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Cruel fate: Director trapped, dies in car

By

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NATIONAL

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Hammed Adebayo, Director of Finance and Administration, Habol Petroleum Limited, left office last Monday night with a strict instruction to his employees to be at work the following day Tuesday, latest by 6am, so he could crosscheck if there was any shortage in the quantity of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) sold to consumers. He had warned them that if any shortage was discovered, the amount involved would be deducted from the salaries of those who were on duty at the time. Unfortunately, Adebayo never made it home that day let alone coming out again the following day as he was caught up in an inferno that claimed his life.

According to eyewitness reports, a reckless driver who was carrying inflammable liquid in a truck had hit a vehicle at Igando area of Lagos and in a flurry of anger, the driver of the vehicle pursued the truck driver and in a bid to escape, the careless truck driver switched off the headlights of his truck and while moving in a breath-taking speed, hit a stationary vehicle which immediately exploded in flames.

Adebayo who was trying to avoid the fire veered off the road and hit the culvert by the roadside. The driver's door, it was learnt, was pinned to the culvert and there was no time to quickly get down from the other front door. Within seconds, his saloon car was caught up in flames with him inside it. The residents of the area, *Sunday Sun* learnt, made desperate efforts to put out the fire by pouring sand and water on the vehicle but with the intensity of the fire, they couldn't do much. His burnt body was found by the fire fighters who had to cut off the top of the vehicle to get his remains out. Nothing from the car including a sum of N100,000.00, a laptop and a phone could be saved.

On Tuesday morning, an employee of Adebayo who identified himself as Sunday was at the scene of the accident.

He disclosed that they all left work at the same time but he and a friend dropped at Badore bus stop. An hour

later, Adebayo's wife called his friend to complain that she had not seen her husband. They called Adebayo's cell

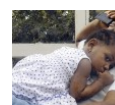
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phones but he was not answering the calls. Scared that their car had been attacked by armed robbers, they ran out to trace him. On the way, policemen warned them to take the other route as there was a fire incident ahead. He said: "We heard that the vehicles involved were jeeps and when I reached the scene, I knew it was C.M's vehicle."

Residents of the area said they thought it was a transformer but when they saw the fire burning, they knew it was more than that; probably a fuel tanker. What they never expected was the intensity of the fire, number of deaths and destruction it left. They also complained about the time the fire fighters from Ikotun arrived at the scene.

Adejare Adams, a resident who spoke to *Sunday Sun* said the people were quite upset by their attitude. He said; "Look at Ikotun Fire Service Station. It is just behind here. They didn't come on time before the people got burnt. That's what is so upsetting about Nigeria. They are never prepared for emergencies. A lot of people were angry. They almost beat up the fire fighters. I saw the Honda man's phone. It was burnt. The phone battery and the man's laptop were destroyed." Adams expressed anger at the people who refused to help salvage the situation but instead, opened the trailers to carry crates of beer to drink.

An official of the Lagos State Traffic Management Agency (LASTMA) who was one of those sent to control traffic said they had warned trailer drivers not to park on the road. He said; "The drivers park their trailers but hang around. We have warned them several times not to park on the road. If the trailers did not park on the road, there is a high possibility that this accident would not have occurred. Instead, the truck would have crashed into the gutter."

The eldest brother of the late Adebayo, Akeem Hameed, who spoke for the family, told *Sunday Sun* that he was called at 11:50p.m by his younger sister who was hysteric about Bayo not yet home. Bayo had earlier told his wife he wanted to eat *fufu* for dinner. When he didn't get home, she got worried. He decided to check the road thinking he had been kidnapped till he was told by policemen to keep away from the other lane. When he got there, he saw the burnt vehicle but he never believed his brother was in there. He ran into the general hospital hoping to see his brother among the survivors but he was not there. He then went back to check the vehicle and saw the burnt body of his younger brother in it.

Akeem disclosed that the brother who was a chartered accountant worked at Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education's Bursary Department while supervising operations at Habol Petroleum, the family business. Contradicting the story spread by the residents of Alhaji Ede area that the errant driver hit Bayo, he stated emphatically that his brother's vehicle had no dents. He said: "He was not hit. Till the top of the vehicle was cut and his body removed, there was no dent on it. The position in which I saw the car, it was not hit. The car was standing alone. It had no dent or sign of impact. He uses air conditioner in his vehicle so I believe it was the gas from the vehicle that attracted the fire."

Akeem who had not set his eyes on his mother since the accident said he would rather other people console her. He mentioned that she was taken to a cousin's place at Lekki and their house locked so she could have enough rest.

Giving glowing tribute on how hardworking and prayerful his brother was, he stated that the deceased should not have died in such a gruesome manner.

"Bayo is an *Alfa*. He is disciplined. He doesn't drink, smoke, womanize or stay out late. He condemns smoking and drinking of beer and even buying of beer for people. He doesn't like parties. Even when we have parties in our house, he condemns it. All he does is view premiership matches, go to work and go home. He was about completing his home before his death. We had dreams to expand the petroleum company but We couldn't take all his remains that night. We went back to look for his remaining body parts on Tuesday evening."

Akeem said for everybody in the world, death is inevitable and what has been destined to happen cannot be changed except by prayers and goodwill. Since this has happened, all they can do is to pray for their brother.

Adebayo's wife has not been able to accept the fact that her husband is dead as she has been inconsolable.

The fire incident also killed four other people and left two men, Eferhobo Lucky and Ogbodo Sunday aged 57 and 29 years respectively, both of Owode Idiroko, Ogun State, critically injured.

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