



The cutlass and bottle recovered in the room

The lady

Tracking down an elusive killer

NO one knows her name; no one knows her place of origin. All that is known is that she entered a hotel alive and was found dead the following morning with incomplete body parts. The night before, which was October 24, 2010, a man who gave his name as Raji sauntered into Tonette Hotel and Suites located at Abaranje Road, Ikotun, Lagos, with a dark in complexion lady. He requested a suite in the hotel and was given one on the second floor. When the supervisor of the hotel asked for his surname, Raji was said to have retorted that, "My name is Mr. Raji."

Raji was shown the way to his room, Room 205, and up he went with the lady who was carrying a bag. Shortly after, Raji called the reception for two bottles of a popular brand of alcohol. The supervisor took it to them in the room and shut the door behind him when he was leaving.

The following day, while the manager of the hotel was trying to find out if all the rooms were clean, he walked past Raji's room and saw the door slightly ajar. Out of fear of intruding, he knocked, but when there was no response, he peeped in and the sight he saw was horrific!

The lady he saw the night before with Raji was lying with her face down and surrounded in a pool of blood. The manager looked closer and saw that her hands had been severed. He took another step and noticed that her throat had been slit as if her murderer wanted to cut off her head!

He ran out of the room and alerted other members of staff. A report was lodged at the Ikotun police station, from where the matter was transferred to the State Criminal Investigations Department, Sabo, Yaba, Lagos.

When detectives from the SCID visited Room 205, an extremely sharp cutlass was found behind the cushion. Even though the cutlass had been washed with water, traces of blood were still on it. One of the alcoholic bottles was found with a cup on a small table beside the bed. A small polythene bag containing some white powdery substances which the police suspect Raji used to poison the lady's drink was also found beside the bed.

A further search of the room revealed four used condoms.

How was Raji able to leave the hotel without anyone's notice, considering the fact that the hotel has only one entrance? The hotel supervisor, Tope Aderibigbe, who was employed at the hotel on October 20, said that he was in the generator room when Raji and the woman arrived. According to Aderibigbe, there was power outage and he was trying to fix the generator when the manager called him

A lady was found dead in a hotel room, with severed hands. TOYOSI OGUNSEYE writes that the police are battling to unravel the identity of the person that murdered her

to attend to the guests.

He said, "I was the one that attended to them. They did not come in a car. When I asked the lady for her name, she told me not to bother; that she was Raji's girlfriend. Only the lady had a bag; Raji was not holding anything. I charged them N2,500 from 8p.m that day to 12 noon of the following day. It was my manager that called me the following morning that our guest had been killed."

Upon further questioning, Aderibigbe said that Raji and the deceased were the only guests lodged in the hotel that night.

The manager of the hotel, Anthony Aburimen, corroborated Aderibigbe's story. Aburimen, who is also a new employee at the hotel, said that how Raji was able to leave the hotel without anyone noticing still baffled him. He said, "I remember asking Raji for his phone number, but he told me that he had

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no phone. No one saw him leave, so we can't say whether he left at midnight or in the morning. I was just walking round the rooms in the morning to be sure everything was fine when I saw her corpse. I checked the lady's bag with the hope of seeing her contact details but the only thing I saw was her under wear."

The hotel's steward, however, said that he could recognise Raji if he saw him.

Meanwhile, preliminary police investigations show that Raji was 'professional' in the dismembering of his victim. The Public Relations Officer of the Lagos State Police Command, Mr. Frank Mba, says though Raji's identity is still sketchy, the police doubt if that was his first time of performing such a dastardly act. He says, "I have looked at the pictures thoroughly and the way the lady's hands were neatly severed is the way an experienced butcher would kill a ram. It was a neat job."

Mba further says that the murderer had no intention of making away with the lady's head. "Even though there is a deep cut on her throat, it is doubtful if he wanted her head. Judging by the way he severed her hands, he would have taken the head if he so wished. We suspect that he sliced her throat to pick an organ there. This is still a fresh case, but by the time our forensic department is done, we will have a clearer picture of what body part he took from her throat. But clearly, he needed only her hands."

It was further gathered that efforts to trace the assailant may be easier said than done, because he left no fingerprints. Investigations show that Raji must have used gloves. Mba says, "That is another reason why we say that Raji is a 'pro.' We searched the room for fingerprints but found none. We, however, saw traces that he covered his hands with two polythene bags when he was killing her. No polythene bag was however found in the room. But we have the alcohol bottles, which we are giving our forensic specialists. He might have been careless with the bottles."

The PPRO advised persons, especially ladies, to be careful with men they move with and the places to go as festivities are fast approaching.