

Rivers serial killer confesses to killing 7 ladies in P/H, Lagos, Owerri

FROM TONY JOHN, PORT HARCOURT

RIVERS State Police Command scored a breakthrough with the arrest of the notorious Port Harcourt serial killer of young women recently declared wanted. The suspect, Gracious David West, 39, was arrested on Thursday by a police team on a routine stop-and-search operation along Ogoni axis of the East/West road to Akwa Ibom State.

The arrest came on the heels of public outcry in the wake of repeated killings of female victims in hotels in Rivers State.

The suspect, sighted in a CCTV camera in one of the hotel receptions in Port Harcourt after allegedly killing a female victim, is a native of Buguma in Asar-Toru Local Government Area of Rivers. He was on Friday paraded

by Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Mustapha Dandaura, at the Police Command headquarters, Moscow Road, Port Harcourt.

Commissioner of Police Dandaura expressed his delight that one of the prime suspects in the killing that has caused panic in the state has been arrested.

"The suspect was arrested in a commercial bus en route Akwa Ibom State. He confessed to having carried out five killings in Port Harcourt, one in Owerri and another in Lagos state. He was on his way to Akwa Ibom, having seen that Rivers State was no longer conducive for him."

According to him, he was arrested by the operatives of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), Bori, who were on stop-and-search routine along Ogoni axis of the East/West road.

"The suspect is not alone in these killings," Dandaura affirmed, "though he has made useful confessions. The Command will go beyond his confessions to ensure that a conclusive end is achieved that will serve the interest of justice." Dandaura further disclosed, "Three suspects are in police custody and are being investigated in connection with these killings."

In his confession, West who admitted killing seven girls claimed he was under spiritual manipulation due to being the only son in a polygamous home.

"I don't know what is causing me to kill women in the hotel. When the spirit comes, it will be pushing me to go and kill, then, after killing the person, I will start regretting my actions," said the 39-year-old.

He admitted to having committed the same crime in Lagos and Owerri, Imo

State capital.

He said: "I always go to the hotel with a kitchen knife. When we (with the girl), go inside the hotel room after eating, after making love, we will sleep for a while. When the girl is sleeping, I will hold her on the neck with the knife and wake her up. I will tell her not to shout; that if she shouts, I would cut off her throat with the knife. At that threat, the girl will not shout. So, she will relax believing that I will not kill her. I will promise her that I will only tie her and keep but will not kill her."

He completely divulged his modus operandi: "After that, I will tear the pillowcase and use it to tie her hands and legs; so, when I will kill her, she will not struggle with me. But, before I kill her, I will increase the volume of the television in the room, so no one will suspect my action."

"While this will be going on, some of them will ask me, how do I want it? That, they have money in their accounts. I would ask her how much; they would check it before me. When I confirm it, I collect the PIN and after the day breaks, when I must have killed them, I will go to the ATM and collect the money in the account."

He used such money to lure other girls. His counted five victims killed in Port Harcourt and seven in Owerri.

"I started the killing in Lagos; that was where I got money because the first girl had N52, 000 in her account," he said. "After that, I went to Port Harcourt, then Owerri. I returned to Port Harcourt; the last girl, I met her in the club."

After killing the victim, West claimed he stayed in the room till daybreak until the laundry brought his. "Then, I will leave the hotel room, leave no suspicion in mind of the hotel management," he stated.

He sold his victims' phones to a phone dealer known as Shina at Garrison in Port Harcourt.

According to him, he had attended one of the popular Pentecostal churches in Oyiibo Local Government Area in the state, to meet the pastor for spiritual deliverance.

"I even went to the church (name withheld), a branch in Oyiibo. I told the pastor that I kill girls in a hotel, that I don't know what is happening to me and he should help me. The pastor told me that they have a programme that I should come back on Friday. He said that they don't allow people to sleep in the church. He told me to come back the next day, so he can take me to their General Overseer, who will be at the crusade."

When he refused to meet the church's overseer, the pastor had turned him out.

"I am the one doing all the serial killings in Port Harcourt. I was with a girl two days ago. But, I didn't harm her. But, when it comes on me I will kill the person", West confessed.

Meanwhile, the Rivers State Security Council has commended the Nigeria Police for arresting the prime suspect of the serial killings of young women in parts of the state.

Addressing journalists at the Government House Port Harcourt after an emergency meeting of the council presided over by Rivers State governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike on Friday, Secretary to the Rivers State Government, Dr Tammy Danagogo said that the meeting was impressed by the successes recorded by the Police in the last few days, especially the arrest of three suspects.

"The Rivers State Government has absolute confidence in the ability of the Police and other security agencies to tackle the challenge posed by these killers who target young women", Dr Tammy Danagogo said.

"These successes show that the support given to security outfits like the Operation Sting and other covert security initiatives is yielding positive results," he said.

The Police and other security agencies in Rivers State are on top of their game "because of the support that they receive from the Rivers State Government under the leadership of Governor Wike," he said.



R-L: Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, Imo State Governor, Emeka Ihedioha and Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde during a visit by six PDP governors to Government House, Port Harcourt, yesterday.

\$9.6bn judgment: Court remands ex-director in prison

FROM GODWIN TSA, ABUJA

A Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court has ordered a former Director, Legal Services of the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, to be remanded in prison custody over offences connected with the controversial P&ID \$9.6bn judgment given against Nigeria by a British court.

Justice Olukayode Adeniyi, sitting in Apo division of the court, ordered that the defendant be remanded in the Suleja Prison in Niger State.

Abiodun suspends N3,700 school levy in Ogun schools

AS schools in Ogun State resume for another academic calendar, the Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun has ordered the suspension of the three thousand, seven hundred naira (N3,700) education levy inherited from the previous administration.

The Governor who decried the public outcry generated by the fee, said his administration did not introduce it as it was a proposal by Parents Teachers Association accepted and implemented by the previous administration.

Prince Abiodun who made this known at a day stakeholders forum with the theme, "Repositioning Education for Sustainable Performance" held at the June 12



BEING A MUM
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Buhari greets foremost gospel