

Suspects open up on roles played in kidnap, murder of Chinese

- Reveal how victim's body was thrown into Ikosi river
- Victim's employees among suspects
- One of the suspects arrested one year after
- I was tempted by the N50m ransom—latest suspect

By Evelyn Usman

Sixty-five-year-old Defa Song, a Chinese national, was kidnapped in February 2020 at Okonowa, Ijebu area of Ogun State. The victim whose daughter, Hongli Song owns Xinxin Energy Limited, had stepped out of the company when he was abducted and bundled into a vehicle which whisked him to an unknown destination.

Few days after his kidnap, his abductors contacted his family, demanding N50 million ransom for his release. Unfortunately, he was allegedly killed and his body thrown into the Ikosi river in the Kosofe Local Government of Lagos State. Till date, the body has not been found.

Startling discovery

During investigation into his abduction, operatives of the Force Intelligence Response Team, IRT led by Deputy Commissioner of Police, Abba Kyari, arrested seven persons in connection with the kidnap, a few weeks after the incident. Surprisingly, seven of the suspects were discovered to be employees of the victim's daughter. Crime Guard gathered that one of the suspects, Jayeola Olalekan, a vulcanizer with the company, who was first arrested, revealed identities of his other colleagues. He disclosed how the sexagenarian was kidnapped and moved to Lagos, where he claimed he died while in custody.

Vengeance

But his death was suspected to have been premeditated following the revelation of one of the suspects during interrogation. Narrating his role in the kidnap saga, 34-year-old Olalekan, a father of two said, "I was employed by Xinxin Energy Company in Odogbolu, as a Mechanic and a Vulcanizer in 2019. I was paid N6000 monthly. I worked for them for three months before Mr Song came from China and sacked me because I bought a vehicle with the salary I was earning. One of the security men, Israel, suggested that we should kidnap the man so that his daughter would pay huge ransom. I informed my

younger brother Hammed Jabiri, who also worked in the company. He bought the idea and invited one Moses, who, he said was a cultist and had guns.

"We held a meeting on how to kidnap him in October 2019. An opportunity came on February 16, 2020, when I was given a Toyota Corolla car to repair. I contacted Ade Tayo, Adeniran, Dele and Ahmed, informing them I had a means of transporting our target.

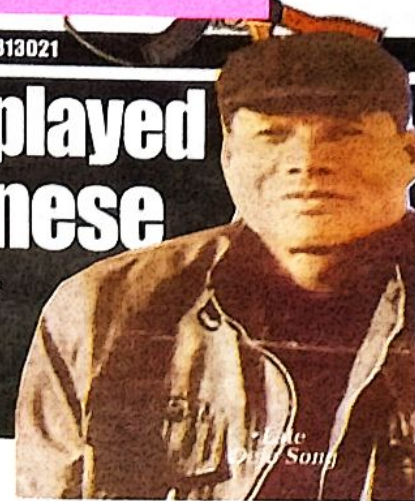
"Israel, the security guard at the Chinese company informed us that Mr Song had stepped out of the house. We went after him, abducted and took him, first to a bush close to my shop, and later, to Morufu's house, while Adetayo started talking to the man's daughter on the phone. He demanded N50m ransom. While we were still negotiating, I got a call from the people looking after the man that he was dead."

Suspicion

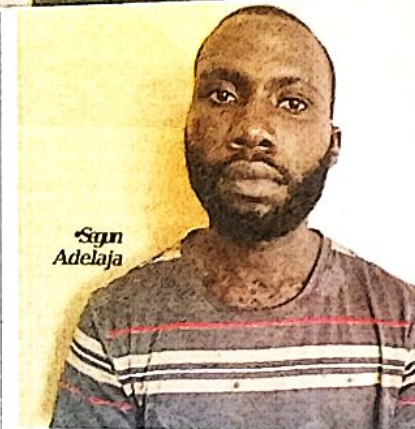
His claim that the suspect died of an unknown ailment while in their custody aroused suspicion as they were suspected to have killed him because the suspect was said to have recognized one of them. This assertion was confirmed by another suspect, Hameed Dabiri, 29. The Lagos State-born suspect who worked as an electrician at Xinxin company disclosed that "While we were waiting for the man's daughter to pay the ransom, he (captive) pulled down the mask I was putting on and recognized me as one of her daughter's employees. I told the security man who brought the job about it and he suggested that I should kill him after I have collected the ransom. Unfortunately, he died before the ransom could be paid and we disposed of the body.

Latest arrest

When news of the arrest of the six suspects went round, one of them, Segun Adelaja, fled to Ondo State, where he took cover. He returned to Emure, Ogun state on March 4,



• Other suspects earlier arrested



2021, only to be arrested two days later in a hotel by operatives of the Lagos State Commissioner of Police Strike Team, during a sting operation, over his alleged involvement

in the kidnap/murder saga. During interrogation, he disclosed that he was a member of the Aiye Confraternity and also opened up on his role in the Chinese man's death.

27-year-old Adelaja expressed regrets, saying he initially resisted the temptation to join the group in the kidnap deal but that he fell for the N50 million ransom.

Revealing his role in the kidnap, the Ondo State born suspect said, "Last year, a friend of mine, Ahmed, called to inform me that they wanted to kidnap a Chinese man and I told him I was not interested. He called another friend of ours, Jamui and even sent him money to come to Ogun State. But I advised Jamui that we should spend the money. Later, Ahmed called to inform them that they had succeeded in kidnapping the Chinese man. I left Lagos for Odogbolu, where they kept him. But I told them I was not comfortable with the location because I didn't know the terrain.

"The victim was moved from Odogbolu to Ahmed's place at Otta Ikosi. He was fed with sausage and soft drinks. I was later called only to be informed that he was dead. I didn't stay with him".

Asked how he died, he replied, "I don't know. I was told he fell sick and wasn't given medication. Jamui and I went to where he was kept and they contacted others.

Evacuation

"That night, around 11pm, six of us wrapped the body with a nylon and kept it inside a drum. Thereafter, we drove to Ikosi river, which is just five minutes drive from where he was kept.

"I did not follow them to the river where the body was dumped. One of us, Moses, did, while I remained in the car, watching out for any unwelcome guest".

But one of them, Adetayo Adediran, who claimed to have driven the Toyota Corolla car used to convey the Chinese's body to the river, had earlier revealed that the drum containing the body of the Chinese, was given to some fishermen to dump in the river.

He told operatives that he was lured into the crime by one of the employees whom he approached to help him secure a job at the Chinese company, adding that he had intended to use his share of the ransom to establish a business.

On the role he played, he said "I was the one who was negotiating with the owner of the company on the N50 million ransom but I was disappointed that the people looking after the man killed him before the ransom could be paid".

Like Adediran, Adelaja, said "I was tempted by the N50 million ransom his daughter was expected to pay. I had earlier told them I was not interested, until they said anyone who did not take part would not collect a dime from the ransom".

The Lagos state Police Public Relations Officer, Olumuyiwa Adejobi, said "The Commissioner of Police, Hakeem Odumosu, has ordered that the Command's Strike team that arrested Segun should work with the IRT on the investigation into the case. He further assured that Lagos State will now be made hot for criminals in the state".