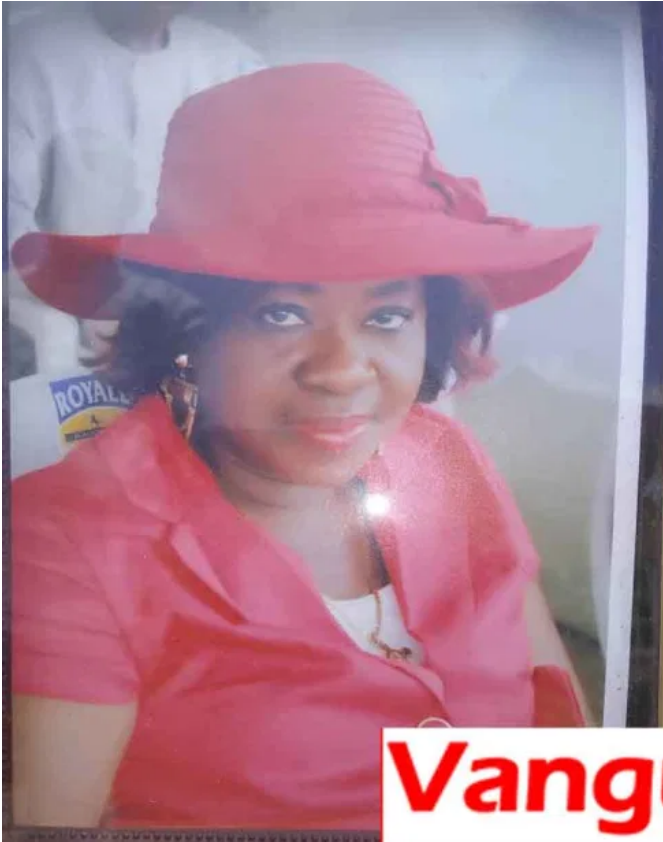


# 'How our houseboy killed my wife, tried to kill me too'

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**Vanguard**

By Emmanuel Elebeke

Wonders they say never cease to happen. When she woke up on the morning of June 1, 2020, to mark her 55th birthday, little did Victoria Wilcox know that she would not witness the next.

On that fateful day, late Victoria, a mother of two, from Arondizuogu, Imo state and married to Mr Ralph Wilcox from Bonny LGA in Rivers State met her painful and gruesome death around 8 pm, when her houseboy named Abdulkareem Babangida (Abba in short form), a native of Kachia LGA of Kaduna State clubbed her to death with the aid of a newly acquired cutlass.

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With the heinous job done, he dragged her lifeless body under a tree in the compound and waited patiently to administer the same treatment to Ralph.

Before her untimely death, the deceased was said to have in 2005, retired into a private business from the Nigerian Housing Insurance Trust Fund, NHITF.

According to reports, late Victoria and her husband had in July 2019 hired Abba to assist in her shop at the Aco Shopping Complex, Lugbe, Abuja where she used to sell some household items and sacramentals. Though she did everything to please Abba, she never knew he had a sinister motive to send her to an early grave.

Narrating his experience, the widower, Mr Ralph Wilcox, who miraculously survived Abba's murderous intent, could not hold back his tears, saying, "Abba has blown my life away", wondering how he would cope with life without his soul mate.

Mr Wilcox, who was a Director in the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture until 11th March 2020, when he retired from service said, "It was about 8 pm that fateful day that I drove into my compound and he (Abba) opened the gate for me and when I entered, I asked, 'Abba why is it that there is light everywhere and there is no light here?

"He responded saying, "there was an explosion in the metre and that the Mummy was aware, so I decided to switch on the generating set".

"I told him to give me a few minutes to park so as to check the metre where I asked him to wait for me. When I couldn't see my wife, I asked, where is Mummy? he replied, "Mummy is in the house."

Not suspecting anything sinister, Wilcox said he went into the house, only to be greeted by darkness all over the place, where the generator did not produce light.

"I went in, dropped the birthday gifts I bought for my wife and my Automated Teller Machine, ATM cards and rushed out with my phone," he

continued.

At this point, he said he never knew Abba had killed, wrapped his wife in a nylon bag and found later that he put on the generator to muffle the sound of his wife's cries when he (Abba) was killing her.

Not too sure of what was playing out, Wilcox said he called one Alhaji and succeeded in calling him once to come to his aid and the number did not go, and now facing the metre to find out what the problem was, he heard "the sound of an axe on my head".

"He started hitting me and hitting until I collapsed, I fell on the floor and felt tick blood over my head. By then I was weak and when he thought he had killed me, he went inside the house to look for the key of my newly bought Jeep in the house," he narrated.

Continuing, he said while Abba was still busy looking for the car key, he regained consciousness and crawled close to his bedroom and started banging the window, beckoning on the wife "mummy, mummy come out, we are under attack, Abba is attacking us," not knowing she had been dead for long.

According to him, "it was God Almighty that raised me after I collapsed again and battled to draw attention in the pool of my blood."

After mummy did not respond to his calls, he gained little strength and crawled again to the gate to seek help, noting that if Abba had started the car then; he would have run over him, and lock the gate.

"If he had succeeded, my corpse and that of my wife's would be here decomposing and nobody would even know, maybe after few days would start smelling before people will realise that we were dead.

"But God foiled his plan, woke me and gave me the strength to manage to open the small gate because he (Abba) forgot to lock the pedestrian gate as he was locking the main gate.

"That was how I escaped to the road, where I met someone coming with a jeep who saw me and reversed to call security men," said the widower.

According to him, as at the time the security men came, he was already unconscious, adding that it was much later they told him that the person with the jeep he had met on the road went to bring people. Abba did not know that he had gone out to bring people.

At that point, he said the sympathisers now believed him (Abba) and packaged him and asked him to drive him to National Hospital.

Abba while serving his master pretended he never knew how to drive.

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While still battling to regain consciousness, he told Abba on their way to the hospital to call mummy's phone and inform her that he was under attack.

"It was like I was in a trance. I remember vomiting and dying. The last thing I said was a branch to the police station and tell them; until I found myself in the hospital," he said.

Also speaking, Wilcox said "While in the hospital undergoing blood transfusion in preparation for brain surgery, the news went around the estate and people started coming to visit in the hospital and immediately the first set arrived the hospital, Abba had reversed the vehicle to escape. But when the people saw him they blocked him and started interrogating him.

When asked what happened, he blamed armed robbers until he was taken home by 2 am, where the lifeless body of the madam was found under a tree. It was then, it dawns on them that Abba had killed his madam.

When subjected to further interrogation, Abba admitted that he killed his Madam.

On why he killed her, he said she was bringing Christian sacramental in the shop for him, a Muslim to sell, which he said offended him. That was after he lied that they were not paying his salaries as and when due.

When asked again, why he didn't resign within the 11 months he was with the woman, he said he wanted to kill the couple and sell their car, house and other valuables.

Justifying his wife's business, Wilcox said she was selling sacramental because she was a strong Catholic and wondered why Abba would kill his wife for living her faith.

When asked about the whereabouts of Abba, he said he is currently with the police, the State CID and noted that he had written a petition to the Force Headquarters to inform the Police IGP through the Minister of Information and Culture, who signed it and copied the IGP.

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According to him, Abba's father had reported to the police and was made to visit his son in the cell, while they were still waiting for the Alhaji (Agent) that brought him on a contract basis.

On how the boy was hired, he said, "it was the agent that brought him to us and we signed and paid. But our mistake as people are saying was that we did not go to the police to crosscheck.

Speaking on Abba's role in the house, Wilcox said "Abba stayed with us for 11 months. He was Madam's shop keeper; he wasn't coming into the house. We had other boys in the house. That week that he committed this crime, he caused the quarrel between him and other boys and because of the way my wife took side with him, the other boys got angry and left because of Abba. We did not know he had a plan."

On how generous his wife was to Abba, the bereaved said, his wife bought Abba a new pair of Jeans trouser and T-Shirt and gave him N10,000 to give his parents during the last Sallah break, and to make Abba comfortable, Abba was provided with everything he needed in his house which was also furnished with Air Condition on the demand of the deceased, wondering how she offended Abba to warrant her killing.

When asked if he had any premonition before the incident, he said: "Yes, I told my wife few weeks before that Abba was changing but she said she trusted him, and because I did not want to offend her, I allowed him to stay. I started suspecting something but my wife did not expect it."

On whether Abba is truly a native of Kaduna state, he said "Abba told us that he is from Borno state but through police investigation, we later found out that he is from Kachia Local Government in Kaduna state. A lot of people have said he does not look like someone from Nigeria, let alone Kaduna from the way he speaks and looks."

On the lesson learnt, Mr Wilcox said "I will be very cautious and careful in bringing people to the house. I will not trust anybody again." He advised the general public to always do due diligence before bringing anybody (House help) to their house.

One of the eyewitnesses, who is a native of Kaduna state who spoke to Vanguard said, "that boy does not look like someone from Kachia. Even the Hausa he was speaking and the video I watched, he is either a Chadian or Nigerien."

Another eyewitness told Vanguard that Abba disclosed to them during interrogation that he had concluded plans to use the shovel available in the house to dig grave under a tree in the compound and bury the couple after he must have killed them. He would then take his time to sell all their properties including houses and if anybody asked about them, he would say they travelled abroad.

Though he has taken the situation in good faith, Wilcox said he is not pleased with the slow pace of the case by the Nigerian police and pleaded with them to give him justice in order to step up plans to bury his wife.

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