

How my brother, six other Osun partygoers died mysteriously after drinking alcoholic mixture, *skushies* – Family member

A 30-year-old Osun-born tiler, Saheed Adeleke, and seven of his friends died in mysterious circumstances after taking an alcohol mixture known as *skushies*. Ismail, Saheed's brother, 31, tells **GODFREY GEORGE** he suspects foul play in their deaths

Briefly tell us about yourself.

My name is Ismail Adeleke. I am 31 years old. I am from Oyan, Odo Otin Local Government Area of Osun State. I work as a mechanical engineer in Lagos. The young man, Saheed Adeleke, who died after taking an alcohol mixture, was my stepbrother. We have the same father but different mothers. Saheed was 30 years old before he died. He was a successful tiler, who had a lot of contracts in Lagos.

What really happened on that day that led to his untimely death?

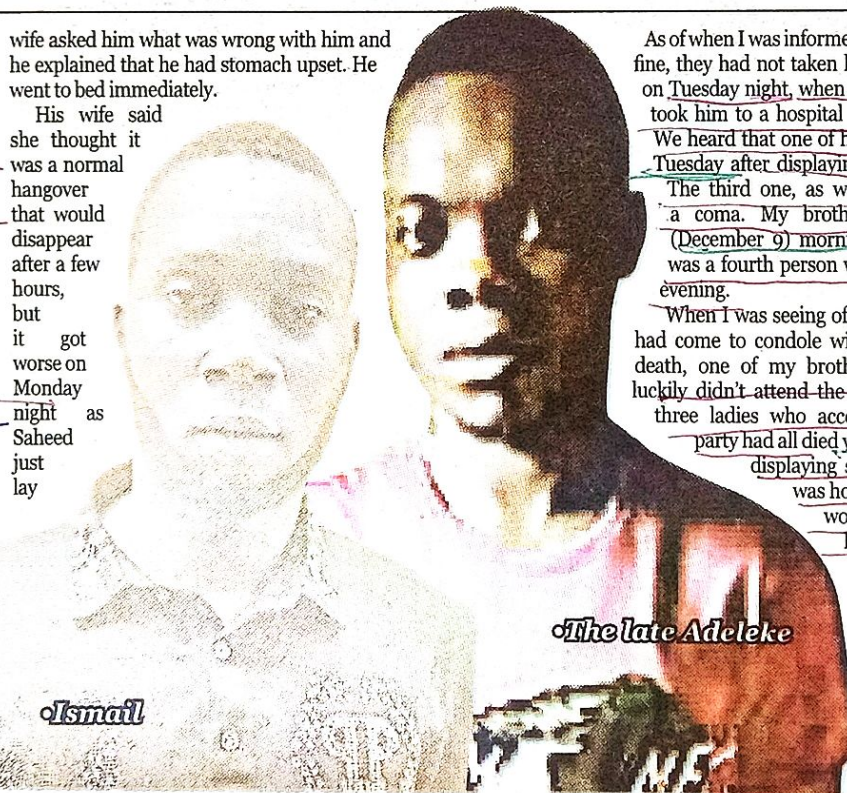
Saheed didn't live in the same area with me, but from what I reliably gathered from his neighbours and from the lady we know as his wife – I think she's a girlfriend – was that on Sunday, December 5, a man, who she identified as one Quadri, came to wake them up to attend a party in Ogun State. She (wife) said she didn't know much about the party and tried dissuading Saheed from attending, but he insisted he would attend, because, according to her, there would be much to eat and drink at the party. I later heard that it was not just a party but an Ifa festival.

What happened when they came back from the event?

On the second day, being Monday morning, December 6, Quadri came back to the house with a drink he brought back from the party and transferred it into another bottle. Meanwhile, Saheed had already complained of stomach upset when he returned from the party that Sunday. The pain was so much that he couldn't come out of his house on that Sunday. In fact, a person who came to visit him at home said Saheed could only walk him down to the balcony before he went back inside, because he said he felt weak. When he got to the room, his

wife asked him what was wrong with him and he explained that he had stomach upset. He went to bed immediately.

His wife said she thought it was a normal hangover that would disappear after a few hours, but it got worse on Monday night as Saheed just lay



Ismail

The late Adeleke

As of when I was informed that he was not feeling fine, they had not taken him to the hospital. But on Tuesday night, when he didn't wake up, they took him to a hospital and brought him back. We heard that one of his friends had died that Tuesday after displaying the same symptoms. The third one, as we speak, I learnt, is in a coma. My brother died on Thursday (December 9) morning. I later heard there was a fourth person who also died that same evening.

When I was seeing off one of my visitors who had come to condole with me on my brother's death, one of my brother's close friends who luckily didn't attend the party told me that the three ladies who accompanied them to the party had all died yesterday (December 11), displaying similar symptoms. That was how seven young men and women lost their lives just like that.

Do you know any of these ladies?

I don't know any of them.

Are you suspecting foul play?

I suspect foul play because they didn't eat anything when they got

back home and they were not all living in the same room. People who attended the party came and said they took a drink mixture, *skushies*, but the other guys said it was not

the drink that was responsible for their death. This case is a suspicious one. It is either there was a wrong mixture of drinks from there or someone poisoned them. I have taken *skushies* before and it didn't have much effect on me as other intoxicating drinks have. It is not something that can kill someone.

Will you describe Saheed as someone who loved parties and loved to drink?

Of the three males our father had, Saheed was the only one versed in the Koran. And when he got to my elder brother's house in Lagos, he did not drink even when my elder brother was drinking then before he stopped. Saheed did not drink. But I don't know when all this started. Maybe when he left us, things changed. You know a sheep that moves with a dog will share in the dog's meal. Someone who came to greet us even vouched that he (Saheed) didn't drink.

Do you think the drink affected him because it was probably his first time of taking it?

To be honest, I can't tell.

Has an autopsy been conducted on the bodies?

We have buried our own. Two of them died at home and two died in the hospital.

Did you report the matter to the police?

Yes, I did and they promised to begin an investigation into the case. They have two guys linked with the case. But the person that hosted the after-party after the Ifa festival, who they nicknamed Body, is yet to be arrested. According to what I heard of the guy, he was a generous guy. But from hearsays in the community, that guy is suspicious. According to his landlord, even if he (the suspect) is arrested, he would eventually be released.

How is your family taking this incident?

It hurts but there is nothing we can do.

Does Saheed have a child?

No, he didn't have a child.

What are your demands on this case?

After God, we don't have any power of our own. It is not possible for seven people to go to a particular event and sleep in different homes, only to die hours apart. It's suspicious and we must not suffer our brother's death in vain. I can't take the laws into my own hands because of the repercussions. The government and well-meaning Nigerians need to help us.