I contemplated suicide after Lagos thugs gang-raped me – 22-year-old student

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A 22-year-old lady identified only as Bimpe (not her real name) shares with AYOOLA OLASUPO her ugly experience in the hands of three men who gang-raped her in the Igando area of Lagos  
  
How old are you?  
  
I’m 22 years old.  
  
Did you have any strange feelings before going out that day?  
  
No. There was no strange feeling because I’d never experienced something like that before.  
  
Can you tell us about your journey before the incident happened?  
  
It was on Sunday, January 26, 2025; I left Ayobo in Lagos State around 8pm and boarded a bus going to Igando. Although I didn’t take the bus from the park, I joined it after I alighted from a tricycle because the driver was shouting Igando. I met a guy and the driver inside the bus, and the driver was in a hurry, saying he could not carry another passenger because he wanted to pick up something somewhere.  
  
He sounded like someone in haste. So, I quickly entered, and on our way, not long after we left Ayobo, we picked another guy up. So, I was on my phone when this whole scenario happened but I could not concentrate on my phone again because I used to feel like throwing up whenever I was inside a bus. I just put my phone inside the bag.  
  
Was it an allergy or you just felt that way on that day?  
  
That’s normal for me anytime I’m inside a car or bus. I often have motion sickness. So, I could not concentrate on my phone anymore, and I noticed that not quite long after the other guy entered the bus, I dozed off immediately.  
  
Can you remember what happened thereafter?  
  
When I opened my eyes, it was around 11pm, and I found myself at the back of the Igando BRT (Bus Rapid Transit). I was naked already and feeling pain all over my body. My genitals were swollen, and I had a peppery sensation there. All the active parts of my body were paining me and I was deeply feeling the pain. So, I knew that those guys must have done something to me.  
  
Were the guys still there with you after you woke up?  
  
Yes, they were inside the bus. So, after waking up and I found myself in that situation, they brought out an axe and threatened me. They said if I didn’t cooperate, they would hit it on my head or stab me. The three of them were making incantations and it sounded as if they were cultists. I could not remember the other things they said because I was scared and in shock. Later on, they asked me to unlock my phone, log into my bank app, and transfered all the money there.  
  
How much was transferred from your account?  
  
They transferred N500,000 from my Opay account.  
  
Can you remember the name of the particular account money was transferred to?  
  
Immediately I unlocked my bank app, they asked for my password. Everything, including the SIM card, was inside the phone. I’ve been trying to log into my account but the SIM was inside the phone, which was collected and taken away. They collected the phone, did everything by themselves, and gave it back to me to log out of my iCloud. They eventually took the phone away. So, I can’t know the name of the account the money was transferred to. I’m so traumatised talking about the incident.  
  
How did you escape from the men?  
  
They pushed me out of the bus naked after collecting my phone. So, when I got back in the morning, I texted TalesWithBlessed with my other phone at home. I explained everything to her and she advised me to go to the general hospital for some tests and examinations. At the hospital, they took my blood sample and I’ve received the results of the tests but they didn’t find anything serious. They also took a sample of their sperm deposit for a DNA test.  
  
Can you still recognise their faces very well?  
  
No, but they should be around their 30s.  
  
Did they wear masks?  
  
When I woke up, I saw the three of them had put on masks. When I entered the bus I didn’t really observe their faces because I only concentrated on my phone. It was a minibus; so, I sat in the middle row and it was just two rows there. One guy sat beside me and the other sat in the back seat.  
  
Were you given any medications at the hospital?  
  
I was given drugs to use for the treatment because I had a tear and PrEp (Pre-exposure prophylaxis). It is also a medication to prevent any further infection or disease like HIV.  
  
What particular feelings or thoughts came to your mind when you opened your eyes and saw yourself naked?  
  
I was scared and it was just like a dream. I was traumatised and shaking. So, when I opened my eyes inside the bus, they were already done with what they wanted to do except for the phone aspect. I just logged out of my iCloud, and the bank transaction, and I was pushed down from the bus.  
  
Are your parents aware of what happened?  
  
My dad is late but I have a mum. She’s hypertensive; so, I don’t want to tell her anything for now so that it won’t affect her health, although I’ve seen a counsellor for therapy. I used to be friends with the counsellor before around Governor Road, and I’ve started therapy already. I’ve not informed anybody close to me about the incident except TalesWithBlessed, the hospital, and the police.  
  
What did you do at the police station?  
  
I wrote a statement about everything that happened. I took the test results, medical checkup, and everything to them. So, they (police officers) asked me to write the statement. I took them to the spot where it happened and after that, I left and went back again on Tuesday, and they gave me back the report.  
  
Are you satisfied with the way the police are handling the case?  
  
They tried because they didn’t treat me badly. They were calm and it was nice with the way they were talking. I was also informed that they were already working on it.  
  
Are you confident that they will do a good job?  
  
Yes.  
  
What message do you have for the police on the case?  
  
I’ve already described the bus to them because I saw them when they left but I could not get the number plate from it because my phone was not even with me. I would have snapped the bus or videoed it. I know those guys will not stop doing that to others but I think their DNA should be with the medicals as evidence.  
  
If they can keep parading that particular area I showed them and want to truly help, and be consistent on this matter, those suspects would still want to try the act again because sinners just don’t give up like that; they will still want to try it again. So, with the evidence, I believe they will be caught and will not be able to deny it.  
  
What other assistance have you received so far?  
  
None! However, the management of my school tried to reach out to me at the hospital after they saw it online. They went to the police station asking for my name and number but I told them that I didn’t want my identity to be known because I didn’t want something that would make my identity to trend within the school environment.  
  
In what way has this experience changed your perspective on safety, both in your community and when in school?  
  
I’m still scared and traumatised. Since the incident happened, I’ve been scared to enter a bus. I could not sleep throughout Monday night. I had to look for something that would not bring back the memories. So, I started watching movies. I could not even communicate. I’m so tired right now.  
  
What do you think can be done to prevent incidents like this from happening to others?  
  
I’ve learnt my lesson that someone should be conscious of his or her environment. For instance, if I wasn’t carried away by my phone, the ugly incident might not have happened. I think they noticed that maybe this person is addicted to her phone or concentrates more on the phone than on anything within her surroundings. That was what I thought because I never imagined something like this could happen to me.  
  
How are you coping with the trauma at the moment?  
  
I’ve gone for counselling and it helped a lot. I was told I should not think about it, but there was no way I wouldn’t. I’m just trying to be fine.  
  
What would you like to say to others who may be experiencing similar trauma at the moment?  
  
I won’t lie; on Monday, I was thinking about suicide. It was the anchor of TalesWithBlessed on TikTok who I texted that I needed someone; an adult to talk to. She sent her contact details and I called her.  
  
Did you know her before?  
  
No, but I used to watch her videos on TikTok. So, it just came to my mind I needed an adult to talk to and clear my mind, and the first text I sent to her was that I was on the verge of death and that I felt like committing suicide. I told her what happened.