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... City, Crime, Courts

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Newspaper vendor for turning down free

**Mudiaga Affe,
Calabar**

A newspaper vendor in Calabar, Cross River State, Mr. Innocent Monday-Francis, was on Thursday murdered after an argument that followed his refusal to allow one of his neighbours, identified as Eno, to read the papers.

Monday-Francis (22), who sold newspapers around the popular Flour Mill junction, along the Murtala Mohammed Highway in Calabar, had retired to a neighbourhood bar at Ikot-Effanga area of Calabar to take a bottle of drink when the incident occurred.

Narrating the incident to PUNCH Metro on Sunday in Calabar, the deceased's younger brother, Mr. Gabriel Monday-Francis, said his brother went to work as usual on Thursday morning and on his way back home in the evening he stopped at a nearby drinking spot for a bottle

of drink.

He said those at the drinking spot had alleged that the assailant, who is now on the run, had picked up one of the deceased's newspapers to read but the vendor told him not to read any of the papers.

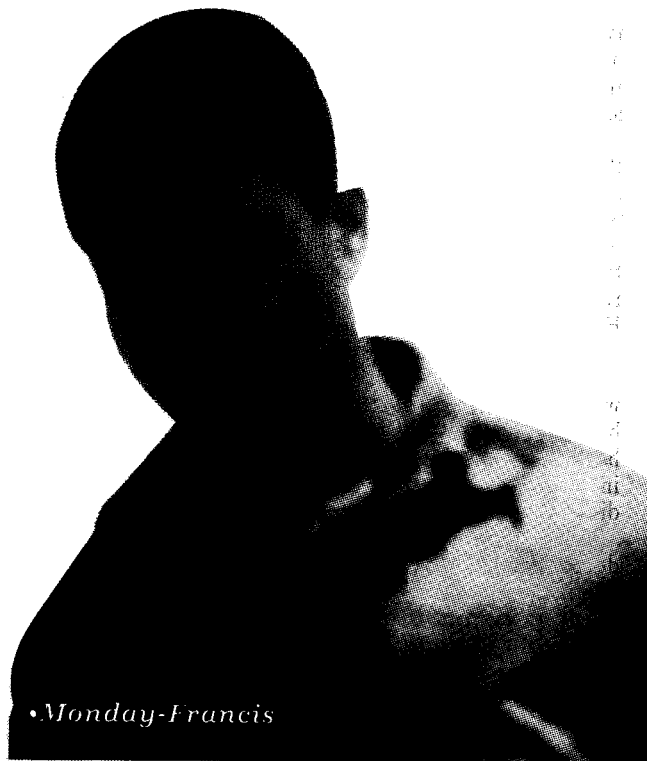
He (Monday-Francis) accused the assailant of not only reading the papers for free on all occasions, but that on one or two instances, he had taken copies away without his knowledge.

The deceased's brother said after that disagreement, Eno got angry and slapped his brother and in retaliation he (Monday-Francis) emptied the content of his glass on the assailant but after people's intervention, the vendor immediately went home.

He said his late brother, who was already relaxed at

home and eating outside, met his death when the assailant came from

behind to hit him on his neck twice with shovel and he immediately slumped



•Monday-Francis

LG donates patrol vans to police

Ifako-Ijaiye Local Government of Lagos State on Friday donated two Toyota Hilux vans to the police in the area.

The council Chairman, Dr. Oloruntoba Oke, said the move was to improve security in the area.

One of the vans was given to the Area G Police Command, while the second went to the Pen Cinema Police Division.

Oke said, "The crime rate in this area has been steadily decreasing.

Kunle Falayi

We feel it is necessary to support the police to ensure the protection of lives and property. It is the security of the people of this area that is paramount to us."

The council boss said these security committees, the community development committees and associations of the LGA had been collaborating with the police on security matters.

He added that he would always accede to requests that would make the police more effective in their line of duty.

Divisional Police Officer, Pen Cinema, Mr. Olatunji Ajimuda, said the vehicles "will not be used to harass residents of the area."

murdered reader

and died.

"It was while he was already at home eating outside that Eno came to hit him with shovel twice his neck and head and he slumped and died immediately," the brother said.

It was gathered that when the incident happened, the assailant's elder brother, whose identity could not be confirmed as at the time of filing this report, rushed to the Federal Housing Police Station in Calabar Municipality to inform the police of what had happened but by the time they got back to the scene of the incident, the assailant had disappeared.

The employer of the deceased, Mr. Etim Dennis, said he was shocked to receive a call on Friday morning that his highest selling vendor had been murdered.

He said, "We are all in mourning now because

Monday-Francis was the highest selling vendor I had," he said.

The deceased's mother, Mrs. Happiness Monday-John, said that she was called on the phone that her son was dead and truly on getting home, she saw Monday-Francis lying down on the ground and she called him many times without answer.

The police at the Federal Housing Police Station had on Friday morning taken his corpse to the mortuary.

The Cross River State Police Public Relations officer, Mr. John Umoh, said the suspect was already at large.

Umoh explained that the assailant's brother, who was being detained, would not answer for a crime committed by his brother but that the police was only trying to get information that would facilitate the arrest of the culprit.

I'm ready for death — Ex-banker on hunger strike

Temitayo Famutimi

Olubiye Odunaro, the 53-year-old former employee of Hallmark Bank Plc, who embarked on a hunger strike on November 12 to protest against non-payment of his terminal benefit says he is not afraid of death.

Hallmark Bank was one of the banks which did not meet with the Central Bank of Nigeria's recapitalisation requirement in 2005 resulting in its being folded up.

Odunaro told our correspondent on Sunday at a garden located on Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way, Lagos, where he had turned to his new home, that his hunger strike remained indefinite as neither the Federal Government nor any of its agencies had taken any serious step to pay him and his over 14,000 colleagues their terminal benefits.

He said his personal doctor, who ran another

afraid of death.

"A man does not die until he dies. It's my belief that a man only dies when he keeps silent in the face of tyranny. My intention is not to commit suicide but if I die for a just cause, I will feel honoured in my grave.

"I won't start something I won't finish and as it is, I won't back down on this hunger strike until we are paid our entitlements."

Our correspondent observed that Odunaro whose hunger strike clocked two weeks on Monday (today) had started looking frail while his voice had started going weaker as against the time of the first interview with him.

PUNCH Metro learnt that an official from the Lagos State Public Advice Centre had called him on the telephone to mediate and make him end the strike but he had stood his ground.

Odunaro said he respected and appreciated the concern of the centre, adding that he had "sent a representation to the office to explain his stance to

