

Policemen kill undergraduate while chasing Internet fraudster

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Eldanojie Joseph

Samson Folarin

Tragedy struck at the Ogoja Market, LASU-Igando Road, Lagos State, after operatives of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad shot dead an undergraduate of a polytechnic in Edo State, Eldanojie Joseph.

The 20-year-old business administration student was said to be on a visit to his cousin, Friday Ojah, who lived on Alape Street, Iba Ojo, when he was hit by a stray bullet.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the operatives were chasing a suspected Internet fraudster, identified as *Badoo*, who had parked his car and fled upon sighting the officers.

The operatives were said to have started shooting sporadically.

The Esan, Edo State indigene, who had reportedly gone out to buy a canned drink with his cousin, was hit by a stray bullet.

He was said to have died on the spot.

Our correspondent was told that the officers took Joseph's corpse, dumped it in the boot of the suspected fraudster's car and drove off.

The cousin, Ojah, told our correspondent on Thursday that the police, in order to cover up their misdeed, said Joseph was a cult member.

He explained that Joseph had only arrived in Lagos about three weeks ago.

He said, "We grew up and attended the same primary and secondary schools together. He gained admission into a polytechnic in Edo State, while I am still processing my admission into the same school.

"Around 9.30am on Monday, we strolled out to buy a can of soft drink. We were returning home when we learnt that some policemen were chasing somebody.

"We decided to go through the back of the market. As we turned back, my brother was hit by a bullet in the head and he fell down immediately.

"As I tried to call for help, I saw that the policeman that shot him had aimed his gun at me. I fled the place immediately."

He said the officers put the corpse in the boot of the car left by the suspected fraudster and drove away.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the corpse was taken to the SARS headquarters in Ikeja, from where it was taken to a morgue.

Our correspondent was told that the SARS team that conducted the operation alleged that the victim was a cult member and he had attempted to shoot at them when they fired back.

“But it was all lies. He only had the canned drink we bought, a phone charger and a handset on him when the incident happened. The police lied to cover up their misdeed,” Ojah added.

The policemen on the team that killed the victim were identified as Lucky, Oganla.

A legal practitioner and family friend of the victim, Saheed Sanni, decried the killing, saying the policemen must be arrested and brought to book.

He said, “Cases like this, involving SARS officers, have become rampant in the state. They kill with impunity and believe they can always get away with it. Whereas Section 33 of the 1999 Constitution protects the sanctity of human lives and prescribes punishment for violation of that sanctity. You cannot just take anybody’s life without a court order or judgment. We are taking up the case and justice must be done.”

The Police Public Relations Officer, SP Dolapo Badmos, said she had yet to be briefed on the incident, adding that she would get back as soon as the Officer-in-Charge of SARS briefed her.

She said, “The OC SARS has yet to brief the command on that issue and he has been directed to do so. I will get back as soon as I have the facts of the case.”

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