

Plenty trouble for wanted prisoner

- Escaped convict serving life jail for killing boss nabbed again after stealing Ipad • I escaped from Kuje Prison during terrorists' attack, but I don't know what made me steal again

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THE PRISONER AFTER THE ATTACK BY TERRORISTS

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From **Molly Kilete**, Abuja

The story of Abdulazak Isa, a 27-year-old man who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2010 for the murder of his then boss, an Indian national, could aptly be described as a life journey from frying pan into the burning fire.

Isa, who was serving his jail term at the Kuje Prison in Abuja, had already spent ten years in prison custody when terrorists attacked the facility on July 5 this year. Like hundreds of his fellow prisoners, Isa escaped from the prison that night. He made his way to Kaduna State where he went to hide in one of the villages.

However like the proverbial dog who will always go back to his vomit, Isa again went into robbery. He was said to have stolen an Ipad and a computer from a hotel in the village where he was taking refuge. He subsequently sold the items for N15,000.

Not too long after the incident, he was arrested by operatives of the IGP Intelligence Response Team (IRT). And during interrogation, the police officers discovered he was one of the escapees from the Kuje Prison.

The police immediately alerted the prison authorities who told them that the suspect was actually serving a life sentence for the murder of an Indian national working at a ceramic factory located along the Abuja/Kaduna Highway. He was said to have committed the offence sometime in 2010, and was sentenced in 2012.

An indigene of Ondo State but born and bred in Bauchi State, Isa was said to have committed the offence when he was just 17 years old.

During interrogation, he explained to the IRT operatives how he, alongside one of his colleagues, killed the foreigner who was his boss. The suspect, who was recently paraded by the Force Public Relations Officer Olumuyiwa Adejobi, said he was charmed by one of the Indians in the company who was at loggerheads with the deceased over official matters to kill his boss.



ISA

He said on the particular day of the incident, he and his partner entered the deceased's office, stabbed him several times in the stomach, shut the door behind them and escaped. He said his colleague had promised to give him 30, 000, out of the N100, 000, he collected from the man who asked them to kill his boss, but did not give him a dime after the crime.

Few hours after the attack, the man was found dead by his colleagues who called the police. During interrogation, it was discovered that Isa, and another colleague were the last persons seen with the deceased. The police immediately commenced investigation and got his partner arrested through his guarantor. Upon his arrest, he confessed to the crime and took the police to where Isa was taking refuge and got him arrested. He was charged to court and sentenced to life imprisonment in 2012. He was serving at the Kuje Prison when the terrorists attacked the prison. The suspect pleaded for mercy and asked government to set him free as he committed the offence when he was only 17.

Rearrested

Hear him in his own words: I am from Ondo State, but I was born and bred in Bauchi State. I was arrested at Tarfa Local Government area of Kaduna State for stealing an Ipad and a computer monitor from a hotel in Sabon Wuse, Niger State.

After stealing the items, I sold the monitor to one Taofik Salau for the sum of 5,000 naira and the Ipad to one Ladan for the sum of N10,000. I stole the items because I didn't have money to feed myself after I escaped from Kuje Prison.

How I became a criminal

I became a criminal after I gained employment at Royal Ceramic Company. I had not even finished my schooling when I joined the company through one of my friends. We are from the same area in Sabon Wuse. I was employed as a cook.

After I joined the company, there was this other Indian who I perceived was having a running battle with my boss. That was in 2012. By then, I had spent two years in the company, because I was employed in 2010 when I was 15

years old. At a point, the other Indian man approached me and started to give me money. He asked me to kill his brother, but I said I could not do it and he left me alone. But after sometime, he came back and gave me a drink and after I took the drink, I didn't understand myself again. I started doing whatever he told me to do. One day, I met this my colleague who introduced me to the job and told him everything about killing my boss. I said I could not kill the man because he was my master. He promised to give me N30,000, that the other Indian man was paying N100,000 for the job. So I agreed. But the following day, that my friend brought another drink for me and I drank it. I didn't know that it was from the same man that wanted me to kill my master.

On the day of the incident, which was a Friday, I saw that my colleague and he asked me if my boss was around and I told him yes, that he was in his office. My colleague now entered the office. Later when I got to my boss' office, I found out that he had stabbed my master and he told me he had stabbed my master. He said we should run away and I agreed. That was how I ran away with him.

I didn't even know that the man had died. It was the following day that I started hearing that they killed one Indian man and immediately I remembered the incident because he stabbed him in the stomach. After my discovery, I felt very bad but I couldn't tell anyone what really happened. I couldn't tell anybody because since I took that drink from the other Indian man, I didn't know what I was doing.

Two days later, they called us to report for work because the company was closed temporarily to allow police do their investigation.

After the investigation, they used the telephone numbers that we used in applying for the job to contact us. They first called that my colleague but he was not picking his calls so the police went to his house and arrested one of his family members and he showed up. When he reported to the police, he told the police that I was also involved and I was arrested and taken to the police station. Then they charged us to court and gave us life imprisonment for conspiracy and murder.

Life in Kuje

I was sent to Kuje Prison in 2013, and I had spent ten years. I was serving my jail term when all of a sudden, there was this night when Boko Haram terrorists invaded the prison around 10.30pm. They were shooting heavily and destroying all the padlocks used in locking the cells. Then they would ask everyone to come out and escape or they would shoot you.

We were in our custody on the day of the incident and there were heavy gunshots and explosives. Later on, we started seeing people with guns inside the prison. They started shooting at the locks and throwing explosives and said everybody should go outside. After we went outside through the gate, they used explosives to destroy the gate. When I got out, I followed the bush path. I know some parts of Abuja because I schooled at Sabon Wuse Central Primary School. I followed the bush path in Gwagwalada, entered Niger State, and then I went to Sabon Wuse.

I was staying at Sabon Wuse with fear because I was hiding there. I wasn't going out during the day, I only went out at night. I didn't go out to look for menial jobs because I was afraid of being arrested having escaped from the Kuje Prison.

So one day, I went to the hotel in Sabon Wuse and stole a computer monitor and an Ipad. I sold the computer monitor for N5,000, and the Ipad for N10,000.

I was arrested by the police one fateful night when I was coming back from an outing. One of the officers called to ask where I was going because it was late in the night at about 11pm. At the time, I was going to the house where I usually slept. That was how I was arrested.

He also gave reasons for his refusal to return to the prison. Said he: "I did not return to the prison after I escaped with the help of the terrorists because of fear. I was afraid to go back to the prison."

He said he has a word of advice to the youth. "My advice to the youth is for them to run away from crime and bad friends that would lead them into trouble. They should always listen to their parents because the parents want only the best for them and they are the only ones that can tell them the truth, not friends. I got into this mess when I was only 17 years old. Look at where I have landed now."