

Woman hired thugs to beat technician to death over N6000 phone

April 17, 2020 Correspondents



A 50-year-old man, Mr. Ezekiel Oni, has been beaten to death over a N6000 phone at the Alapere area of Lagos State. It was gathered that Oni bought an Itel-phone from a woman identified simply as Alhaja for N16, 000 and deposited N10, 000. He promised to balance N6000 later. It was alleged that because Oni failed to pay his balance at the agreed date, Alhaja sent thugs to beat him, in the process, Oni was killed. Oni's friend, Mr. Sunday Aladewolu, said: "A day before Oni promised to pay Alhaja; her husband called Oni and lied to him that he has a job for him. Oni was a technician. He used to rewire vehicles. The man asked Oni to come to their residence at Alapere.

The following day, Oni set out for Alhaja's home, believing he was going there to fix faulty cars. When Oni got there, he didn't know husband and wife had different plan for him. They had hired hoodlums to beat him for refusing to pay the balance for the phone. While they were beating him, he was shouting that he came with the money to pay Alhaja. But the thugs refused to heed him. After they were through with him, they left him at that spot and went away. He was rushed to a private hospital by someone who recognised him. He died a few hours later as a result of injuries he sustained from the beating." Aladewolu added:

"The Good Samaritan that rushed him to the hospital used Oni's phone to call me. I then informed his wife about the incident. I don't know why they beat up a grown up man like that to death because of N6000. He didn't steal the phone.

He would have paid earlier, but work was not coming as expected, thus the payment was delayed. Oni was an easy going person even in the workshop where we work. He was a technician; many of his customers can testify to it that he was an easy going person." Aladewolu, who described the death of Oni as unfortunate, disclosed that the deceased had two wives. While one of his wives had been told of his death, the other, who is heavily pregnant, had not been told. "I don't want my friend to die in vain.

I want justice because Alhaja and her husband believed they can do anything and get away with it because they have money. They are now trying to compensate the deceased's family members, so that they wouldn't take the matter to court," said Aladewolu.

The distraught first wife of Oni, Bolanle, revealed that was not the first time her husband had bought phone from Alhaja. She said: "He used to buy phones from her. In fact, he bought this present phone because his was stolen.

He paid her N10,000, to balance N6000, which he promised to pay the following Wednesday. My husband had even taken me to Alhaja's shop to buy a phone for me when I needed a new one. My husband always patronised her, but on that fateful Wednesday that Alhaja called to ask for her money, he had promised to give it to her later that day. I was surprised when a man called him that same Wednesday; the caller turned out to be Alhaja's husband. He told my husband that he wanted him to come and fix his car, that he should come to Aina Obe Street, Alapere. When my husband got to the street, hoodlums hired by Alhaja pounced and started beating him, calling him a thief.

When the couple realised that my husband was dead, they ran away. The corpse of my husband has since been deposited at the Ikorodu General Hospital Mortuary. Alhaja and her family members are now begging us, they want to compensate us with N500, 000.

We don't want their money, we want justice." Oni's daughter, Yemisi, who is a nurse, said: "I was not at home on that fateful day. I was on duty. It was after I got home that I heard about the incident. I returned in the morning to see a crowd in front of our house. Somebody told me that my father was dead. I became confused; how can someone I left at home hale and hearty suddenly die? I don't know how we are going to cope without him. How can they beat my father to death because of N6000? I'm appealing to the Lagos State Government to come to our aid, because my father shouldn't be allowed to be killed like a chicken. I also want to beg the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Hakeem Odumosu, to assist us, so that the case will not be swept under the carpet.

I don't have any other person to run to. When I followed my father's family members to the police station, we met Alhaja and her people there, they were begging us to collect N500, 000 and withdraw the case from the police, as if my father was a chicken."

The deceased's neighbour, Benjamin, said: "I saw Oni on Tuesday, he told me that he would be going to offset a debt of N6000 in order to avoid disgrace. I was shocked when I heard he had been beaten to death because of the money.

We've been living on the same street in the past six years. We also attend the same church. I've never known him to be a troublesome person. I heard that he has an aged mother in the village. We'll not rest until we get justice for him.

We, as residents' association are making efforts to get a good lawyer, who will help in getting justice for Oni and his family." All efforts to get Alhaja to state her side of the incident were abortive as her phone line was not going through, and her shop at Alapere was under lock and key. The Lagos State Police

Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Bala Elkana, when contacted about the matter, promised to find out the facts of the matter and get back to our correspondent, but as at the time of filing in the report, he was yet to do some.