

Man who beheaded my elder brother hails from our community – Sibling

16th March 2025

| By Ayoola Olasupo

Osaro Edobor shares with AYOOLA OLASUPO the events that led to the brutal killing of his 44-year-old brother, Lawrence, which left the family and community in shock, the ongoing investigation, and the family's call for justice

How are you related to the late Lawrence Edobor?

I am 40 years old and a businessman. I am the immediate younger brother of the man who was killed along Evbuotubu Road in Benin City, the Edo State capital.

How did the incident happen?

My elder brother's head was cut off by a ritual killer on Friday, March 7, 2025. The incident happened around 1 am. I think my brother was coming from a burial ceremony. So, when they left the venue of the burial, he was dropped at the junction to my house, which was just about three houses away. There were about three or four of them who went for the burial; the others just dropped him at the junction and left.

Around 3 a.m., the wife of my other elder brother, who was older than the late Lawrence, called me because we live in the same compound. She came to my flat and said, 'Brother Osaro, come and hear what I was told. Some people called me and said Brother Lawrence is lying on the ground along Evbuotubu Road near his store.'

I was surprised when I heard that. So, I quickly stood up and called our other brother who lived in another compound opposite ours. We both came out together, and when we got to the scene around 3 a.m., we found the headless corpse of my brother on the ground; it was there in the middle of the road. The head was taken away by those who attacked him.

How did you recognise the corpse when the head was not there?

I knew the native clothes he wore that day because we lived in the same flat. So, I recognised the clothes he wore. It was when we were trying to call other neighbors that we noticed that a young man was caught in a nearby community that same night. He was caught with a sack, and a human head was inside it. The head was that of my brother, Lawrence.

We were alerted to the development and quickly ran to the place, but before we could get there, the vigilantes who caught the young man had already left the place where the killer was apprehended.

I also remember that before we got to the scene, some people had already made a video of the young man with the head of my brother in his hand. So, it was when we were about to take him to the police station that we met the vigilantes. By that time, the suspect was already inside the vigilantes' vehicle, and we just told them to take him to the police station.

Was the suspect asked to talk what he intended to do with the severed head?

They asked him, but the guy refused to say anything. If it wasn't for ritual purposes, I see no other reason why he would just kill someone, cut off the head, and try to leave with it before being caught. Without that sole purpose, he wouldn't have done such a thing, and he refused to say anything about what he wanted to do with the head or the person who sent him.

What can you say about Lawrence?

My brother was a peace-loving person. He didn't like looking for trouble, and he was always happy and jovial. He always made people laugh. He was also a tailor who had his shop almost opposite where he was killed.

If you visit Evbuotubu right from the bus stop and ask about him, they will tell you how loving a person he was, and he didn't have any issues with anybody. He was not troublesome and was a very peaceful person. That's why everybody is feeling it right now because the incident affects the whole of Evbuotubu because of his nature.

How old was he before he was killed?

He was 44 years old.

How many siblings did your late brother have?

We are seven in number. He was the sixth child of the family, while I am the last born.

How are his wife and children coping now?

He didn't have kids and wasn't married.

Did your brother ever share his plans with you before he was killed?

Not really. The only thing I knew about him was the contract he was given before the incident. That was the only thing he discussed with me; about how we went and purchased the material for the job because the contract was given to him by our elder brother's friend who had just returned from abroad.

He only talked about what he bought and who he gave some of the clothes to help him sew so that he could meet the delivery time he had promised the owner. That was the only discussion we had.

Did your brother know the 27-year-old suspect personally?

No. He did not know my brother. My brother was just a random victim.

Did you at any time suspect that somebody was monitoring your brother's movement before he was murdered?

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No, I don't have any suspicion because I don't know the man who killed my brother. I don't know him personally, although I know some of his family members.

Is he from the same community as you?

Yes, he is from the same community, but their family house is a little bit far from ours. I've never seen the boy's face before. I know some of his dad's younger brothers, but I don't know him particularly, and he didn't know my brother either.

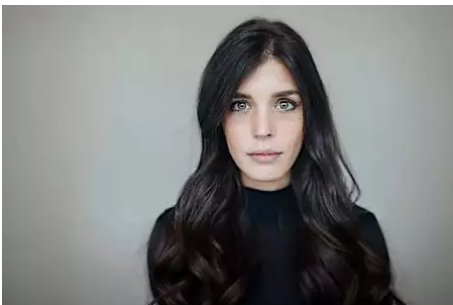
Do you believe it was a targeted attack, or was he just a victim of circumstance?

For me, I would say my brother was just a victim of circumstance. With the way the incident happened, I suspect the young man was just on a patrol looking for someone to attack, simply to get a human head for the ritual he wanted to do. It was unfortunate that my brother became a victim of that violent attack.

You said your brother went for a burial. Whose burial was it?

Yes, there's one man who is close to us. It was the man's elder brother at Evbuotubu who was being buried. The burial took place near Evbuotubu bus stop.

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The suspect has been arrested. What do you know about the police investigation so far?

I've been to the state CID, and we've always been coming here. The investigation is still going on, although we were promised that before the weekend, the matter would be taken to court, and we would continue to follow up from there.

How did the family react to the news of your brother's death?

The incident broke everybody down; the whole family was broken, and we are still in shock and pain. It is not easy for us at the moment. Since the family became aware of the incident, what we are praying and fighting for is justice. We want justice for my brother.

So, how is the family coping with the trauma at the moment?

It is very hard because we no longer have parents; no father, no mother. You can imagine how it feels for siblings who have no parents to lose their brother. We didn't just lose him, but we lost him in such a situation. It's so painful and very hard to express.

How has this incident affected your trust in the security situation in your area?

Definitely, it has affected my trust negatively because something like that could happen. Although the boy was caught, why wasn't he apprehended before killing my brother? So, it has affected my trust in security, and that is the truth.

What efforts are the community leaders making to ensure a proper investigation of the matter?

The community leaders are doing their best to ensure we get justice because my brother was very friendly with everybody. So, my brother's death has affected the entire community, and I can say that the community is still in shock after the incident.

What do you think should be done to ensure justice for your brother?

I've never experienced something like this before. I'd only heard about it on social media, but I'd never seen it before. What I'm saying is that appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that we get justice. We need assistance from various people to make sure justice is given to my brother. We don't want the case to be swept under the carpet. We want the Inspector General of Police to intervene in this matter because we don't want our brother to die in vain. That is exactly what we want.

What message do you have for the police and the government regarding this case?

The message I have for the police is for them to allow justice to be done. We don't want them to sweep the case under the carpet, and we want the government to come to our aid to make sure justice is done for my brother because the way his head was cut off looked so horrible.

Till now, I've not been able to watch the complete video that was made when he was murdered and the way his head was severed. So, we appeal to the government to come to our aid to ensure we get justice for my brother.

Since the suspect's family compound is also in the community, has any of them come around?

Till now, none of the man's family members have shown their faces.

Has your brother's remains been buried?

He hasn't been buried. His body is still in the mortuary, and the family has not decided when he will be buried yet.

What legacy would you like your brother to be remembered for?

His legacy is the peaceful life he lived. It is amazing how people loved him because he didn't take anything too hard. He lived a simple and peaceful life and was always happy with everybody around him.