

Man kills 52-year-old uncle with screwdriver

Just a week into the New Year when the average person was still savouring the joy of transiting from 2010 to 2011, a 32-year-old man murdered his uncle. TOYOSI OGUNSEYE reports that the suspect, now being held by the police, provides insight into what led to his rash action

LANRE Ajewole kept mute when he was asked why he murdered his uncle. He said that the incident of January 8, 2011, remained a mystery to him.

That day, Ajewole, who doubles as a painter and an electrician, entered his house located at 10, Ramonuoke Street, Itire, Lagos to sleep when all hell broke loose.

His aunt, Biodun, was peeling yam in the compound when he sauntered in. She said that he bumped rudely into her as he made to enter the house. And that was how trouble started.

According to Ajewole, while he was arguing with his aunt, she pointed the knife she was using to peel the yam at him and also threatened to stab him with it. While this was going on, his uncle, Oladiji Mobolade, who also lived in the house, stood up to intervene in the quarrel, but this further escalated the matter.

Ajewole said, "Just as I was quarrelling with Biodun, my uncle stood up from where he was lying in the compound. It is not true that I hit Biodun with my body as I was entering the house; my body did not even touch her. I did not touch her at all; she just didn't like my face."

Ajewole, 32, claimed that his uncle stood up with a knife in his hand. "I was surprised when I saw uncle Oladiji with a knife because he was sleeping on the ground and not peeling yams alongside my aunt. It then dawned on me that they wanted to make trouble with me, so I entered my room."

The suspect, who attended Atunwase Boys High School and Ansar-U-Deen Comprehensive High School, said that that was not the first time his 52-year-old uncle would be picking a quarrel with him.

He said, "He was always fighting and cursing me. He drinks a lot and this makes him quarrelsome. I can't count the number of times both of us had fought. The entire neighbourhood knows him as a very troublesome person. I am not the only person he fights; he also fights the tenants in the family house."

SUNDAY PUNCH gathered that both Mobolade and Ajewole were regular visitors to the Itire police station. A neighbour who did not want his name mentioned said, "They have been to the station more than four times. Both of them drink a lot and always fight.

Everyone knows them on the street for this, so we eventually chose to ignore them."

Most people in the area saw the last fight between the suspect and his uncle as another regular altercation between them and refused to mediate.

Shortly after the fight started, Ajewole said, "I entered my room to avoid my uncle, but my uncle came after me and was raining curses on me."

"I then told myself that I needed to leave the house for him and my aunt. I did not take off my clothes again and even forgot to remove all the tools in my pocket. As I stepped out of my room, I saw my uncle standing there with a knife."

"He wanted to stab me. I told him that I would not open my eyes and watch him kill me, so I brought out the screwdriver in my pocket and charged at him. I hit him first on the chest with the screwdriver and he fell down."

It was learnt that Ajewole left the house and told a few people on the street that Oladiji wanted to kill him with a knife but that he got him first.

When the suspect, who was once a casual worker with the Power Holding Company of Nigeria returned home, he met a crowd outside his compound. Before he knew what was happening, they pounced on him, giving him a thorough beating. His uncle was dead.

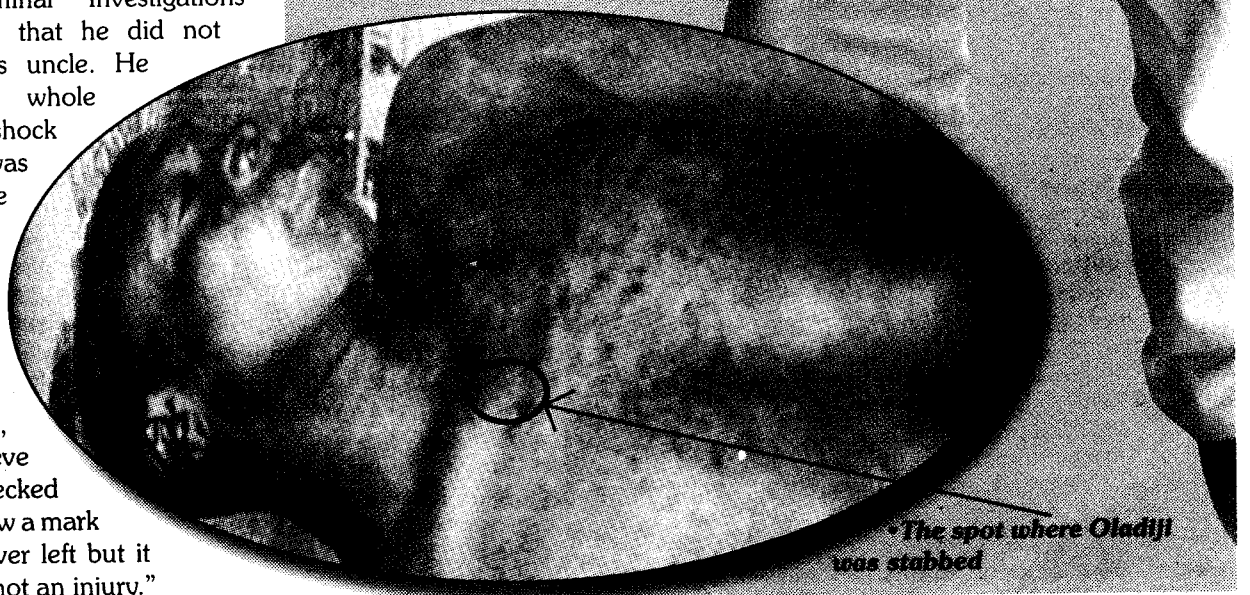
Ajewole was taken to the police station where the police had often had cause to settle the disagreement between him and his uncle. They were not surprised to hear that Oladiji was dead after his nephew hit him with a sharp object.

The suspect, who is presently at the State Criminal Investigations Department, said that he did not intend to kill his uncle. He stated, "The whole incident is still a shock to me. My uncle was not bleeding; there was no injury on his body when I struck him with my screwdriver. So, when I got home and learnt that he was dead, I could not believe my ears. I later checked his body, I only saw a mark that the screwdriver left but it was just a mark, not an injury."

Meanwhile, the family members of the suspect and the deceased have written a letter to the police pleading that they were not interested in the prosecution of the matter. They told the police, "We have lost one person, and we don't want to lose another one."

The Public Relations Officer of the Lagos State Police Command, Frank Mba, confirmed this and said, "The family cannot dictate to us what to do. It is a clear case of murder and the suspect is not denying it. An autopsy will be carried out to determine the cause of death and the suspect will be charged to court."

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•Ajewole

•The spot where Oladiji was stabbed