

Metro

Battered, killed and hanged

The shocking and bizarre story of a young welder who was tricked by his friend and killed in Ikot Ekpene

BY TONY NYONG, Uyo

GABRIEL Danson Bassey, 26, an indigene of Ikot Ekwere Ubium, Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State was a professional welder and lived at No 33 Akpa Ube Street, Uyo. On August 9, 2011, the young man felt he deserved some rest and fun, and so went out to relax with some friends at a joint in Uyo. After they had had a fill of the fun the place could offer, they took their leave and Gabriel was later dropped off at his residence by one of his friends.

The story, however, took a tragic turn the following morning, August 10, as his lifeless body was found dangling in front of a shop along Umuahia Road in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area. The pair of trousers he wore became the noose with which he allegedly hanged himself. A measuring tape, pen, a pair of his shoes and an exercise book were found on the floor where his body was discovered.

Initially, those who rushed to see this 'august' spectacle shouted, suicide. But on a closer examination, it was discovered that Gabriel never committed suicide. He was beaten to death and later dragged up and hanged with his trousers to make it look like suicide. The body of the late Gabriel was later deposited at the Ikot Ekpene General Hospital Mortuary, after necessary clearance was given by the Police and the needed sacrifices performed to cleanse the environment of the abominable act.

Appropriate authorities

The body of the deceased was later released by the appropriate authorities to be buried in his home town, Ikot Ekwere Ubium, Nsit Ubium Local Government Area, and that was when the bubble burst. All along, the death of young Gabriel was shrouded in total mystery. People were confused as to how Gabriel, who was with some friends in Uyo the day before, could suddenly be found hanging at somebody's shop along Umuahia Road, in Ikot Ekpene the following morning.

It was during the occasion of the burial of Gabriel sometime in September, that it was discovered that one of his very close friends was not present at the ceremony. The young man, simply known as Isaiah, is also an indigene of the same village where the late Gabriel hailed from. Vanguard Metro, VM, checks revealed that Isaiah was putting up with Gabriel at 33 Akpa Ube

Street, Uyo until worried about his dubious lifestyle, Gabriel one day asked him to find accommodation elsewhere. Not quite long after Isaiah, also a welder, had left Gabriel's home, an alarm was raised that the said Isaiah, had stolen a generator belonging to someone he went to work for. Since Isaiah could not be found, the Police, in company of the owner of the generator came and arrested Gabriel since it was common knowledge that Isaiah lived with him. He was detained and asked to produce Isaiah. Gabriel, who did not know the whereabouts of Isaiah, had no other option than to take the Security Operatives to the village (Ikot Ekwere) and showed them Isaiah's home. His parent were subsequently arrested, Isaiah was fished out and the generator returned.

After the burial of Gabriel, a concerned brother got curious and started making enquiries about the whereabouts of Isaiah. It was discovered that Isaiah was now living somewhere along Ekom Iman junction. It was there that the concerned brother (also a welder) acting on intuition, told Isaiah on phone that there was

Akpan Abia, where he is currently helping the Police to unravel the mystery behind the murder of the late Gabriel. A top Police source, who spoke to VM on condition of anonymity, disclosed that Isaiah has admitted to killing Gabriel Bassey but is yet to mention his accomplices, since it was discovered that it was practically impossible for Isaiah to have carried out the dastardly act alone. Asked about the motive behind the murder of Gabriel, the Police source hinted that Isaiah claimed that he planned and killed Gabriel because the deceased was pestering him incessantly on the debt he (Isaiah) was owing him and also because Gabriel brought policemen to his village to arrest his parents.

VM investigation also revealed that Isaiah may have tricked Gabriel to come to Ikot Ekpene immediately with a claim that there was a job waiting for him there. That clearly figures out why a measuring tape, a pen and an exercise book were found on him, when his lifeless body was discovered. It is, however, still unclear whether the Police has concluded their investigations on the matter as the world is watching with deep interest on the unfolding events as it relates to the murder of young Gabriel. The Police Public Relations Officer, Onyeka Orji, could not be reached for comments as at the time of filing this report as he was unable to pick his calls.

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work which required his welding services. That was how Isaiah was lured by the concerned brother and later handed to the Police at Ewet Housing Police State as the prime suspect on the murder of Gabriel. He was later taken to Ikot Ekpene Police State for further questioning. It was there that it was discovered that the said Isaiah and another welder, were Gabriel's relaxation partners the day before he was brutally murdered.

The other suspect was also arrested by the Police, but later released. Isaiah is currently under the custody of the Homicide Unit of the State Police Command, Ikot



'Beaten and hanged...the late Gabriel Bassey'

Council boss harps on prayer for success

•Launches a jetty in December to ease transportation

BY OLASUNKANMI AKONI

THE re-elected chairman of Ejigbo Local Council Development Area, Lagos state, Mr. Kehinde Bamigbetan has stressed the importance of prayer in every area of endeavour, saying it is the key to success of any government.

Speaking at the council secretariat, during Christian and Islamic prayer sessions held to usher in a successful second term in office, he also disclosed that his administration is set to introduce water transportation system by launching a jetty in December, which will enable ferries to transport people from Ejigbo to Festac and Lagos Island.

The council boss in his address at the interdenominational service attributed the modest achievements he recorded in three years in office to

prayers by religious leaders in the LCDA. He added that "in October 2008 when we first assumed office, we had the lofty idea of turning Ejigbo into a mini-London, but we encountered many challenges and obstacles; if not for prayers, we would not have recorded any major achievements".

Bamigbetan further said: "Nobody believed we could provide free uniform for 4,200 pupils in our public primary schools; also, nobody believed we could provide free meal for the pupils every Monday. We were able to provide these people-oriented services and many others for the benefit of our people through the power of prayers, and I believe, our decision to begin our second term in office under the umbrella of God is a right decision".

He, therefore, called on religious leaders to use their close-

ness to God, to pray for the success of his administration as he prepares to fulfill all the promises he made during his electioneering campaign.

The council boss said: "In the next three years, we hope to construct the much talked about Ejigbo-Ajao Estate link bridge, introduce water transportation system by launching a jetty in December which will ferry people from Ejigbo to Festac and Lagos Island and also rehabilitate 30 major roads within the council".

Mr. Bamigbetan added that all these projects could only be accomplished with the support of God and the people.

He appealed to the religious leaders to use their spiritual ability to clear all obstacles and difficulties that may stand as stumbling blocks during his stay in office.