to each other.

Have you ever been engaged by the second defendant to do any work for him?

No.

You narrated what happened. As of the time you severed the body parts of the deceased, did you ever inform the second defendant?

No.

You were in court when PW1 and PW2 gave evidence.

Yes.

The evidence by PW1 and PW2 was that a car was intercepted by the police.

No.

So, you were alone when you were arrested by the police?

Yes.

The severed body parts that you were caught with were never at any time handed over to the second defendant?

No.



The accused persons leaving the court on Monday.

So, you did what you did only on the instruction of Afaa Ado?

Yes.

Apart from the N2,000 that Afaa Ado gave you, did you receive any other money from him?

No.

The second defendant was not the only occupant in the car he came to join you at Agbarigo.

He was with a friend.

The friend was equally arrested by the police on that day?

Yes.

So, you went to school and understand English very well. I'm a secondary school dropout. I understand a little.

So, you can write both English and Yoruba languages very well.

I can write Yoruba very well, but not English. It means you did not write your statement.

I didn't. I was only asked to sign.

The statement was not read to you when they wrote it?

No.

You watched a video clip in the court during trial.

Yes.

The video clip did not show full body.

I don't know.

Tell the court why they did not show your full body in the clip.

It's because they were torturing me.

Are you telling the court that it's not what happened that was shown in the video clip.

No, it's not. They forced me.

Next was a cross-examination by the Attorney General, Mr Abiodun Aikomo, who led the prosecution team. It went thus:

Mr Tayo Akinrinola, have you seen me before?

No.

So, it's not possible to know the school I attended.

No, it's not.

This means it's not possible for anyone who doesn't know you to know the secondary school you attended except you tell them.

No, it's not possible.

You made a statement at the police station.

No.

You signed a statement.

Yes.

If it is in the statement that you went to Poly High School, Ijokodo, and learnt mechanic work, the police would not have known if you didn't tell them.

(The first defendant was asked to read the introductory part of Exhibit B2)

This information that you read out were provided by you.

Yes.

You told the court that you have known the second defendant for 10 to 12 years.

Yes.

You have never done anything for him?

No.

So you have never done any work for him, for example as a tiler.

I have helped him in his house.

You said you had a quarrel with your wife. What is the name of your wife?

Abigail

Your son?

David Akinrinola

Which school?

Okesola Omowumi (a private school), Nalende

But you did not mention these names to the police.

No. We did not talk to that level.

On what day were you arrested?

15th October, 2023. It was a Sunday.

(The first defendant was asked to read out Exhibit B2 and he read that he was arrested on 16th October.)

I put it to you that the version you are narrating to the court this morning is a third version.

The one I said this morning is the truth of the matter. I was forced to say the other ones.

This is the third version.

Yes.

Can you recall that when the prosecution was giving their evidences, they played two videos - one of the confession, one of the scene of crime.

Yes.

You said that while they were recording a video, they hit you on the head with a bottle.

They did that before they sat me down for video recording. You said that you saw a corpse. How did you know it was a corpse?

Flies were buzzing around it.

Did anyone certify the corpse as dead?

No.

Q. You sold the human hands to Afaa Ado?

No, I didn't sell them. I gave them to him.

You have been involved in this practice before the incident.

No.

You have never done this before?

No.

(The first defendant was asked to read out Exhibit B2)

I did not write the statement.

On the day the police arrested you, where was the bag containing human body parts found?

It was found with me.

On that day, were you trekking?

After a bike dropped me, I was trekking.

So, you saw police as you were trekking.

Yes, two police officers stopped me.

Around what time?

It was about 5pm.

So they stopped you.

Yes.

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When the person came, it was around what time?

He came around 6pm.

Where was the bag when he arrived?

It was in a gutter beside where we stood. The police had asked me to drop it there.

What did you tell the police when you were taken to the scene of crime?

At the time I was taken to the scene, they had tortured me. They asked me to say I killed the person.

Can you remember exactly what you told the police?

I can't remember.

(The first defendant was asked to read Exhibit 3).

The eyewitnesses who saw the body said it was still dripping of blood.

They told a lie.

(The first defendant was asked to look at Exhibits A1 and A2)

Look at these exhibits, can you see blood on the body?

I can't see any blood. It was the fuel they poured on the body.

On the hair on that head you were holding, what are those red lines?

I don't know.

Show us where you were injured on the head.

I was first taken to the crime scene before the injury.

You told us that you have worked for the second defendant.

Yes, but labour.

Are you aware that he also made statement?

I don't know.

It will be recalled that Akinrinola, Opeyemi, who is popularly known as Alubarika, and one Taofeek Olalekan a.k.a. K'abelohun were arrested by police officers attached to Swift Response Squad (SRS) in Oyo State Police Command on October 16, 2023, at Agbarigo area of Ibadan. They were allegedly found with a bag containing a human head and other body parts. After preliminary interrogation, they were transferred to the Homicide section of the Criminal Investigation Department, Iyaganku, for further investigation.

After the conclusion of the investigation, Nigerian Tribune gathered that they were charged to a Magistrate's Court on holden charge on April 4, 2025. In a suit between the state vs Tayo Akinrinola and Ramoni Opeyemi, the accused were on four-count charge of conspiracy, murder, possession of a human head and improper and indecent interference with dead human body. With no plea taken, they were remanded in court while the case file was sent to the Director of Public Prosecution for legal advice.

The legal advice exonerated Olalekan, as he was said to have joined the other two accused persons along the road.

The remaining two accused persons, Akinrinola and



Opeyemi, were first arraigned at the State High Court, Ring Road, Ibadan, presided over by Justice M.I. Sule, on July 2, 2024. There, they pleaded not guilty, and the court adjourned to November 28, 2024 for hearing because of the incoming legal vacation period.

On November 28, the prosecution team, led by the Attorney General of the state, Abiodun Aikomo, included S.A. Osuolale Esq. and O.A. Shobande Esq. The counsels who made appearance for the accused were Ademola Salami Esq. (for the first defendant, Akinrinola) and Adebola Ogungbe (for the second defendant).

Prosecution had opened its case by calling one ASP Ojo Sunday who was attached to SRS as Prosecution Witness One (PW1). The PW1 narrated how the defendants were arrested for being in possession of a human head and other body parts. ASP Ojo spoke on how he and other police officers were on stop-and-search duty when they stopped a Toyota Highlander SUV with registration number AAA 885 EP.

ASP Ojo had narrated: "On October 26, 2023, I was posted to Agbarigo opposite Pensioners House. At about 9:30pm on that day, my team observed stop-and-search on the road. A vehicle, Toyota Highlander with registration number AAA 885 EP was stopped for a search. There were three occupants in the vehicle on the said day. I told the man who drive the vehicle about the stop and search, and he came down. The other occupants also came out and we conducted a search of the vehicle. This happened at Onireke Agbarigo.

"I spotted a black polythene bag behind the driver's seat

and I inquired about its content, but the driver kept mute. The second defendant (Alubarika) was the driver of the vehicle on the said day. I signalled my men to join me in searching the vehicle. The second defendant approached me secretly and told me that the bag contained a human head. I ordered my men to arrest them and we took them to our office at Ido Gate, Dugbe. The bag was opened at our station in the presence of our superior police officer, Kehindeldiwu. The second defendant opened the bag and brought out a human head. Blood was dripping down from the head on the floor which showed it was a freshly severed head. Two legs of a human body were later discovered in the bag. It was a male human head. My superior officer informed the Officer in charge, CSP Femi Okunowo, and the matter was transferred to State Criminal Investigation Department, Iyaganku."

In a cross-examination by the counsel for the first defendant, Salami, the questions and answers went thus:

How do you know whether a person is male or female?

As a professional police officer, I can identify a male and a female.

Will you be able to identify a she-male?

Yes, I can.

What were features you saw on the head that made you identify it as that of a male?

The facial features.

Instances abound that one would mistake a female as a male or vice versa. Is that correct?

No, it is not correct.

Did the head have moustache?

I cannot remember.

Counsel: Did the head have a beard?

No, it didn't.

If I tell you that the head was that of a female, will you be surprised?

I will not accept it.

Cross-examination by the counsel for the second defendant

The only thing your team did was to stop the vehicle and take it to your office. You didn't do any preliminary investigation before transferring it to SCID.

We didn't.

You said there were three occupants in the vehicle. You didn't ask any of the occupants to know who the owner of the bag was.

The driver (second defendant) made us to know that the bag belonged to him, and there was a human head in it.

You assumed that the owner of the bag is the second defendant because he was the driver?

He himself told us that the bag was his.

You could not travel or discover the body to which the head belonged?

That was why the case was transferred to the State CID.

Hearing continues as the case was adjourned until March 3 for the defence of the second accused.