

Body of real estate bizman recovered in Bayelsa

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| By Samuel Ese

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The Bayelsa State Police Command has recovered the corpse of a real estate businessman, Ekpeboh Richard, between the Internally Displaced Persons camp and Otuokpoti in Ogbia Local Government Area of the state.

PUNCH Metro gathered on Sunday that operatives of the Rapid Response Unit recovered the corpse with a gunshot wound in the head and dumped in the bush at about 6.00 pm on Saturday.

Our correspondent learnt that the deceased, who hailed from Amassoma in the Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of the state and married with two children. Until his death, after he left home on July 24 and never returned home, he was the vice chairman of the Real Estate Consultants Association of Bayelsa State.

A family source, who spoke with our correspondent in confidence on Sunday, disclosed that when he did not return home by 2.00 am on July 24, the wife got worried and placed calls to his mobile number to no avail.

However, three days later, he responded via a Whatsapp chat that he was alright and that his wife should not mount unnecessary pressure on him.

The family source said: “Further promptings by the wife that she would reach out to the extended family to ask him why he abandoned the house were met by a promise to send money via PoS. A sum of N15,300 was purportedly sent to a PoS agent and not to her account.

“He also revealed that he owed two persons N9.00m and N3m within the association.”

The police later discovered that it was those who abducted and killed him who were using his phone to chat with his worried wife.

Some friends and colleagues of the deceased later reported the matter to the police. The men of the Rapid Response Squad, headed by CSP Bishop Elemide, swung into action.

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Working with the cooperation of youths, the RRS operatives received intelligence that two young men in a blue coloured Honda car had dragged the deceased out of their car and taken him deep into the forest.

“What we heard later were two gunshots. And the two young men scampered to their car and left,” witnesses told the police.

According to them, the assailants also left with the deceased’s car, a Toyota Matrix.

Police investigators discovered that there was a struggle between the deceased and his killers, with a footwear discovered a few metres from where the body was discovered.

“The youths assisted in recovering the body. The place where it was dumped was a swamp. His head was blown off by a gunshot,” the police said.

A source at the state police headquarters told PUNCH Metro the Homicide Department of the State Criminal Investigation Department might take over the case and was already working on two facts.

“We are looking at the fact that it may be a case of business deals gone wrong with members of his Association of Real Estate Consultants or that he may be involved in cybercrime or money laundering deal that went wrong.

“We will get to the root of the matter and bring the culprits to book. Efforts are on to apprehend assailants,” the police source said.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Musa Mohammed, could not be reached for confirmation as he is said to be on leave, while the Commissioner of Police, Mr Francis Idu, is away on official assignment.