



Medicine, the Law & You

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TORTURE CASE: A young man was tortured to death after misplacing a key of a vehicle. And he was tortured in such a way as to virtually leave no medical evidence of what he went through. The young man's death was, however, very suspicious following what he narrated just before his death.

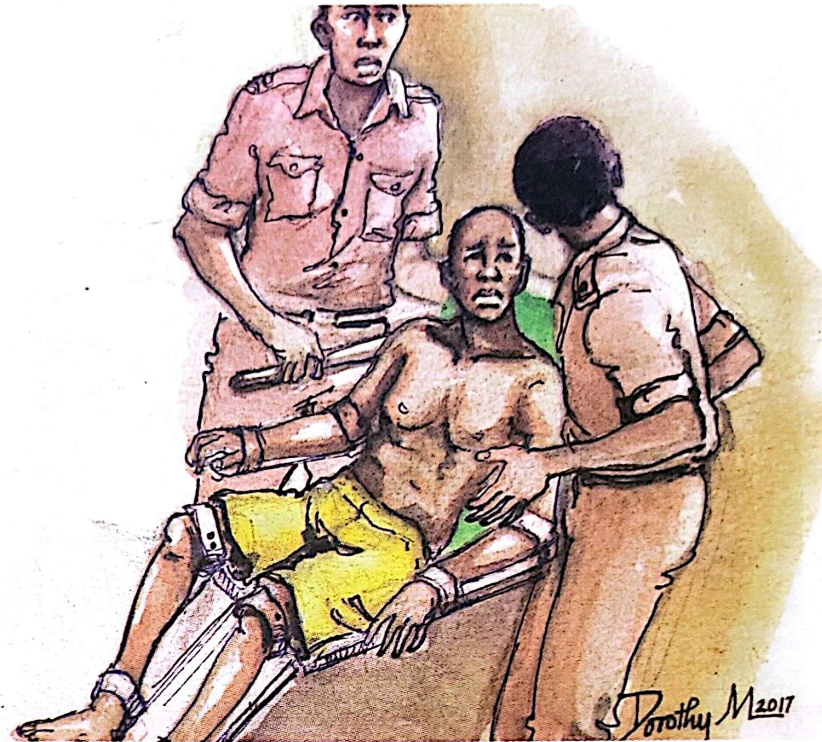
On June 9, 2015, the young man died in a renowned private missionary hospital. He had been referred to the hospital from a private health unit in Kampala.

He was closely related to a prominent minister and his biological brother was the minister's personal assistant. One of the young man's relatives is a prominent medical doctor.

The doctor demanded for a forensic postmortem as the young man's death was suspected to have been due to his arrest and detention at a seemingly ordinary police station.

The young man was working as a manager of a parking yard in town. One the fateful day, a man brought his car to park at the yard. However, when he returned to pick his car, the car key was nowhere to be seen. The

Deducing medical evidence of torture



owner of the car suspected foul play and reported to police. A police officer then came and arrested and detained the manager on a Monday evening.

Early the next morning, there was a head count of the inmates and three of them were picked out, including the young man, and matched to a special room dubbed the "VIP Room" in the basement, next to the armory.

In there, each of the inmates was strapped to a special chair with hands extended and strapped. And that is when the torture began. The three were continuously hit on the knee and ankle joints, an act the police officers called "installing speed

governors". The inmates were also subjected to electric shocks and sharp needle-like gadgets were used to prick their finger nails and abdomen and other painful body parts.

The most vicious and sadistic of policemen was described by the inmates as a smartly dressed, small bodied officer.

When the policemen were done with them that morning, the inmates could not walk; they had to crawl back to the cells with a lot of difficulty. It was almost impossible for each of them to hold a cup to drink water. That is when the three inmates learnt from the other inmates that they had been receiving the "VIP" treatment.

The three inmates were again subjected to the same treatment on Wednesday and Thursday. When relatives of the young man visited him on Thursday evening, they found he had a mental breakdown. He was extremely frightened, agitated and hallucinating.

Deteriorating health

The relatives were advised to take the young man to a mental hospital. The relatives only secured the young man's freedom on Saturday and took him to a private clinic where treatment was commenced.

After three days, the young man's condition apparently improved and

ABOUT TORTURE ACT

The Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act, 2012 of the laws of Uganda defines torture as an act or omission by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of any person whether a public official or other person acting in an official or private capacity for the purpose of obtaining information or confession, punishing that person or intimidating or coercing that person to do or refrain from doing an Act.

he was discharged and was able to narrate his ordeal to the relatives. However, a few days later, he developed difficulty in breathing and he was taken back to the private clinic. The private clinic referred him to the bigger health unit where he passed on.

The postmortem was carried out by three doctors. The torture had been so "scientific" that it left no obvious injury on the body of the deceased. The main findings were in the muscles and the lungs.

The doctors found that there was extensive bleeding into the muscles (a condition known as bruising or contusions) that was caused by blunt force trauma. The body then reacted to this trauma that caused the young man to develop difficulty in breathing and finally total impairment of the respiratory system, a condition known as adult respiratory distress syndrome.

To be continued

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