

Hotel workers kill London returnee-owner, manager in Lagos

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Olusola, Tunji

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The owner of Etashol Hotel and Suites, located on Budland Street in the Ojodu Berger area of Lagos State, Mrs Abimbola Olusola, and the manager, Tunji Omikunle, have been murdered.

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PUNCH Metro gathered that the deceased were drugged, tied up and strangled by a gang that included some workers at the hotel.

Olusola, who had lived in London, the United Kingdom, for 35 years, was said to have returned to Nigeria recently and opened the hotel for business in March 2018.

Our correspondent learnt that the 56-year-old had issues with some of the workers, who allegedly defrauded the hotel of millions of naira.

Two of the workers were reportedly sacked after the police were invited to look into the matter.

Last week Thursday, a gang said to have consisted some of the sacked workers and some still in the employment of the hotel, allegedly conspired among themselves and drugged Olusola and Tunji.

They allegedly deactivated the Closed Circuit Television cameras on the premises, dragged the manager into a toilet, where his hands and feet were tied.

Our correspondent learnt that Tunji was strangled, after which the suspects proceeded to Olusola's room and strangled her too.

Relatives of the deceased told our correspondent that the suspects fled the hotel, as family members met the lifeless bodies of the victims in the hotel.

The case was reported at the Ojodu Abiodun Police Station.

A family member of the late businesswoman, who asked not to be named, said Olusola was planning to lease out the hotel and return to London when tragedy struck.

She said, “The incident happened on Thursday night cum Friday morning. I was called that my sister had been murdered by the boys working for her in the hotel.

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“From what I learnt, the manager had dragged one of them, called Light, to a police station for involvement in fraud in the hotel. There were also cases of stealing involving these guys. Two of them were sacked.

“On Thursday night, the men tied Tunji’s hands and feet and strangled him. I think it was after they had killed Tunji that they got access to the card that opens my sister’s room. They went to her bed, tied her up and strangled her.”

PUNCH Metro learnt that the woman’s 12-year-old son, who was to go to school on Friday morning, was the first to discover the mother’s corpse.

Around 7am when the school bus came to pick him, a vigilante member, who had tried unsuccessfully to reach the deceased businesswoman on the telephone, insisted on knowing her whereabouts from the son.

The boy was said to have found her dead on the bed in her room.

The family member added, “The child sleeps in a room in the hotel. Tunji used to wake him up and prepare him for school. But when the boy did not see the manager that morning and his school bus had arrived, he quickly got himself ready and ran out.

“However, a vigilante member, who had suspected that something was amiss after noticing some of the workers’ movements the previous night, waited at the hotel’s gate. The man had called both Tunji and the woman on their phones without getting any response.

“When the boy was hurrying to school that morning, the man said he should go and call the manager. The boy went inside and returned, saying he could not find the manager. He was hurrying to get into the school bus when the man said he should go and call his mother.

“He went to her room and raised the alarm after discovering her corpse.”

Our correspondent learnt that Olusola, who hailed from Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, had separated from her husband.

Tunji’s uncle, Chief Tunde Omikunle, said the deceased was survived by his wife and twin children.

Tunde said, “He grew up with me before learning fashion designing. And when he was done, the family got a shop for him; he even had apprentices until last year when he said he had been employed as a manager in the hotel.

“His wife, a graduate, had just been delivered of a set of twins. She stays in Ibadan. In fact, he wanted to go to meet his family in Ibadan when his boss asked him to wait. It was that night that he and the boss were killed.

“From what we know, two of the sacked workers conspired with those still there to carry out the act. They drugged him and took him to a toilet, where he was strangled. Although they destroyed the CCTV in the hotel in order to cover their tracks, we still got to know that they were responsible for the killings.”

PUNCH Metro learnt that the case had been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department, Yaba, where one of the workers was being interrogated.

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A source said the police had recovered the ropes used to commit the crime.

“There was no stab wound or anything on the corpses. The victims were strangled. We recovered the ropes used to commit the crime,” the source said.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, CSP Chike Oti, confirmed the incident, adding that investigation was ongoing.