

CrimeAlert

By Esther Onyegbula

THREE teenagers are currently cooling off in one of the holding cells at the State Criminal Investigations Department (SCID), Panti, Yaba, Lagos, over the death of one of their friends, Ibrahim Musa, who was allegedly stabbed during a brief disagreement over N2,000.

The suspects identified as Olatunji Oladeji, 16, Taiye Muraina, 20, and Ibrahim Habeeb, 18, were apprehended by the Police after allegedly stabbing the young man to death.

Crime Alert gathered that on May, 24, Habeeb, allegedly gave Olatunji, N2,000 for safe keeping. The next day, he requested Olatunji to give him back the money, unknown to him that he had already spent it on sport betting.

When Habeeb eventually discovered that his money has been spent by his friend, he became furious.

It was learned that all efforts by another friend, Ibrahim Musa, to make peace between Habeeb and Olatunji were unfruitful as the argument degenerated into physical confrontation. It was during the brawl that Habeeb's elder brother, called Taiye, allegedly stabbed the peace maker, Ibrahim Musa, with a broken bottle on the head and hand.

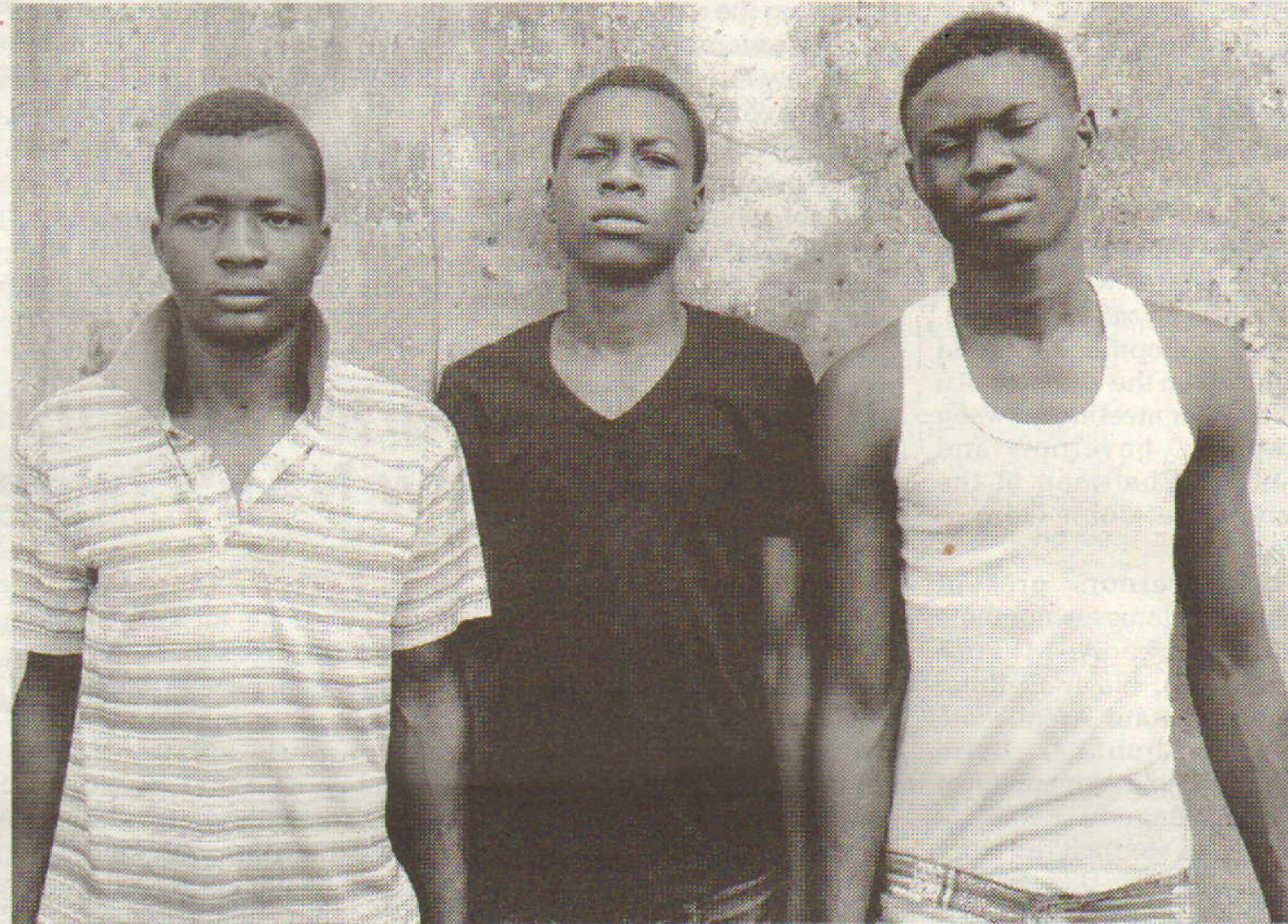
Crime Alert learned that the deceased who was rushed to different private hospitals within Pelewura Market was refused treatment before he was eventually taken to the General Hospital in the area. Unfortunately, by the time he arrived at the hospital, he had lost a lot of blood and was confirmed dead.

Suspects' account

Narrating events that led to the unfortunate incident, Olatunji, who spent the contentious money told **Crime Alert** that it was a casual disagreement that resulted in the death of his friend. According to Olatunji who hails from Oyo State, "I am a student of King Ade High School, Lagos Island. I live at 26, Abukuru Street, Ajegunle, Lagos.

"The reason I was arrested is because Taiye and Ibrahim fought and injured themselves and in the process, Ibrahim died. I am not the one who fought. I was arrested because I was the cause of the fight. I owe Habeeb N2,000, which he gave to me for safe keeping. However, I spent the money on sport betting and I did not win. So, when he came asking me for the money, I

SPORT BETTING: Peacemaker killed in brawl, 3 in Police net



•The Suspects

told him I will give it to him in the night. But Habeeb did not accept to hold on till the evening. He held me by the waist, saying he must get his money.

"I told him I had used the money to play sport betting in their shop. I also told him to be patient that I would give him the money later.

Ibrahim, who we all respect as an elder, intervened and told Habeeb to be patient with me, that after all, it was his business that I spent the money on. Ibrahim started fighting with Habeeb that he should let me be since I had promised to pay back later in the evening. Habeeb however insisted that he needed to prepare his account, that his boss would soon arrive.

"It was during this argument that a friend of mine who was also there loaned me the N2,000 and I settled Habeeb and the matter was resolved.

"I do not know why Taiye and Ibrahim started fighting and injured themselves. Ibrahim was terribly injured with a broken bottle and when he was rushed to the General Hospital, he was confirmed dead.

"After the incident, Ibrahim's friends who saw him with blood came after me and Habeeb, claiming we were the cause of the fight. But, Pelewura market security men arrived just on time to save us from the wrath of touts. That was how we were taken to the police."

Expressing regret over his actions, Olatunji advised lovers of sport betting to desist from the act. According to him, "I really regret taking the money from Habeeb. My greatest regret and advice to young boys out there who play sport betting is to desist from it as

it has had influence on their lives. You will end up spending all you have on what is not valuable."

In his defence, the owner of the money, Habeeb Ibrahim, told **Crime Alert**: "I work as an agent in with a sports betting outfit (name withheld). It was after my secondary school education that I began to work there as my parents had no money to further my education. So, I came to Lagos to help my elder brother who owns a sport betting business.

"It all started on May 23; a friend of mine gave me N2,000 to keep for him. Knowing that I am very careless when it comes to money, I gave it to Olatunji who is a good friend. The next day when the owner of the money came for it, I started looking for him to get the money back. Shortly after, he came to our shop. I requested for the money. I also told him that after a fruitless search for him, I had to take out of my boss' business money to settle the owner of the money. I told him I needed the money to balance my account for the day.

"Trouble stated when Olatunji started behaving funny. I held him by the waist and he then told me he did not have money. He claimed he had used the money to play sport betting in our shop and that after all, it was on our business that he spent the money on.

It was at this point that Ibrahim Musa intervened; he did not come in as a peacemaker but supported Olatunji not to pay back the money since he spent it on our business.

"I was very displeased with what Ibrahim said. I told him not to encourage Olatunji not to pay the N2,000. While I was talking to him, I pushed him on the shoulder. He gave me a blow and beat me up in the shop. After this slight misunderstanding between Ibrahim and I, Olatunji just came in with the N2,000 and gave it to me. I do not know where he got it from. We then settled the matter and I went back to attend to customers in the shop.

"Suddenly, someone rushed into the shop to call me that Taiye, who is like an elder brother to me and Ibrahim Musa were fighting outside over the same issue we had settled. Olatunji and I rushed out to see what was happening. Surprisingly, we saw Ibrahim's arm bleeding seriously. Ibrahim ran after me, I fell. He was holding a broken bottle which also fell off his hand.

A friend of Ibrahim stopped him and told him I was not the one who stabbed him. Some of his friends then came around and tried to attack me. But thanks to the security men around who rescued me and Olatunji. It was the security men that took Olatunji and I to Adeniji-Adele Police Station and that was where we heard that Ibrahim was dead."

Denying the allegation, the third suspect, Taiye Muraina who reportedly stabbed Ibrahim said he is not responsible for stabbing Ibrahim.

"I was just telling Ibrahim that the way he intervened in the case was not the best, especially as he is the eldest of us all. I asked him how he would have felt if he was in Olatunji's shoes. We started arguing and Ibrahim broke a bottle on my head. I ran away. I am not the one that stabbed him. I don't know who stabbed him on the head and his arm."

Confirming the incident, Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Kenneth Nwosu, said the police is still investigating the suspects to ensure that the culprits are brought to book.

It was during this argument that a friend of mine who was also there loaned me the N2,000 and I settled Habeeb and the matter was resolved. I do not know why Taiye and Ibrahim started fighting and injured themselves