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Security guard mistaken for robber shot dead

By COMFORT OSEGHAE

Saturday, 14 May 2011

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Olaniyan

writes COMFORT OSEGHAE

A man who allegedly shot a fellow security guard after mistaking him for a robber is answering questions from the police in Lagos,

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At New [London](#), a sprawling satellite community of Baruwa-Ipaja, Lagos, the residents are still going about their daily activities as usual. Unfortunately, one resident will not report to his duty post when night falls again. One of them, identified simply as Umore, who until his death last Tuesday was a security guard at New London, was shot by one of his colleagues in what is regarded as controversial circumstances.

When CRIME DIGEST paid a visit to [Nwagbo Street](#), where Umore was said to have been shot and died, the area looked deserted. Most of the houses which are owner-occupied are protected from prying eyes by high walls and sturdy gates. However, a resident told CRIME DIGEST on the condition of anonymity that Umore's death was shocking.

"We had just employed him as a security guard for our street," she explained. "So many robberies occur around here and it is quite difficult to sleep at night. Since he was employed, I had been sleeping well because I was happy we had a guard on this street. Imagine my shock on Tuesday morning when I learnt that he was mistaken for a robber and shot."

The resident said Umore had just moved his young wife and baby to the estate because they had nowhere to stay. She was however reluctant to shed light on the circumstances that led to Umore's death. "I can't really say what led to it. So many of my neighbours went to the uncompleted building where he died to see him. It was horrible; I couldn't bring myself to go there. From the pictures I saw, he was in a pool of his own blood," the source said.

A member of the New London Community Development Association told CRIME DIGEST that the blame for Umore's death lay on the residents of Nwagbo Street.

"New London is a large community and we have only four security guards patrolling the entire estate. Certainly they cannot be everywhere at once and some robbers have taken to monitoring their movements. Despite the security, there are frequent robbery attacks here; when the guards leave any street to monitor another, robbers would strike," the source, also a landlord, explained.

In a bid to stem the rise in crime, the CDA reached a decision: every street was to get its own security guard in addition to the estate security guards.

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“There was a caveat: each street was to bring their security guard to the CDA for introduction to the estate security guards. Nwagbo Street residents failed to comply with this rule. They engaged Umoru without introducing him to the rest of his colleagues,” the landlord said.

In the early hours of May 3, 2011, an estate security guard, Ismaila Olaniyan, while on patrol, saw Umoru in an uncompleted building, allegedly acting suspiciously.

What remains unclear is how Umoru got shot as Olaniyan and the CDA have different versions of events.

“Umoru was wrongly shot because Olaniyan thought he was a robber. I mean if Olaniyan knew he had done something bad, he would have run away. Instead he remained on duty. It wasn’t until the next morning that it was discovered that the person who was shot was Umoru,” the source explained.

He regretted the incident, saying Umoru’s relatives had asked the CDA to compensate Umoru’s widow and child, which he said had already being complied with.

However, no one could say where Umoru’s widow once lived within the community.

Olaniyan, who is currently at the State Criminal Investigation Department, Panti, Lagos, however claims Umoru was shot accidentally during a struggle between him and the deceased for his gun.

“I met Umoru in an uncompleted building on Nwagbo Street while I was on patrol. He was with a ladder and acting suspiciously. I accosted him and asked him to identify himself. At first, he said nothing but when I insisted, he said he was a security guard for the street. I looked at his face; it was unknown to me. I decided to fire a warning shot in the air and blow my whistle, hoping that my other colleagues would come over and help clear the situation,” Olaniyan, who is a welder by day and guard at night, said.


“Unfortunately, none of them responded. I then told Ismaila that he had to come with me to see my other colleagues. That was when he started resisting. He came up to me and held me by my trousers. Now, the gun I use is a cock and shoot type. After I had fired the warning shot, I had reloaded. Now, Umoru seized the gun. While I held on to its end, he held on to the nozzle. In the process of struggling, a bullet went off and I

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realised that Umore had been shot in the leg,” the father of one said.

Olaniyan denied firing at Umore directly, saying that it was an accidental discharge.

Claiming to have alerted the landlords, Olaniyan said, “Immediately, I called one Mr. Obinna, a landlord in the estate and told him what happened. He is in charge of the estate security. He told me we had to wait till the morning.

“I was surprised when he said so and left to see if I could get help from my other colleagues. Umore was still alive and bleeding when I left. About an hour-and-a-half later, Mr. Obinna called me back on the phone and asked me to come back to Nwagbo.” This was at about 1 or 2 am. Olaniyan returned and was told that he had to make a report at the police station.

“I went with him to the police station, but made no statement. Instead, I was immediately detained. It wasn’t until the next morning that I learnt Umore was dead; I was shocked because when I saw him last, he was still alive.”

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer DSP Samuel Jinadu however debunked Olaniyan’s claims of an accidental discharge. “Olaniyan actually shot Umore but it was in error; he thought Umore was a robber because he saw him acting suspiciously in an uncompleted building. Olaniyan has been arrested and the matter transferred to SCID Panti for investigation” Jinadu said.



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