

FEATURE

Man stabbed to death during N5000 feud

Sesan Olufowobi

Few residents of Atila, Alagbado, Ogun State would not forget in a hurry how a minor argument led to the death of 26-year-old Moses Kolawole Badejo on November 20, 2009.

Like a scene from a horror movie, some residents of the area recounted to our correspondent how a seemingly harmless argument between friends over money led Tobi Ogunleye to kill Badejo his friend.

Badejo had quarrelled with his friend, Babatunde Adebayo, a carpenter, for failing to execute a contract for which he (Badejo) had paid him since March, 2009.

According to Badejo's uncle, Mr Joseph Badejo, the late father of three who many in the area thought was Joseph's biological son, paid Adebayo to construct a bed for him, "At that time, (March) he was expecting the delivery of his last child and he told me that he wanted to use the new bed to mark the baby's coming. He paid the full amount of N7,000 the carpenter had charged," Joseph recalled.

By the time the baby arrived in April, however, the bed was not ready and there was no sign that the carpenter would do it soon. April turned into May and May into June, still there was no sign that Adebayo would make the bed.

"By July, Kola decided that he no longer needed the bed, so he demanded for a refund of the money he paid his carpenter friend. He was able to collect N2,000 from the carpenter who promised to pay the balance a few days later," Joseph said.

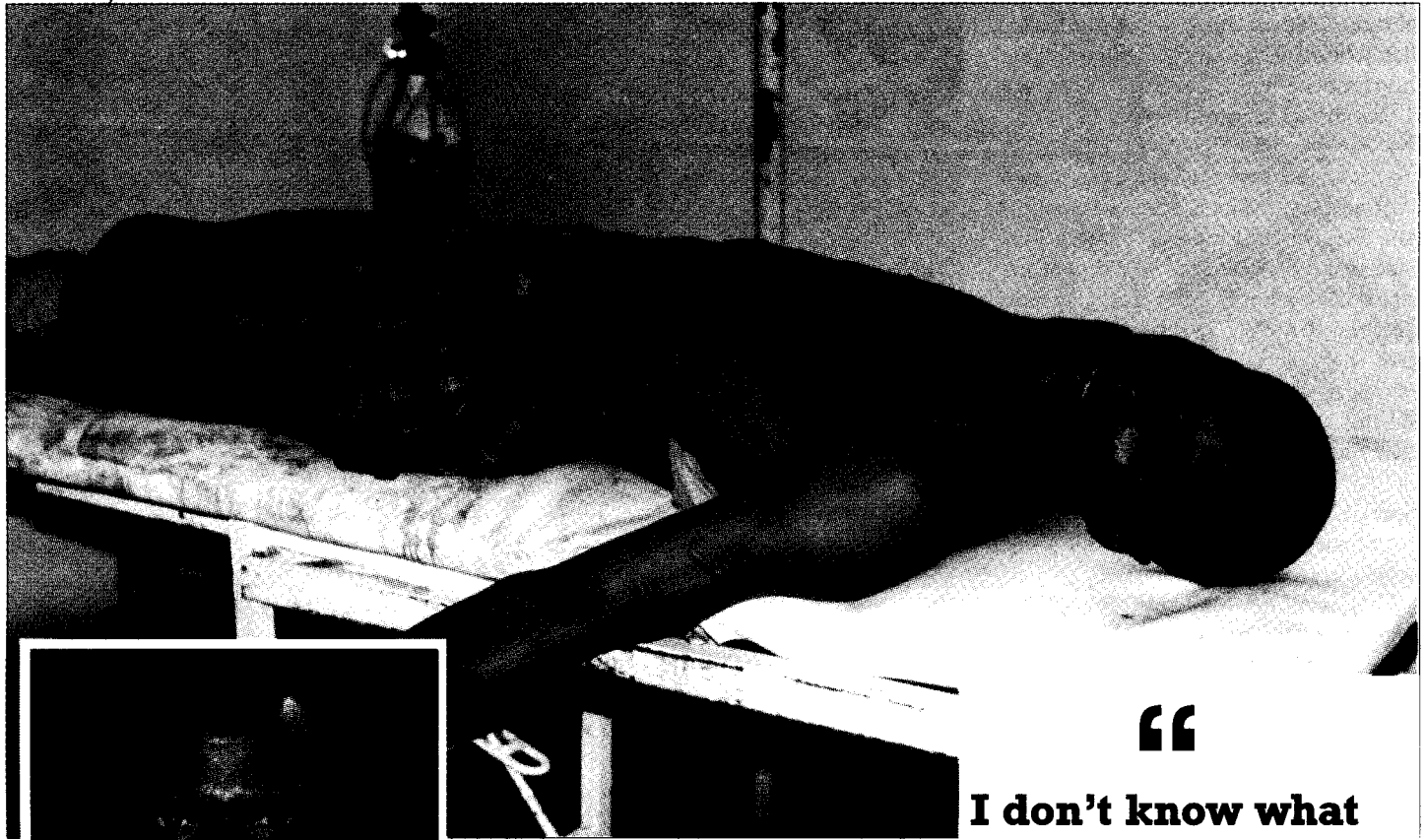
By November, Adebayo had not paid the balance of N5,000. So it was an angry Badejo who stormed Adebayo's house on November 20 to demand for the balance.

According to some members of Atila community, who spoke with our correspondent on Wednesday, the discussion of the two men soon turned into heated argument and later into a physical combat.

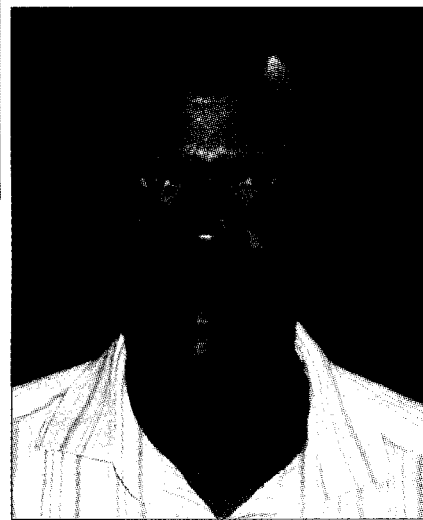
"I was also told about the argument. Let me tell you, I practically trained him (Badejo) from kid and I know that he could be difficult. But after he got married in 2004 and started having children (he has three children now), I have seen a changed Kola. All the bad things, he left them and became a responsible family man. He was riding Okada (commercial motorcycle) for a living before he was killed. I know that on that day, he would have raised his hand first," Joseph said.

But residents said that the fight was spontaneous and they were not sure who gave the first blow. One of them, Tola Adetoye said, "The fight started in the house and then moved outside. But they did not fight for long before they were separated."

The duo of Badejo and Adebayo might not have fought for long, but it was enough to attract other tenants in Adabayo's



Badejo, before he finally passed on



Joseph

house who were surprised to see the two friends exchanging blows.

"In fact, what I learnt was that it also attracted the landlord who called the duo and made effort to settle the quarrel," Joseph said.

However, the landlord's effort failed as Badejo insisted on collecting his balance of N5,000. Things got so bad that some of the residents resolved to get Tobi Ogunleye, who was supposed to be the third of the three friends.

"But what I heard was that it was the carpenter that called Tobi. Some people said he called him to appeal to Kola, others said he called him with a dubious intention," Joseph said.

By that time, the landlord had locked Adebayo in his room, while other residents were busy appealing to Badejo who insisted on collecting his money before leaving.

It was in the midst of this that Ogunleye arrived.

While residents were not agreed on what actually happened, their various accounts ended with the fact that Ogunleye's intervention resulted in Badejo's death.

Joseph said, "I was told that when he (Ogunleye) came, Adebayo was with the landlord while Kola was outside talking to

some people. Like a hired assassin, Tobi (Ogunleye) just went to where Kola was talking and stabbed him in the back with a knife. He removed the knife and stabbed him again in the thigh. Tobi fell down in a pool of blood," he said.

However, other residents said that Badejo and Ogunleye exchanged words before the former was stabbed to death.

Adetoye said that Ogunleye had asked Badejo for a private discussion when he came to the scene, "I don't know what they discussed, but immediately, Kola turned and walked away from him. He just removed a knife from his pocket and stabbed him in the back. When Kola turned to him, he stabbed him again. Kola then fell down and blood started gushing out of his body."

Commotion then took over. Some of the people at the scene ran away, others screamed while some others were too stunned to do anything.

It was said that on seeing what had happened, Adebayo rushed out of the landlord's room, lifted Badejo on his back and took him to the hospital, wailing. Ogunleye was said to have taken to his heels but was quickly apprehended by some residents of the area.

"I was in the office, when my co-tenant called me around 6.am on November 21 and said that Kola was arrested by the police and that I should come home. On arriving home, I met Kola's father-in-law, who told me that Kola was in the hospital. When I got to the hospital, I learnt that Kola was dead," Joseph said.

Adebayo's efforts to save his friend proved abortive. It was said that he first

"I don't know what they discussed, but immediately, Kola turned and walked away from him. He just removed a knife from his pocket and stabbed him in the back."

took him to a specialist hospital in his area, but was rejected. Badejo was then taken to another hospital where he died a few minutes after he was admitted.

Meanwhile, the duo of Adebayo and Ogunleye were later arrested and taken to Agbado Police Station from where they were taken to Ogun State Police Command CID, Eleweeran on Monday.

Joseph said that the family wanted justice, "We want the full wrath of justice to take its course in this case. Since Kola died, Tobi's family has been going to the police to beg, and I don't think that should be allowed to work. We will monitor this case to conclusion," he said.

Ogun State police command spokesman, Muiywa Adejobi, said the command was conducting an investigation into the case. "The suspects are here with us and we are aware that on November 20, at about 2350 hours, there was a fight between the suspects and the deceased. The suspects will be dealt with according to the provisions of the law," he said.