

With thorough investigation I believe police will uncover my brother's killers – Sibling of Lagos director killed by masked men

Funmi, a sibling of a director at the Lagos State Ministry of Health, Abiodun Adenuga, who was killed by gunmen in the Ikorodu area of the state on October 6, tells **ALEXANDER OKERE** how the death of the 52-year-old left his family traumatised

From reports, it appeared your brother's assailants were after some documents in his possession. Did he complain about having an issue with anyone even at his place of work?

We don't really know how it happened. We were not there. It was what we were told that we had to tell. What we were made to believe is that he was shot, according to a man at the hotel. He said he heard a gunshot in their own room and by the time they came out, they met him in a pool of blood. The man at the hotel said the attackers were masked and that they took his phone. He said other people in the hotel were also robbed. I was told that the attackers went away with my brother's bag. He was a very calm and gentle man. Even his colleagues said he was a gentle officer. He did not have a problem with anybody. We don't know what happened. Only God understands what happened.

Did he have a misunderstanding with anyone over money or property?

There was nothing like that. He never reported a case like that. He recently got a house and that was where he lived. When we were told he was shot in a hotel, we were shocked and wondered what he was doing there. But a friend of his told us they lodged there whenever they closed late from work and he had told us he did not go home any time he closed late. He told us that he usually closed early on Friday so he could go home. So, I think he closed late with his team on that day because they went for an inspection somewhere and returned very late and because of that, he decided not to go home.

What kind of brother and father was he?

He was my elder brother. He was a lovely brother that didn't joke with his siblings and parents. Today (Wednesday,

October 20, 2021), my siblings called to tell me that my mother said she would kill herself because her son was killed. He was our mentor. He told me many things about my education that prompted me to study further. He was a giver to a fault. That is why it (his death) is a blow to all of us. On October 1, we all met at my parents' house. We had a meeting and that was when he told us about his new promotion because when we meet like that, we talk about our lives and homes. He told us many things then but we didn't know he would die.

What exactly did you mean when you said the assailants signaled to a lot of people that your brother was their target?

That was what we believed because an armed robber would not shoot someone just like that. So, something must be fishy but we don't know. The way he was shot showed that he was their target. People who saw him at the intensive care unit wondered whether he was really attacked by armed robbers. The hotel is not big. I visited the place on October 10 and was even surprised that my brother could stay there. But because of the love he had for his friends, I guess he went there with them. When he was in the company of his friends, his status did not matter to him.

Did you at any point fear that his life was in danger before he was killed?

No, I didn't. I didn't have any premonition because he was not involved in any shady business. He was not a politician and did not have anything hidden. We didn't think his life was in danger. In fact, it (his death) is still a mystery to us. I was about to get some injections for him but when I returned, that was all (he died).

You said the owner of the building where he lodged had told you earlier that your brother had an accident but you later found out that he was shot. Did you suspect something was fishy?

No, he was not the person that called; it was one of my brother's friends that called and that was what he was told. When he called me, he told me that he was told that my brother had an accident. So, I had to call my other siblings because I had a conference that morning; I never knew it was something that serious. While I was at the conference,

my younger brother called me to say that it was not an accident but an armed robbery incident, so I had to leave the conference and go straight to Lagos State University Teaching to see him (Abiodun).

Has the owner of the hotel reached out to you or your brother's family since the incident occurred?

Yes, he was at the hospital; he was even the one that rushed him to the hospital.

According to him, my brother was taken to a private hospital but was rejected.

When he was taken to Ifako General Hospital, they were referred to LASUTH and that was why he was taken to LASUTH. He stood by him and was visiting. He was also around during my brother's burial.

You also said 11 bullets were removed from your brother's chest. On what side of his chest were they lodged?

I think they were removed from the left and

that was why people believed he was a target.

Have the police informed you about the progress made in the investigation?

No. We have not heard anything from them but according to the Divisional Crime Officer of Pen Cinema, the owner of the hotel came to make a complaint but was told to return the next day so they could take it up from there. I learnt he did not go until I went there on Sunday to see the DCO and the Investigating Police Officer in charge of the case and they said they would be at the hospital. But before they came, he (Abiodun) was dead.

Did your brother tell you anything before he died?

He did not but the director of clinical service told us that my brother kept saying, "I don't know what I did; they just shot me." The doctor also said my brother complained about feeling weak.

How did his wives and children receive the news of his death?

He had only one wife and four children. His wife and children are with our parents. We could not hide it from our

mother. My brother used to call her almost every day. When my parents did not hear from him, my mother called me to ask whether I had heard from him because his mobile line was not reachable. I told her that I had been calling too without reaching him. On Wednesday, my mother called again to ask whether we had heard from him and we said the same thing. On Thursday, she called again and told us to go to his office to check. As of that time, he was already in the ICU and I didn't know what to tell my parents. I just summoned courage to lie to them that he was promoted and had to travel to Benin Republic for an inspection and there was no stable network where he was. I did that to get her mind off it. But she wondered why he would be taken to Benin Republic. She also asked how we communicated with him if there was no stable network. She then told us to tell him to use the same way we had used to talk to him to call her. It seemed she had had the feeling that something was wrong. When he died, my mother and father called me as early as 6am when I was at the hospital; it was even their call that woke me up, they asked whether I had heard from my brother.

What did you tell them?

I told them I had heard from him because I thought he would be out of the ICU so I could give him the phone to talk to his parents, not knowing he was going to die. I had to tell my siblings and uncles that we needed to break the news to them (my parents) because my mother did not let me rest. It was not easy telling her so we had to use the Imams around our area to talk to our dad. They were the ones that broke the news to my parents. When my mother heard what happened, she fainted, but we were already prepared and had to get a doctor ready. So, the doctor sedated my parents. My mother is 85 and my father is 88.

Does his family intend to go beyond the police investigation?

We just want justice. We know that we are in a lawless country. I told my siblings that we just had to leave everything to God because my joy is that before his death, he gave his life to Christ, even though he was a social person. He gave his life to Christ in December 2020, and I thank God for that. Whoever did that to my brother, let it be between that person and God. Let God intervene. If the police can do the investigation and get it right, fine. We know what our country is – before you know it, nothing would come out of it. So, it is only God that can give us what we want. We don't have any plan beyond the police investigation if they can actually do it. But if they can't, we would leave it to God to judge. He (Abiodun) has been buried. We are just being hopeful that the government can do something about it. I feel if the case is well-investigated, they (police) will get them.

