

## BEREAVED DAD WAILS:

# It's cruel for Police to beat my son to death, then turn around to say he died of epilepsy

By Wole Mosadomi, Minna

**P**ATHETIC, CRUEL! — These words aptly capture the untimely death of a young and promising photojournalist, Adekunle Adebuseye Lawrence who died few days after allegedly receiving severe beating from security men attached to the personal residence of Niger state governor, Dr. Muazu Babangida Aliyu. Late Adekunle, 25, was said to have died few days after being badly battered and having spent four days in a private hospital in Tunga area in Minna following the police brutality.

### How it happened

Adekunle was a private photographer who worked for Dr. Babangida Aliyu years back, even before his election as governor of the state. He was a household name in the Babangida home. In fact, except if explained, late Adekunle could be mistaken as one of the children of the governor.

Narrating the unfortunate incident to *Saturday Vanguard*, father of the deceased, Pa Lawrence Adebuseye said his late son went to the governor's private residence on Wednesday, May 30, 2007, to deliver the photographs he snapped during the May 29th inauguration during which Dr. Babangida was sworn in as governor of the state.

As usual, Adekunle was allowed entry into the premises of the governor and attended to by the wife of the governor, Hajiya Jummai Aliyu who went through the photographs. The governor's wife was said to have later returned to her bedroom to dress up in order to take some photographs for her official use. She was to return without seeing Adekunle.

While in the waiting room, the deceased was said to have been accosted by one of the security men attached to the house, who asked of his mission. Not satisfied with the explanation given by the deceased, the security man allegedly dealt some blows on Adekunle as he dragged him out of the waiting room. At this point, as he was being dragged out, other security men descended on him, beating him into a state of coma. As if that was not enough, a mobile policeman also attached to the residence hit him with the butt of his gun and the photographer was reportedly left rolling on the

floor in pains, unattended to. While in pains, Adekunle's wife who was immediately notified rushed to the scene where she quickly rushed her husband to a private hospital in the Tunga area of the state capital. And just as Adekunle was receiving treatment, the news spread quickly to every nook and cranny of the town. That was how late Adekunle's father got informed of his son's ordeal.

### Shock for governor's family

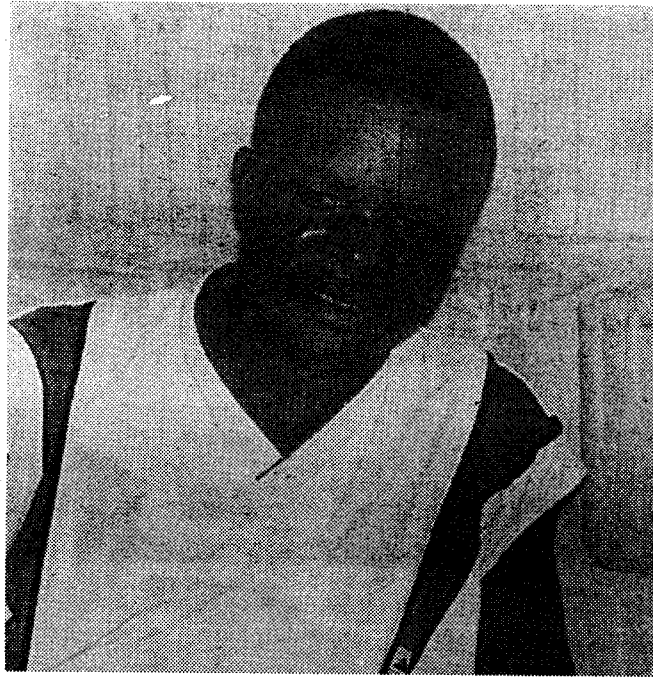
It was unbelievable and shocking for both the governor and his wife when the news was broken to them. The duo wondered if the same security men were not at the gate when the photographer gained access into the compound before they were to later meet him at one of the waiting rooms. So evidently dazed, the governor immediately gave a directive for an immediate investigation into the matter and that the overzealous security men should be identified and brought to book while Adekunle should be adequately treated at the hospital.

### But death came calling

Late Adekunle was hospitalized and discharged after four days in the hospital. Everyone thought that would be the end of the matter, as all that remained was for him to recuperate and resume his normal life. But his discharge from the hospital was only the beginning of his final journey to death.

But six days after being discharged, the unbelievable happened in the early hours of Saturday, June 9. He had spent few days at home after his discharge. As usual, the family members were woken up for the early morning prayer. The wife of the deceased, Folashade, as usual, woke her husband up for prayers but he did not respond well after several attempts.

Based on his health, the wife left him to continue to "rest" while she and their only son, seven-year old Francis went for the prayers, not knowing that her bread winner was gradually passing on. After the prayers, the wife went back to the room just to wake her husband up, only to discover that Adekunle was almost lifeless. She raised an alarm that drew the attention of the photographer's father and other neighbours to the



●Late Adekunle: Died after discharge from hospital



●Widowed: Folashade and late Adekunle on wedding day

house. He was immediately rushed to a general hospital. The doctor who rushed out to give a helping hand from the car confirmed Adekunle dead.

"Baba, he is gone," the doctor broke the news to the father who accompanied others to the hospital. It was simply unbelievable.

### His ambition, his last moments

His ambition was to become a professional photographer of repute. He dreamed that one day, he would be counted among the photography giants in the country. But dreams die first.

In an interview, the wife of the deceased, Folashade recalled the last moments of

her husband with the family. "A day before (his death), he had ordered tipper loads of building sand to be delivered on a plot of land he had acquired, on which he intended to erect his own personal building. But look at what they had done to me," she said.

Adekunle who lost his mother few years ago had lived with his wife in his father's house. His ambition to become a reputable photographer and a landlord at his early life also became shattered. Married in 2004 to the deceased, Folashade said there was no premonition of his death since he was not sick.

"We ate together on the eve of his death during which we discussed at length on



Bereaved: Pa Adebuseye Lawrence

*The Police said it has no hand whatsoever in the death....state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Paul Isegbohi said Adekunle died of epilepsy, and not torture from his men*

various issues." Folashade who is a fashion designer narrated in a grief-laden voice continued: "I never knew that it would be our last supper together; I never knew that it was our last discussion."

And she began to sob, quite uncontrollably. Asked what she would want the government to do, Folashade simply said: "I leave that to them (government) to decide; I can't put money to the life of my husband. But I want the government to find my husband's killers. He didn't do anything to be killed that way."

The family, however, acknowledged the financial assistance given by the governor towards the settlement of the medical bill of their late son. "We thank the governor and his wife for the kindness they showed when my husband was shot," added the widow.

### He died of epilepsy— Police

IN what seems to be a twist to the death of Adekunle Adebuseye, the Police said it had no hand whatsoever in the demise. The state commissioner of police, Mr. Paul Isegbohi told journalists that Adekunle died of epilepsy, and not torture from his men.

He said that investigations carried out revealed that the deceased collapsed when he was being led out of the premises of the governor and started rolling on the ground as he was foaming in the mouth, which was a symptom of epilepsy. This, according to him, kept the security men off from giving any help to the deceased until his wife eventually arrived the scene and took him away.

**They're lying, says**

### dad

But in a swift reaction, father of the deceased, Pa Lawrence Adebuseye said his son had never suffered from epilepsy or any other related disease in his life. He described the claim by the Police as scandalous and damaging to the family but did not say what step to be taken against the Police on the matter.

He said no member of his family has traces of the disease, saying, "the police is just trying to cover up and surely, truth will prevail soon."

### Doctor: Autopsy'll clear the air

*Saturday Vanguard*, however, called at the private hospital where the deceased was treated and discharged before he eventually died, just to ascertain the ailment for which the late photographer was admitted and treated when rushed to the hospital.

Dr. Akikoye, the Medical Director of the hospital, said that he cannot categorically state what actually led to the death of Adekunle since he died about six days after being discharged from his hospital.

"What I can tell you is that he was rushed here after being beaten up, according to those who brought him and was treated for pains and discharged after some few days hail and hearty," the doctor explained.

Akikoye added that if the family, parent and relatives are interested in ascertaining what led to the death of their son, they could "order for autopsy" which could be perfectly done in either Kaduna or Ibadan.