

Homicide. A murder is a death caused unlawfully. There are two fundamental elements necessary for a person to be found guilty of murder. These are the mental intention to cause the death, for instance a reason for causing the death, and the actual action which caused the death, for instance shooting, stabbing.

Court sentences witch doctor to

Felony. Siraje Balidawa, a witch doctor, conned Sarah Nnampiima of Shs1.2 million. When she started demanding for her money, he killed her.

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Sarah Nnampiima, a young businesswoman operating in Kiyembe in Kampala, went missing from her home in Busabala, but her disappearance was not detected until her brother, Muhammed Kiryowa, visited her home.

When he did not find her at her home, he went to her workplace but she was not there too.

Nnampiima's family had not heard from her for several days. Kiryowa decided to report a case of disappearance at Katwe Police Station.

The following day, Kiryowa was summoned to Kampala Central Police Station to provide more information on the disappearance of his sister.

Kiryowa offered to lead the police officers to Siraje Balidawa, a witch doctor whose shrine his sister frequented.

Kiryowa directed police detectives to an old house on Martin Road in Old Kampala.

Inside the house, they found the witch doctor and two of his clients.

When the detectives asked him about the whereabouts of Nnampiima, Balidawa feigned ignorance, claiming she was not one of his clients.

However, police arrested and detained him at Kampala Central Police Station.

"We got him out of the way because we wanted to talk to his clients when he is not hearing. One of the clients told us how he had seen a lady who fitted the police description. He even pointed to us a box which he said had been brought by the said lady," a detective who investigated the case, said.

One of Balidawa's clients told police that he heard him talking about Busabala, but he did not understand what he was speaking about.

Detectives took the box to the central police station.

On arrival at the central police station, the detectives were informed that the body of a woman had been found at Busabala near the Scouts camping ground in Kazi.

"We drove to the scene and found the body. When I talked to the residents, they told me they suspect the body had been brought by a Grey Toyota Corona that had been seen in the vicinity the previous evening at about 9pm," the detective said.



1 Fooled. Siraje Balidawa cons Sarah Nnampiima of Shs1.5 million, claiming that he will make it multiply to Shs20 million. ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANNY BARONGO

TRIAL AND SENTENCING

The detective who handled the case said: "We were convinced Balidawa had killed the lady, but without a murder weapon or scene of crime, everything else was circumstantial. But we moved and charged Balidawa with murder in Buganda Road Chief Magistrate's Court."

"We had six witnesses and I was one of them. "Though we did not find the crime scene, at least eye witnesses placed Balidawa's car at the crime scene. Also the box that Balidawa had instructed

Nnampiima to buy was exhibited as evidence, including the cut papers," he added.

During trial, Justice Monica Mugenyi Balidawa guilty of murdering Nnampiima and sentenced him to life imprisonment.

"I remember Balidawa was inconsistent in his testimony. If someone has committed a crime it's easy to tell because they tend to be inconsistent in testimony," the now retired detective said.

The woman's throat had been slit. There was no blood at the crime scene nor signs of struggle.

"The deceased had been killed somewhere and dumped where the body was later found," the detective said.

A scene of crime officer photographed the body before it was taken to the City Mortuary.

When police asked Balidawa whether he owned a vehicle, he answered in the affirmative.

Balidawa then led detectives to a garage in Nateete, where he had taken it for minor repairs. Detectives towed the vehicle to Kampala Central Police Station.

"We had to get scenes of crime officers to critically examine the vehicle. They removed seats to see what was inside. Unfortunately the vehicle had been thoroughly washed," the detective said.



4 Missing. Nnampiima's brother Muhammed Kiryowa reports to police about her disappearance and D.U.I.

life imprisonment for killing client



2 Murder. Balidawa kills Nnampiima after she asks him to return her money.

ing Balidawa had bought the vehicle at Shs1.2m round about the time the Nnampiima had given him money. "If we had experienced forensic examiners, we would have had a strong case. Without the scene of crime officers it was difficult to secure a good conviction. I knew if this case landed in the hands of a good lawyer, I would lose it," reminisced the now aging detective.

Police broke open the box recovered from the witch doctor's shrine in Old Kampala. Inside it there were bundles of manila papers cut in the shape of money and on top of each of the bundle of papers, the witch doctor had placed genuine banknotes to make whoever looked at them think that they were bundles of money.

Nnampiima's friend, only identified as Prossy, told the police that Nnampiima frequented Balidawa's

shrine in Old Kampala, seeking wealth.

Prossy said Nnampiima had paid the witch doctor Shs1.5m to enable her to get rich.

Prossy said Nnampiima was obsessed with getting rich. She added that Balidawa had promised to multiply the Shs1.5m Nnampiima gave him to Shs20m.

Investigations revealed that the time vehicle had been bought corresponded with the time when the deceased had given the witchdoctor money.

"At least Prossy knew her friend's dealings with the witch doctor, but still that was not enough to secure a conviction," the detective said.

"During interrogations, we asked Balidawa where he hailed from and he led us to his home in Kaluba village in Iganga District. We found he had



3 Attempt to hide crime. Balidawa dumps Nnampiima's body in Busabala near the Scouts camping ground at Kazi.

a shrine there as well but we never found the place where Nnampiima had been killed," the detective added.

Breakthrough

Balidawa maintained his innocence in the death of the Nnampiima.

"It was by sheer luck that one of his friends came to the police station to see him. Incidentally he happened to be an acquaintance of mine. I allowed the friend to speak to Balidawa on condition that he would tell me what they had discussed," the detective

said.

After meeting the suspect, the visitor returned to the police officers and told them how Balidawa had indeed killed the woman.

According to the friend, Balidawa had conned Nnampiima of her money and he killed her after she attempted to recover it.

Balidawa's friend reiterated what Prossy had earlier told the police that Balidawa had tricked Nnampiima into giving him money to purportedly multiply it magically.

"This was a very common way

used by witch doctors to steal money. The moment victims insist on following with a view to recover the money, they are killed," the detective said.

"He convinced her to make a metallic box fitted with a padlock. So when she brought the money, the witchdoctor would tell her to put the money in the metallic box and lock it. She delivered the money in about three installments and whenever she brought the money she would put it in the box. Balidawa told her to lock the box and take the keys," the detective added.

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