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Five-year-old boy narrates how his father was tortured and killed in his presence:

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For three days, they beat my father with a rod that had nails on it, while we both cried. On the third day, a woman shot him in the head. He is only five years old, but Bisoye Taiwo has undergone the kind of trauma that many men are yet to experience. For three days, he watched in horror as assailants tortured his beloved father before they shot him in the head.



Bisoye

"He is ordinarily a very lively boy, but the ugly experience appears to have depressed him a lot," lamented Tawa, his distraught mother, at their Eka Street, Ijebu-Ode residence on Wednesday.

Yet the fate that awaits him appears as gruesome as the horror he witnessed for three days. With their breadwinner dispatched to an early grave over a lost chainsaw, the upkeep and education of Bisoye and his four siblings are severely threatened.

Bisoye was abducted alongside his father some time in August by some men suspected to be members of Oodua Peoples Congress. By the time he returned home three

days later, he held the neighbourhood spellbound with the horrible tales of his father's last days.

Recalling how he broke the news of his father's death to his alarmed audience when he returned home after three days, his mother said he simply declared, "My daddy has died. They shot him in the head with a gun. It just sounded gboa! And he fell down."

Tawa recalled that on the day her husband and five-year-old son were abducted, she had left their residence at Irewon, for nearby Ijebu-Ode without an inkling of the tragedy that would later unfold. When she returned home around 5 pm, she found her world collapsing.

She said, "As soon as I stepped into our street, neighbours began to urge me to leave the area immediately. I was scared but I did not want to run without knowing what was chasing me. So, I asked what had happened."

The neighbours told her how some young men had stormed the house and accused her husband of theft. "They said he stole a chainsaw at his work place. Of course, that was a lie. He had never stolen in his life," Tawa said.

Saturday Punch gathered that the late Taiwo last worked for six months as a security guard at Ogbogbo Baptist Grammar School, Ijebu-Ode, augmenting his earnings with what he got from operating a commercial motorcycle.

The chainsaw in question belonged to the school, and got missing on a day Taiwo was supposed to be on duty. Some residents of the area told our correspondent that a senior teacher in the school compiled the names of suspects and took them to witch doctors, some of whom declared that Taiwo was responsible for the theft.

Tawa, however, took exception to the allegation. She said, "One, my husband was not present where he was accused of theft, whereas the other people on the list were there. Why did they not invite my husband? Two, I learnt that out of the six witch doctors they

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approached, only four of them accused my husband of stealing the saw. Why not all of them?"

It was learnt that after the consultations, some young men suspected to be members of OPC stormed Taiwo's home and arrested him and Bisoye, who was at home with his father.

Tawa had been told by neighbours to flee for dear life because the men in question had threatened to come back and fetch her. But she said she was initially reluctant to leave because the whole thing looked like a bad dream. She however heard some gunshots and feared that the OPC men might be coming back for her, so she took to her heels.

"I ran to my mother who lives in Ijebu Ode and narrated the story to her. She promised to step into the matter and advised me not to go back home," she said.

The following day, Tawa's family went to Irewon and the school. They brought back with them the four remaining children, namely Dimeji, Samuel, Michael and Ajoke. But they heard nothing of Taiwo and Bisoye.

Tawa said, "There was not much I could do because people came here to tell me that I should not go out. Unfortunately, we did not know where the OPC men came from or who sent them. The school denied sending the men and even went ahead to help search for my husband and son. So I don't know what to think."

There was no news until four days later when Bisoye appeared at his grandmother's home. "One of our neighbours brought him. She said the OPC men brought him back to the house," Tawa said.

As his mother narrated the incident to our correspondent, Bisoye himself strolled into the living room and narrated the circumstances in which his father was murdered.

He said, "They took us away and asked my father where he kept the chainsaw he had stolen, but he said he did not steal any saw. They beat him with a rod that had nails. He cried, but they told him to shut up. I was crying too, but one mummy told me to keep quiet. When I did not, she put a gun to my head and said she would shoot me in the head. I did not want to die, so I did not cry again."

Bisoye said the horrible experience continued for three days. And for those three days, their tormentors, including a woman he called Mummy, tortured his father and demanded where he kept the chainsaw. On the third day, however, his father lost his patience.

"That day," said Bisoye, "they beat my father very well, but he kept saying that he did not have the saw. Then the mummy was angry. She just put the gun to my daddy's head. It sounded gboa! And my daddy fell down. My daddy has died o."

"I wanted to cry, but the mummy faced me and said if I made a noise there, she would shoot me. I did not make a noise."

With Bisoye's tale, the whole Eka Street was thrown into mourning and anger. Tawa became inconsolable. But the incident gave the residents enough courage to report the case to the police at Igbeba Area Command. The police managed to arrest one of the men, who was identified as Onile. "It was Onile that took the police to a bush in Atan where my husband's remains were thrown. He was not even buried. He was just dumped there," Tawa said.

The police gave the body to the family to bury, but Onile was said to have escaped into the bush while the police were trying to bring Taiwo out. Tawa said she was still scared to go home because of threats from the men that killed her husband. "I can not work, the children can not go to school and I don't know what to do with Bisoye," she lamented.

The Principal of Ogbogbo Baptist Grammar School, where Taiwo worked as a guard, Mr. Odunuga, said he was not competent to comment on the incident. Asked why a secondary school would resort to the use of witch doctors rather than the police to resolve a case of theft, he directed our correspondent to the Zonal Education Officer. He also said the ZEO was in the best position to comment when he was asked why the OPC was contacted and what the school was doing about the incident.

However, the ZEO, who identified himself simply as Mr. Ashiru, also directed our

correspondent to the Ministry of Education in Abeokuta. "I don't have the facts. I don't know anything about it. Go to Abeokuta. If they feel that the two principals of the school (JSS and SSS) should talk to you, they will invite them. I can not comment on it," he said.

But the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Mr Olu Soyombo, told our correspondent that it was a criminal case, adding that the police and the Ministry of Justice were already handling the case.

He said, "We are aware of the case and we have gone to the police with it. You are also aware that it is a criminal case and we can not prosecute, so we have also involved the Ministry of Justice. We are now waiting for the police report and recommendation from the Ministry of Justice."

Spokesman of the Ogun State Police Command, Mr Sunday Ubua, confirmed the incident, saying that the command's headquarters at Eleweeran was investigating the case.

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