

## Top Stories Extra

# Bricklayer kills taxicab driver in Edo

■ Attempts to sell his car ■ Demands ransom from late victim's family

FROM NGOZI UWUJARE

**N**emesis has caught up with a 37-year-old bricklayer in Edo State, Kelvin Omoregbe, who killed a taxicab driver after luring him to a fake construction site in Ovbiogie community in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State.

Omoregbe, whose apparent intent was to snatch the Audi 80 car belonging to 40-year-old Emmanuel Arigame, which was being used by him as an unpainted taxicab, pretended that he needed to visit the site where he had a building project and hired the victim to take him to the place.

Not suspecting any foul play, the late Arigame, who hailed from Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State drove Omoregbe to the supposed site. When they got there at 3.00pm, Omoregbe made a show of going round the place and then called Arigame to bring down his bag from the boot of the car. When the victim tried to do that, Omoregbe hit him viciously at the back of the head with an iron rod, killing him instantly. Then he dragged

his body into the bush, drove the car away from the scene and headed to Lagos.

As the blood of the murdered taxi driver cried for justice, providence heard and prompted policemen at a checkpoint in Epe area of Lagos to flag down the car. They demanded for the particulars of the vehicle and Omoregbe presented Arigame's papers, which were in the car. The officers then asked for his driver's licence and of course, he had none. Just then another car was also stopped by the policeman. With the officers momentarily distracted, Omoregbe bolted into the bush with the victim's phone snuggling in his pocket and somehow made his way back to Edo State.

With the failure of his gambit to sell the vehicle having failed, he resorted to extorting money from the bereaved relations of the victim by claiming that he had kidnapped Arigame.

Recalling what had transpired before the death of his elder brother, Olu Arigame recalled overhearing Omoregbe incessantly call his brother on the phone, telling him to come to Brons Hotel, Oluku and to take him to his new site at Ovbiogie community. It was

when the phone calls got too much that the victim expressed his worries to his wife and also gave her Omoregbe's number.

Olu added: "My elder brother told his wife that he gave her the number in case anything happened to him. After some days, the phone number of my elder brother did not go through each time we tried to call it because it was switched off. Then later the suspect switched it on and when we called, it was not my brother that answered but the suspect. He demanded US\$300 from us. I also asked him to allow me speak with my brother. He asked for N20, 000 in MTN recharge cards. We sent him recharge pins worth N5000. After that, we didn't hear from him again. So we reported the case at the police station."

After the police waded into the case, the Commissioner of Police in Edo State, Mr. Samuel Adegbuyi, said that police detectives contacted MTN and requested that a red alert mark be placed on the series of recharge pins. When one of the people who bought the recharge pins loaded them, MTN alerted the police and he was tracked down. Meanwhile, Omoregbe was also using Arigame's hand-

set and SIM card. Through the phone's 'electronic fingerprint' on MTN's network, the police identified its GPS location and subsequently arrested him in Benin.

At the headquarters of the police command in Edo State where he is being interrogated, Omoregbe told Sunday Sun how it all happened: "I am a bricklayer by profession. I never owned any land at Ovbiogie community in Ovia North East L.G.A Edo State. I called Arigame Emmanuel on phone and asked him to take me to my site in Ovbiogie. When we got there, I came down from the car and went round. Then I asked him to bring down my bag. When he turned, I took an iron rod and hit him on the neck and he died instantly. I took his Audi 80 car and drove to Epe, Lagos State where policemen at checkpoint stopped me. They asked about the papers for the car. I showed them, but when another car was stopped, I ran into the bush and escaped. I came back to Edo State. My intention was to sell the stolen car in Lagos State, unfortunately the police stopped me and took the car when I ran away."

The Assistant Commissioner



•Suspect

of Police in-charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Benin, Edo State, Mr. Dayo Ariyo, revealed to Sunday Sun that it took the police about two weeks of diligent investigation to arrest Omoregbe, who later took operatives to where he killed the victim. By then the body had started to decay.

He said that the suspect didn't bother to bury the corpse, but rather left it on the ground. Ariyo also disclosed that the iron rod Omoregbe used to kill Arigame was also recovered.

Adegbuyi assured that the suspect would be charged to court soon for the alleged murder of Arigame.