

Man slaughters lady for ritual during night out

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THE violent and gory pattern of the murderer's knife that slashed the lady's throat and cut through her intestines contrasts sharply with the peaceful surroundings. With ease and class, much of Area 11 in Abuja swings endlessly at dusk. That is the time when many ladies of various ages, including several innocent-looking young girls, take to the streets. Some are students from schools in distant towns; most are in Abuja without parents and relations having an inkling that someone in the family is plying the oldest trade in the world—prostitution.

Area 11, where the Federal Capital Development Authority has its seat, is a beautiful part of the city. On one side of the area is Gimbiya Street, home to numerous exotic eateries, classy drinking joints, offices of a few government parastatals and residential houses. Ironically, it was from here that 29-year-old Alhaji Uba Abdullahi took a yet-to-be identified lady for night romance. But he later killed her some minutes after, as the case before the police in Abuja states.

Even policemen at Garki Police Station, where Uba was brought early in the morning of Wednesday (September 5) were shocked by his calm mien. Whether threatened or cajoled, he would not talk much. He looked like the least perturbed person in the room when taken before the Assistant Inspector-General of Zone 7, Mrs. Ify Okoronkwo.

His Honda station wagon car, which police detectives told *Sunday Punch* that Uba bought for about N900,000, was parked at the Garki Police Station. The metallic blue car with registration number Niger AG 847 SUL, has become an exhibit, largely because of the thick splashes of human blood all over the front passenger's seat.

Like a habitual thief fated to get caught when he least expects it, Uba was calmly changing from a blood-soaked Senegalese-type kaftan when the headlights of a distant vehicle shone on him. Coincidentally, a patrol vehicle belonging to the Rapid Response Squad was passing by in the vicinity. It was about 2am on Wednesday morning and the simple act of changing clothes by the roadside appeared odd, especially at that hour. According to one of the policemen, they gently moved towards him to ask a



•The victim

few questions. Uba shrugged off their curiosity and insisted that the stain all over his clothes was from 'zobo,' a local drink. "He told us that he sells zobo in big jerry-cans and that it is a normal thing for some to spill. He was so calm and composed, but when we looked closer and found other things, including the blood on the front seat and a pair of torn female shoes, he made some illogical explanations. But all through, he was not shaken or scared, the way an ordinary person would behave after committing such an act," a policeman said.

Still bold and confident as if whatever he just did was a mere routine, he was said to have proposed gratification to the policemen. After offering N60,000, which he brought out from the car, the policemen cunningly played along and got him to cooperate. "We told him our suspicion, assured him that the money he was offering will also take care of those who will properly bury his victim. We then asked him to take us to the corpse and he did. But he was surprised at our subsequent reaction and then, attempted to flee," the policeman added.

The female body seen by the policemen was dumped in a small cassava farm on an undeveloped plot of land behind Advance Link filling station. The plot is at the intersection of three streets—Uke, Gwandu and Balanga—in Area 11. The female corpse was sprawled between ridges. When *Sunday Punch* went to the scene, it was evident that her throat had been slashed and her abdomen also showed deep cuts. Part of the intestines and other entrails were lying on the ground

beside her.

The generous quantity of suya found in the car suggested that both Uba and his victim might have had fun for a while before he decided to kill her with a knife. Uba's short but illogical explanation included the one he gave about the knife. According to Uba, the knife was purchased for his wife's use at home in Kano. He also tried to briskly explain away the torn female shoe in his Honda, saying that it belongs to his wife in Kano. He claims to be an Alhaji, an indigene of Kano, with two thriving stores in Abuja.

Alhaji Uba later said that he had picked the lady, after offering to pay her N1,500 for her services. He explained further that when they got down to business in the place, where he parked the car, the lady raised her fee to N2,000, thereby prompting his anger. His explanation sought to present the murder as a matter of rage, rather than ritualistic purpose, which police suspected him of.

When *Sunday Punch* went to the murder scene, armed policemen were waiting for a vehicle that will take the female corpse to the mortuary, where a specialist can also identify whatever part of the anatomy that is missing.

When asked for approval to enable *Sunday Punch* interview Alhaji Uba, the Divisional Police Officer at Garki Police Station, Mr. Friday Freedom declined. "You know that the case has now been taken up at a higher level. You can go to the FCT Command for the information you require," Mr. Freedom told *Sunday Punch*. At the FCT Police Command, the Public Relations Officer, DSP Nwaoha Uzoma was said to be attending an official

function in Enugu. His aides requested that *Sunday Punch* should delay the publication of the story because the Acting Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Mike Okiro, is considering addressing a news conference on the case immediately he returns from Enugu.

In the meantime, Abdullahi is in custody over



•The suspect

the murder, which has jolted many residents of Abuja.

On Friday morning when *Sunday Punch* visited the Garki Police Station, four ladies of the night, who were being taken to court, were seen giggling when a fatherly policeman was warning them of the risks involved in

consorting with men they never knew. References to what happened to one of their kind appeared to make no impact. Evidently, those whose souls are immersed in the oldest profession in the world do not quit easily, even when ritual murderers prowl the same streets with them.



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