

► How 25-year-old man perished in car accident while celebrating addition of another year, with fiancée, friends and neighbours ► We find his death too painful – Family

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Gyang Bere, Jos

He died on the day he was out celebrating his birthday in a big way. Death, the grim reaper, the one who kills a man on the day his life is sweetest to him, ensured that he did not live to see the following day. It came in

form of a speeding car that could have come from nowhere but hell, as it disappeared into the thin air the moment the deed was done, colliding with an equally speeding birthday boy, in high spirits, on a motorbike. But the time it was all over, it left nothing but blood, sorrow and tears.

That is the tragic tale of Fwanshak Gumap, who celebrated his 25th birthday recently. Now his 67-year-old father, Gumap Sati and the entire people of Mangu town in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, are left to mourn his mysterious and painful exit. Popularly known as Labista, his death has left his parents, close associates and fiancée devastated.

Marking Fwanshak's birthday in a big way

Cheerful, lively, active and with a good sense of humour, before

the D-Day, Thursday, August 8, 2019, Fwanshak not known to do things in half measures, have had his birthday bash carefully planned out to be an elaborate ceremony where drinks, food, fun and laughter would flow without limit. To that end, he booked a popular relaxation spot in Mangu town to host his friends, colleagues and associates.

Sources said that he was woken up very early on the morning of that fateful day with birthday songs from his close friends and admirers within and outside the community. This was followed by wild bath celebration in which he was symbolically bathed with water and soap by his friends. Photos from the event were later shared with friends on different WhatsApp platforms. This action brought together more friends outside Mangu town to come and celebrate with Fwanshak.

It was gathered that different activities were lined up that fateful day to mark Fwanshak's 25th birthday. Some of the activities were organised by his friends as a surprise birthday gift before the evening party. Incidentally, he had shared photos of different events that took place in the daytime including the photo of him on the

motorcycle in which he perished.



His friend, who gave his name as Mathew said they had moved to the party venue within Mangu town at about 8pm where his friends, fiancée, neighbours and well-wishers gathered to dance and enjoy themselves in a convivial atmosphere filled with fun and fantasies. During the time he was said to have entertained his guests with nice music and wonderful dance steps that brought the hall down. He was hailed to the highest heavens for putting up such scintillating performance.

But unfortunately after that, he sneaked away, for unknown reason, from the scene of the party. Some of his friends were said to have assumed he was going to take delivery of something urgent when he mounted his motorbike and zoomed off at a breakneck speed. In fact, the manner in which zoomed was said to have left some of them laughing and hailing him for his dexterous riding skill. Meanwhile the celebration with wining and dining continued.

The ride that ended in death and sorrow

Overwhelmed with joy, he was said to have been driving so dangerously, at a very high and excessive speed when he suddenly ran into a speedy oncoming vehicle. Time was about 8pm when he had a head-on collision with a car along Gindiri community road on the outskirts of Mangu town. The impact was such that he was flung off the motorbike and hit his head on the tarred road. It was gathered that the car driver did not stop but zoomed off the moment he realized he had knocked down somebody. And, that was how the birthday boy, broken, battered and blood-soaked, was left groaning in pains until help came his way. But by that time he had lost much blood and whatever help that came his way afterward ended up being medicine after death. Shortly after, he gave up the ghost while in an unconscious state, not talking, nor moving any part of his body.

It turned out that while his friends were busy dancing and entertaining themselves in one huge birthday revelry, the celebrant was bleeding to death. But it did not take long for them to realize that something or somebody was missing. Where on earth is the celebrant? And, that was when everybody began to search for him. Those who saw him earlier driving out of the celebration venue then set out in search of him. Not long after, a shocking sight starred them in the face. For lying down somewhere in a bush, at a spot on the expressway along Gindiri was the lifeless body of Fwanshak.

They looked at his motorbike; it was bent and twisted out of shape, no thanks to the impact of the accident. On a closer look, they saw blood over it, the blood of their dear friend. But still some held tenaciously on to some hope. None of them, including his fiancée, believed that he was dead. But after waiting in vain for hours without him emerging from the scene and flashing his enchanting smile and entertaining them with his nimble dance-steps, it was then they believed that he was dead. And, with the sudden realization, a joyous party turned into a mournful one. Many of them, found themselves repeating Macbeth's words when told about his wife's death, amid banquet ("she should have died hereafter").

Feelings of regret and self-recrimination

And, that was how the sun set for Fwanshak on the day of his sunrise. He was said to have broken his head as blood was seen all over his body. Some said he sustained neck fracture when he landed on the ground headlong. His father, Sati, was bitter and speechless on receiving the sad news. He cried profusely. Now, he is filled with sense of loss full of regrets and self-recrimination. “If I knew that this will be the end result of this birthday celebration, I wouldn’t have allowed it,” he told *Saturday Sun*. “Look, at what the birthday has caused my son.”

His elder brother, Ishaku Gumap , said his lifeless body was recovered from the scene of accident the following morning and buried immediately as the death was beginning to generate serious tension. “Fwanshak was a young man that commands respect among his peer group,” he said. “His friends were happy to associate with him and they were there at the birthday to make him happy and they really made his day until the tragic end of his life. His death was so painful to us that we had to bury him immediately, the body was badly mangled and keeping it will cause more pains to the parents because decomposition was already setting in.”

He gave a second reason for the hurried burial. “In our culture, it is a taboo for a father to bury his son,” he clarified. “Fwanshak was the last born in the family but he was also the bread winner ; in fact he was the backbone of the family, now that he is no more, only God will raise another person to fill the vacuum.”

A 2017 holder of Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) in English/Social Studies, Fwanshak graduated from College of Education and was planning to further his education before he met his untimely death. The young and energetic man said to be in charge of NaijaBet in Mangu Local Government Area was into the business of transporting goats from Jos for sale in South East. The last child in the family of six he was planning to go for his traditional marriage which has been approved by both families, when tragedy struck.