

Alfa kills co-tenant over N60 house bill

Published February 16, 2018



Adebayo close

...police shut house, remove generators

Samson Folarin

The Ogun State Police Command has launched a manhunt for an Islamic cleric, identified only as Raheem, for allegedly killing a co-tenant, Monday Olaleye, aka *Messiah*.

The duo, who lived in a house on Adebayo Close, in the Ibafo, Obafemi Owode Local Government Area of the state, reportedly had a disagreement which degenerated to fisticuffs.

The fight, which occurred on Sunday, February 11, started after 49-year-old Olaleye demanded the N60 contribution of Raheem for the replacement of a burnt electric fuse.

Olaleye was appointed by other tenants to collect funds for the purchase of the new fuse, valued at N600.

During the fight, Raheem, aka *Alfa*, was alleged to have hit Olaleye with a stick, while the victim used a plastic chair to fight back. Both men were reportedly injured.

The next day, Olaleye's health condition deteriorated and he was rushed to a private hospital where he was confirmed dead.

The deceased's family members were said to have reported the case at the Ibafo Police Station.

PUNCH Metro learnt that neighbours, who got wind of a possible mass arrest, fled the house.

When our correspondent visited the community on Thursday, he observed that the house had been locked up.

Residents approached for information either declined comment or feigned ignorance of the incident.

However, *PUNCH Metro* established contact with a few of the runaway tenants, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

A father of two said the police locked up the house when they did not meet anyone, adding that they left with three generators belonging to tenants.

He said, "I remember the two men had a disagreement over payment for a burnt electrical fuse which was valued at N600. We are 10 tenants in the house occupying the 10 single room apartments. We divided the money and everybody was asked to pay N60.

"I was sleeping when I heard a noise. I was indisposed and couldn't go out. But I learnt there was a fight between *Alfa* and *Messiah* over the fuse money. Within a few minutes, it was over and everybody dispersed.

“By morning, the man woke up, took his bath, drew water from the well, and prepared a meal which he ate. But around 12 noon, we observed that his door was ajar. I heard heavy breathing and rallied other tenants to get him to a hospital.”

Another tenant said no one knew the victim was ill until a family member visited him.

He noted that the relative raised the alarm, blaming the neighbours for being uncaring.

He said, “After we settled the dispute between him and *Alfa*, everybody left for their apartments. They were both OK. *Messiah* was a painter and he rarely went out. We all saw him do his chores that morning; nobody suspected anything until someone said he was breathing abnormally. A relative who visited him around 12 noon queried us for not checking up on him.

“We didn’t get a vehicle on time to convey him to a hospital. We later got one. The medical workers did not allow us to take him down from the vehicle before they said he was dead. Inasmuch as I find it difficult to connect his death to the fight, some people said he might have had internal bleeding.”

PUNCH Metro gathered that the news of the death sent fear into the community, as many residents took to their heels. The prime suspect, Raheem, who had gone to work, reportedly did not return to the house.

A female tenant said later that evening, the police arrived in the community in a bus.

“They broke *Alfa*’s apartment and took some things away. They also locked up the entire house after carrying away three generators. As I speak to you, most of the tenants are squatting with friends and family members. We have nowhere to go,” she said.

A senior police officer from the Ibafo division said it was a murder case, adding that it had been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department, Eleweran, Abeokuta.

He urged the victim’s neighbours to come forward and assist the police with information.

“The suspect hit the man with a stick and he died. It is a murder case,” he added.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Abimbola Oyeyemi, confirmed the incident.

He said, “There was a fight between the two tenants on Monday and in the process, one of them died. All the tenants in the house fled; nobody reported to the police. It was when the victim’s relatives

arrived from Lagos that they met his corpse in the house. That was how the police knew about it.

“When we got there, we didn’t see anybody; the house was deserted. The police found two generators on the corridor and because it was not safe to leave them there, they decided to secure them by taking them to the station. We have not seen any of the tenants since then. The state Commissioner of Police, Ahmad Iliyasu, has ordered that the suspect be made to face the full wrath of the law.”

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