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Killer maid to die by hanging

AN Igbosere High Court in Lagos yesterday sentenced a 23-year-old Beninoise housekeeper, Christian Yavine, to death by hanging for the murder of a 78-year-old woman, Mariam Abiola.

Justice Oluwatoyin Ipaye convicted Yavine after three years of trial.

Yavine, who was accused of murdering his employer's mother, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Delivering judgment, Ipaye, dismissed Yavine's defence, including a claim that he was 14 years old at the time of the offence.

The judge, however, observed that there was ample corroborative evidence that falsified the convict's claim.

She held that the prosecution's evidence showed that at the time of the murder, Yavine was seeking admission to a university and would have registered to sit for an entrance exam but for financial challenges.

The judge noted further that it was unlikely that the defendant was seeking university admission at 14.

The judge also observed that a birth certificate obtained by the Lagos State government from Yavine's alleged birth hospital in Benin Republic showed that he was born in 1996.

The judge also considered Yavine's claim that the confessional statement tendered by the government against him was contrived by the police.

The judge noted that the convict claimed that being a French speaker, he could not have made the statement, which was written in English, a language he claimed he did not understand.

But the judge observed that there was corroborative evidence to the contrary.

Ipaye observed that Yavine lived with the deceased for two weeks before the incident, during which he also went to the market with her.

The judge wondered what language he spoke with her, if he truly did not understand any English.

The convict was arraigned on April 15, 2016, by the Lagos State government.

The prosecution counsel, Mr Akin George, had said that the incident took place on July 1, 2014, at Block 74, Flat 4, Ipaja Low Cost Housing Estate, Pen Cinema, Lagos.

He said that Yavine nearly severed Abiola's head with a knife while she was asleep in her daughter's home.

He said that Abiola was the mother of Ajoke Ashiwonyi, Yavine's employer, who was away at a church vigil.

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