



Onyeka



Tope

# Neighbour Strangles Seven-Year-Old Boy to Death, Demands N5m Ransom

Chiemelle Ezeobi

It was a typical case of man's inhumanity to man when one Onyeka Patrick strangled Ayuba, the seven-year-old son of his neighbour to death in Ikotun, a suburb of Lagos city. Not done, he made the boy's parents to believe that their son was still alive by demanding N5 million from them as ransom for his kidnappers.

The deceased was said to have playfully strolled into Patrick's compound on January 12, when he was abducted and strangled within minutes. From the suspect's account to THISDAY, it was gathered that the boy, as usual, had answered Patrick's call as he was a familiar face in the neighbourhood.

For someone the innocent boy called uncle, not even an adult mind would imagine that harm could come from a friendly neighbour. Patrick, with a straight face, narrated how helpless the lad was when he was being strangled, recounting how Ayuba looked into his eyes with a dire quest for his life to be spared.

Having killed him, he was faced with the next task of disposing of the corpse. He put the corpse in a sack and went to an uncompleted building next door where he dumped it in an empty soak-away pit.

For days, the parents of the boy were in anguish, frantically searching for little Ayuba. Patrick joined in the search and sometimes, he even wept to show how deeply touched he was by the 'disappearance' of the boy. When asked by his neighbours why he wept that much, he had explained that the boy was so dear to his heart and he could not understand who would have kidnapped such a lovely boy.

The parents then got a hand-written note asking for a N5 million ransom to get the boy released. Accompanying the ransom note was the suspect's phone number through which he demanded that the 'kidnappers' should be contacted. Even when that sum was way out of what they could ever raise, it brightened their hope that their son could be alive. It was a false hope.

The bubble burst when Patrick's elder brother saw the "kidnapper's" note and recognised the handwriting to be that of

his younger brother. Secretly, the elder brother quizzed him about the author of the handwritten note. But he insisted that he was not the one. He discarded the SIM containing the number he dropped in the note. Not convinced and suspicious of Patrick's moves, the elder brother reported the matter to the police at the Ikotun Police Station. Promptly, Patrick was arrested, and after initial denials, he confessed to the crime. He eventually led the police to where he dumped Ayuba's body, which had been ravaged by rodents and insects.

Yesterday, Patrick was paraded before journalists at the state Police Command in Ikeja. He could not explain the motivation for his actions, preferring to, as usual, blame the devil and greed for his dastardly act.

According to him, "I didn't plan to kill him. The thought came into me all of a sudden when he strolled into my compound. I was just sitting down when he came. As the thought came into me, I didn't pause to think but jumped at him. I took him to the backyard where I used my hands to strangle him to death."

"When I was strangling him, he did not shout or put up a resistance because he thought I was playing with him. By the time he started feeling in pain, he couldn't shout again because I had closed

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his wind pipes but his eyes spoke to me."

He added: "It was the devil. I used to be a glass fabricator and a footballer. I don't know what got into me that fateful day. I also don't know what made me demand a ransom. But I had intended to use the money to start life all over again. I was arrested because my brother recognised my handwriting and called in the police."

Confirming the incident, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Ngozi Braide, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, said the suspect confessed to his crime only when he was transferred to the State Anti-robbery Squad (SARS), Ikeja.

Braide added that upon confession, the suspect led SARS operatives to recover the decomposed body of the victim from the pit. The body has since been deposited at the Isolo General Hospital mortuary for autopsy. Braide said the suspect would soon be charged to court for murder since all aspects of the investigation had been covered.

And in a similar development, the Ketu Police Division also arrested another suspected kidnapper, one Tope Akingbemila, who had attempted to kidnap a five-year-old boy simply identified as Dayo. THISDAY gathered that the suspect and three others had already dragged the victim into a tricycle popularly known as *Keke Marwa* and had attempted to flee with him before he was caught by bystanders.

An angry mob chased and arrested Tope while the three others escaped. Tope confessed that he had actively participated in three other kidnap operations that were successful.

Speaking to THISDAY, Tope admitted that his job was to kidnap children and demand ransom. He said: "I am a kidnapper. That is how I make my money. I have successfully kidnapped three children with my partners and collected a ransom of N500,000 each."

"I was brought into the business by Baba Fatai, a *babalawo* (medicine man). Even when Baba Fatai said he had retired, I continued because it is lucrative."

Braide said the suspect had been cooperating with the police to assist them track the fleeing gang members, adding that investigation is in progress.

## Two-Minute Briefing

### NEWS

#### Presidency Flays Buhari, CPC's Comments on Emir of Kano

The presidency yesterday lampooned former Head of State and national leader of the CPC, Maj. Gen. Buhari (rtd), describing his comments on the attack on the Emir of Kano, Alh. Ado Bayero, as irresponsible and reckless.

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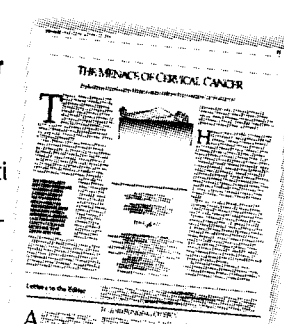


### EDITORIAL

#### The Menace of Cervical Cancer

The precise death toll may never be known. But there is no denying the fact that the number is staggering. Dr. Maliti Kerry, a cancer prevention specialist, says cervical cancer kills about 80,000 Nigerian women every year.

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### POLITICS

#### A Boost for Fayemi

The endorsement, some weeks ago, of Governor Fayemi of Ekiti as the ACN candidate in next year's governorship election by some leaders of the party in the state may have set the tone for the election...

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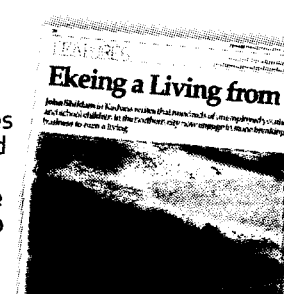


### FEATURES

#### Eking a Living from Stone Breaking Business

John Shiklam in Kaduna writes that hundreds of unemployed youths and school children in the northern city now engage in stone breaking business to earn a living

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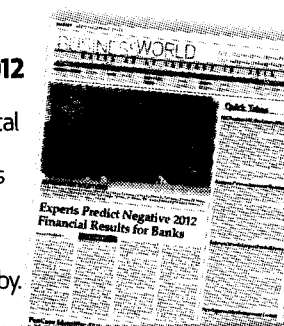


### BUSINESS

#### Experts Predict Negative 2012 Financial Results for Banks

The recent rebound of the capital market as a result of investors' bets on positive full year results of banks may be cut short soon if expert's prediction that the much-awaited results will be disappointing is anything to go by.

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### CITYSTRINGS

#### Abandoned Karu International Market, Wears a New Look

George Okoh writes that the Karu Int'l Market in Nasarawa State is one of the major projects being executed by the Nasarawa State Governor to give the state a new look

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### INTERNATIONAL

#### Israeli Election Records High Turnout

Israelis yesterday voted in large numbers in a general election in which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to be returned to office.

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### SPORTS

#### NFF Summons Keshi over Eagles' Performance

Super Eagles Head Coach, Stephen Keshi was yesterday summoned by the leadership of NFF to explain how Nigeria squandered the chance to defeat Burkina Faso...

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