

# PANORAMA

By Evelyn Usman

## While Nuru slashed his throat with a knife, I held a bowl close to his neck for the blood to drain into'

● *Confessions of 35-yr-old Muyideen, who with a friend at large allegedly snared teenaged Rilwan, killed him and drained his blood for money-making ritual*



● Soji Akodiyin, the herbalist, and Muyideen at Seme Police station. Photo by Evelyn Usman

**A**KETEGBO community in Seme, Badagry area of Lagos, was three weeks ago thrown into mourning following the discovery of the dead body of a teen-aged boy three days after his strange disappearance from his mother's shop. The deceased, identified simply as Rilwan was, according to neighbours, last seen in his mother's kiosk at J4, Seme, where he helped his mother sell cooked beans popularly known as *ewa aganyin*. The lad, who was the first child in a family of four, also ran errands for people and at the end got stipends which he used to assist his mother who barely managed to make ends meet.

All was however going on well in their own little way until that fateful day when he was declared missing. After a long wait for his return, a search party was said to have gone round the nooks and crannies of neighboring communities to look for him. Apprehension set in after two days of long search without any positive result. But just when the search party had given up hope of seeing the missing boy, his remains were seen three days after with his throat slashed, signifying that he could have been a victim of a ritual killing which is said to be a common incident in the area.

The first accusing finger was pointed at one Muyideen Salam whose shop is close to the deceased's mother. He was said to be the person last seen with the deceased. After much persuasion which later took a brutal dimension, Muyideen opened up and revealed that he had used the deceased for a money ritual.

**S**hock and disbelief were the right words to describe the expression on the faces of sympathisers who trooped in droves to console the bereaved mother who was yet to come to terms with the reality of her son's death. But for the intervention of some Policemen from Seme division, Muyideen might have been lynched by an angry mob.

When *Saturday Vanguard* met with Muyideen, he blamed his action on poverty and frustration. The 35-year-old Ibadan-born young man who said he was an orphan without a brother, a sister, an uncle or an aunt, lamented that his wife left with their two children when feeding them became an uphill task. With remorse written all over him, he narrated his involvement in the killing of Rilwan and pleaded passionately that he be left off the hook as if his freedom depended on his pleas. The

suspect who was in the company of the herbalist that required human blood for the money-making ritual spoke in Yoruba as he could not express himself in English. Excerpts:

"Ah, *aye mi o!* (Oh, see what I've done to myself) If only I had known I would not have partaken in Rilwan's killing. I would not have listened to Nuru, my friend when he sold the idea to me.

"I was all alone in the video club shop owned by my master when a friend of mine called Nuru came and said he knew someone who could make us get rich. He told me that all that was needed was just the blood of a boy of about fifteen years old. He said all I needed to do was to get the person since he had already contacted the herbalist that would do the money ritual for us. In my desperation I told him we would take Rilwan, mama *elewa's* son since I could get

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easy access to him because he usually ran errands for me and I sometimes gave him money and unused clothes. We also felt it was needless to go out to get somebody since Rilwan stays in the same area with us. I made Nuru understand that getting someone was not the problem but taking the person to *baba's* shrine where he would be killed. When we told *baba* our constraint, he gave Nuru a ring and instructed us to just touch whoever we wanted to bring with it and that the person will follow us without hesitation. That was how I called Rilwan on getting to the shop and touched him with the ring.

"To our surprise, he became dumb and followed us to the shrine. When we got to the shrine, we kept him there for it to get dark before we would kill him. When it was midnight and there was no sight of anyone around, we took him away from the shrine and laid him on the ground. While Nuru slashed

his throat with a knife, I held the bowl that was given to us by *baba* close to his neck for the blood to pour into it. Rilwan did not put up any resistance as promised by *baba* because he was hypnotized and his memory was gone. After we collected the blood, we gave it to *baba* and carried Rilwan's body far from the place to avoid suspicion and threw it on the expressway so as to give an impression that he was hit by a vehicle and thereafter went to bathe with the blood. He performed some ritual before us and mixed blood with a black native soap and gave us to bathe with it after which he said we would be rich.

"But after bathing with the substance on the third day, we did not see any money. We were as poor as we used to. We were so angry and decided to go to *baba's* shrine and fight with him. But on our way to his place, Rilwan's mother held me, and asked me to produce his son. She said she was informed that I was last seen with

his son. I denied I was ever with him, but she vehemently refused to give up. This caused a scene and people gathered round me and started beating me. Then Nuru, my partner in crime was with me. At that moment some Policemen came and took me to their station where I opened up.

"Now, Nuru who lured me into it is on the run while I'm left to bear the brunt alone. If I had known, I would have continued working for my master where I was being paid N1,500 every month. The most painful aspect of it is that I neither have a mother, a father, a sister nor a brother. I am just all alone in this world. My wife left me with our two children about five years ago because I could barely feed my family. Since then I have been living from hand to mouth.

"Are they going to kill me? What is the next line of action because I do not want to die even though I have partaken in the killing of Rilwan? I know Rilwan's blood that I

shed is responsible for my being arrested. Now, the money I thought I would get at the end is not there. My former situation is better than this present predicament," he lamented.

Sitting next to Muyideen was a haggard looking herbalist who identified himself as Soji Akodiyin. The 45 year-old man who said he inherited the profession from his father right from infancy, claimed this was his first time of indulging in money making ritual.

**A**ccording to him, "I am a herbalist who specialized in attending to barren women. I also help people to get work and also give charms to traders to sell more than their fellow traders. I do not charge my clients much. Sometimes I collect N50, N100, N200, N500, depending on what the oracle dictates. It is then left to my clients to bring anything they wish if what I did for them works.

"But I got the money ritual charm from a colleague ten years ago, when all the herbalists went for a meeting in Ijebu-Ode. Usually what we do at such meetings is to help ourselves. For instance if I have the cure to any disease and others do not, I will give to them and whatever any of us has that others don't we would share it among ourselves. That was how the *baba* gave most of us *ogun owo* and instructed us on how to administer it to our clients. But I have never used it before. This is my first attempt. It was even when Nuru who is currently on the run came to me for help that I remembered I had such charm."

Asked if he instructed his clients to get human blood to make the ritual, he said "I told them that what would be needed was human blood because money ritual is one of the greatest tasks in our line. I told them they could either use their own blood for it but I believe they never wanted to and therefore brought that of the boy."

Were you around when the boy was slaughtered?

"No, I was not. I didn't know when they even brought him. He was not killed in my shrine."

Muyideen interrupted: "It is a lie. You knew when we brought the boy; you were even the one that gave us a bowl with which to take the blood. You even instructed us not to kill him in your shrine for security purpose and you were aware when we were killing him that night."

Why didn't the charm work?

"It did not work because they did not follow my instructions. The instruction was to bathe with the prepared concoction nine days after its preparation but they used it on the third day. If they had used it as instructed, it would have worked."

How would the money have come after the proper administration of the concoction?

"They would have witnessed a total turn around in whatever they set their hands to do. Their business would be lucrative and if they had like N1,000 before and kept it in their bag, they would find an amount triple that the next morning."

## How 29-yr old beauty fell prey to 17-yr old beast

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not see madam but he saw blood in the parlour. He asked Monday to take me to the parlour and we went in and I saw blood every where. I asked him where was madam, did he say she was dead?

he said he did not see madam. Oga's friend now said he was going to call the Police and I supported him and that was it. When I asked him where madam was he did not even tell me the truth that he has killed madam.