

Taiwo Jimoh

A 34-year-old man, Rowland Horsfall has been beaten to death after being accused of generating a fake alert for hard drugs he purchased at the Trans-Amadi area of Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The victim, it was learnt had gone to buy some hard drugs from his customer, but was accused of sending fake alert for payment, resulting into a fight, leading eventually to his being beaten to death.

The suspected members of the Iceland Cult group who beat him to death are Endurance Thompson, Boma Otonye a.k.a. Excess Chiter (41), David Link Ishaku a.k.a. Biggy (34), Moses Nsikak Benjamin a.k.a. Aboy (29) and Emmanuel Aniete (32).

Genesis

Thompson who leads the Iceland Cult group where the hard drugs is being sold said Horsfall is one of his favorite customer who usually come to buy drug called Charlie from him for the past two years.

He said the deceased had become his customer and that whenever he doesn't come he will call him on phone to check on him and inquire why he did come to base to buy smoke.

"On the fateful day of the incident, Horsfall came around as usual to buy the same drug he usually get, and he will do transfer and leave. When I noticed that the transfers he made to me is fake, I tried to check the money he sent to me.

"I discovered that the money he claimed he sent to me didn't add up to the balance in my account, but he had gone then. I promised to deal with him whenever he comes again. When he eventually came, after buying his choice Charlie drug and sent same alert to me I told him to wait for me to confirm the money, he said he was in haste. I persuaded him to wait which he did. I later discovered that the money didn't add up to what I have in my account.

"I immediately reported him to my colleagues who sell drugs in the same area, we forced him to prostrate and we started beating him with cane telling him what he did was wrong. We then threatened to take him to police station and we dragged him into a tricycle. It was in the tricycle that he gave up the ghost and his corpse was dumped at Abuluma area of the state."

He added that, "what they did was just to threaten him, but not to kill him.

"It was at that point we decided to use his death to make money from his parents and threatened them that we have kidnapped him and we are going to kill him, if they didn't send ransom whereas he was already dead. I regret my actions, I

How cult group allegedly beat man to death for sending fake alert

...extort mother



The suspects

beg God for forgiveness."

Titus

Another suspect, Titus said they had no intention to beat him that fateful day, claiming they only wanted to threaten him.

It was true I flogged the deceased three times on his leg before he died in the tricycle.

"I was with Endurance selling Indian hemp. After I beat the deceased three times after which I went back to where I was selling my drugs, few minutes after I learnt he was dead in the tricycle, I was shocked, because how can cane just kill him just like that. That is what brought me to police.

"I am also a member of the Iceland Cult group. Those of us selling drug where the incident occurred are member of the cult group. No other cult group can come to our area to sell except we alone. We are very famous club in Rivers State."

Aniete

Aniete also told the police that his own specialised business is the sale of India hemp in the base and other hard drugs.

He also confessed to participating in the beating of the deceased because of the fake alert that he usually send to his brother.

He said: "if not that the deceased was arguing with us we wouldn't beat him, we would have allow him to go, because he's one of our regular customer in the base where we sell drugs.

"We only wanted to threaten him, because he has been doing it for long. I don't know he will die, we only used cane to flog

him, the beating was not much. I was arrested in my house."

Ransom

The suspects after killing the victim also extorted ransom from the victim's mother. The cultists initially demanded a ransom of N2.5 million from Horsfall's mother, who unknowingly transferred N300,000 to her son's account, unaware he had already been killed. Suspicious of their demands, she contacted the police, prompting swift action.

The ordeal of the victim began on September 10, 2024, when Horsfall left his residence in Peace Valley Estate, Woji, to attend a meeting in Port Harcourt.

Operation

Shortly after, the abductors raised the demand to N2.5 million, threatening dire consequences if their demands are not met.

They sent threatening pictures and voice notes to the victim's girlfriend, warning that Horsfall would be killed if the ransom wasn't paid promptly. Despite paying the N300,000, the victim remained in the Iceland cultists captivity.

The suspects eventually beat him to death and dumped his remains along Queens/Kings Bakery, Abuloma Road, Port Harcourt, when they were unable to receive the ransom they demanded from the victim's mother, he was beaten merciless till he gave up the ghost in their custody.

After receiving the complaint of the incident from the victim's mother, police operatives launched an operation and arrested the prime suspect, Thompson, in his hide out at Woji Town on November 3, 2024, which led to the arrest of all other members of

the cult group.

Confession

During interrogation, Thompson confessed to the crime, detailing how he and his gang members held Horsfall captive, killed him after failing to secure the ransom and disposed of his body.

"All the suspects reportedly confessed to the crime, while efforts are ongoing to apprehend other fleeing members of the gang."

Police

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Grace Iringe Koko, said on November 1, 2024, the River's State Police Command received a distress report from one Gloria Iyenemi George of Peace Valley Estate, Woji Port-Harcourt, suggesting that on September 10, 2024, her son left home to attend meetings in Dr Peter Odili road and GRA Port Harcourt respectively.

George said she told the Police that at about 8pm, she called her son to know his location and informed him that she was heading back home. Shortly after that all subsequent attempts made to reach him were unsuccessful, until the following day, September 11, 2024, when her son called again and informed her that he was being held hostage and his phone seized and demanding that he should pay a ransom of three hundred thousand naira before he could have his phone back.

Iringe-Koko advised youths to be cautious about their associations and movements to avoid falling victims to criminal elements.

"The command had intensified its manhunt for the remaining suspects to ensure they face the full wrath of the law."

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