

# Crime

## Missing mother of two found mutilated, buried in Lagos

Juliana Francis

**T**he search for the missing mother of two, Mercy Henry, has come to an end.

The 35-year-old woman was found, mutilated and buried in different sacks behind a building belonging to the prime suspect, Mr. Mayowa Timothy Bamidele.

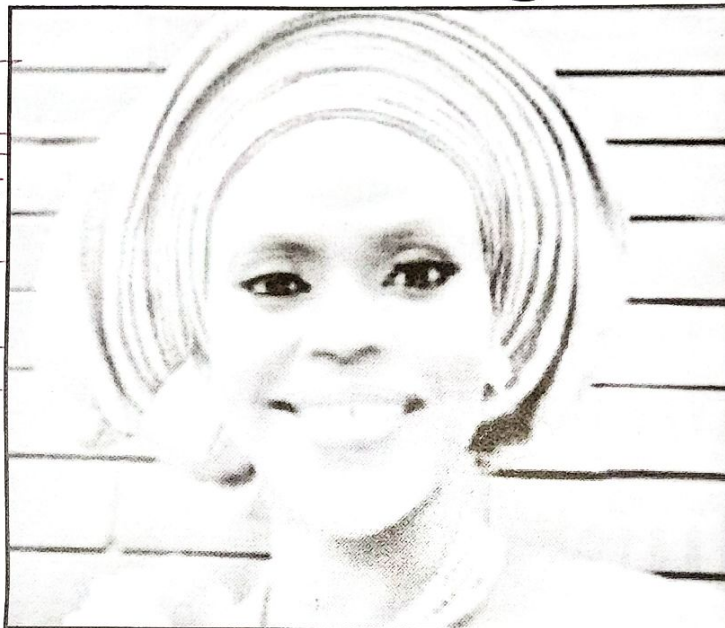
It will be recalled that Bamidele had repeatedly vehemently denied seeing Mercy. In fact, he maintained that he last saw her four years ago.

The deceased's grieving father, Pa Henry Ekienabor, 70, choking on emotion, said: "It's rather unfortunate that my daughter was killed, mutilated and buried at the back of Mayowa's house. She was killed on the same December 16th, 2021 that she left home. Police called my son on January 14th, 2022, to tell us the development. I was hoping and praying that maybe they had been able to track and locate where her captors kept her. The Police told us that she was murdered in cold blood, mutilated and then buried. After mutilating her corpse, she was then packed into five sacks and buried at the back of Mayowa's house. Police have gone to the scene to exhume her remains."

Pa Ekienabor further stated: "The breakthrough in the case was said to have started after the Police arrested four people alongside Mayowa. During interrogation, the detectives appealed to the four suspects that anyone who gives them useful information wouldn't be punished. One of the four men raised his hand and then volunteered information to the police. Police went there, searched the house and zeroed in on the spot where Mercy was buried. Police recovered her handbag, Automated Teller Machine (ATM) card and her phone. These items were hidden in one of the uncompleted houses inside the blocks there. Till tomorrow, Mayowa is still denying knowing anything about the matter; but when the police brought him out of the cell after interrogating the other four suspects; he saw them and almost collapsed. Yes, he knows them. They are working together, so he couldn't deny it."

Pa Ekienabor, who opined that Mayowa probably killed Mercy for money ritual purposes, added: "All the men of God, women of God, pastors, Bishops, I went to, all assured me Mercy was being kept somewhere, that we should pray, that she would come out, we didn't know that she had been killed and buried for long. Yes, she was killed three minutes after her friend, Ayo, transferred N30,000 into Mayowa's First Bank Account."

Mercy on December 16, told her family that she was heading to Ijegan, a suburb



Mrs Mercy Henry

of the Ikotun area of Lagos State; she however, never mentioned the name of the person she was going to visit.

Ekienabor said: "On December 16th I got a call from my son that Mercy didn't return home to sleep. She had told everyone she was going

to Ijegan, but she didn't mention the name of the person she was going to see. That same night, her siblings started calling all her friends, asking if they had heard or seen Mercy. One of her friends residing at Port Harcourt, named Ayo, said that she spoke

with Mercy at noon time. She said that Mercy called, asking for a loan of N30,000, that she needed it for treatment at a trado-medical home, that she was short of blood and getting leaner. Ayo told us that she paid the money into a First Bank account bearing the name, 'Mayowa Timothy Bamidele,' given to her by Mercy. The money landed in the account at 1:59pm and at 2:02pm, Mercy's phone number stopped going. Since then, we've not been able to reach her."

The following day, the anxious family members dashed to Gowon Police Station to make a formal complaint, declaring Mercy missing. Using the information supplied by Ayo, the police went to First Bank and with the assistance of the Bank, Mayowa; the account holder that received the N30,000, was arrested.

He, however, denied seeing Mercy. Pa Ekienabor said: "He claimed to have seen Mercy four years ago when she came to his traditional birth centre to deliver a baby girl. But his phone history and chats showed that he and Mercy spoke on December 15th about 9pm. Now, if you call her phone it would be switched off, but at night it would ring twice or thrice, then it would be switched off. It shows that someone used to charge it."

The children of Mercy, following her disappearance, had been asking for her; but relatives told them their mom would soon be home, unaware she had been killed and buried.

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Adekunle Ajisebutu, who confirmed the disappearance of Mercy and arrest of Mayowa last week, while speaking with our reporter on the latest development, said: "It's true some suspects have been arrested and exhibits recovered. We will make a comprehensive press statement soon."

## Survivor: How family members sexually abused me for 12 years

Wisdom Nwachukwu

**A** 20-year-old lady, who doesn't want her name disclosed, has shared the harrowing story of how she was sexually abused for 12 years by relatives.

Speaking exclusively with our reporter, she said that it started when she was very young.

She said: "An uncle came to the house to visit, and I was all alone. He took advantage of me, and then warned me never to tell anyone or he would hurt my little brother. I kept it to myself. It went on for several months and I was too scared to tell anyone. One day, I was told that I would be going far away to live. I was so happy and I felt so happy because the abuse would have to stop. I felt free. I felt I would start a new life all over at the new place I was going to. I didn't know that the new place was the beginning of my worst nightmare."

According to her, when she got to the new place, she was happy for a while, especially when she was enrolled in school. She was pampered and she felt special.

She said: "But affection was missing in my life. It wasn't my biological family home, but the person was a close relative. I wasn't liked by their mother or so I thought. Communication was difficult for me. I couldn't communicate

with anyone in the house, but I was free outside the house. After a year, things changed. The two boys started coming to my room at night or whenever we were left alone. It started with the oldest boy, he didn't have sex with me at first, but he violated and abused my body. I felt used and useless all at once. He never had sex with me, but the things he did and made me to do, were so nauseating. He would play with my breasts and make me suck his manhood. He would tell me things like I was a big girl and stuff. And then, before you know it, his younger brother joined. He was not that old, but he was older than I. He was like six or seven years older than me. It was even the younger one that used to make the threats. He would threaten to tell his parents to send me back to where I came from. I was called a pig. I was so scared that I didn't know what to do. There was no one to talk to, and the fact that I lacked communication skill and couldn't speak with mom and sister made my situation worse. I was all alone."

She recalled that she continued to stay alone and kept far away from everyone. She didn't like staying indoors because she no longer felt safe. "I was more terrified of staying indoors and preferred staying outside as long as possible, even preferred staying in school than returning home. I felt safer outside the house,"

she said.

According to her, she developed imaginary friends and then soon started telling herself that she was useless and not good enough for anything.

She said: "It was like that for years until I told myself that I was the one who could change my situation; through my mindset by saying enough was enough. I was tired of being scared and alone. I was no longer a child, and it was time for me to stand up and fight for myself, and no one was going to do it for me. I had no one to fight for me. It was a choice and decision, which I decided that it was time for me to make. I was no longer a child because I was 16 years old and was beginning to understand things and issues. And that was how my life changed. Soon, I was the one making threats. It took time, but the violations stopped. The psychological effects it had on me, is that I had a phobia for men. But now, I have got over it, thanks to the help of Google and books. Parents need to be aware of what is happening to their children. They also need to build that relationship and good communication with their children. Everyone needs to feel safe and loved. I was able to liberate myself from the shame of childhood abuse with the power of self-esteem and self-compassion. I can proudly say I'm a survivor and not a victim!"

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