Born To Run

BORN TO RUN

the story of DELE GIWA

by

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and
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Preface

THIS biography has been written with only one objective in mind: to present a clear and, as much as possible, full picture of Dele Giwa, whose assassination on 19 October 1986, rocked the entire nation. Dele Giwa was at once a complex and straightforward person, strong-willed and sentimental; a leader who, at times, like most leaders, was only a child.

We spent long hours burrowing into research materials, clarifying snippets of information and absorbing the essence of Dele's being. We spent many days in both Ile-Ife and Ugbekpe-Ekperi, just wandering around trying to enter Giwa's early life. We have been able to recreate specific scenes by conducting detailed interviews with, in most cases, people directly involved. It also helped that, in some instances, one of the authors actually witnessed the drama unfold.

Actual work began on this project late in January 1987. It was completed about eight months later. While reporting and researching the book, the authors spoke to nearly all the central — and some peripheral — players in the drama that was Giwa's life. We are confident that the information provided within this volume is factual, as much as the authors were able to determine. It is possible that some errors may be found, for which we accept full responsibility. Where we were not absolutely certain, we have refrained from jumping to conclusions.

To the most important question of all: Who killed Dele Giwa? — We regret to say that we are unable to provide any answer just yet.

DELE ỌLỌJẸDE
ONUKABA ADINOYI-OJO
AUGUST 1987, LAGOS

Appreciation

THE authors are indebted to several hundred people who sacrificed their time to make invaluable contributions to this book. We are especially grateful to those whose interviews proved exceedingly illuminating. It is not possible to mention all of them by name, indeed many prefer to remain anonymous, but we thank them most profusely.

Our sincere gratitude also goes to a wonderful lady, Funlola Olojede for spending long hours, often far into the night, to assist us in this project.

We are grateful to Tony Okhamera for providing an atmosphere conducive to creative work; to Nyaknno Osso, the *Newswatch* librarian — the best in the business — for his immense assistance in sorting through a huge stockpile of research materials; Nosa Igiebor, May Ellen Ezekiel and Austen Omamegbe, for their encouragement and support.

Finally, we appreciate the co-operation and encouragement we received from our publishers, Spectrum Books, in particular Joop Berkhout, Gbenro Adegbola and Bankole Olayebi, for tolerating our temperament.

Thank you. Thank you.

DELE and ONUKABA

Prologue

October 19, 1986

IT was not to rain until noon. While, out at sea to the south, where the sky merged with the water, appeared the beginning of dark clouds, this humid Sunday morning bore no promise of rain on its tired breeze. Ray Ekpu would not be engaged until noon. His wife, Uyai, grabbed hold of this rare opportunity and coaxed Ekpu out of the house to pay long-overdue visits to relations and friends. Shortly after midday, as he approached the last stretch of road on his return home, Ekpu was flagged down by two staff of *Newswatch* magazine, where he is the deputy editor-in-chief. One of the staff was Kayode Soyinka, the London bureau chief of the magazine, the other, Nosa Igiebor, an associate editor. The two staff were agitated and barely coherent.

"Dele has been bombed," Soyinka cried. Ekpu stared at him, uncomprehending.

"Dele has been bombed," cried Soyinka again.

"What ... what are you saying?" Ekpu asked, his voice low, uncertain.

Both Igiebor and Soyinka burst into a babble at the same time, trying to explain an event that happened only a half hour before. The words 'bomb' and 'Dele' built a barricade at the gate of Ekpu's mind; he could not absorb what he was being told on this ordinary Sunday noon. He followed the two men, (who he now suspected to be slightly deranged, unless he himself was), back to his home, which was only next door to that of the subject of this unsuccessful conversation.

In front of the twin blocks to which they headed was a motley crowd of fire fighters and on-lookers. Something unfamiliar stirred within Ekpu. Then he saw the twisted steel of the blackened window of a room he had always known as his friend's study. Somebody mentioned First Foundation Hospital. In a daze, Ekpu climbed back into the car and was driven to the hospital, only about two kilometres away.

Just inside the hospital reception area was Dr. Tosin Ajayi, the medical director. Ekpu tried to search into Ajayi's eyes, but they were covered by mist. The doctor held Ekpu by the shoulder and led him into a side room. A stench of burnt flesh hung on the air. By the side was a stretcher, on which lay what appeared to be the body of a man covered with a blood-soaked cloth. As he stumbled forward into the room, a deep, sickening fear began to rise from the pit of Ekpu's stomach.

*** *** ***

Gani Fawehinmi's law chambers appeared deserted on this Sunday afternoon. It gave a wrong impression of what was going on inside, where a team of lawyers led by the tempestuous Fawehinmi worked feverishly preparing a writ that was to be filed at a Lagos high court the following morning at nine. The scene appropriately depicted the urgency of the matter. Two days earlier, on Friday, October 17, an agitated Dele Giwa, accompanied by Ekpu, had met him and demanded an immediate court action against the State Security Service, which he said had leveled grave accusations against him.

Throughout that weekend, Giwa repeatedly called Fawehinmi to speed up action so that the case could be in court by Monday. Giwa was a man Fawehinmi admired, for he could see something of himself in the 39-year old journalist. Which was why, on this Sunday afternoon, Fawehinmi assembled his team to get ready the papers to be filed in court.

In the middle of this frenzied activity, at 2.20 p.m., the telephone rang. Distracted, Fawehinmi picked up the receiver. "This is Ray, chief." It was Ekpu on the line.

"Ah Ray, how are you?"

"Dele has been bombed."

The lawyer's forehead creased into a frown. "Who is this talking?" he asked, as if he hadn't heard.

"I said, Ray. Ray Ekpu. He has been killed by a parcel bomb. He has been bombed. Can you come right away?"

Fawehinmi was getting impatient with this meaningless talk; angry, even. He, therefore, was not surprised at the sudden rise in the pitch of his own voice.

"You must be talking nonesense," he shouted. "You bombed him, or what?"

Ekpu said, "No, chief, they bombed him."

"Who bombed him?"

"Will you come right away, chief?" Ekpu asked, and described the hospital.

The receiver became a dead weight in Fawehinmi's hand. He dropped it. He looked down at the papers strewn on his big burnished-wood desk. Then he looked up at his now silent staff. "You had better stop what you are doing," he told them solemnly. "Let us go and see Dele Giwa. He has been bombed."

*** *** ***

Stanley Macebuh, managing director of *The Guardian,* had just come in from Enugu at 4 p.m., two hours before Giwa was to visit him at home that day. At the gate of his house, his brother, stopped him and said it looked like Giwa was in some kind of trouble. Someone had called the house three times and left the telephone number of a hospital. Macebuh was worried. What kind of trouble could it be? His brother offered that maybe it was an accident. Macebuh thought that might be possible. They had met last, two days earlier, at a party, and the accident could have occurred on his way home. There was a heavy wind that Friday night. Maybe he ran into something. All right, he said, he would have a change of clothes and then call Giwa's house to find out what had happened. He hoped it wasn't serious.

He was about to step into the shower when the phone rang. A friend was on the line. "Have you heard the news?" the friend asked.

"What news?"

"About Dele Giwa. He has been bombed."

Macebuh exploded. "What the hell are you talking about? I have just been told he had an accident or something. He is supposed to be here at six; go to hell." The words tumbled over one another, as if he was trying to distance himself from the madness. So he banged the phone, but he was shaken. Instead of taking his shower, Macebuh put his clothes back on and went downstairs into his living room. He decided to call the hospital number left for him.

But at this moment, Eddie Iroh, also of *The Guardian,* Chuks Osuji and Ralph Uwechue, the publisher, drove in. Once Macebuh looked at Iroh's face, he dropped the phone.

"What is it?" he demanded. "Is it about Dele Giwa?"

There was silence, and Iroh finally nodded. Macebuh headed for his car. The others joined him. He drove straight to Giwa's house. No one said a word during the ride.

In front of the house was a group of policemen.

"Stop!" one of them ordered.

"Don't be stupid." Macebuh said in a clipped tone. Behind the gate was Billy, Giwa's 19-year old son. Macebuh went towards him.

"Where is your father?"

Billy said he was in the hospital. Macebuh was in the middle of asking another question when his eyes caught the blown-out window of Giwa's study. Alarmed, he turned back to Billy.

"What is that? What's that?" Macebuh asked repeatedly. Billy did not answer. The tears in his eyes were the first indication of disaster.

*** *** ***

Out of a flat on Kenway Road, London, emerged Dan Agbese into the slight chill of the British autumn. He was seeing off his guests, Soji Akinrinade, his colleague in *Newswatch,* and Akinrinade's five-year old son, Kunle. The three crossed the street. Akinrinade's son wanted a hamburger. It was about 5 p.m. At that moment, Agbese's host called to him from the front door of the house. There was a phone call from his wife in Lagos. Agbese ran in and listened to his wife, Rose.

His mouth was agape. His eyes widened until they nearly popped out of their sockets. Agbese ran out of the house to share the terrible burden of the unbelievable news he just heard with Akinrinade. But Akinrinade was gone.

*** *** ***

Where on earth could he be? Rekiyat Mohammed was asking herself this question for the umpteenth time. She had become frantic. All day long, she had tried to reach her husband, Yakubu, in all the places he was likely to be, and had drawn a blank in all of them. She gave the Federal Palace Hotel, where her uncle-in-law, Mamman Idu, stayed, a last try. Idu had still not heard from Yakubu Mohammed, even though he was supposed to have gone there. Exasperated, confused and fatigued, she settled down to wait. At a quarter to five, the phone rang. Mohammed had touched base at last.

"Where have you been?" Rekiyat said thickly. "Come home immediately." Something in her voice set off the alarm in Mohammed's head.

*** *** ***

Mrs Funmi Giwa paced up and down, up and down, in a private ward of the First Foundation Hospital, shut away from the section of the hospital where the living, who were not really sure if they were alive, scurried about in confusion. Up and down, up and down, she paced, then sat on the single bed, then paced again. She had been shot full of tranquilisers, which had as much effect on her as a syringe filled with water. Her head was slightly light, but she was alert. Just before seven o'clock when, even though she was not aware of it, daylight was fast disappearing into the darkness, a nurse unobtrusively walked into the room, disconnected the 16-inch television set and carried it out. Her mind dwelt for a brief moment on the nurse's action, then resumed wandering in the crowded alley of her solitary existence. Presently, Ekpu, Ude and Alex Akinyele, another director of *Newswatch,* walked in. Some news at last. The three men wore faces dark as night. They stood just inside the room, looking at her, mum.

"Ray ..."

"Mmm ..."

"What is the situation?"

"Bad."

"How bad?"

"Very bad."

"Is he dead?"

*** *** ***

Anyone who saw Yemi Ogunbiyi, at 7.30 p.m. that day, would have thought that he, and not Wole Soyinka, his mentor and former teacher, was the one announced winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature. All through that weekend, he walked on air. On Friday October 17, he had been with Giwa at an impromptu party to celebrate the award. The party lasted till the early hours of Saturday morning. Then on Sunday morning Ogunbiyi left Lagos for Abeokuta to see Soyinka, enroute to Ife via Ibadan. At every stop on the route, Ogunbiyi celebrated hard. By Sunday evening, when he finally drove into his home on the University of Ife campus, he was one with the moon and stars.

Humming a favourite hymn under his breath, Ogunbiyi got out of the car and noticed a crowd in his living room. Ah, he thought, his friends were waiting to continue with the good feeling of the Nobel win. In the group was Bayo Williams, reeling from the news he had just heard and the effect of the alcohol he had to take — for medicinal purposes. Ogunbiyi's wife, Sade, was lost somewhere in the labyrinths of her own mind. Funmi Giwa's sister, Bola Olaniyan, a medical student at the university, laughed hysterically, a dry, piercing, unreal cackle that distressed those trying to console her. Tokunbo Osinowo, a teacher in the university, was the first person Ogunbiyi picked out of the crowd. Ogunbiyi beamed.

"Hi, Toks!" he saluted, full-throated.

There was no answer. Ogunbiyi caught a chill in the air. Why was everybody staring at him like some extra-terrestial creature?

"What is happening?" he asked, now completely sober. "What is happening in my own house?"

*** *** ***

Night came early to Ugbekpe-Ekperi, a tiny farming village in Bendel State, but the village folks could not sleep this night. Sleep had eluded her, too, the poor woman, but how could any mother sleep? Two days earlier, Elekia Giwa had been troubled by a dream. Nothing, however, could have prepared her for what was coming. As the sun prepared to take its last bow, and the evening sound of the rain forest — the chirping of birds and crickets; the croaking of frogs — filled the air, Elekia noticed a certain deathly silence in the village. Through the window of her uncompleted dwelling, she saw people whispering, and some mournfully pointing at the direction of her house. They had heard the news on the radio. And then she heard wailings. A small crowd began to gather in front of the house. First came the women. Then the elders. The first group was to give support; the second to break the news.

All that was hours ago. And now, deep in the belly of the night, Elekia stared with unseeing eyes into the distance, oblivious of all the women still around her. Occasionally, she would make a mother's sound. Her mind oscillated between fragmented thoughts and blankness. She was unable to follow a train of thought to any conclusion, she intermittently switched off, involuntarily, and enjoyed the momentary sedation of nothingness; and then the pendulum would swing in the other direction again. Slowly, the night neared the end of its journey into day. Elekia Giwa just stared with the glazed eyes of one who hated, it seemed, for just being born. The shadows around her faded gradually away; the darkness in her heart, however, would not be dispelled again.

1. Family Profile

MUSA Giwa had surreptitiously planned his escape. On the appointed date, at dusk, he quietly left the village. On his frail shoulders was slung only a rucksack, into which he had packed a few personal belongings. He was out at last.

The young man's father, Isa, soon sensed, rather than knew of his son's escape. He, within half an hour of the younger man's exit, chased after him on foot for about 30 kilometres to Auchi, a far bigger community in the region.

The young Musa was lucky. He sighted his father before he was seen, and scrambled inside a culvert by the side of the earth road. Isa, tired and weary, cast around for a while and, failing to see his son, finally gave up and trudged back to the village.

Seeing that the coast was clear, Musa continued from Auchi on to Ikare, now in Ondo State. He enjoyed his initial victory. No one could stop him now.

The village he had just escaped from in the year 1933, was Ugbekpe-Ekperi, which in the local dialect means, "the lion's tongue". He had good reason, or so he thought, to do so.

For Ugbekpe-Ekperi, as well as most other communes in the geographical expression then, as now, known as Nigeria, it was a period of extreme privation made more unbearable by fanciful tales that filtered back about the life in well-endowed, paradise-like cities.

The villagers groaned under the heavy load of taxes from their new overlords — the British administrators. The colonial staff fed fat on

taxes, fines and fees from the courts, forest royalties and other levies, but not much came in return as social services.

In the entire thirteen districts of Afemai division, now in Bendel State, there were only two government schools and two dispensaries (with only an attendant each) at nearby Auchi and Agbede before 1933. The whole division had a total of 198 miles of earth roads, including the 34-mile Auchi-Ugbekpe-Agenebode road.

The paucity of these very essentials of the new era, dramatically highlighted by the very imaginative tales from the cities, encouraged many of the villagers to escape.

Ugbekpe itself was a little farming village that had hardly changed from the way its founding fathers left it. The primary occupation of its inhabitants — farming, fishing, hunting — had come to be viewed by the youth as laborious, penurious and unsalubrious.

The size of a man's farm and his courage on the game grounds were no longer the barometres of social status. Which was why Musa was not much impressed by the position of his father in the village.

Isa was one of the notable farmers in the village. He was head of the Ivhiegwela quarters and had large cocoa and plantain plantations. He had three wives and several children. His eldest wife, Magajiya, was Musa's mother.

It was, as tradition demanded, Isa's dream that his second child, Musa, should inherit his vast farmland. But the lure of the city, as exemplified by the earlier departure of James Ikanoba, who was to become the clan head in the 80s, was irresistible for the young man.

The lure was out there in the towns and cities. He wanted a white collar job, as had been wonderfully described to him, but Ugbekpe offered none. The choice then became an adventure in search of this job which, he reckoned, could catapult a man to his cherished future.

He reached Ikare, unknown to him, only a little different from the village he just fled. He assessed its potential and realised it would not give succour to his restless spirit. He therefore headed further south to Ilesha.

The story was the same. Musa did not consider Ilesha ideal for the nurture of a dream. His stay was equally brief, and the venturesome young man left for the ancient town of Ile-Ife.

Ile-Ife was then far more developed than Musa Giwa's Ugbekpe. It could in fact swallow more than twenty Ugbekpes, leaving no trace in the bowel. Ile-Ife was not in anyway sophisticated, however. It was a dull, dusty town. Although under the administration of the new masters, Ile-Ife was still very much a traditional society. It had a sprinkling of half-educated natives, mostly clerks and interpreters to the colonial administrators, as well as a few enlightened men who were becoming vocal in the affairs of the town. Some of them, through the primacy enjoyed by the Ooni, had in fact benefited from overseas training in law and one or two other disciplines.

Ile-Ife had better roads, hospitals, government, community and missionary schools. It also had dispensaries that were well equipped, and properly 'constituted' courts. In comparison to Ugbekpe, Ile-Ife, which Yoruba mythology characterizes as the fount of all creation, was next to heaven.

Bicycles and motorcycles were a common sight on Ife roads. It was not strange in the early thirties to see children run after the few cars that plied the roads. In Ugbekpe, only very few had seen these "moving houses". Although, a majority of the population of Ife scraped an existence from the land, there were a few options for those who considered that inadequate and tasking. They could be cooks, gardeners, houseboys, messengers, cleaners and laundryhands to either the colonial masters or the emerging elite among the natives.

Ife was to Musa fertile ground for nourishing and transforming his dream into reality. He therefore decided to make it a home.

In his native Ugbekpe, the chiefs—district, clan and village heads—were next only to the whitemen. The Indirect Rule system gave them almost limitless powers. He remembered vividly that in 1927, the then Otaru of Auchi, at the pain of persecution, forcibly ordered all those within his district to embrace Islam.

In Ife, where the Ooni was already a very powerful ruler, well before the arrival of the Europeans, colonial rule was to further strengthen the throne. Musa found a growing community of Afemai people in Ile-Ife. They assisted him to blend into the Ife community. When he finally chose to earn a living from washing clothes, he tilted towards the royalty and the wealthy among the educated and illiterate natives of those days. They were the ones who in any case could afford the services of laundry-men at that time. He became one of the per-

sonal staff of Oba Adesoji Aderemi, the then Ooni of Ife, who already had a number of people of Afemai origin as palace hands.

Cloth-washing required no special skill; it was, better still, not a job that banished one to the forests. he could do it in the day and partake of the rollicking life of the town, which then was little more than drinking palmwine, in the evenings. The job offered Musa a few pounds and shillings, a sum he never could imagine in all his years in Ugbekpe. Musa readily embraced his new-found profession.

He settled down fast in the palace of Oba Aderemi and acquired a rare popularity and reputation in his chosen job. Ile-Ife, despite its size, was a very close-knit society. Everybody knew everybody else. The people knew about arrivals, and departures. The society was warm to strangers. Those of them who conducted themselves well earned the community's respect while imperious ones got a good dose of derogatory remarks, such as *irakira* (worthless stranger). But Musa was not a man to treat those who offered him shelter with contempt. He realized that a man who left his home for another in search of a prosperous future must give his hosts their due.

He wrote home soon after settling down in Ife, to inform his family about his new home and his new occupation. His parents were pleased to hear from him. His mother's fears as to his safety were dispelled, and his father's intense anger at his obstinacy gradually vanished and gave way to hope. He began to identify with his son's dream and helped to give it meaning.

Isa Giwa decided to search in the village for a girl he considered good enough to be his son's wife. He found one in young and pretty Ayi Elekia, living a few huts away. All the necessary negotiations were concluded and a letter went to Ife summoning Musa home for marriage. He came, married Ayi Elekia by native law and custom and took her away to Ile-Ife.

In Ile-Ife, husband and wife made a home out of their one-room apartment in the Ooni's palace. Musa resumed his occupation; Elekia took care of the home front and sold a few items to complement her husband's meagre income.

Time sped by, and Elekia responded naturally to its dictates. In time, she started to feel life stir inside her and as she grew close to delivery, Musa moved her to the home of a fellow Afemai in Obalufon

in Ile-Ife, as Yoruba custom did not allow childbirth inside the pala

Elekia was delivered of a baby girl. Husband and wife were happy. Ugbekpe heard of their joy and shared it with them. The child came at a time of high infant mortality. There was a near-absence of vaccines against children's diseases and post-natal care was accessible only to the few who could afford it. The happiness in the home of the Giwas was shortlived—the girl took ill. The parents battled hard to save her life but did not succeed.

Time soon planted another seed in Elekia. On March 16, 1947 a baby boy was born at the home of the Giwas. Musa and Elekia coming from a place where the Nupes had long established their religious influence, were devout muslims. The child was therefore given the Islamic name of Sumonu (a corruption of the name Usman) and an elated Oba Aderemi (ever interested in the affairs of his personal staff) added the Yoruba name of Oladele (meaning, wealth has come to the home).

The Giwas moved to a backyard room and parlour at 2, Atiba Street, less than fifty metres away from the palace. It was here that the battle for survival began to take various forms and shapes. The couple cherished their boy and were determined to give him the best within their meagre resources.

Another baby girl followed Dele into the world and like the first girl, she fell ill at an early stage. After only a few days of illness, she died. Dele was very fond of his baby sister and for days afterwards, he was very sad and withdrawn. He also took ill as a result. His superstitious parents blamed it on the close resemblance to his late sister. She was believed to be beckoning to him from the spirit world. The Giwas went into action to ward off that evil spirit and to encourage the boy to take refuge in his mother's warm bosom. Knives etched tiny marks on the boy's cheeks, offerings were made and prayers chanted for his survival.

Dele was almost six years old before he had a sibling. The Giwa's second son arrived on January 16, 1953. Musa called him Lasisi (a corruption of the Islamic name, Abdulaziz). He was followed two years later by yet another son on April 19, 1955. He was called Karimu (Abdul Karim).

Dele, their precocious brother, preferred the Yoruba traditional names. Lasisi, who came around the new year festivities, he called

Abiodun (born with the festival) while Karimu, born not long after grandpa Isa Giwa's death, was called Babatunde and later on Olatunde. The Islamic names their father gave them were eventually dropped when his brothers were old enough to make their own choices.

2. Early Days

MUSA Giwa was one of those for whom Islam was more than just a way of worship. He tried to uphold its tenets. He began very early to inculcate in his children a deep moral awareness.

At three, Dele was enrolled in a Koranic preparatory school in Ile-Ife. It was owned and run by a stern Islamic teacher called Malam Oseni. The owners of these schools were usually the only teachers. Their houses or the shade of near-by trees or the foyer of mosques served as classrooms. The pupils squatted on bare floors, loudly chanting Arabic alphabets and Koranic verses.

At times, the older pupils were given the task of leading the freshers in a chant when the teacher was indisposed. Parents paid only token fees, and bought uniforms. During Islamic festivals the pupils were expected to sing and dance around the town. Specially carved wooden slates on which Islamic alphabets and Koranic verses were written often distinguished these children from regular school pupils.

At Malam Oseni's, punctuality, class attendance, attentiveness and a good memory were required, as most of the texts were learnt by rote. Those who ran foul of any of these were severely punished.

Although Dele later abandoned the Islamic religion, he was considered outstanding at the Koranic centre and Malam Oseni was very fond of him.

In 1955, at the age of eight, Dele was enrolled at an elementary school. His father decided on a school which was likely to successfully combine Western education with a sound Islamic foundation. The

Ansar-Udeen Primary School in Ile-Ife was for him, the obvious choice.

In addition to the Arabic lessons, Ansar-Udeen School offered daily, Dele's father still insisted that he should regularly attend Malam Oseni's centre. At the close of school during the week, Dele would race home for his meals and a quick change of clothes, before resuming at the Koranic centre. His two brothers, Tunde and Biodun, were to follow the same pattern when they joined him in the same elementary school.

Dele grew fast and sharp. He was popular in the school and was outstanding academically. His starched and well-pressed uniform distinguished him. Musa took great care in handling his boys' clothes. They modelled his proficiency at the laundry.

Most of the teachers at Ansar-Udeen School liked the bright young Dele. Some of them were later to comment on the big difference between him and his two brothers when they eventually enrolled at the school. They used to tease the younger Giwas that Dele had appropriated the entire family intelligence.

The Giwa household continued to grow in strength and in number. The family was soon joined by a distant relation called Alimotu. She was about Dele's age and, in line with the extended family system, had been assigned to the Giwas to look after. The backyard dwelling at 2, Atiba Street soon became inadequate for the family. They had no means of getting a bigger place even though rent was relatively cheap in those days. The apartment had been given out to them free of charge in return for Musa's free laundry services for the landlord.

Musa and Elekia lavished affection on their first son. He was to them a priceless possession and they were ready to give him the best whenever fortune smiled at them, but it never really did. Their existence was becoming progressively tougher. The income from cloth-washing had become less regular. By 1955, Elekia had become a proud owner of a hand-driven portable Singer sewing machine. It was Musa's gift to her at the end of her apprenticeship at Mrs Ogunjimi's sewing shop. Elekia sewed and mended the family clothes and those of outsiders. But not much came in from this either. In spite of their penury, they were still determined to give Dele and his brothers the best they could afford.

Dele was not one to wait for Providence to shape his life, however. He tried to firmly grip his destiny early in his life. He saw the grinding poverty in his family and realized he had to be smart to free himself of its hold. He mixed freely with his peers, many of whom were from more privileged families.

One of those early friends was Dipo Fadiora. Dipo's father was one of Ife's prominent men in those days. He was a man of means and was very active in the politics of the town and the Western Region as a whole. His house, a modern one storey-building, was just in front of the Giwas' place, and Dipo had a whole room to himself. Dipo, an only son of his mother, was somewhat pampered by the parents. His mother, a popular palmwine seller in the town, was of substantial means too, at least by Ife standards. Dipo had everything a child desired in those days. There was always food in the house, pocket money for sweets, clothes and shoes that were the envy of his less fortunate play-mates. Dele was one of these playmates. He lacked money, clothes and shoes; even food was sometimes in short supply, but he had the independence to discover himself.

The bond between Dele and Dipo grew so strong that Dele began to pass some nights in Dipo's house. There was no objection from the Giwas. Dipo and the entire Fadioras were well known to them. Besides, Dele was growing too fast to be crammed along with the others in the small, sunless dwelling. Unconsciously, he drifted from home frequently; he seemed to want to escape from the oppressive, stultifying poverty around him. The Fadioras' house provided this escape. He crept in gradually, staying some nights, until he finally moved in. His parents did not object, and the two houses were so close in any case that the Giwas needed only to shout to summon Dele whenever they so wished.

Dipo's parents warmly welcomed Dele into their home. They knew the Giwas very well. Dele, was to them, a sharp, neat and respectful boy. The Fadioras believed he was going to be a good influence on their son. They therefore accorded him the love, care and protection that they gave their child.

Only those close to them knew that Dele was not one of the Fadioras. Dele and Dipo, the two jolly friends, romped the streets of Ife in search of adventure. As time raced by, their circle began to expand. In 1958, Kola Ilori, joined the group. Dele was the first to meet Kola. It was during football practice at S.S. Peter and Paul

School in Iremo, Ile-Ife. It was the school Kola attended and Dele had gone there to play football. The two of them struck up a friendship that was to continue long after Kola left the school.

In 1962, Lai Arasanmi, was admitted as the fourth member of that circle. Dele and Dipo met Lai during the annual *Egungun* festival in which the highpoint was the emergence of *Gbandu,* a popular, fearsome and tough masquerade believed to have magical powers. *Gbandu* would go round the entire town and those who considered themselves men were expected to join its wild and drunken entourage. The riotous revellers wielded long whips with which they ferociously lashed themselves. Only those who thought they could withstand that whipping were supposed to be seen in *Gbandu's* company. Those who could not, kept a safe distance and played the role of cheer leaders.

Lai, a rather smallish boy, was one of those who went to prove his manhood during this particular festival in 1962. At a point during *Gbandu's* whirl and twirl through the sprawling town, some bullies surrounded him and wanted to flog him. Dele and Dipo emerged from nowhere to his rescue. They had never known Lai before but they detested the harrassment. Dele was particularly daring. It was not that he could beat any of Lai's attackers if they decided to call his bluff. But they were deceived by his gallantry and aggressiveness and so left a trembling Lai in peace. The three—Dele, Dipo and Lai—continued trailing *Gbandu* until everybody went his way.

When Lai's father was appointed something of an *aide-de-camp* to Oba Aderemi, the family left Iremo to live in the palace. Dele and Dipo were frequent visitors to the palace to play with the young Aderemi's. This was how they re-united with Lai after the *Gbandu* episode. The three shared a passion for collecting bubble gum pictures of music stars such as Elvis Presley, Cliff Richard, Sam Cooke, the Everly Brothers, James Brown, Elton John and the Beatles. Lai had notebooks which paraded these photographs, as well as his favourite songs. Dele and Dipo were great lovers of this pastime. They borrowed the notebooks, copied the songs and invited Lai to sing for them. The trio became very close and visits were regularly exchanged.

In time, the warmth and friendship extended to their parents. The elder Giwa and Lai's father worked together at the palace. The Arasanmi's and the Fadiora's also were familiar with each other.

By 1964, the three boys became so close that Lai left the palace to join Dele and Dipo in the Fadiora house. There were then two rooms for their use. The inner room had a bed and whoever slept first or 'camped' a girl, furtively for the night, took that special room with the bed while the others occupied the parlour. An old transistor radio which they commandeered from Dipo's father provided music.

Dele and Dipo were the closest, but they were often the ones to disagree with each other. Such quarrels usually arose out of arguments, for Dele was argumentative and, even at that age, domineering. But they were very good friends nonetheless. Dele in fact used Dipo's clothes, since he had very few. Their lives became more and more intertwined and the bond between them became stronger.

Meals were eaten together. The three of them would finish Mama Dipo's moinmoin and eko for breakfast and move over to Dele's and Lai's for lunch and dinner. They knew what to expect in each house. In Dele's house, pounded yam was the usual fare at lunch or dinner.

While Dele basked in the warmth of his friends, the mouths his parents had to feed increased. Daughters Hawawu and Fatima had arrived. The income from cloth-washing and sewing remaining a mere pittance. The children had to be educated, clothed and fed.

Musa and Elekia did not give up the struggle for survival. Dele and Tunde began to assist in the laundry during their spare time. Musa had come to realize that there was no easy way to earn a living. Every job posed its own challenges, and after a while, started to wonder if there was any difference between the profession he jettisoned in Ugbekpe and the one he had embraced in Ife. But he did not regret leaving home. It had opened his eyes. It had demystified a lot about life. Musa only murmured about the sweat and pain of the laundry.

One problem was the lack of water. In Ile-Ife at that time, potable water was a luxury in most homes. Few had access to it. Musa and his two sons chose a stream called Esinmirin, some few miles from Ife township on Ilesha Road. Departure from home for the stream was usually as early as 5 a.m., shortly after the morning prayers.

All the clothes to be washed would be tied up in bundles and conveyed to the stream by all three of them. They would also take along big bowls or buckets, and the locally made soft soda soap.

Since breakfast and lunch were taken at Esinmirin, the Giwas had to take along some garri, akara (bean cake), moinmoin and pap. They usually arrived at the stream shortly before sunrise. Esinmirin was between one and a half and two hours walk from the town. There were no trees to provide shade at the portion of Esinmirin where the Giwas often did their washing. They had to work very fast to finish the bulk of the job before the scorching sun enfeebled them. There were times when Dele and Tunde had to make two trips to the stream. Whenever there was a heap of clothes which could not be dried at the stream, the sons evacuated the wet, heavy heaps in turns.

Father and sons returned home completely exhausted after every wash. At the end of every such trip to Esinmirin, there would be backaches from hours of stooping, painful knees and numb feet from kilometres of trudging, necks stiffened by the head-loads and fingers bleached and made sore by the caustic soap.

It was like this every Saturday and at vacation period for Dele and Tunde. But their involvement in their father's occupation was not limited to this alone. They were also the ones to deliver the finished clothes to their owners in the evenings. This was how Dele came to be well known to members of the Ife upper class that his father served. Many of them grew to like him. Whenever they met Musa, many of his customers often advised him not to let Dele's education stop at the primary level.

Elekia still sewed and mended clothes for a few pennies. She also added petty trading in order to improve the family income. Tunde and Biodun hawked raw maize, groundnuts, oranges and bitter-kola on the streets of Ile-Ife.

In 1960, Dele completed his primary education at the Ansar-Udeen School. Bowing to the pressures of friends and well-wishers, Musa enrolled him at the Local Authority Secondary Modern School in Lagere, Ile-Ife. The modern school then was somewhat like today's junior secondary school. It was an intermediate school between the primary and secondary levels. They were peculiar only to the Western Region of Nigeria.

Musa battled against all odds to see Dele through the modern school after which he planned to send the boy into the labour market. Tunde and Biodun were following very closely. At home, the number of mouths to feed continued to outgrow available resources. One of

Musa's brothers who was later to become a Jos-based businessman, had also joined the family. There were no signs that things would improve for the family in the immediate future. Dele was already being looked upon to carry some of these responsibilities whenever he found a job after he completed the modern school.

While Dele was still at the Local Authority Modern School, one of Musa's clients at Akarabata in Ile-Ife approached him to allow Dele to stay with him. Dele and Tunde had made several delivery trips to his place and the man had grown fond of the boys, especially Dele. The man realized that Musa's impoverished state could rob the young Dele of many opportunities in the future. His offer of help was readily accepted, and Dele moved into his house.

At this time, his attendance at Malam Oseni's centre was no longer regular, and he began to develop an independent attitude to religion. He no longer observed the daily prayers. Musa was no longer nearby to coerce him to the mosque. Although his visits home became rather infrequent, neither of the parents grumbled. Dele had always been an independent-minded child. This explains why he was never fluent in the Ekperi dialect.

Musa's service and closeness to the high and mighty in Ife ultimately brought its rewards. It was through one of those men that he got a job at Oduduwa College. It was in the palace that he met one Mr Olagbaju, an in-law of Oba Aderemi's and a teacher at Oduduwa College. It was through him Musa learnt that Oduduwa College wanted a washerman for the boarding students' beddings and personal clothes. The pay was eight pounds per month.

It was not very much, but it was something. Unlike the past when his income was based on the number of clothes he washed, the Oduduwa College job came with a regular salary. Musa immediately grabbed the offer. And so the daily trek to Esinmirin ceased. There was plenty of water in the college. Musa also had the opportunity of keeping most of his erstwhile customers. He carried their clothes to the school and as soon as he finished with the students' job, he would begin on the ones from outside. Oba Aderemi was one of those clients he still served. He was therefore able to add a few extra pounds to his monthly salary from the college.

Musa also engaged in subsistence farming on a portion of the large expanse of land at the college campus. The family no longer spent

much on food. They fed better too. The children were expected to assist in both the laundry and on the farm. But Dele was not too fond of the farm, he in fact, detested it. This invariably caused a conflict with his father. Whenever it was time to tend the farm, Musa would send any of his brothers to fetch him and Dele would only grudgingly agree to go with them, and even then only rarely. He felt too clean for its dirt, and too fragile for the strain. But Musa never relented to send for him whenever it was time to farm.

In 1963, the family moved into another two-room dwelling at Oduduwa Road. It was closer to Musa's new place of work. Every morning as Musa headed for the college, Elekia would dispatch Tunde, Biodun and Alimotu to the then fledgling university campus in Ile-Ife where major construction work was in progress. Elekia's children sold bread and other food items to the working men. She would sometimes trudge the ten kilometre distance to the campus with her young ones to explore the lucrative campus petty trading.

Meanwhile, pressure continued to mount on Musa not to terminate Dele's education at the modern school. Dele's teachers and some of Musa's customers advised him to endeavour to send Dele to college. Although he knew what college education meant, he did not have the means to bequeath it to his children. But he was always told he could if he set his mind to it. Musa yielded to those pressures. He decided to make an attempt.

Dele sat for and passed the entrance examination to Oduduwa College. He was called for an interview and was successful. In January 1964, he was admitted into form one along with over a hundred others.

That same year, Tunde finished primary school and had nowhere to go. His father could of course not afford to send two sons to college. Paying Dele's school fees was already problem enough. To make it easy, he worked out an arrangement with the school authority in which a percentage of his monthly pay was deducted at source for school fees. While Dele went off to school, Tunde had to remain at home for one year, hawking wares in the streets for mum and assisting dad in the laundry and on the small farm.

Musa decided to visit Ugbekpe that year. Previously, he only went home once in every three years. The road to the village was not very good. Elekia and her children had assumed that he went home to see his ageing mother. Unknown to them, Musa was being pressured from

the village to marry a second wife. It was considered unwise for a man to have all his children from one woman.

Musa's people could not understand why he decided to "splash" all his "wealth" on a woman and her children. They did not see the sense in sending Dele to college. They considered it a waste of resources for a man who had not built the usual mud house at home. At that time in Ugbekpe, education was still not very popular. Even those who accepted it, chose to stop their children's education at the primary school level. "Too much book," they said, "spoils a child." Education of female children was of course out of the question completely. But they thought it was ridiculous for Musa to spend all his 'fortune' on one son. It was in heeding to these pressures from home that Musa left Ife for Ugbekpe. But he told nobody in his family the object of his mission.

In 1964, Elekia's sixth child, her third girl, was born, Musa was still in the village when the child arrived. The joy which trailed every birth, was not to be found wanting in their small apartment. The new arrival met a poor but God-fearing, and therefore hopeful, family. The day that brought Abiba rapidly expired and, at the approach of darkness, the family went to bed as usual. Elekia cuddled her baby, waiting for sleep to usher them into another day. At about 2 o'clock in the deep of night, there was a gentle knock on the door.

"Who is that?", Elekia asked.

"It's me," came the muffled reply. Elekia recognised the voice. The children — Tunde, Biodun, Hawawu, and Fatima — did too. It was their father's. The door was opened and in came Musa and a strange woman. Greetings were exchanged and Musa introduced his new wife to a bewildered Elekia. Coincidentally, her name was also Elekia. She, like the first wife, was also from Ekperi.

In those days, only very few women could look their husbands in the face and question their actions. They were supposed to be meek housewives, accommodating their husband's every whim without complaining. Elekia, while sometimes vocal, was nevertheless steeped in this tradition. The unannounced marriage of the second Elekia was one case over which she kept mute, even though she had seemingly justifiable grounds to complain for not being taken into confidence by her husband. She decided not to raise a storm for fear of its being misinterpreted. She could be accused of not wanting to share her man

with another legally married woman. Her family, her peers in Ugbekpe and her friends in Ife would be disappointed upon hearing that. So, she bore the humiliation in stoic silence. The admission of her son into college, something she never dreamed of, was a source of immense joy to her. Why make an unprofitable fuss?

3. School Days

ODUDUWA College was in those days, one of Ife's most prestigious schools. Founded in 1932 by the Ife community, at the inspiration of Oba Aderemi, who was then only two years on the throne, the college attracted most of Ife's sons and daughters. Within a short span of its history, it had acquired a high reputation in academics, sports and other extra-curricular activities. In a gathering of students from reputable schools in the Western Region, an Ooduan, as students of Oduduwa College proudly called themselves, could raise his head without the fear of being snubbed.

In 1964, the college had three arms each of forms one to five, with about thirty-five students in each arm, as well as a lower and upper six for its higher school section. There were four dormitories — Cole House (named after the college's first principal), Moremi House (for an Ife heroine), College House, and Aderemi House, in honour of the Ooni.

Boarding was compulsory for forms one and five students in addition to those in higher school. The rest were allowed, if they so elected, to attend school from their homes. For most day students the daily trek to the school was a relatively short distance. The day students also were at liberty to do whatever pleased them outside the college gates, unlike their counterparts in the hostels whose lives were regulated by seniors, prefects and house-masters.

The senior students constituted virtually a separate authority. They demanded obedience, respect and personal services from the junior students. Failure to comply earned the hot headed ones punishment

such as cutting the grass, fetching water from the pond, and an occasional wack on the behind.

But in spite of this, the school had a liberal tradition. Its students were highly competitive in academics, sports and social activities. The students mixed freely and friends and acquaintances were easily acquired. The more adventurous among them savoured the fun of escapades, when undetected, and paid the price when caught. School days were unforgettable for most of those who passed through Oduduwa at this period.

This was the Oduduwa College that received the 17-year old Sumonu Oladele Musa in January 1964, slightly above the average freshman's age of 15. The fresher spent his first boarding year in Moremi House. In this class, he was sent to the 'B' arm. A particularly articulate student, Dele had a penchant for engaging in informal discussions with his teachers and fellow students. His immaculate appearance became his trademark. His bushy but well-kept hair was styled into the 'Afro', the rave of the time. This, with his fair skin, cut for him the image of an Afro-American.

Dele was conscious of his faint resemblance to an African-American, a fact which influenced him to confer on himself, 'Negro,' a nickname that stuck throughout his four years in the college.

One of the very first students Dele chummed up with was Debo Ibiyemi, then a third-year student of the college. It was Dele's father that Debo first met in 1962. As the college washerman, Musa had noticed that there were never any of Debo's private clothes submitted for washing each time he went round to pick up the students' soiled clothes. One day, he asked Debo why he did not submit his clothes. Debo confessed that he could not guarantee that his "expensive" clothes would be carefully handled by the old man. He said he preferred washing them himself. Debo's down-to-earthness struck Musa. He saw a similarity between his son Dele and Debo in this regard. He spoke to Debo about Dele, with hopes that he would soon join the college.

When, in 1964, Dele arrived at Oduduwa College, Musa introduced him to Debo who became his protector. Dele, forever a self-confident boy, was not the favourite of most senior students. He was intrepid and self-assertive. Many of the senior students loathed his impudence. He got into trouble with them quite often, but Debo, who had come to

be regarded as his relation in the school, was always there to protect him. Whenever he crossed paths with senior boys and was to be 'fagged', for a misdemeanour it was usually Debo's intervention that saved him.

One other person who came early into Dele's life was a pretty, slightly plumpy girl, called Stella Ogunseitan. She was a "college daughter" to Debo Ibiyemi's girl-friend and that, of course, made Debo her "college father." A school "father" or "mother" is a senior student who takes care, by his own volition, of a junior student, who then is called a "daughter" or "son." But it was not through Debo that Dele and Stella first met. It was when they were being interviewed for admission into the college that Dele first set eyes on her. After that, he seemed to have determined that he was going to make friends with her. Fortunately for him, they both were offered admission.

Stella, on arrival at the school, drifted into a group that consisted of two other girls — Rachel Makinde and Iyabo Olajide. Dele manouvered his way into their group in order to achieve the object of his desire. It was through Rachel and Iyabo that Dele obtained Stella's home address.

Easter break came in late March and the students left for home. Dele remained in Ile-Ife and Stella went to Olokemeji in Abeokuta, Ogun State where her parents, David Adebayo Ogunseitan, a forest superintendent and his wife Victoria, lived. Dele wrote a six-page "love letter" and posted it from Ife to Stella's address in Abeokuta. In it, he extolled Stella's qualities to high heavens and asked her to be his "life partner."

The addressee received and read the letter repeatedly. Stella knew the writer very well and understood his request. But she did not want to do anything that would jeopardize her studies and said so in the reply which the author had demanded. She thought that put paid to his childish fantasies. An infatuated Dele did not give up.

School resumed in early April. It was time again for the furtive affairs between boys and girls. Many "fashionable" male students had girls with whom they were identified. Those who did not were considered conservative and were seen as yokels. To be part of the sneaky fun of those days, a student must find a partner of the opposite sex.

Dele was not exactly a novice in the game. Although he was still only 17, he had grasped the intricacies of life fairly early. He was still pre-occupied with the unfinished business of Stella. He resolved not to be discouraged by the rebuff, which was not unexpected. A sensible girl was not expected to say 'yes' at the first try.

One day, he found a safe time and place in the school to physically confront the elusive Stella.

"You got my letter," he began.

"Yes."

"Your reply is not good enough," he said, pursuing his argument determinedly. "You must give me a better one."

She shrugged doubtfully. Dele did not miss the faint sign of encouragement. Right there, he conferred on Stella the title of "Nigress," thereby carefully claiming a trophy he had yet to win convincingly. Stella smiled. The encounter was inconclusive, but it represented a modest improvement.

Subsequently, Dele kept up the pressure. He told her he had never needed to "base" a girl for more than two days, and that Stella's tenacious refusal had further convinced him that she was the kind of decent girl he needed. Thus humoured, Stella began to soften. She realised that she was only shying away from what was already fashionable in school. In mid-April, two weeks after school resumed, she gave in to this popular, handsome and persistent boy.

The affair grew fast and strong. Stella's once-a-month outings (usually on the last Saturday of the month) were spent with Dele in the Fadiora household. Dipo was at that time a student at Oshogbo Grammar School and was at home only during the holidays. That left Dele alone and thus he was able to strengthen his love for Stella. Aside from their monthly outings, the two lovers also shared some hours together during the weekend visiting time, when the students received their visitors in the college hall.

Perhaps the most popular male-female students' rendezvous, was the spot between the girls' hostel and Cole House. Stolen kisses in the dark qualified the spot for the appellation of "ehin ogba (behind the fence) show." There the young lovers met and whispered sweet nothings into each other's ears.

Dele scaled through his first term examination brilliantly. He was at the top of the class. His three years in modern school placed him in a better position than his classmates who came in straight from primary school. The college authorities then decided to automatically promote him to class two. This was how he got to be a year ahead of Stella by April 1964.

He settled down remarkably fast in his new class. He was familiar with most of the students even before he joined them. One of those he allied with early in the new class was Gbade Abiodun Sote, a cool-headed young boy. They became the closest friends in the class. Wherever you found one, the other was bound to be there. They were gregarious young folks sharing together the unforgettable experience that was Oduduwa College.

The most popular students in those days were usually academically brilliant and also outstanding in athletics. Dele was good academically, especially in the liberal arts. Subjects such as English language, English literature and bible knowledge were his best. He was weak in the sciences even though he was fair in chemistry. He was not particularly outstanding as from the second year but he was always among the first ten in his class. He often excelled in extra-curricular activities.

His performance during the March/April Inter-House Sports Competition in 1965 is a good example. There was a boy in Cole House, Omolade Binuyo, who was the superstar of the 110 and 220 yard track events. Dele had promised himself to dim Omolade's star that year. He practised secretly and was determined to win the 110-yard medal for Moremi House. The competition came and a confident Omolade came on to the track basking in resounding applause.

'On your mark! Set! Go!' Dele, an unremarkable athlete up till this time, breasted the tape ahead of the field. It was a surprise to everyone, not the least the former champion, Omolade. Dele liked challenges. He always set himself tasks that he strove to fulfil. He never believed anything was too difficult to achieve if one was determined. This remained his guiding principle throughout life.

In 1965, a West Indian, teacher, Hartley Sutton, joined the staff of Oduduwa College. The task of improving the students' performance in English language fell to him. Sutton introduced innovative ideas aimed at stimulating the students' interest in the English language

One such innovation was the fortnightly newsletter called *The Torch* There was, in addition, the school magazine, the *Ooduan*.

The birth of *The Torch* was not only useful for the students tc develop their use of English, but also an experiment for Sutton, whc had always wanted to get involved in publishing and journalism. Mos- of the other teachers were not keen. So he got the students togethe- and demanded for original stories, written in reasonably gooc English. The first copies were cyclostyled. As the newspaper becam popular and stronger, the production crew began to print with Fadehan Press in Ife.

Students such as Segun Oladehinde, who was then in the Upper Six Biodun Sote, Oyekale, Lasekan, Dele and a host of others were fully involved in the production of the paper. Sote was particularly usefu because he could type. Dele was involved in gathering the materials and editing, while Lasekan did the cartoons and illustrations. There was an editorial board supervised by Sutton. The board edited and planned the pages of the newsletter. The liberal tradition of Oduduwa College encouraged the students to write whatever came to their minds without inhibition.

Dele distinguished himself in *The Torch* team not so much for his ability to write as for his daring. Some of the teachers considered him too brash and vocal. He did clash with one when he wrote an uncomplimentary article about the teacher concerning his relationships with the female students. Dele was taken before the principal. Fortunately for him, the principal had heard about the teacher's amorous affairs. When the teacher laid down his complaint, to his consternation the principal asked if the boy lied. That was the end of the matter.

Some of the teachers were obviously not pleased with the principal's handling of a clear case of insolence by a student. Some of them grumbled. Reports about Dele's alleged propensity to disobey his teachers got to his father, who decided to report him to Oba Aderemi. Dele was called to the palace. Dele had envisaged what was likely to happen in the palace. He needed a shield. He therefore asked Kola Ilori to accompany him to the Ooni. On arrival at the palace, he was brought before Oba Aderemi who scolded him harshly. "Look, young man, if you do not behave from now on, you will be withdrawn from school," the Ooni said.

Mr Justice Dapo Aderemi, the Ooni's heir, was present when Dele was summoned. He liked young Dele very much. He realized the young man must be in serious trouble to have been summoned before *Kabiyesi*. He was genuinely concerned for Dele's future, and, he interjected.

"Look, what is your problem? I know you are a good boy, but you have to cool down. I can assure you, if you pass your next term examination, I shall give you a scholarship for life." Dapo Aderemi then dipped his hand into his pocket and gave Dele twenty pounds! The windfall was unexpected. Dele was overwhelmed. He thanked his benefactor profusely, prostrated, promised to be of good behaviour, and left the palace. Dele and Kola squandered one pound from the big sum romping around town till late evening.

But Dele's father was not happy. He thought the boy should have been thoroughly thrashed instead of being handed a huge sum for being naughty in school.

As for the promise of a scholarship, Dele passed his examination, but as fate would have it, Dapo Aderemi died, the following year. It was the end of another hope of a brighter future.

Despite some teachers' mounting opposition to the latitude which *The Torch* gave the students, the fortnightly newsletter survived until 1971 when its originator left the school. Considering its unpopularity among some teachers, it was not surprising that the punchy pamphlet became moribund after the departure of Hartley Sutton. While it lasted, it served the purpose for which it was created and there was no doubt that it provided useful training for those members of *The Torch* who were later to make writing a career.

Dele became more and more involved in his affair with Stella. He wrote to inform Dipo of his new heart-throb and Dipo began communicating with her. They met physically when Dipo came home for the mid-term holidays. Lai also got introduced to her on arrival from Ibadan Grammar School on holiday. Dele's parents got to know her and they liked her. They did nothing to discourage their son. They were convinced he knew what he was doing. In school, everyone knew that Dele was going out with Stella. It was no longer a secret affair

Communication between them in the day time was brief. When they met anywhere in the campus during the day, it was not more than a

exchange of 'hellos'. Letters carried more detailed messages betwee lovers but they were also the most risky. Some mischievous senic students in the hostels usually demanded and read out love lette received by junior students from their lovers. Dele was once punishe in his first year for refusing to let Stella's letters be read. He later tol Stella that it was the seriousness with which he took their affair tha emboldened him to turn down the request for her letters to be read ou by the seniors.

Vacation came at the end of every school term and students return ed happily home to join their families and friends. It was to Abeokut that Stella always went while Dele remained in Ife where his parent battled to improve the quality of their life. Out of sight was not out c mind for the two young lovers on holidays. Letters travelled frequent ly between Ife and Abeokuta.

Ife, during the holidays, offered a lot of entertainment for th young. Besides visiting friends and relatives, there were socia activities to fill the idle days. There were youth clubs, and the trio c Dele, Dipo and Lai had invitations to their parties. They were rate three of the hottest guys in town and were envied by their peers. The turned down invitations to become members of these clubs becaus they felt they were "too much" for the existing clubs. But they neve failed to turn up at the parties. Otherwise, they preferred being o their own. Some prominent men in the town liked them because the were intelligent, smart and outspoken. It was to these people the went in 1966 and collected money for their own party. By Ife stan dards, the party was very successful. Each of the organizers brough his own girlfriend and invited a couple of others in the town.

When birthdays fell on vacation, the Ife boys would not let it pas without a noise. But the noise was not really more than assembling a few boys and girls to jump and howl to some tunes from an ageing record player. What went for refreshments were not more than a fev bottles of Coca-Cola and one or two packets of Cabin biscuits, whicl some disdainfully called "pako" (wood) because of its hardness. A such parties, Dele refused all temptations to be unfaithful to Stella He would enjoy himself to the full but he never forgot the girl in Abeokuta. Stella loomed so large in his mind that there was hardly a place for another girl. Dipo too had a steady relationship with one o Dele's classmates at Oduduwa College, Florence Adebayo, whom he later married. Lai could not be restricted by some starry-eyed affair

For a boy born into poverty, even when that boy was Dele, it was inevitable that he would be reminded, at regular intervals, of his position by some of his peers. It was something Dele never forgot or forgave. In 1965, Dele decided to mark his eighteenth birthday. He went begging for a camera from a friend whose father was relatively well off. Dele had informed him well in advance and he promised to bring it to the party. At the very last minute, the friend was nowhere to be found. Dele then decided to go to his house. The boy said he had changed his mind and slammed the door in Dele's face.

Dele felt so humiliated, he almost wept. He promised himself solemnly that whenever he had the means, he would buy himself the best camera in the the world; a promise he was to fulfil eight years later, in America. It was a beautiful Canon camera which he chose after exhaustively checking through several camera catalogues. Lai knew of the vow in Ile-Ife in March 1965. After buying the camera, he promptly phoned Lai up, reminded him of that birthday pledge and its fulfillment.

Apart from dampers like the birthday camera incident, Dele generally enjoyed the goodwill of many people in Ife. His peers knew he could not be cowed by anyone. He mingled with both the sons of the rich and poor He neither swallowed insults from anyone nor forfeited his self-respect. It was this self-confidence and fearlessness that endeared him to a number of people. Dipo's father, for instance, was one of those whose hearts he won. Pa Fadiora came to like him more than ever before, following a political incident during the turbulent politics of the First Republic.

At that time in the mid sixties, the sun was already setting on the First Republic, and human lives were as valuable as those of ants. The situation was worse in the Western Region. Blood flowed daily like a damaged tap, houses and valuable properties went up in a raging inferno in the senseless orgy of violence that was called *wetie* (spray with gasoline). It was amidst this political turmoil that an allegation of murder was brought against Pa Fadiora. He was arrested and detained in Ibadan.

While in detention, his political enemies began to harass his household. There were threats to set the house on fire in the dark of the night. The Fadioras continued to live everyday in fear of the unknown. They fled the house when they could bear it no longer. Dele

was the only one left in the house. He remained there until Fadiora was released and returned to Ife. Fadiora admired Dele's courage and spoke in glowing terms about the boy. He believed Dele's refusal to run away from the house, probably prevented the thugs from burning it down. He felt indebted to Dele and became very fond of him.

In the home of the Giwas, life was still the same old tale of want, aborted dreams and hope. Tunde had spent a year at home and there was still no money with which to proceed to college. Biodun was following closely in the elementary school. The family toyed with the idea of having Tunde learn either tailoring or becoming a roadside motor mechanic to break the boredom of idling away at home. Dele intervened and chose photography.

There were prosperous photographers, at least by Ife standards, in those days. There was Rosy Photos at Pa Amoo Olojede's Modakeke home, there was Muyis Photos and A.A. Oguns. Dele was fairly regular at their studios. He loved photography and took quite a lot of photographs himself. It was therefore no surprise to his family when he asked his brother to join the ranks of those glamorous men who lived comfortably by that profession.

Tunde signed on for a two-year apprenticeship with A.A. Oguns Photo Studio in 1965. The fee was ten pounds for the entire course. He qualified in 1967 and there was still no smile on his face. There was no money to buy the needed equipment with which to set up a studio. Photography was a capital intensive business. There were all sorts of things to buy, from cameras to darkroom facilities. A shop had to be rented too for the studio. All these cost money. And for a boy who could not afford a few pounds to go to college, photography was like another pipe dream.

At Oduduwa College, Dele was making steady progress in his studies and he offered hope to his pauperised family. In him they saw a glorious day and the proverbial glimmer of light at the end of the dark tunnel. There were already references to "when Dele finishes school, this and that will be ours." Dele had become the lone seed that sprouted, would flower and bring forth prodigious fruit.

Educationally, Dele symbolised the realisation of that hope. But his private life appeared to be swirling dangerously towards a precipice. It was a patent threat to whatever gains could be made in academics. It

all began during the second term holiday in 1966. Stella had gone to spend it with her parents in Abeokuta. Dele pursued her there and put up with a friend who was living nearby. The lovers virtually spent the holidays together. They met almost everyday.

When the inevitable occurred, Stella did not know what was happening. She did not realize that her body, in response to the biological process was visibly transforming. The more experienced ones in the school saw and understood Stella's transformation. It became the subject of whispers and rumours in the school. The rumours spread fast. A disturbed Dele called her and spoke about what the rumour mill had been spinning.

Stella still did not understand what the agitation was all about. As far as she was concerned she was hale and hearty and did not feel any different. With this false confidence, she left for home during the mid-term holiday in September 1966. Her parents noticed nothing and said nothing. The were apparently confused by her natural plumpiness.

She resumed from the mid-term break to discover that the students were more than ever before convinced that there was something wrong with Stella. Although, she was beginning to feel minor inconveniences, she blamed that on over-feeding. She told Dele again that there was no truth in the rumour then gaining ground in the school. They were confused as to how to handle the issue. Dele kept a bold face throughout. His worries were known only to Stella and his friends in the school. It was under this mental agony and psychological confusion that they sat for and passed the promotion examination in December 1966. Stella moved to class four and Dele to five.

School resumed in January 1967 with Stella still around. Her parents, by then in Ibadan, did not suspect anything throughout her stay at home. By that January her stomach was gradually bulging. She still did not understand what was the matter with it. Dele could not bear it any longer. It was humiliating for Stella to still hang around in school. The pregnancy was now getting too big to be concealed although Stella apparently did not understand what was hapening to her. It was to him better to disappear quietly than to be summoned before the school authority. He advised her to go home. Stella heeded his advice and left for Ibadan.

On arrival, she told her parents she was ill. The Ogunseitans were no kids. They began to suspect that their daughter could be pregnant.

Mrs Ogunseitan, accompanied by a few other relations, took Stella to the hospital where a doctor confirmed their fears. Their daughter was carrying a five-month pregnancy.

The Ogunseitans were indignant over the abrupt termination of their daughter's education, although they were grateful to God that she had not attempted to terminate the pregnancy. They had heard of numerous cases of attempts to terminate pregnancies that ended in death. Her father, initially, was not particularly anxious to meet Dele. His only concern was the possibility of Dele disclaiming responsibility for the baby. For her part, Stella's mother conducted a few secret sessions with the young lady, anxious to know if she was really sure of the child's father. Stella was consistent in her claim. Mrs Ogunseitan remembered Dele very well even though they had never met. Her daughter had mentioned him occasionally in the past two years. When Dele first proposed "marriage" to Stella, she confided in her mother. Like any mother would do, Mrs Ogunseitan discouraged such talk for fear of jeopardising her educational career. She warned her daughter against pregnancy and advised her to finish school first before getting involved with men.

There was no message from Dele and no effort was made by the Ogunseitans to get in touch with him until Stella delivered a baby boy on May 29, 1967.

Two weeks after, she came back to school and joined her classmates in form four. It was as if nothing had happened. She arrived under the pretext that she was just recovering from a long term illness. There was no problem about her ability to cope for she was fairly brilliant. The problem, unknown to her, was that her pregnancy had come to the knowledge of some of her teachers, including the principal, Canon David Olayinka.

Dele had been in the school while Stella was away and was aware of what was happening. The school authority could not be fooled for too long. Sooner or later, he thought, they would be summoned for questioning. It was foolish to continue pretending that nothing had happened. The only way they could both escape the humiliation of expulsion was for Stella to return quietly home, take care of the child and look for another school later. He called Stella and told her this. Stella heeded his advice and left the school.

In Ibadan where Stella was to spend seven months nursing the baby before going back to another school. the Ogunseitans had decided to name Dele's son Adisa, which in Yoruba means to "package and abandon". It laconically summed up their feelings about the circumstances in which their grandson came into being. The name appeared to be an indictment of Dele. It portrayed him as a coward, a man who bit more than he could chew, the frail neck that asked for a heavy burden and who ran away from a responsibility, his responsibility.

In a way, the Ogunseitans could not be blamed. They could not understand why their "son in-law" had become so elusive. They thought he should have shown up at least to acknowledge his child and express his gratitude to them for taking care of him. They were also not happy that neither Dele's parents nor his brothers and sisters deemed it wise to visit Ibadan to see the baby and his mother. They decided to wait and see.

Dele was himself not too sure of what was in store for him in Ibadan. There was the fear of being humiliated by Stella's parents. He was in school, their daughter was not. He had ruined her education while enjoying his. He therefore decided to wait till an opportunity offered itself.

The opportunity came four weeks after the child's birth through Dele's friend, Lai Arasanmi, who was then a high school student at Ibadan Grammar School.

Stella had a brother Rowland Ogunseitan in the same class with Lai. One day, an inquisitive Lai wanted to know if Rowland was in any way related to one Stella Ogunseitan. Rowland answered in the affirmative.

"Stella used to be very friendly with a friend of mine," Lai said, as a matter of fact.

"Is it Dele Giwa?" asked Rowland.

"Yes," Lai answered.

"Well, you people have a child in our house. You better come and see the child," Rowland said.

He led Lai to Stella and the baby in their Ibadan home. When he came in, Stella was genuinely pleased to see him. She was very happy to

re-unite with one of her old Ife pals. Lai carried the baby in his arms as a smiling Stella repeatedly showed him Dele's features on the baby. "Do you see your friend's nose?" Lai nodded in agreement.

Back in school, Lai was planning to send a message to Dele in Ife when Dele arrived in Ibadan to watch a film. He visited Lai who told him about Stella and the baby. The two friends immediately left for Stella's house. They were warmly received. The hostility Dele envisaged was not there. The Ogunseitan household and their neighbours poured in to behold the elusive father of the four-week old baby.

"Oh, look at the father, oh, they look very much alike," chorused those who witnessed the highly emotional encounter between father and child.

Dele was very moved. He stared at the little thing in his arms. "So, this is my child," was the only audible expression of joy that he could utter. He praised the Ogunseitans for their understanding and patience and promised to assume his paternal responsibilities whenever he had the means.

Dele expressed his dislike for the name Adisa. He went to the Ogunseitans armed with his own choice. It was Billy, a name he picked from one of the several novels he read at that time. Billy is an English name, the abbreviation of William, but Dele did not have William in mind. He just wanted a "fashionable" English name beginning with the letter 'B'. He had at that time imposed the name Baines on himself. It was a name he took on from his admiration for the then American President, Lyndon Baines Johnson, as well as all things American.

Dele, apparently, wanted to share the same initials with his son — Baines Giwa and Billy Giwa. He would stretch his imagination to the future when father and child would be arguing over the ownership of letters that were simply marked B. Giwa.

He left for Ife shortly after this memorable encounter with Stella and Billy. It had not been as bad as he had contemplated. As he resumed classes, he looked forward to a day when he would live up to the expectations of a father to Billy and a husband to Stella. Within himself, he resolved to work for success in his final examinations, find a job and take his place beside Stella and Billy.

The affair between a boy and his girlfriend were later to change, a change that was so dramatic and serious that it nearly ruined Dele's future. Stella's father visited Oduduwa College with his nephew soon after Dele's first trip to Ibadan. He was unhappy that his daughter was out of school and had come to convince Canon Olayinka, the principal, that Stella's long absence from school was due to an unspecified illness.

Having heard stories to the contrary, the principal was sceptical. He insisted on knowing the truth. Mr. Ogunseitan was reluctant, but his nephew quickly cut in and confessed to the principal. There was no alternative but to set the school's disciplinary machine in motion.

In Oduduwa College, the penalty for pregnancy was expulsion of the parties concerned. Dele was summoned before the college's disciplinary committee and handed the expected verdict. The two lovers were expelled from college.

Fortunately for Dele, he had paid and had been registered for the West African School Certificate Examination, his registration number had even arrived. The school authority therefore decided to allow him to come back for his papers.

At Number 63, Oduduwa Street, despair reigned. It was as if someone died in the Giwa family. Musa wept like a child. Elekia was unconsolable. The children produced a river of tears. The Giwas thought Dele's expulsion was the end of the road for them. Their only hope had been shattered. All their fantasies vanished. Despondency hung in the air and a bleak future stared at the household. They appeared condemned to perpertual indigence. Their only hope of breaking the agonizing cycle of poverty had been shredded.

Dele packed his belongings out of Oduduwa College and waved his friends and classmates a solemn goodbye. At home, an intrepid Dele calmed down his parents and explained to them that he could still do his final examination. He requested for money to travel to Lagos to meet Debo Ibiyemi and attend evening classes in preparation for the examination. By then, Debo was already working in the Ministry of Communications. His parents, dejected, meekly agreed to his plans and gave him some money. Dele departed for Lagos.

4. Getting Ready

LAGOS, Nigeria's capital city of sharp contradictions, did not in its overpowering complexity intimidate the young man from Ife. It was not a new place to Dele. He had first visited Lagos in 1964 as a freshman in Oduduwa College. His father had told him he had a brother in Lagos and Dele went after him as part of a general search for relations to assist his father in paying his way through college. It was to John Akuagwa, Musa's younger brother, that he went to visit for that help. Akuagwa was then a carpenter at Araromi Street, Lagos.

Dele laid his request before his uncle, who promised to assist. The visit proved to be rewarding for both Akuagwa and his nephew. For Akuagwa, it was his first contact with the Giwa family in Ile-Ife. Ever since he left Ugbekpe, he never heard of his brother, Musa. It was while thinking of the possibility of finding out how Musa and his family fared in Ife that Dele surfaced in Lagos. It was through his nephew that Akuagwa re-established contact with his brother in Ife.

At Dele's request, Akuagwa took him to a shop on Nnamdi Azikiwe Street and bought him a pair of shoes. Bally shoes and one other brand called the "Congress" were the most fashionable footwear in those days, and any kid who could afford one, invariably stood out in the midst of his playmates. Dele had for a long time dreamt of being the proud owner of Bally shoes. He was therefore ecstatic when his uncle agreed to provide him with a pair.

Akuagwa also bought him a sweat-shirt and a pair of trousers, gave him some money, and paid his fare back to Ife. Armed with the

address Dele had given him, Akuagwa went to visit his brother's family in Ife, a week later. Before returning to Lagos after a brief stay, Akuagwa left behind some money with which to buy books for his nephew. After that, he visited Ife regularly and Dele too visited Lagos either to visit him or his friends.

Dele arrived in Debo Ibiyemi's family house at No. 6 Kasali Street, Ikate, Surulere. He told his friend about the events leading to his expulsion from Oduduwa College and Debo offered to help. Debo's father did not particularly like the idea of Dele staying in his house, but his son convinced him to the contrary. The first hurdle scaled, Debo approached one of the teachers at Ansar Udeen Grammar School, Randle Avenue, Surulere who promised to talk to the principal. He did and Dele was allowed to attend afternoon science lessons with the then form five students of the school. Fortunately, he was not charged for these lessons. As luck would have it, the teacher Debo contacted took a liking to Dele and he offered every possible assistance. Debo took care of the daily transport fares to the school as well as feeding.

Dele came down to Ife and took the school certificate examination along with his classmates at Oduduwa College in late 1967. The results were released two months after, and he was passed in the third division with a distinction in English language, credits in bible knowledge and chemistry, and passes in Yoruba, English literature, mathematics, physics and biology.

He entered Oduduwa College as Sumonu Oladele Musa in 1964 and left in 1967 as Baines Oladele Giwa. While trying to shed all Islamic tags, he picked up the American name, Baines, as substitute.

Dele left Oduduwa with a testimonial that read: "Oladele is intelligent and hardworking. He showed keen interest in the extra curricular activities of the school and was a leading member of the school editorial board. He is diligent and respectful. His character is satisfactory."

It was signed by Canon David Olayinka, the man who had expelled him. Before leaving Ife, he got a letter of introduction from Oba Aderemi's personal secretary to A.B. Fasola, then branch manager of Barclays Bank (now Union Bank) at Mainland Hotel in Oyingbo, Lagos. Fasola was the Ife branch manager of the bank before he was transferred to Lagos. Dele delivered the note to Fasola at his Jalupon

residence. He was invited for an interview and was employed as a bank clerk at the Oyingbo branch.

Debo took him to the market and bought him some shirts and ties, which his new job demanded. Debo was also responsible for his transport fares for the daily trips to Oyingbo from Surulere until Dele started earning a salary. Dele wrote to inform his parents about the employment. When he got his first salary, he sent some money home. The skies were overjoyed. Hope, which passed away on the day of expulsion, had been resurrected. Dele looked set to liberate them from poverty's cruel chains. Castles sprang up in the air and new dreams emerged as old ones seemingly crawled towards realization.

When Dele became a little comfortable, he moved from Debo's home to a one-room apartment at No. 6 Badaru Street, Surulere. He had only a four-by-six spring bed, a wooden clothes-hanger and an empty tin he used as a stool. He could not afford a stove and had to use a neighbour's. As soon as he settled down, he wrote home, inviting Tunde to visit. Tunde had by this time long completed his apprenticeship with A.A. Oguns and merely roamed the streets. Whenever he saw his former elementary school mates in their college uniforms, he would almost shed tears. He wanted to be one of them but there was no money to finance his desire. He accepted his fate and waited for the messiah in the family.

When the invitation letter from Dele arrived, Tunde was very excited. He followed Dele's graphic description of his office and arrived at Oyingbo Mainland Hotel in 1968. It was his first visit to Lagos and the city was more than a dazzle. He waited for Dele to finish his day's job before heading for his Badaru Street residence in a public bus. Tunde spent a month in Lagos and went back home with new clothes, shoes, a sum of ten pounds and a note to Dipo's father. It was with this note that a place was found for Tunde at Ife Anglican Grammar School.

In Lagos, no sooner had Dele settled down than he got entangled with a girl in the neighbourhood, Joke Osiyemi. Stella and Billy still managed to occupy a big place in his heart. He wrote to Stella saying he was aware his presence was needed in Ibadan but that he had to get over some problems first. He promised to show up when things improved for him.

Trouble started early in the bank. An abrasive and pig-headed Dele was always at loggerheads with his immediate bosses. They could not

easily punish him because of his connection with the manager. Fasola's fondness for him was well known and everybody was cautious in dealing with Dele in order not to offend his mentor. Dele, on his part, was less than modest about his alleged links. He related to some of his seniors with an irritating air of importance. Not to mention the fact that he always reminded them that none understood the English language better than he.

Unfortunately, his job as a cashier was not always impeccably executed; he committed a string of errors. He was always overpaying customers. While some were honest enough to return the excess money, many others could not be bothered about a cashier's carelessness. The mistakes were becoming too many. Those who disliked him for his haughtiness were only too happy to catalogue these errors for the manager.

Fasola could no longer protect the boy. Under normal circumstances, Dele would have been sacked but Fasola called him into his office and advised him to resign. He had spent only a year in the bank.

When Dele got home that day he did not say anything to his brother, Tunde, who was visiting. Neither did he tell his girlfriend Joke, why he was home early. He merely asked Tunde to pack all his things — bed and all — and find a way to transport them to Ife. All the money he had could only pay Tunde's transport fare. He was ill-prepared for his sudden departure from the bank. Tunde approached one of their former neighbours in Ife, Bisiriyu Adenekan, then an employee of Vegetable Oil of Nigeria in Lagos, for help. Adenekan arranged for a lorry to transport the belongings to Ife without charging a fee. Dele only told Tunde that he would write home to explain.

Dele spent about two weeks in Lagos before heading for the North where an uncle of his was a businessman. The departure to the North in 1969 was not only in search of another job but also to explore the possibility of obtaining an American visa, which he had heard was easier to obtain in the North than in the South. All through his one year stint at the bank, going for further studies in America was his target. In fact, he disclosed this to his former English teacher at Oduduwa College, Hartley Sutton, during a chance meeting at Barclay's Bank while Dele was still a member of staff.

Things did not quite work out well in the North and after hanging around for five months, Dele came down to Ibadan. He located a

casual friend, Adebayo Bolujoko, then an employee of the Nigeria Tobacco Company, NTC, and put up with him on Liberty Stadium Road. It was through Bolujoko that he heard of a vacancy at NTC for the post of a clerk in the administration department.

He drafted an unusually lengthy application, giving his life history, his qualification and his sterling personal qualities. It was typical of Dele Giwa. He had written so many applications around 1965 to the then newly-created Mid-Western Region, explaining why he, an indigene should be given a scholarship. He wrote to the governor, the premier and the scholarship board. None of the applications, however, received a reply. For a long time, Dele remained very bitter that none of the officers to whom he wrote even had the courtesy of acknowledging receipt.

Dele walked straight to the NTC manager in Ibadan with his well-worded application.

"I am the candidate for you," said the over-confident job seeker. The man looked bewildered.

"Who told you, you are the candidate we want?" he asked. Dele handed him the application and assured him he would be convinced after going through it.

The NTC official admired his self-confidence and gave him the job on which he spent five months before his restless spirit set him on another path.

While at NTC, he made some friends at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, NBC, whom he visited regularly. It was through them he heard of the corporation's plans to employ some young men in the news department. Dele approached the then regional news editor of the corporation, Alhaji Saka Fagbo.

Fagbo invited him into his office for a talk. Besides the fact that he was good-looking and neatly dressed, Fagbo observed that the young man exuded the kind of confidence that was rare in most applicants. He was very relaxed and quite cheerful as he talked. He did not look cowed even before a personality such as Fagbo. The editor was impressed. He decided there and then to give Dele the job. He asked Dele to submit his credentials and with them Fagbo briefed the regional controller about the impressive young man he just met.

A short interview was arranged for him after which he was signed on as a news assistant. He resigned from the NTC to take the NBC job. Journalism had been an attraction right from the period Sutton fired his journalistic instinct and opened his eyes to the power of the written word in *The Torch*. Years back in Ife, he and his two pals, Lai and Dipo, used to discuss their life ambitions. Lai wanted to be a detective, something that came to his head after a good dose of James Hadley Chase's paperback fiction. Dipo and Dele wanted to be medical doctors. But when Dele started reading Peter Pan (Peter Enahoro) in the *Sunday Times* of those days, there was a change of heart. It was then he began toying with the idea of being a journalist. The NBC job seemed to have concretized that dream. He rushed at it with enthusiasm.

As a news assistant at the NBC, his duties included taking phoned-in reports from correspondents in Abeokuta, Oyo, Ikeja, Warri and all other major towns that fell under the jurisdiction of NBC, Ibadan. He was also in charge of recasting wire service reports to fit the NBC house style. Sometimes he would be sent to cover minor assignments or monitor such foreign stations as the British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC, Voice of America, VOA and Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, GBC.

For most of the boys, and Dele among them, this was a good training period and Fagbo went all out to give them the necessary grounding in journalism. The corporation was supposed to be a regional one, but Fagbo stretched his reporters' minds beyond that region. The whole country and the whole world, he said, should be their terrain. They were taught to be versatile and encouraged to have an encyclopaedic knowledge.

Fagbo's ceaseless drill was: "You will reach the position of general manager, just put that in the distant future. What you are today, make yourself good, make yourself capable, so that you can be a pride not only to yourself, your family but to the station, and the nation at large." Fagbo was himself a product of the tradition he sought to impart in Dele and his colleagues. It was a tradition of punctuality, of seriousness and dedication to duty.

Within a short period of his stay at NBC, Dele became very well known as a junior reporter in the corporation. He was eager to work and often stayed till the late hours. There were two bulletins on the

radio then—the first at 3.30 p.m. and a recap of the events of the day along with the latest news, at 8 p.m. Dele would at times show up even when he was not on duty. Fagbo grew to like him very well and that earned Dele the sobriquet, "son of R.N.E." (Regional News Editor).

His copies were very good and they were always beautifully hand written. But one habit of Dele's that trailed him everywhere was his garrulousness. He was very argumentative. Whenever his voice appeared to be getting too high in the newsroom, Fagbo would come in to demand some quiet.

Sometime in 1970, when Dele's finances improved, he rented his own room along the same Liberty Stadium Road in Ibadan. In it, was his four-by-six bed, a shelf for all sorts of novels, a clothes-hanger, a small record player for his growing collection of pop music, especially the albums of Sam Cooke. His colleagues at NBC, Sanya Ogunlana, Olu Soetan, and Adetoro Adetayo, then an employee of NTC, were his closest neighbours. They exchanged visits regularly, and Dele later became closer to Adetoro because they had a mutual passion for music. They attended parties together and organized a few of their own. Joke, Dele's 'steady' girlfriend at that time, visited Ibadan almost every weekend.

The seriousness with which Dele took his affair with Joke, while still trying to rejuvenate his relationship with Stella, brought out the complex relationship Dele had with women. The same Dele who was promising Joke Osiyemi marriage was rekindling his old affair with Stella. He apparently took both relationships seriously.

Being in Ibadan brought him very close to Stella and Billy. He was always at the Ogunseitans and sometimes joined them at dinner. Stella had at that time completed her secondary education at Saint Margaret's School in Ilesha and was working as a clerk with the Nigerian Army Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Corps.

There was no formal marriage between them and the parents were not in a hurry to arrange one. The only opposition to their union was Stella's father. It was on the basis of religious differences. Dele was from a Muslim background and the Ogunseitans were devout Christians. For Dele, this was no problem. He was only a nominal Muslim and it was easy to change that status, if only to satisfy Mr Ogunseitan, although he knew he could not be forced to go to church. He seemed to care very much for Stella. Their reunion could at this time have brought another child but it was not to be.

All along, Dele and his childhood friends, Dipo and Lai, never had the intention of studying in Nigeria. Dipo and Lai, for example had had the opportunity to study in Nigerian universities after their higher school, but they did not. They had been collecting American university catalogues and the list of American universities approved by the Nigerian government since their form three days. They read all the available literature on the American way of life. For them, it was not just going abroad, but to America. They had heard stories of the enormous opportunities America offered anyone who was hard-working.

Dewale Layade, an in-law of Oba Aderemi's was the very first among their friends to leave for the states. He left in late 1969 after being admitted to Wilberforce State University in Ohio. The Layades were of course well-to do. Dewale's father was the first electronic engineer from Ife. When he left for America, it was not as a pauper. Like most Nigerian new comers in America, Dewale bought a long, impressive American car, took pictures with it and sent copies to his friends at home. This was soon after his arrival in the U.S. There were also pictures of him in the company of white girls at parties.

"Whao! this is life," chorused Dipo, Dele and Lai when they saw the photographs. They were enthralled. America became, more than ever before, the paradise awaiting their arrival. They were eager to be a part of that Eldorado, share in its limitless treasures and bring home as much as they could.

Dipo followed Dewale a year after, in 1970. Dele and Lai became desperate to leave as soon as possible. At NBC, Dele's audacity and outspokenness had begun to place him on the war path with his senior colleagues. He was still a favourite of Fagbo's but his immediate seniors could and did try to clip his wings. He was not always happy if he thought he had a good story and it was not aired. He would go home cursing those he thought were responsible. He would brag that he would get out of NBC and return to be their boss. He never believed some of his seniors were capable of editing his copies.

"I am not an English boy but I command the English language," he would proudly tell his seniors and anybody who cared to listen. Whenever his story was given air time, he would rush home to his friends, shouting: "Yeah! that was a bloody good story. Good stuff."

Dele had a very high opinion of himself. Without any sense of modesty he would declare himself the best and others on the ship must kowtow to the self-appointed captain.He never liked to take the back seat. Whenever he was not in control, he tried to get out fast, re-equip himself and return to take over. It was partly for this reason and the craving for admission to the honeycomb, fantastically illustrated in Dewale's photographs, that took Dele out of NBC and subsequently, the country.

One day, after working for more than a year at the NBC, Dele walked into Fagbo's office and spoke to him about his plans to leave for America for further studies. Fagbo asked if he had the money to finance the trip and his stay in the U.S. Dele said he was going to try his luck. He asked Fagbo to assist him in obtaining an American visa. To convince Fagbo that he was serious, he brought along his passport and his savings passbook, showing a few hundred pounds. He also spoke of his friends in the U.S. who would assist him generally.

Fagbo was convinced. He talked to his friends at the U.S. Consulate in Ibadan and they helped him to process the visa within the shortest period. It was a student visa for which he presented his admission letter, source of sponsorship, marital status and other relevant information.

Many well-wishers chipped in but he still needed about 200 pounds to be able to take off. While thinking of someone who could bail him out, his mind went to an Ibadan businessman of Lebanese origin, Raymond Zard. He had done Zard a favour while reporting for the NBC. One of Zard's customers had walked into the NBC newsroom and handed Dele a list of twenty complaints alleging illegal practices by the Zard family. One of the complaints was that the produce-buying family was cheating customers by not paying the proper commissions. Dele called on Zard for the other side to the story and it was then he discovered the complaints were mostly fabricated. He was convinced that the customer only wanted to use the press to blackmail Zard. Dele bade him goodbye and made for the door.

"Okay, my boy, here is some pocket money for you. Thank you for coming and I am happy you got the story correctly," Zard said. In his outstretched hand was the infamous "brown envelope."

"Mr Zard, thank you very much. I do not need your pocket money. I am employed by the radio here and I am doing my job." Zard was surprised and impressed. He then offered that whenever Dele needed his assistance in the future, he should not hesitate to call. Dele nodded and left.

Indeed, seven months after, Dele was to come asking for that assistance from Zard. He told the businessman of his decision to go for further studies in the U.S. and that he needed 200 pounds with which to sort out some passage problems. Zard was more than happy to help. It was the return of a seven-month old favour. With the 200 pounds in his kitty, Dele chose a date of departure and commenced a farewell trip that took him back to Ife and Ugbekpe.

It was with Joke, his fiancee, that he visited Ife that November in 1971. He told his father of his decision to leave the country for further studies. His father was naturally very pleased. He saw life tilting towards the brighter side for the family. He assembled some *"alfas"*, (Islamic scholars) in the town to give his son special prayers — asking for God's guidance for the lone traveller in the strange land and safe and happy return to all those he left behind.

Musa fought very hard to keep away from tears of joy. He loved his son. He had come to see certain aspects of himself in Dele. He had also noticed certain fundamental differences. While he was easy going and quiet, his son was pugnacious, aggressive and loud. While he chose a simple life style, his son was already exhibiting a love for life on the fast lane. He was venturesome, and so was his son. He was resolute in his convictions; his son shared that with him. He loved the company of women, keeping two wives in the house and several mistresses in town. His son though, appeared to want to surpass him in this regard. Dele had become a father at 19. The dust from that had hardly settled when he brought another woman to whom he had proposed marriage.

Dele had come to enjoy some measure of independence early in his life, so much so that most of his actions, were hardly questioned. They had a lot of faith in him and they trusted his judgement. Being the most exposed and most educated in the family, his views were sought and respected. He was thought to have taken the family's interest into consideration before embarking on anything. This explained why he could walk into his father's house with a woman one day and another the next.

While planning his exit, Dele took steps to ensure the well being of his family even after he had gone. He was particularly worried about Tunde's and Biodun's education. Tunde was already in form three. Dele had been responsible for his fees, from the little he earned as a clerk with NTC and as a junior reporter with the NBC. Biodun had been forced to repeat his final elementary class three times for lack of funds to proceed to college. After being refused admission in three colleges for not presenting tangible evidence of his expected source of school fees, Biodun got a job as a clerk at Independence Bookshop in Ife, earning only six pounds a month. Dele pulled him out of the place, got him introduced to his former principal, Canon Olayinka, and he was admitted into Oduduwa College.

After tidying up that end, he dashed off to Ugbekpe where his mother, Elekia, was recuperating after a year-long illness that nearly claimed her life. At home, he explained to Elekia why he had to leave the country in search of the golden fleece. The school certificate, he said, was not sufficient to meet the family's expectations and that he needed to reinforce himself educationally for the enormous task ahead. Elekia gave her blessings and parted with her son, in tears.

In Ibadan, the NBC editorial staff organized a small send-off party for him, with Fagbo presiding. While munching groundnuts and sipping soft drinks, the staff took turns to eulogize the usually well-dressed, brilliant, hardworking, fast-talking and argumentative young man who was dashing in and out of the corporation as opposed to the usual norm of growing with the system. Fagbo was the hardest hit by Dele's departure. Within a short spell in the corporation, he had come to love him as he would a son. He had hoped that Dele would stay and make a career in broadcast journalism. But the boy obviously had a different plan and Fagbo did not want to discourage him. Dele parted with the good wishes and prayers of his colleagues and bosses at NBC.

His co-tenants and friends on Liberty Stadium Road — Sanya Ogunlana, Adetoro Adetayo and Olu Soetan — also organised a party that lasted till the early hours of the following day. Joke was to come to the party but somehow did not make it. During the party, Dele was invited to the floor and introduced as the guest of honour. It was customary at such moments for the guest of honour to speak briefly. Dele did. He promised not to return from the U.S. until he earned a doctorate degree in his chosen course of study. A hearty applause greeted that pledge.

Dele called on Stella, Billy and the Ogunseitans to bid them farewell. He assured them things would be all right, and that they would be hearing from him regularly. With their prayers and best wishes, he went in search of his other friends. One of them was Kola Ilori, who incidentally was only being discharged from hospital after a long illness. They considered the possibility of his being deported for lack of means to sustain himself. Dele said he would accept it as his fate were he to be deported from the U.S. He gave a tearful Kola signs to watch: if he wrote immediately on arrival in the U.S., Kola might have to come to Ikeja Airport to welcome a deportee and if he wrote late, he should rest assured that he was okay.

In late November of 1971, Dele waved a sombre goodbye to the old and rusty city of Ibadan and headed for Lagos enroute to 'God's own country,' the 'land of milk and honey.' His fiancée, Joke was at the Ikeja airport to bid him farewell, so were Tunde, his brother, Elekia, his father's second wife, who stood in for Dele's father and a couple of friends.

Departure formalities concluded, passengers on the Lagos-Paris-New York flight were asked to proceed and board the aircraft. Dele shook hands with his friends, embraced Tunde, bowed to Elekia, embraced and kissed Joke before making for the boarding gate. It was a very emotional scene and some of the members of the send-off team were misty-eyed when the aircraft roared off into the skies.

5. Taking Off

THE Lagos-New York trip accommodated Dele's long-held fantasy, about the city of Paris, which was expressed in the perhaps ridiculous slogan of those days; "see Paris and die." He, therefore, routed his flight through Paris to enable him catch a glimpse of the fabled city of indescribable beauty.

When the aircraft started its descent into Charles De Gaulle Airport in Paris, Dele stretched and strained his neck through the cabin window for an aerial view of the famous city. Although human beings were tiny dots on the ground and magnificient multi-storied buildings looked like tree stumps, Dele was satisfied to have even seen this distorted picture of beauty.

At the airport in Paris, he bought some cards and posted one to Stella and Billy, stating exactly where he was on the journey. As a transit passengêr not much of Paris was available to him, but he was extremely delighted to have stepped on its soil. Nobody needed to tell him tales again. From the little he saw of the city from the aircraft, he formed his vision of Paris and it was something he cherished.

At the John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, a stern-looking immigration officer asked the usual questions to which Dele gave the routine answers: Was he sure he would be a student while in the United States? Who would pay your fees? Had he associated with communist groups or sympathised with communism?

His near-empty box went through the customs scrutiny and was cleared, along with its owner. He stepped into the lounge and

discovered that nobody was waiting for him. His cable from Nigeria had not got through to his friends. Number 8, South Oxford Street, Brooklyn was the address at the back of the envelope he was holding. It was his destination.

Outside, the weather was chilly, something he had never experienced or anticipated. He was wearing a light grey polyester suit. He had just seventy-five dollars in his pocket and was not prepared to squander it on a taxi ride. He could not call his friends on the phone because he did not have their number. After some enquiries, he settled for the subway. He took a bus to the station and boarded the next one. He got off at De Kalb Avenue, about two and half blocks from his destination. But he did not realize he was so close to South Oxford Street and when he stopped a taxi the driver did not tell him either. The driver drove him round the neighbourhood for about fifteen minutes, deposited him not too far from where he got in, and collected four dollars.

It was not his first shocking experience. Within a few minutes, he had seen the contradictions, the individuality and the palpable absence of love in this strange land. The first Nigerian he saw at the airport did not even acknowledge his hello and the first black American he met in the bus refused to tell him how to get to Brooklyn from the airport, and now the conman in the taxi. Right from these initial encounters, he began to reorder his thoughts.

New York, big, bad New York. In this vast concrete jungle that man created to reduce himself to Liliputian proportions, the individual is sucked in and quickly lost in its rushing crowds.

Dele had read all about New York in all those second-rate crime novels, the intimidating and mystifying city where everyone walks around with a hand gun in his pocket. Well, he said to himself, they had better watch out for him. This young man is not for shoving.

Hosts Dewale Layade and his wife treated their guest from Nigeria to a dinner of chicken and eba, which was made from flour and potato powder, rather than cassava. Their flat was in a big apartment complex. There were two rooms. Husband and wife shared one and Dele was assigned the other. They exchanged stories, the guest about events at home since Dewale left in 1969, and the host on survival in America.

After he he had had time to rest, his mind raced home to Billy, Stella, Joke, Tunde, Biodun, mother and father, the other members of the family, Lai, Kola, Sanya, Soetan, Adetoro, Fagbo, NBC and of course the colourful and glossy brochures in American libraries in Nigeria. Those brochures, from the little he had seen, had not told him the whole truth about America.

Dele woke up the following day, resolved not to be a failure in this strange land. He was determined not to go back without the 'golden fleece.' But he had to survive first. He had to work and earn enough to pay his way through college.

His first job was in a plastic factory. It was a job that brought tears and regrets, regrets for leaving his reporter's job at NBC in Ibadan. He was working in a factory with mostly illiterates. His pay was less than eighty dollars a week. He was fired two weeks later and he left with palms that had been peeled off by molten plastic and skin that had been darkened by the heat from the moulding machines.

He paid 125 dollars to secure his next job and it lasted only three weeks. He was hired again as a factory hand in an envelope pasting sweat shop. His Indian supervisor sent him out for alleged arrogance. It was the second time in less than two months. Dele was fed up with the factories and their hiring and firing streak. He resolved never to work as a factory hand again. Dele took to taxi driving. First he hired a car and later he bought a rugged six-year old black Chevrolet from a fellow Nigerian for use as a cab. Taxi driving was a popular job among Nigerians in the U.S. in the early seventies. It paid well. One could make about seventy dollars within six hours. Weekends were the most profitable but then one had to forgo the usually lavish parties associated with the Nigerians of those days.

Those who chose to forgo the parties, could leave their homes on Friday evening and return on Sunday morning with close to 300 dollars. The cost of living was not very high. For a kitchenette (a bedroom, a bathroom and a kitchen) or a mini flat, the rent was about 35 dollars a week. The kitchenette was popular with students. Food was not very expensive either. With forty dollars, one could buy good food that would last a whole week. A man who earned 300 dollars from the weekend cab driving would have as much as 150 dollars to save for his school fees after all expenses. He could even afford the luxury of taking a girl out once in a week.

Cab driving, though dollar-spinning, was one of the riskier forms of employment. There was the constant police harassment which could land a man in detention or at the immigration centres and on his way home as a deportee. The police checks were random and once they found the driver had an accent, your passport and resident or work permit could be demanded. If these papers were not in order, it was goodbye to America for the unlucky driver.

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of taxi driving was mugging. It could mean the loss of life if the victim did not do the right thing at the right time. Most Nigerians who drove taxis, used their own cars. Unlike regular cabs, these cars were not partitioned between the driver and the passengers and they were not painted the taxi colour, yellow. They were the same cars that these Nigerians drove daily to school and to parties. So, they chose not to deface them and make them look so obvious as cabs. Once they were out on the streets for commercial purposes, they hung the *Car Service* label and this was removed as soon as the cars were playing different roles. They were called gypsy cabs or duty cabs.

Gypsy cabs were permitted only in the outskirts of the city which were usually slums. These were black neighbourhoods where poverty, racism, unemployment, indolence and the lack of identity combined to raise the crime rate to a frightening level. Harlem, Brooklyn, the Bronx and some parts of Queens were those dangerous neighbourhoods where gypsy cabs plied the streets. They were not permitted to operate in Manhattan, for instance. Roughly half of the Nigerian gypsy cab drivers had woeful tales to tell about their encounters with criminal-minded black kids and their few white counterparts. Some Nigerians died in their hands. Bisoye Okubanjo, a Nigerian student who lived in the borough of Brooklyn with Dele, had a gun put against his temple on four occasions. He surrendered all his earnings to the kids each time.

Dele was mugged several times too. In one instance, he bravely called one mugger's bluff and did not surrender a cent. But he was lucky he did not lose his life. Besides mugging, there was stiff competition from Haitian immigrants, which also discouraged many Nigerians from the rewarding job of cab driving.

Dele quit cab driving after a serious accident in which his passengers were hospitalised. It was a tragic end to a job that had paid him well.

He kept in regular contact with Nigeria through letters and parcels. He exploited New York's limitless opportunities to survive the odds in America. He was still responsible for his brothers' school fees, as well as some allowance for his parents. Whenever life smiled at him in New York, he hastened to have money sent home to his family. Dele sent clothes to Billy and Stella, and letters to friends in Ibadan, Ife and Lagos.

Distance did not lessen his love for Joke, now an employee of Adebowale Electrical Industries in Lagos. He wrote to her regularly and even considered making arrangements for her to join him. But Joke was no longer the same and Dele did not know. The first to spot the change were the Giwas in Ife. Joke visited regularly shortly after Dele's departure. But after a while, she stopped visiting.

The Giwas were worried. Tunde was sent to find out what the problem was. Joke said there was none. But soon after, she married a wealthy man who incidentally had driven Dele and Joke to Ikeja Airport that late November day in 1971 when Dele left for the U.S. It appeared that Joke finally submitted to pressure from her parents. They had never really approved of her relationship with Dele, apparently because of ethnic differences. The Giwas wrote to their son in New York about Joke's unexpected change of heart. It disturbed him for a while, but as he was so busy coping with survival in America, he quickly got over it.

When he had earned enough money to pay his initial fees, Dele enrolled at Brooklyn College for a Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

Brooklyn College at that time had a population of about 40,000 students. It was one of twenty colleges of the City University of New York with a total student population of about 250,000. The university was run by the city government of New York. Brooklyn College itself was situated in a Jewish community and a majority of the students were Jews. There was a substantial black population of about 2,000 and about 500 foreign students. There were up to 200 Nigerians in the college, including Professor Lekan Oyedeji, then head of the college's African Studies Department.

Like all the colleges of the City University, Brooklyn College was for the grassroots. Only non citizens of New York State paid fees. But the fees were reasonable and affordable, even by students who were self-sponsored. The college was well financed and it had sufficient

facilities for instruction. It was considered one of the best of the city university colleges because of these facilities and its rich course content. The buildings were impressive and the campus was neat. The community in which it was situated, Flatbush, was well laid out. The majority of those who lived in that area of Brooklyn were whites. As at that time, racism was very subtle in the area; discrimination was rarely open. Both whites and blacks got on fairly well.

One of the several avenues for interaction between the colleges of the university, was through the summer courses. In those days, it was acceptable for a student to take some courses in other colleges during summer holidays, provided the student's head of department consented. It helped to reduce the duration of the course. Dele took advantage of this facility and attended summer courses at Herbert Lyman College.

Like many of his friends, Dele dropped out of college one or two times due to lack of funds. By the time Lai got to Brooklyn in 1972, Dele and Dewale had dropped out of school completely. They were in a financial mess. Their telephone had been cut for not paying their bills. Lai, who got to the states with 300 dollars, had to loan them 100 to settle their accummulated bills. When Lai left them to see Dipo in Ohio, he was fascinated by the seriousness of the Nigerians there in contrast with those in New York. Most of them were not in and out of school. Life appeared rosier in Ohio than it was in New York.

Following Dipo's advice, Lai enrolled in a school in Ohio, which Dele thought was ill-advised. He had planned to help Lai get into Brooklyn College so that he too, like him, could work and make some extra money. He thought Lai was deceiving himself by imitating Dipo whose financial situation was better than theirs. But Lai did not want to get into the kind of problem in which he found them in Brooklyn. Dele was not happy with Lai's behaviour, and Lai thought Dele was trying to run his life for him. For one whole year, the two of them were estranged. In spite of their differences though, Dele never forgot to inquire about Lai's progress in school anytime he met a friend from Ohio.

The hard times which scared Lai away from New York, soon caught up with them in Ohio. Dipo dropped out of school, and came to New York with his wife to join his friends. It was hard for everyone. Dele still managed to send some money home, but it had become irregular.

When Lai's father learnt of Dele's efforts, he wrote to his son to stop demanding money from him and fend for himself, like his friend.

Dele's financial problems worsened in 1973. He could no longer send money home. Tunde and Biodun had to drop out of school. Tunde headed for Lagos and Biodun for Ibadan. Musa Giwa's situation was not any better either. At the time of the Udoji Award, a national upward review of salaries by the Gowon regime, Oduduwa College decided to cancel the employment of some non-academic staff. They were no longer regarded as employees but as contractors. So, Musa reverted to his earlier status — of being paid according to the number of clothes he washed. He was denied the Udoji Award and lost his regular salary. And so poverty again tightened its grip on the family.

Biodun went to see Stella in Ibadan. Stella had then started teaching. She promised to help Biodun find a school. It was the Giwa's first contact with Stella and Billy since Dele left. Stella was quite happy to be counted on after the acrimony that trailed Billy's birth. Stella got Biodun into form three at Oke Ibadan High School, in early 1973. But he dropped out of school again when the school fees were not forthcoming from Dele in the United States. Biodun then moved into Stella's house.

After a few months, he went back to Ife and squeezed, like water from a rock, some money from his father. With it, he rented a room in a mud house at Oke Ibadan for two naira a month. For weeks, he survived on gari alone. Sometimes, he would visit Stella for his meals. He wanted to prepare for the General Certificate of Education, GCE, but he could not concentrate. He went back to Ife when things were no longer bearable.

He wanted to go to Lagos, but his parents could not afford the transport fare. He laboured and earned a pittance, with which he made the trip. He could not pay the full fare, and an angry driver dropped him off several kilometres from his destination. He walked the rest of the way. His cousin, Nicholas Osigbeme, could not put him up because he already had many mouths to feed. After only a night, he had to move out. Biodun ended up with his mother's uncle, Abraham Nakoji, who was himself without a steady job.

Tunde roamed the streets of Lagos for close to two years in search of a job. Dele wrote to his close friend, Biodun Sote, to accommodate

his brother. Sote obliged and Tunde stayed with him for one year. He had to move out when Sote brought in a wife. He moved into a room owned by James Erua, a cousin in Ajegunle, a tough, over-populated neighbourhood. He was there until Dele again wrote from the U.S. this time to his friend in Ibadan, Adetoro Adetayo, who not only agreed to put Tunde up, but found him a job at the company where he worked — Wellcome Nigeria Limited, a pharmaceutical firm.

Life still was not easy for Dele and his friends in the U.S. They just barely managed to survive. The hardship drove many Nigerians to all sorts of jobs. Some of them had to do two, sometimes three jobs at the same time. None of them wanted to be a failure. It was considered shameful to have been to the land of milk and honey and return to Nigeria without some success. Many of them had to resort to a series of survival strategies, some of which ran counter to American laws.

Most of them had left Nigeria on visitor's visas which entitled them to only three months stay. On arrival, they found a school, obtained letters from the school that the fees had been paid on admission, (sometimes the letters were fake) filled the immigration forms and submitted them for a change of status. After a brief interview, the applicants would have the visitor's visas changed to student's visas. In some cases, such a change cost the applicant as much as 1,000 dollars.

There were others who went for the green card. The green card conferred a lot of privileges on the holder. For most Nigerians at that time, this card, came via marriages to American citizens. Some of these marriages were genuine, many merely convenient. There were American girls who specialized in such marriages of convenience — for a fee. These girls would agree to marriages with desperate foreigners to enable them obtain the green card. As agreed with the foreign student, they sued for divorce soon after obtaining the green card. The girls usually charged between 1,000 and 2,000 dollars. They then moved into the homes of their husbands after the supposed marriage, so as to get to know each other before the immigration interview. Once they were given the green card, they were guaranteed permanent residence, free or cheap education, and access to decent jobs.

Nigerian scholarships were at that time, almost impossible to obtain. Only those, it seemed, who were well connected, managed to get them. While many were unable to enjoy the benefits of a scholar-

ship, some students had two — federal and state. Dele was one of those who struggled to obtain a scholarship but was not successful throughout his stay in America.

Because of the hardships they experienced in America, many Nigerians often violated the law. Some formed social clubs, fought at uproarious parties and were involved in drug dealing and credit card fraud. Many of them left home with substantial amounts but as soon as they arrived, they wanted to buy up everything in America, especially cars and electronics. There were some others who only wanted to make it fast in America without being prepared to do the requisite work.

Dele and his fellow countrymen in the U.S. found a way of easing the tension built up by the daily struggle for survival. They arranged weekend parties in celebration of birthdays, matriculations, graduations, arrivals and departures of fellow Nigerians, births, business triumphs and other successes.

It was these parties that usually brought many Nigerians together. Most acquaintances were struck on the dance floors. Dele met and made friends with one or two people who were to play an important part in his life in later years, at these parties. Stanley Macebuh, then a part-time teacher in Columbia, and Tunde Thomas, a student in one of the city colleges, were two such friends. The parties were also avenues for reuniting with old friends from home.

Dele re-united with such school mates as Omolade Binuyo and an old acquaintance in Ibadan, Bisoye Okubanjo. These were successful affairs between men and women which had their beginnings on the dance floors. The seeds of future associations were sometimes sown at these functions. At one of such parties in Brooklyn in 1973, Dele met a pretty, quiet black American nurse named Ann, through her Nigerian friend, Victoria Obi. Dele asked her to dance with him, and she obliged. Later on, he went to ask Victoria who she was. Victoria introduced them and they began dating thereafter.

Ann was immediately impressed by Dele, especially the ease with which he seemed to have adjusted to life in a place as complex as New York. She was also struck by Dele's originality, intelligence and charm. The affair became increasingly intimate. Dele told her all about himself — his humble background, Billy and Stella. Rather than get

put off by Dele's not exactly dignifying past, Ann was encouraged by his honesty and openness.

On April 14, 1974, they were married in the presence of about twenty-five of their friends. It was followed by a wedding reception with about one hundred people in attendance. For the newlyweds, it was the happiest moment of their lives.

Ann's parents did not object to her choice of a husband. They liked him and so did her friends. Dele too introduced Ann to most of his friends. He wrote to inform those far away from New York. The Giwas in Ife heard of the marriage and even got copies of their wedding photographs. They wished they had been there to witness that glorious moment. They were nevertheless happy that he had apparently, finally found true love.

But in Ibadan, one woman who did not clap and dance at the news of the marriage, was Stella, the mother of his first son, Billy. She felt cheated, terribly cheated by someone who had promised her a life-long relationship. Dele did not inform her initially because he knew she would take it badly. It was when he was about to be thrown out of the U.S. by the immigration that he wrote to inform Stella about the New York affair. Ann was by then pregnant. The marriage to Ann had qualified him for the valuable green card but there was a problem.

Back in Ibadan in 1971, Dele had declared in the papers he filled at the American Consulate that he was married with a son. This made it easy for him to obtain a visa. When Dele applied for the green card on the basis of his marriage to Ann, he was confronted with the information in his visa application. He said he had divorced Stella. The U.S. Immigration authorities decided to contact the Ibadan Consulate to find out if Dele's claim was true.

Dele was really in trouble. If he was denied the card, he was going to be thrown out of the U.S. He had to write to Stella, explaining everything. But Stella was not impressed. Here was a man who had jilted her begging her to lie to a fake divorce of a non-existent wedding. She was not going to be fooled the second time. Her parents were solidly behind her. Tunde and his father had themselves sworn to an affidavit that there was a divorce. It was the timely intervention of Dipo that saved the day.

Stella and Dipo met by chance at the secretariat in Ibadan. Dipo was home on a brief visit. He begged Stella to overlook the fact that

Dele had married an American and that nobody knew what might still happen in future. He reminded Stella of Dele's background, the child they had together and explained that if he was sent out of America, he would not forgive her. Persuaded, Stella, accompanied by her father, went to court and swore to an affidavit, that they had been married under native law and custom and had since been divorced through the same process. The consulate then sent the documents to New York.

Stella's mother was the only one who refused to be convinced. She was bitterly opposed to the idea of lying to save a man who had abandoned her daughter.

Once Dele obtained the prestigious green card, his problems eased, and life became easier. He got a decent job at Chase Manhattan Bank. He moved to Ann's apartment at Clinton Towers on Clinton Avenue in Brooklyn, a middle class neighbourhood. The apartment was well furnished. Dele later found an apartment in the same building, for one of his friends, Tunde Thomas. Dele and Ann lived in apartment 361 while Thomas was in 365. He attended school more regularly because he did not have to run around for his fees again. In this smooth-sailing period, Ann gave birth to their first son, Dele Junior, on July 27, 1974.

At Brooklyn College, he made steady progress in his degree course. He had got his bearings right and was able to concentrate on journalism more seriously. He bought himself a used IBM typewriter and wrote commentaries on events at home. He was very vocal in class and would argue until he was convinced to the contrary. Lecturers easily knew he was there in the class. Around 1975 when he was almost winding up his degree course in the college, he met a young Nigerian student lecturer.

Yemi Ogunbiyi, a Ph.D student, was handling the subject of Negritude in an African Literature course, which Dele took. He took issue with Ogunbiyi on what he considered the proper perspective in teaching Negritude to black students in America. Ogunbiyi asked who he was and Dele introduced himself. It was the beginning of a long friendship. Dele would drive from Brooklyn to Manhattan, about an hour's trip, to show his articles to Ogunbiyi for correction. Ogunbiyi assisted Dele with his writing although he found Giwa's prose style rather light. It was much later that Ogunbiyi realised that newspapers did not really appreciate the academic style demanded in thesis-writing.

6. On Course

THE turning point in Dele's life was joining the prestigious *New York Times* in 1974. The paper taught him the fundamentals of journalism, polished his writing style and widened his horizons. It was also at *The Times* that he chose a firm professional bearing as well as mastered the bolts and nuts of newspaper production.

The *New York Times* job came as in a fairy tale. It was so unexpected that even the over-confident Dele was in the end surprised by the dramatic change of fortunes. The friends who were with him at apartment 361, Clinton Avenue, when the drama began, still wonder at the impetuousity of it all.

The whole thing was typical of Dele. The drama began one morning in his residence. Tunde Thomas, then living in the Bronx, was one of the spectators. They were going through the day's papers when, Dele, a meticulous reader, told his friends he had spotted a grammatical error in a copy of the *New York Times*. He underlined the error and characteristically boasted that "even Dele would not commit such a blunder."

"There you go again," his friends said. Dele was undaunted in his conviction. He promised to visit the newspaper's offices the following day and have the mistake shown to the editors. His friends dismissed it as the usual Dele Giwa sounding off.

"You will see. I shall surprise you all," he told his sceptical friends. Two days later, he kept his promise. He met the metropolitan desk editor of the paper, showed him the error, and expressed his surprise that it could come from a newspaper such as the *New York Times*.

The editor agreed it was an error. He was struck by Dele's bluntness. The two began to talk; about themselves, journalism and working with the newspaper. Dele said he was interested, and he was hired on the spot. When he came home and told his friends about the *Times* offer, they were of course incredulous. It sounded too good to be true. Why, this was the *New York Times!* It was only when he resigned from his job at Chase Manhattan and joined the *Times* that they took him seriously.

Dele was first on the national desk, and subsequently, the metropolitan and the foreign desks, assisting a horde of editors in managing their departments. He wrote stories and studied critically the technical aspect of newspaper work. He was particularly close to the assistant metropolitan editor Thomas Johnson, a black American who had been a correspondent for the *Times* in Lagos between 1972 and 1976. Dele offered quite a number of good ideas at the metropolitan desk and they were often used.

Dele took the *nom de plume.* 'Baines' and soon became well known by that name. He was chatty, affable and his immaculate appearance endeared him to a good number of his colleagues. He wore very expensive designer clothes, bought at some of New York's most exclusive shops.

Dele's penchant for the controversial, quickly manifested itself in the *Times.* The paper was having problems with its minority editorial staff who were demanding equal salaries, and better promotion prospects. Dele wanted to be promoted from a news clerk to a news assistant. He became involved in the Rosario versus *The New York Times* law suit over employment, promotion and pay for minorities on the paper's editorial staff.

The case had not been resolved when Dele got promoted and was deployed to the *Times'* United Nations bureau as a news assistant. He assisted the bureau chief in covering the affairs of the world body. It was a six-month stint which he came to regard as the most valuable of his four and a half years with the *Times.* He revelled in the politics of the United Nations, enjoyed the exposure the beat gave him, the deeper insight into the intricacies of journalism and above all having a mother figure in Kathleen Telsch, his senior colleague at the U.N. bureau.

Dele graduated from Brooklyn College and wasted no time in enrolling for a masters degree in public communication at Fordham University in the Bronx. He was the only Nigerian in the graduate programme at Fordham. He subsequently convinced his friend, Tunde Thomas, to go to Fordham for a masters degree in advertising and public relations. Dele's lectures at Fordham usually began at 6 p.m. and lasted till about 9 p.m. and sometimes as late as 10 p.m. The days were spent battling with paper and pen in the *Times*.

Dele's fortunes in America had changed so fast that he at times doubted if it were real. He got a loan and bought a brand new Cutlass Supreme car worth about 7,000 dollars. It was the car he drove to work at the *Times,* to school and to parties. By every standard, his was becoming a success story - a typical rags to riches.

His new car became a symbol of his new status although he did not forget his more humble beginnings. A ritual began with the car, a ritual which his friends watched silently. Dele would come home, park the car and would for a while stare unconsciously at it before going into his apartment. The car, his car, He could not believe it. Dele Giwa owning and driving a Cutlass Supreme worth 7,000 dollars. A bolt and nut was beyond him a few years back. The transformation was too rapid to believe. But it was real.

In that daily ritual, Dele looked through the car to Ile-Ife where even feeding was a problem, the hazards of life in Lagos and Ibadan and the struggles for survival of the early days in America. The car epitomized a reversal of his fortunes. But the reversal came so fast, it dazed him.

At Fordham, quite a number of his teachers grew to like him for his intelligent contributions to classroom debates. Dele was particularly good in a course on media reaction to, and coverage of certain events in the U.S. It was his favourite. He argued with his professors and invariably brought into these arguments his experience at *The New York Times.* Of course, the fact that he was on the staff of the respected *New York Times,* meant that his views were taken seriously by his classmates and teachers.

Dele graduated from Fordham College with a 'B+', a grade considered to be in the upper brackets. At apartment 361, a new member joined the family. Dele's second son, Tunde, was born.

Dele was happy. Ann was mildly disappointed. She had prayed and hoped for a girl to "even the score" with her husband. But it turned out differently. Dele loved his boys and was very fond of them. He was determined to make life comfortable for them. It was his wish that they would go through life without his own kind of hardship. He worked very hard to smoothen their path. He watched them pick the air, he saw them breathe, and feed, he witnessed his own creations crawl, toddle, walk, jump and grow. His joy knew no bounds.

At home, things gradually began to turn sour between husband and wife. The problems began very early in their marriage. One of the first causes of friction was Dele's strong commitment to his friends. Once Dele left Ann on a hospital bed to be best-man at a friend's wedding. Ann could not understand. In her society, the nuclear family was of primary concern.

The cultural differences between the couple was the genesis of other matrimonial wranglings. An average American woman, for instance, wants to share life with her husband—know where he goes, when he is due back and what he does. Ann demanded these from Dele. As much as he did not hide many things from her, Dele detested the idea of being censored by a woman. This led to many quarrels.

Ann was disturbed. She wanted a happy home. She wanted to save her marriage from impending collapse. She wanted to learn, learn about the African society's expectations of a wife. She was so ignorant about what her role was supposed to be, that she once asked visiting Lai and Dipo to educate her on the duties of the African woman to her husband.

Dele at times thought Ann was not being helpful in his career. He did not like sitting on a typewriter, racking his brain to write a good story, with a woman nagging him. When that happened, as it often did, Dele was furious. Ann did not unfortunately understand the pain writers go through in trying to reasonably weave words together, being a nurse. Dele's expectations of her as a journalist's wife, did not therefore, come quite close to Ann's idea of her expected code of conduct.

Beside these cultural and career differences, there were fundamental contradictions in their make-up. Ann was an introvert, Dele, an extrovert. Ann was the simple, plain, respectful, dutiful, reserved and quietly intelligent type; Dele was gregarious, inquisitive, matey,

magnetic, intelligent and arrogant. An association between these two different individuals, ought to be- founded on compromise. But neither of them seemed to agree on compromise.

When their relationship did not improve, Dele began to spend more time out. He had hoped this would reduce the frequency of their quarrels but it instead worsened the situation. His late nights brought doubts in the mind of Ann, doubts over Dele's faithfulness. She realized her husband was easily attracted to women and she knew that even if the ladies kept off him, he was not likely to keep off them. At one point, she actually accused Dele of unfaithfulness but his denial only increased her doubts.

While his financial position had improved considerably, money was still a problem. Although Ann was working, she did, like every other woman, expect Dele to play his role as a husband. Dele complained to their mutual friends how she asked for certain things which he could not give because he needed money for the maintenance of his car, buying books, paying his sons' fees in a private school, providing for his parents, brothers and sisters and, of course, getting himself nice clothes.

The quarrels between husband and wife often spilled over into Tunde Thomas' place, with Ann, frustrated and in tears, sobbing: "Tunde, you better talk to your friend. One of these days, I'm gonna kill him." Tunde Thomas would go over to Dele to find out what had happened, but a carefree Dele would dismiss it with a wave of the hand. "Don't mind Ann, please,"was his usual reply. It was therefore a matter of time before the fragile association began to collapse.

Billy and Stella visited the Giwas early in 1977. It was Billy's first trip to Ife. The old man was pleased. He held Billy close to his heart. He had finally beheld his grandson, Dele's son. He was excited. It was a memorable moment and it convinced him more than ever before that he was going to set his eyes on Dele.

Biodun accompanied Stella and Billy back to Ibadan. By the time he returned, he heard that his father had nearly died. It was shocking. The old man himself narrated the happy event to his son. But he renewed his promise to behold his Dele before passing away.

The ticking of the clock frightened him. Death was no longer a distant caller, it drew closer as each day died and gave life to another. One day, in May 1977, as he rode his rickety bicycle home from

Oduduwa College, just outside the gate of Saint John's Primary School, a sudden dizziness overcame him. He could no longer pedal. He sluggishly got down, pushed his old Raleigh aside, and sat by the side of the road. He sent a message home and Elekia and her daughter, Hawawu, rushed to his rescue. They stopped a taxi and took him home. He was taken to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital, Ile-Ife, but as soon as he arrived, he starting vomitting blood and breathing heavily. He did not leave the hospital alive.

After Musa's death, the family waved a melancholic goodbye to Ife, their home for 44 years. It was the tragic end of a story, the story of an adventure, growth, poverty, survival, love, hope, misery and death. Musa's corpse, his two wives, children, a bicycle, two beds, three wooden chairs and his ironing tables were all packed into the back of a bolekaja lorry that took them to Ugbekpe, where their story began.

Dele heard the sad news and was for several days moody and withdrawn. It had also been his wish to see this man who had laboured so much for him and at least to say thank you. A number of thoughts ran through his mind. What was he supposed to have done? Why should a man sacrifice his life for another? Was he negligent? Was life fair to the old man? Was it fair to both of them? What in fact was fairness? And life? What was it all about? Was it a continuum of living and dying?

As his mind went through these thoughts, he took another look at his own life and imagined his own death. What would it be like? Would it come in the middle of the road? Would drums be rolled out? Would the world be aware that a Dele Giwa passed away?

Death brought him closer to his father. He realized more than ever before the man's sacrifices, his self-denial, the sweating at Esinmirin stream, the scorching sun at Oduduwa College laundry, the toil in the farm, the tears of joy and sorrow, grinding poverty, illness, pain, and ... death.

He could not come home. It was meaningless and wasteful. The old man had already been buried, long before he was informed by the letter from home. He resolved quietly to work hard in his chosen profession and improve the status of the Giwa family. He promised to continue the battle to give meaning to the dream, his father's dream. He vowed not to die unsung like his father. He promised to fight those

forces that perpetually kept some men down. He swore to help the family overcome the dehumanizing and deprived life of the past.

His father seemed to have heard his resolutions. His invisible hand began to guide him. Life became kinder to him. Those things which in the past worked against him began reversing themselves. America became more loving, but Nigeria was beckoning him to come home. He began to have a kind of nostalgia even for the chaos of Lagos. He began to identify with that crazy confusion and saw himself as one of those who could help restore order. But why leave a country that had been so kind? America had given him education, a professional training, a wife and two sons. Going back home to the power cuts, armed robbery, official corruption, poverty, inefficient public utilities, and poor or non-existent social services or remaining in America, where things were relatively easier, was the dilemma, that Dele had to resolve.

But that debate over home-coming did not start until he met Dr Patrick Dele Cole, managing director of the Nigerian *Daily Times,* in 1977. Cole was trying to recruit some good hands to work for the dull, uninspiring *Times* and was also involved in trying to establish a kind of professional cooperation with some overseas newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post.* It was while speaking to the editors of the *New York Times* that one of them said, "But we have a Nigerian working here, have you met him?" Patrick Cole had not. He was taken to the newsroom where he was introduced to the smart-looking young man, who was working that day on some crime stories in the city. Cole had a brief chat with him and they agreed to meet again, over drinks in his hotel.

Dele kept the appointment, and over drinks they discussed several subjects and of course, the situation in Nigeria. Cole asked him if he would like to come home and work for the *Daily Times.* Dele did not think it would be sensible for him to leave a well paid job, a wife and two kids for whatever the Nigerian *Daily Times* was offering. But he confessed that he was very interested in what was going on at home, apart from wanting to re-unite with his family.

When it became obvious to Cole that he was not going to be able to convince Dele to return home, he suggested an-all-expenses-paid visit to Nigeria to see the structure of the *Daily Times* and suggest possible improvements. That did not seem to change Dele's mind either. But

Cole did not give up. When he returned home, he began regular telephone contact with Dele.

Cole also spoke to Stanley Macebuh of his encounter with a bright young Nigerian at the *New York Times*. Macebuh had of course met Dele in New York a few years earlier. He was immediately given the task of convincing Dele to come home and take the *Daily Times* job.

Macebuh got in touch with Dele and told him he was coming to New York and would like to talk over lunch. They met on a cold, wintry afternoon at Victus on Columbus Avenue. Over lunch, Macebuh laid his cards on the table. He spoke of exciting things happening back home and how it would be nice for every young man to come home to contribute his quota.

Dele was surprised at Macebuh's apparent turnaround. Here was someone who had sworn a few years before, while in the U.S., that he would not return to Nigeria until the soldiers were out of government. Macebuh apparently was one of those deeply touched by the events in Nigeria during the "revolutionary" months of the Murtala Muhammed government. He was now trying to convince Dele to come home and be a part of what he saw as the new order.

Dele, in his usual blunt manner told Macebuh to go to hell, that he was talking rubbish: "Look, people in government, whether in uniform or not, are bloody politicians. They all behave the same way. They are mean and selfish—all of them are bastards. I do not want to have anything to do with them." The *Daily Times* he added, was a government-owned paper and he was not going to have anything to do with "such junk". He said he had taken a look at "the lousy paper" and did not see himself fitting in at all. Macebuh had not envisaged that it was going to be easy to convince Dele to come home. He again mentioned the idea of an all-expenses-paid fact-finding visit. But Dele's reaction was negative.

"Dammit, man said Macebuh sharply. I am making you an offer nobody made to me, giving you a paid holiday to come and enjoy yourself. If you like it then you can go back to New York and arrange to return. If you do not like it, then you just tell us to buzz off." Dele now seemed to be having second thoughts about the offer. But he made it quite clear that he was not making any commitment.

Macebuh returned to Nigeria and briefed Cole. A formal letter of invitation was then written to Dele early in 1978. He replied, stating when he would make the visit. He went back home in June 1978. It was his first visit home in seven-years, and it was exactly a year after he first met Dele Cole in New York.

He was warmly received at the Ikeja Airport by his brothers Tunde and Biodun, his former boss at NBC, Saka Fagbo and a *Daily Times* team of editors and managers. Accommodation had already been reserved at the Bristol Hotel on Martins Street, Lagos, and he was ushered into his room by the airport reception team.

Patrick Cole and Macebuh did everything possible to make the visit a memorable one. In their company, Dele savoured the bubbly social life of Lagos, took more than a casual look at the *Daily Times,* and was not impressed.

At the end of his stay, Cole and Macebuh asked him to write a blueprint on what should be done to revamp the entire structure of the paper. Dele took this as a challenge. He produced a twenty-page document, making all kinds of interesting, but for the *Daily Times,* impossible suggestions. Upon the receipt of the document, Macebuh and Cole thought it was time to get Dele off his high horse. One day they sat him down and said:

"All right, we are keeping it as a document, come home and see what you can do to implement it yourself. There is no point writing us fancy memos."

Dele said their request was unfair and a gross violation of their earlier agreement that the visit home had no strings attached. Patrick Cole and Macebuh, however, refused to give up. At that time, the tempo of politics was just hotting up. The ban on partisan politics had been lifted and the *Daily Times* was in the forefront of the media campaign for the new dawn. The paper's circulation was increasing and there seemed to be a kind of general euphoria about civilian rule. The newspaper was sensitizing the people towards their political rights. It got a debate going on the constitution and the pages were open to anybody who wanted to say something on politics. Dele, himself a politically conscious person was fascinated by all this. It was this, perhaps more than anything else, that cracked his resolve against coming home.

Another was his family. Tunde and Biodun were scratching a living from some lowly jobs and he began to think he could be of better service to them if he moved nearer. At one time, he had asked Tunde to join him in the U.S. but that did not work out. During his visit to Nigeria, Dele went to Ugbekpe with Tunde and met his mother and all the other members of the family. They were all very pleased to see him. He had a lengthy discussion with his mother, and spoke of his plan to take Billy along to the U.S. Elekia expressed her worries about Dele's final return. He promised her it would be soon.

In Ibadan, he reunited with Stella and Billy. Stella was still a school teacher and Billy was now a form two student of Ora Secondary School in Oyo State. When he told Stella he would like to take Billy with him to the U.S., she raised no objection. Unfortunately, he was not able to get Billy a visa. He had thought having Billy with him in the U.S. would enable him make up for the fatherly care he had been unable to provide his son.

Although he left Cole and Macebuh as adamant as ever, he knew in his mind that his resolve was already broken. The needs of Elekia, Billy, Tunde, Biodun, and his sisters, and the political situation in Nigeria at that time of transition to civil rule combined to weaken his determination to stay on in the States.

Eventually, he agreed to come home. A formal letter asking him to join the *Daily Times* was written to him, and in his reply he gave all kinds of conditions. One was that as a professional, he would not have time for all the politics going on in the place. He promised to run any department given to him to the best of his ability and would wish to be left alone to do the work in the best way he could.

Both Cole and Macebuh assured him he would be given a free hand to run the department and that there would not be any interference on the basis of political considerations. That settled, Dele then began to set in motion the process of his return to Nigeria. He resigned his *New York Times* job.

At this time, his marriage to Ann was already on the verge of collapse. The last straw was when Dele told her he had decided to go home and take the *Daily Times* offer. Ann said she had no idea Dele wanted to go home, and that she was not prepared to follow him. It was the end of their four-year marriage.

Dele left their Clinton Avenue home and moved to Queens, and into the home of his friend, Bridget Okpaku, a young, pretty, intelligent Nigerian girl. The sudden emergence of Bridget on the scene was an indication that Dele had quite a number of girlfriends while still married to Ann. Dele was an incurable romantic; a *don Juan,* who found something to love in every woman he met, however short-lived that love may have been. Bridget was about Dele's closest girlfriend outside his marital life. Her brother, Dr Joseph Okpaku of the Third World Press, was in the circle of friends that Dele got into in the latter part of his stay in America.

At the time Dele moved into her house, Bridget had just finished her course and was also preparing to come home for her National Youth Service. They had been dating each other long before this time. They were seen around together at a few Nigerian parties. Bridget, it appeared, was the type of girl who wanted to settle down as quickly as possible, but after the breakup of his marriage, Dele was understandably in no hurry to get married again. He had just come out of a relationship that had caused him a lot of mental stress. Although he was sure Bridget would make a good wife, he was not emotionally prepared for another marriage.

At 122 Ashland Place, the residence of one of Dele's good friends, Emmanuel Okoro, a send off party was held. Dele, the guest of honour, came in as usual with a retinue of girls. It was a well attended party and went on till the following morning. Dele was exuberant, dancing throughout the night. The idea of going home filled him with a greater joy than he had even imagined. He began to realise how much he really missed Nigeria.

He tidied up his affairs in the U.S. in readiness for his return. He visited Ann and his two sons, dashed around to bid his friends goodbye. By the time he boarded the Lagos bound plane, he was convinced he had taken the right decision.

"As a young man and as a young Nigerian, I feel a strong pull by my country. I hear a call to patriotism and a call to duty. I hear a ringing call to come home, a call to give the best of me to my profession and my people. So, home I am coming", he wrote in one of his first articles in the *Daily Times* in 1979.

America had been home for seven and half years. He looked forward to the challenges he was going to face at the *Daily Times.*

7. Home-coming

AND so, in the late afternoon of April 9, 1979, three weeks into his 32nd year, Dele Giwa finally arrived on the shores of the land of his birth to keep his date with destiny. He was full of America; he was fresh, hopeful and brash for somebody who had always been fresh, hopeful and brash, and his head was filled with all the things he planned to do at his new post as features editor of the *Daily Times*.

At the new Murtala Muhammed international airport, where he just disembarked from a KLM DC-10, he was impressed with the spanking cleanliness and the comfort, but wrongly assumed that efficiency went with such things. On the long queue, waiting to be attended to by a group of disinterested and thoroughly bored immigration officers, Giwa observed that one of the officers had pulled a white fellow to the side and quickly processed his papers. Giwa challenged the immigration officer, saying that could not be done because the white man was at the back of the line.

The officer appeared surprised at this impetuous young man's objection. He surveyed him contemptuously and asked his name. Giwa told him. The officer then rifled through the papers in front of him and, having identified Giwa's, announced that he would make sure that the impudent young man was the last to leave. "You must be kidding," Giwa said, and demanded to see the supervisor. At this, the man laughed. He said, "This J.J.C. (Johnny Just Come) says he wants to see my supervisor." The others laughed, too, and thereafter ignored Giwa. The officer turned back to his papers; Giwa held his hand. Things came to a halt.

At this point, a senior officer came to intercede, and while the argument continued, another immigration officer suddenly recognized Giwa from his photograph recently published in the *Times,* and announced it to the others. That brought the matter to a quick end. On the very first day that Giwa finally returned to his country, he got the recognition that he had always sought from his youth. Three years hence, few literate Nigerians would ask who Dele Giwa was.

That was a promise he had made to himself. A major phase in the fulfillment of that promise had just begun and, God help him, he was going to push himself into the place where he rightly belonged, which was upfront. He was supremely self-confident; he was enthusiastic and, he believed, his seven and one-half years in America had prepared him for his goal. He was ready now.

Giwa spent the night, at the Ikoyi hotel, snuggling up to his family and friends. The following morning, he promptly reported at the *Times,* where Macebuh was waiting for him. Tony Momoh, who was then editor of the *Daily Times,* was there as well. Giwa informed his new colleagues that he would be ready for work in a week. Momoh thought that was a joke; he must start right away. Holding Giwa by the hand, Momoh resolutely led him out of Macebuh's office to his own section of the building, where Giwa was introduced to some of the staff he would work with.

From the beginning, Giwa was given a free hand to run the features department as he more or less pleased. Cole's directive to Momoh was clear. While, as editor, Momoh had overall control, Giwa was to be left alone to run his department; no one was to breathe down his neck This arrangement worked because both men respected and liked each other. Giwa did not think too highly of many of the staff at the *Times.* He regarded the top as "heavily laden with junk." But he thought Momoh was a solid professional. And since they got along on the personal level as well, there was never really any friction between them.

Giwa got down to business quickly. At the time, there was not a properly organised features department. That section of the newspaper was basically dead. He found a crop of reporters who apparently did not know much better. His features team consisted of Amma Ogan, Richard Ikiebe, Coker Anita and, later, Banji Adeyanju.

Giwa knew what he had to do. He fired up the staff with the zeal he so clearly displayed himself. He involved himself in writing stories

with them, line by agonizing line, and held regular brain-picking sessions to bandy ideas about. He exhorted them to be alert, to improve their capacity to imagine, that anybody who did not have an active imagination had no business working for him. He was furious with anyone who appeared to be slack in their work. He would call them all sorts of names. But when he was presented a clean copy, the writer automatically became his best friend. In writing a report, he told his team, the opening lines were very important. He liked something dramatic; he sometimes brought his books to the office for the reporters to read.

Giwa brought life to the pages of the hitherto cautious and somewhat conservative newspaper. He created Page 7, *Art/Life* and, for a brief period, the *American File*. He had an insatiable appetite for writing; he ran two columns a week. One was a kind of journalistic column he called *Press Snaps*, and the other was for general commentary, which he named *Parallax View*. His style was unique for the period, in that it was not involved; it was breezy, snazzy, somewhat personalised, (he could write about how his girlfriend left him) and, in its unencumbered honesty, it seemed like a breath of fresh air in an otherwise staid newspaper.

The first few weeks he spent in Nigeria were not easy for him. He found that things he had taken for granted were not forthcoming. He complained bitterly about getting a car. This proved difficult, and he needled Momoh persistently. Eventually, he got one of the *Daily Times* Volkswagen Beetles. He had to fight for everything, including a refrigerator for his office. He could not bring himself to complain to Cole, and so Macebuh and Momoh bore the brunt. Macebuh and Giwa's other friends outside the *Times*, on a personal level, chipped in once in a while to make his new life less unbearable for him.

He was a very flashy person. He wore designer clothes, he was outspoken, which annoyed many in the conservative army at the *Times*. Many of them thought he was full of America, which was true. He was very good-looking, and it was not surprising that he became something of a ladies' man. The only visible thing he retained was his Nigerian accent. He did not think he had to speak through his nose to make himself noticed. But he more than compensated for that in other ways.

Within the week of his arrival home, Giwa travelled to the village to see his mother. Elekia was overjoyed to see him. She thought her suffering, at long last, had come to an end. Her son was doing well. He would pull his brothers and sisters up. The family, finally, was rising from the dust into which poverty had ground them.

After spending a month at the Ikoyi hotel, Giwa moved to an apartment in Ogba. His landlord was Yaya Awosanya, the administrative manager of the *Times*. The building consisted of four apartments, and Awosanya himself lived in one of them. Giwa moved into the apartment with Bridget Okpaku, with whom he was having what appeared to be a serious relationship. His brother, Biodun, also lived with him. Biodun, was still working as a bedroom steward at Eko Hotel, while struggling to pass his secondary school examinations. Abiba, the youngest sister, was in secondary school. Giwa took over from Biodun, the responsibility of paying her fees.

Giwa was a very good neighbour, which was not surprising, considering his uncanny ability to make friends. He quickly became close to Awosanya, with whom he rode to the office every day either in his own Volkswagen or in Awosanya's car. He always took a personal interest in the people around him. One day, while Awosanya was on relief assignment outside Lagos, his wife fell ill. The illness worsened while Awosanya was away, and Giwa had to look after the woman. When he got on the phone to Awosanya he scolded him. "What the hell are you doing out there, while your wife is at home, ill?" Awosanya hurried back to Lagos.

Giwa also loved a good argument. He liked to discuss all manner of issues with his neighbours, and this sometimes went on for hours. Awosanya soon got used to this habit of his tenant who always strove to bring the other person to agree with his own point of view, and could go to unusual lengths to achieve this. One evening, after he and Awosanya arrived home from the office, an argument started and raged till far into the night. At about two in the morning, when both sides refused to shift, Giwa decided to rouse from sleep, another neighbour, Kola Akinbami, marketing director of Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, to give a third opinion.

He was often very blunt. Another neighbour who had lived in England for a few years liked to address his daughter, Tola, with an English accent. This meant that Tola was pronounced with a rising

pitch. One day Giwa just walked up to the man and asked him to "stop being funny." The embarrassed man managed to laugh over it and subsequently reverted to the appropriate Yoruba intonation. Once they got used to Giwa and understood his basic good nature, no one took offence at his bluntness.

Shortly after he arrived home, Giwa got in touch with Stella Ogunseitan to ask after his son, Billy. The boy, now twelve, was in secondary school in a small town in the north of Oyo State. Giwa arranged to bring Billy to Lagos as soon as the school went on vacation.

Stella had never married and still had some hope that she would one day marry the father of her son. She was aware that his marriage to Ann in New York had collapsed. But Giwa was now more or less preoccupied with Bridget, his new live-in love. In fact, when Stella, visited him in Lagos in 1979, even before Billy joined him, Giwa would not allow her into the house. He felt that phase of his life was behind him, and was now only interested in taking care of his son, whom he loved dearly.

Meanwhile, at the *Times,* Giwa asserted his authority in the features' department. His articles had begun to attract national attention. There was no question that he ran his department competently. He drove his staff almost beyond endurance, but they soon got used to his style. He had one big cassette player that he always brought to the office, from which boomed music from his considerable collection, which he always proudly told his staff consisted of about 700 albums. His favourite singers were Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder and Simon and Garfunkel.

He encouraged his staff to excel and praised them effusively when they did well. If a reporter he respected was slack for a minute, he would refuse to talk to him for days. He encouraged them to call him by his first name, and took a personal interest in them. The staff, in turn, were loyal to him, because he always tried to push them up; to make them improve.

He soon became well known for his knack in spotting a fine story. His exuberance at such moments was infectious. Lewis Obi was on the sub-desk at the *Times* in 1979. One day, he sent a story to the features desk for publication. The story was about the difficulty he encountered before he got a job. Giwa was not in at the time. When the

story finally got to him, he was ecstatic. "Who on earth is this Lewis Obi?" he asked his staff. Someone replied that he was on the sub-desk somewhere in the building.

Before the day was out, Giwa had gone to look for Obi twice, unsuccessfully. When he visited the sub-desk the third time, he found a quiet young chap behind a desk.

"Are you Lewis Obi?"

"Yes, sir."

He grabbed the young man by the arm and led him downstairs to the features department. "You mean," he began, somewhat breathlessly waving a copy in Obi's face, "you mean you actually wrote this story?"

"Yes, sir."

Giwa got up and took Obi to Macebuh's office and introduced him. Macebuh asked if Obi wrote often, to which the young man, still surprised at all the attention, replied in the negative.

Giwa was greedy about getting competent people to work for him. He made up his mind to bring Obi to the features department. He then approached Momoh for help. Momoh was reticent.

"If the boy goes to your department as a writer," he told Giwa, "then he would lose ₦250 from his annual salary. Giwa bided his time. When, Momoh proceeded on leave, Giwa brought the matter up with Martin Iroabuchi who was acting for Momoh. Giwa wanted Obi, but he did not want him to have to take a pay cut. So he found a way around the problem. He would redeploy his own sub-editor, who he did not think as good anyway, and bring Obi down as sub-editor. That way, Obi would not only be able to write, but would not have to take a pay cut. Iroabuchi acquiesced. Obi left his desk for the features department, and thus began his career as a writer.

Apart from the official relationship he had with his staff, Giwa was concerned as well with their personal affairs. This trait was to stay with him till the end of his days. He also talked freely about himself, and was never ashamed of his very difficult background, which he talked about so often it very nearly became an obsession—the poverty of his youth he said was responsible for what some people might consider his flamboyance.

He inspired his staff as no other person in the *Daily Times*. He always told his staff that feature articles were not, as was the practice then, essays or compositions, but extended versions of the news. He had a nose for news, and particularly loved investigative reporting.

One of Giwa's favourites on the staff was Amma Ogan, who had joined the *Times* about six months before Giwa arrived. Ogan was not a trained journalist, and no one had really bothered, until Giwa came, to school her in newspaper writing. She was on the reviews page. Giwa took time to show her the ropes. He thought she was a refined and talented young woman. In a short while, Ogan's writing had improved dramatically, and when the political transition took place that year, she was sent to cover the national assembly. Her weekly reports were the best in the business. Ogan had become a star. Giwa liked her a lot, and they dated for a brief period. He always had a special regard for her.

Another member of his staff he took a liking to, for he observed a basic talent in him, was Richard Ikiebe. Giwa spent a lot of time going through Ikiebe's stories, the structure, the approach, the flow of language. On a few occasions he actually co-authored reports with Ikiebe. One was a review of the music of the American jazz musician, Roy Ayres in July 1979, when he came to Nigeria for a nation-wide concert tour with local ace, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti.

Titled "Blues and Jazz and Disco of Ayres," it had the kind of poetic, rhythmic ring that Giwa loved in headlines. And this was the kind of schooling he gave Obi, his new sub-editor. He discarded the conventional turgid headlines and sometimes settled for a quote or some kind of alliteration that caught the eye. Giwa changed page-planning methods as well. He favoured short, half-page stories instead of long, unwieldy dissertations that intimidated readers. There was a lot of flexibility. Emphasis was on good prose and short, crisp sentences with descriptive power. The pages he handled were alive. There was no doubt that his four and a half years at the *New York Times* left a strong impression on him.

Giwa was mostly aloof from the internal politics of the *Times*. When he joined, the *Times* was being totally overhauled. Cole had brought in a number of fresh hands to revive the newspaper. Momoh was the editor; Macebuh handled the editorial board and gave the *Times* an intellectual flavour; Giwa manned the features desk while

Angus Okolie, was news editor. The idea was that, everyday, something fundamental and interesting, that could sell the paper, should come out. On Mondays was *Grapevine,* a gossip column that became so popular and so needling it was eventually scrapped. There was Giwa's *Page Seven;* there was the *In The Nation* column, where people like Macebuh, Olatunji Dare, Biodun Jeyifo and others let fly; there was *Counterpoint*—which ran all kinds of innovative ideas. Giwa's two columns - *Parallax View* and *Press Snaps* — were very popular.

So it was among this group of exciting people, which came to be regarded as a kind of cult, that Giwa was to acquire his first taste of popularity. They were people who set themselves apart in the place from its bureaucracy and internal politics. The affirmed leader of this group was Macebuh. The group generally drifted into Macebuh's office everyday. There they would pontificate and make noise and drink cognac and argue vociferously.

Inevitably the group attracted the attention of the establishment. There was a lot of resentment and talk of the 'Cole clique'. Many outside the group, thought, 'who are these people that Cole keeps bringing into this place?' When Cole got to know about this development he did nothing to stop it. He believed that the newspaper was an intellectual organisation where a little controlled rivalry would not do any harm. The congregation in Macebuh's office consisted of the superstars of the *Times.*

More than any other 'superstar', Dele Giwa was not particularly liked for his blunt and outspoken manner. He had a self-confidence that many saw as arrogance. In an argument, he never hesitated to remind the other fellow that he was at the *New York Times,* the world's greatest newspaper, for four and a half years. Not many people took kindly to such audacious remarks.

At some point, the resentment bothered him enough to speak to Cole on the matter. The managing director dismissed it as unimportant. "Don't you worry," he told Giwa. "Just keep doing what you are doing. This is a place where, if you show your ability, they will be forced to respect you, even if they don't like you." Giwa did not bother about the matter, at least overtly, again. He just went about his business as usual—blunt, direct, fresh. He believed in himself and did not think one had to take a circuitous path to make a point. Occa-

sionally he would have an argument with Macebuh over his approach, during which Macebuh would advise him to go easy on people. His standard reply was, "Com'on, give me a break. If something has to be done, it has to be done. I don't have time to be nice to everybody."

As the civilians were preparing to take over political power from the soldiers, his articles got more and more biting. He did not have much regard for what passed for politics at the time. He did not think much of the soldiers, and the civilians who were about to take over were even worse. When he attended editorial board meetings chaired by Macebuh he argued about what he thought were the responsibilities of the *Times*. Frequently he told Macebuh: "You know these politicians are bastards. Why don't you bloody well say so instead of the fancy language?"

For his part, Giwa made sure he 'bloody well' said so. During the controversy that attended the fixing of outrageous salaries and benefits for members of the national assembly by the 'honourable members' themselves, Ume Ezeoke, then speaker of the House of Representatives, was unhappy about the bashing he and his colleagues received from the press. On the floor of the House he warned the public that the assembly would deal with anybody who made uncomplimentary remarks about them.

In his column the following week, titled "Mr Ume Ezeoke's Recklessness," Giwa lambasted the Speaker for arrogance and for insulting the Nigerian people. "To point a finger at the public as the Speaker did. . . is the height of recklessness, and that's the most decorous expression one can find. . . Mr Ezeoke must apologise and promise not to be so excessive in the future."

The legislators were very angry. Ezeoke raised the matter with Joseph Wayas, president of the Senate. Wayas sent the sergeant-at-arms to go to the *Daily Times* and "fetch" Cole and Momoh to his office. When both men arrived at Wayas' office, the Senate president wanted to know why the *Daily Times* was trying to undermine the federal government by publishing 'a dangerous editorial'. The 'editorial', (which in fact was only the features editor's opinion), said Wayas, had been directed to 'the fourth person in line to succeed to the presidency of the country.' When he found that it was not an editorial, Wayas tried to placate the two men. But it was only a matter

of time before the Shagari government decided that the men at the helm of the *Daily Times* did not serve its interests.

But Giwa went about his duties enthusiastically — amiable, vocal, ebullient, energetic and friendly. He was as eager to compliment his staff, as he was to receive praise for his own writing. He not only ran his department efficiently, he occasionally wrote news reports. His coverage of the Organisation of African Unity summit in Liberia in July 1979 was adjudged outstanding by his colleagues.

Giwa's popularity grew. He was becoming a successful and accomplished journalist. Meanwhile, the affair with his live-in friend, Bridget was degenerating. He was out-going and gregarious, she, more reserved. They had increasingly frequent arguments that were sometimes physical, and occasionally, Yaya Awosanya, his landlord, had to intercede. Biodun, who lived with his brother, was regularly caught in the middle.

Late in 1979, Giwa met another young lady who caught his eye. Bose Agbabiaka was attached to *Headlines*, a *Daily Times* publication, as a youth corps member. She was directly responsible to Duro Onabule, who was to remain Giwa's colleague for the next five years. Agbabiaka, as was typical of youth corps members on primary assignments, took an unauthorised three-week leave. She came back to meet an angry Onabule. Giwa stopped over in Onabule's office at that precise moment and, like the cowboy of the westerns, rescued Agbabiaka from Onabule.

Giwa thereafter turned on his considerable charm. "You are a stunning black beauty," he remarked. The young lady was embarrassed. Giwa pursued the opening, but Agbabiaka managed to fend off his approaches. Minutes later, Giwa reluctantly left. "Don't mind that loud mouth," Onabule counselled the girl. "He is not a serious man." Nothing came of the brief encounter until the following year. This was because, shortly after the chance meeting, Giwa was preoccupied with more serious issues. Moshood Kasimawo Olawale Abiola, millionaire businessman and party chieftain, had arrived on the scene.

It was a period of increasing interference by government in the affairs of the *Daily Times*. The atmosphere was changing rapidly from the days when Cole had almost complete freedom to run the company. He had been in the political department of the cabinet office, the department which more or less worked out the details of the political

programme of the Murtala-Obasanjo regime. It was from there he was seconded to the *Times,* which had been taken over by the government. His job was to use the organ to prepare the public for the dramatic changes in the political arena then taking place.

To help achieve this primary objective, Cole had brought in a number of people, including Macebuh and Giwa. The *Daily Times,* for fear that the politicians might appropriate it for not altogether altruisic purposes, was to be reverted to a trust rather than direct government control. The trust agreements were ready; all but one signature had been appended. Liman Ciroma, secretary to the government, had signed. The only person left was the chairman of National Insurance Corporation of Nigeria, NICON, which held the majority shares for the federal government. But the NICON chairman could not be located at the critical moment. He was in Calabar. There was a lot of footdragging. Before the last signature could be obtained, the transition took place. As was feared, the Shagari government was not in a hurry to lose control of such a credible and powerful medium; in-fact, it was not interested in so doing. Therefore, the management more and more was pilloried, boxed into a corner and had much of its independence gradually nipped away.

It was in this kind of atmosphere that key staff of the *Daily Times* functioned when, in November 1979, Abiola decided to establish his own newspapers. The primary reason was to try to counter the bad press that the ruling party, the National Party of Nigeria and the Shagari government were getting. Abiola raided the *Daily Times.* He got Henry Odukomaiya, a general manager at the *Times,* to become managing director of the new Concord Press. He needed an editor for the daily paper. He first settled for Dayo Duyile but for some reason changed his mind. The new publisher contacted his political soul mates for suggestions. Shehu Musa, secretary to the new Shagari government said he knew somebody; the only problem was that it was a woman. Abiola said it did not matter, and Doyin Aboaba was hired.

For the post of editor of the Sunday paper, both Odukomaiya and Aboaba advised Abiola to get Giwa on board. Giwa was contacted and presented with the offer. He was to get about twice his salary at the *Times;* he was also to get an official car, driver, and an official residence.

Giwa was in a quandary. He genuinely regarded most of the politicians of the day with contempt. He feared that Abiola, despite promises to the contrary, was likely to try to turn the paper into a political organ; a situation he could not accept. What was more, what he always wanted to do was run his own outfit, call his own shots. The problem was, as he sometimes discussed with Macebuh, how to finance such a project. On the other hand, he could accept Abiola's offer and use the opportunity to give himself more exposure, gain more experience in readiness for when he would break out. Also, the offer, was financially good, even if he did not want to admit it to himself. So, what to do? Giwa turned to his good friend and confidant, Macebuh.

Macebuh himself had made up his mind that, sooner or later, his position at the *Times* would no longer be tenable. He was convinced that Cole would soon go, in view of the problems he was then having. There was already talk of setting up a private newspaper, even though the details were yet to be worked out. Macebuh thought the departure of Cole from the *Times* was fairly certain; the only question was when. As soon as that happened, according to Macebuh's projection, it would take a week flat before Giwa was fired, and maybe another two months before a reason was found to get rid of him too.

When Giwa consulted him, therefore, Macebuh did not object outright. "Dele," he said, "it would be unethical for you to go anywhere until Dr Cole leaves this place. It would be a breach of faith; it would smack of disloyalty." Macebuh had made up his mind not to do anything until it was clear what was going to happen to Cole.

Giwa took a more practical view of the matter. "You and I know this man has to go," he argued. "These people are not going to permit Dr Cole to remain. They won't do it." "Why?" Macebuh asked, more for reasons of argument than of ignorance. "Dr Cole would not play the game the way they want him," Giwa answered. "There is no way they are going to have such a man around when they can put somebody of their own choice there." The two of them eventually agreed that, no matter what, Giwa had to get Cole's consent before he took a decision.

Giwa subsequently told Abiola that, unless Cole gave it his blessing, he was not going to take the offer. Abiola was Cole's friend. He went to Cole and asked him to release Giwa. Cole in any case knew about

the Concord project and had advised on the logistics. He did not object, so long as Giwa agreed to leave. Giwa went up to his boss to seek his advice. Cole said, "Are you asking me as your boss or as a friend?" Giwa said it was as a friend. Cole told him that he, too, was planning to leave; that in any case he knew Abiola well, and that he would be able to influence him. He advised Giwa to go. Thereafter, Abiola phoned Cole to thank him. Giwa had accepted the offer.

In choosing his team for the *Sunday Concord,* Giwa first considered his staff at the features department. He called Obi to Macebuh's office and told him he would like the young man to go with him to the *Concord,* and that he should go and think about it. Obi said there was nothing to think about. He trusted Giwa implicitly. "If you have made up your mind that we are leaving," he said, "then we are leaving." Banji Adeyanju also left with him, but Richard Ikiebe declined.

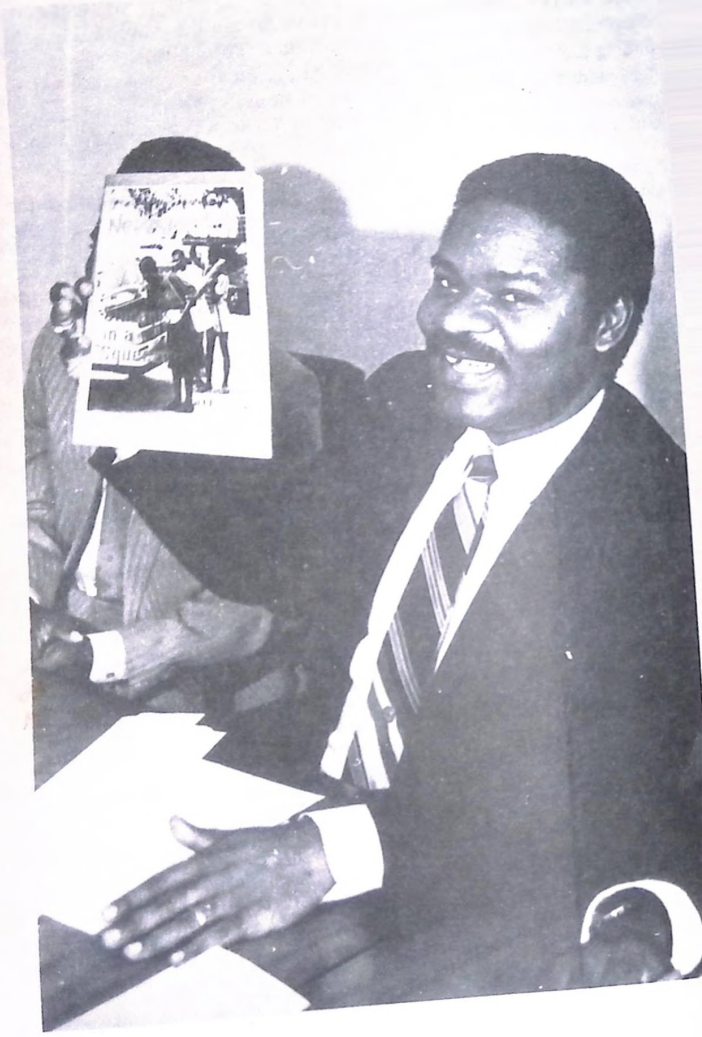
In January 1980, shortly before his final departure for *Concord,* Giwa informed Yemi Ogunbiyi, who was now teaching at the University of Ife, that he was going to work for Abiola and that he would like to spend a week with Ogunbiyi and his wife, Sade, in their home on the university campus. Ogunbiyi and his wife had since returned to Nigeria from the U.S. and had kept in touch with Giwa. Ogunbiyi had in fact done a couple of reviews for him on the *Art/Life* page of the *Times.*

Giwa went to Ife in the company of Bose Agbabiaka with whom he had already developed a steady relationship. The one-week break was to enable him to unwind before he reported for the *Concord* job. The Ogunbiyis arranged a party for their guests and invited their friends in the university community to come and meet Giwa. But Ogunbiyi warned Giwa before hand that some of the invited guests were people with strong ideological positions, usually of the left. These people, he warned, were likely to be unfriendly because they regarded with suspicion his decision to team up with Abiola to start a newspaper.

It turned out to be a very lively evening. The party went on late into the night. Giwa frankly told them that, while he believed in fairness, and equal opportunities, he did not share the sympathies of the ideological left in that he did not want anything to do with poverty again. He told them the story of his youth and the privation his family had suffered. Some of them were not convinced because, as a participant observed, "He did not pursue his own logic." That night, Giwa

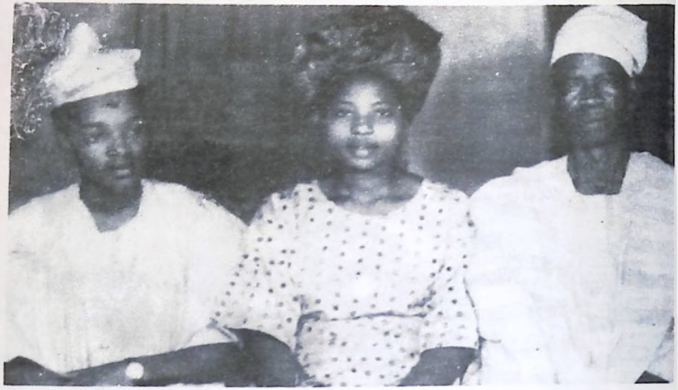
asked them to come with him and he took them to 63, Oduduwa Street, where his family had lived before his mother moved back to the village following the death of his father. The university people, including Kole Omotoso, the writer, had to cross an open sewer before they gained access to the dilapidated house. The impact of this experience was such that, on the journey back to the campus, nobody said a word.

Early in 1980, Dele Giwa began a new phase in his struggle to the top. He became editor of the *Sunday Concord*. For the next four and a half years, he would move ever so closer to the inevitable confrontation with his fate.



L-R: Tunde Giwa, Dele Giwa, Abiba Giwa, a cousin, and Abiodun Giwa in Ile-Ife (A.A. Oguns Photo Studio).

L-R: Abiba Giwa, Biodun Giwa, Fatima Giwa (Mrs. David), Dele Giwa, Yakubu Musa, Tunde Giwa.



L-R: Dele, his fiancée Joke Osiyemi, his father Musa Giwa.

Giwa on N.B.C. Beetle, Ibadan, 1971.

Madam Ayiyi Elekia Giwa, Dele's mother, August 1978.

Dele Giwa with President Babangida, Dodan Barracks, 22nd November, 1985.

Umana, Chairman of Newswatch, and his wife.

Giwa under arrest, outside Lagos High Court, 1983.

Giwa with Gani Fawehinmi.

Wedding party, Dele Giwa and Florence Ita, Calabar, April, 1981.

M.K.O. Abiola (left) with Giwa in Calabar, April, 1981.

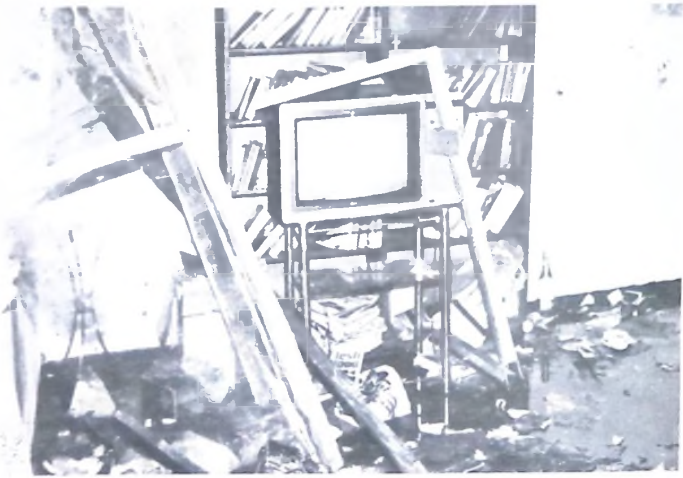
L-R: *The Newswatch Executives:* Yakubu Mohammed, Dan Agbese, Ray Ekpu, Dele Giwa.

Wedding day, 4th July, 1984, Giwa and Funmi Olaniyan.

L-R: Tunde Giwa, Dele Jnr., Funmi and baby Aisha.

Dele with his friends.

L-R. Ray Ekpu, Yemi Ogunbiyi, Wole Soyinka (after the bombing).



Giwa's destroyed study, 19th October, 1986.

Ann Giwa, photo courtesy of the *Guardian*, Lagos.

L-R: Florence Ita, Stella Ogunseitan, and Funmi Giwa proceed to the burial site, Ugbekpe-Ekperi, 8th November, 1986.

8. Changing Gear

THROUGHOUT February 1980, Giwa threw himself into the thick of preparations for getting the *Concord* newspapers off the drawing board. Abiola was not swayed by the argument that it was better to start the publication of a weekly newspaper before going daily. He wanted both at once. This meant a nerve-wracking pace of preparations throughout that month, since the proprietor did not want any shift in publication dates of Saturday March 1 for *National Concord* and the following day, Sunday, for the *Sunday Concord,* which Giwa was to edit for four and a half years.

Giwa's team had gradually taken shape. Apart from Obi and Adeyanju, who followed him from the *Times,* Giwa had also recruited Michael Awoyinfa and a few other greenhorns. It was not until May 1, almost three months after the maiden edition, that he finally had a deputy, Sina Adedipe. Giwa and his new deputy had met a year earlier, while Adedipe was controller of current affairs at Radio Nigeria. Giwa liked him immediately, and over the next few months they met several times. When it was time for Giwa to move over to *Concord,* he persuaded Adedipe to abandon his broadcasting career and switch to the print media. Giwa was reluctant to recommend Adedipe for the number two post in *Sunday Concord,* because Giwa did not want to have to give orders to someone who was older and probably jeopardise their friendship in the process. But Giwa's other nominees — including Joe Nwokedi, who was to become energy correspondent much later — impressed neither Abiola nor Odukomaiya. Giwa confessed his predicament to Adedipe, who did not see it as a problem. Adedipe passed through.

From the onset, Giwa was determined to run an independent course at the *Concord,* as much as possible, especially because of the doubts expressed by his friends and the growing followership he had acquired as a result of his writing, and the improbability of newspapers founded by Abiola, at that time, an active party chief in the National Party of Nigeria, being non-partisan. Many of his friends, including Tunde Thomas, on holidays from the States, expressed reservations about his new job. The pressure on him was considerable. He almost had no breathing space for the first year. In December 1980, when he had already become confident in his new position, he wrote a column launching a counter-attack on his accusers and detractors. At a symposium at the Obafemi Awolowo University—(then Univesity of Ife)—on press accountability in a presidential system of government, Giwa had to spend the entire time defending his decision to work for Abiola. When he got back to Lagos, he wrote in his column an essay titled, "No Apologies, Please."

From the very beginning, therefore, and for the next eighteen months, he tried his best to distance himself from politicians and men of power. To minimise political and proprietorial interference, he decided not to carry editorial opinions in the *Sunday Concord.* Also, during the same period, Giwa provided a protective cocoon for his paper, with the result that the *National Concord,* most of the time, was left to do what partisans would call "the dirty job."

The Sunday paper also had a distinct character from its daily counterpart. The Giwa stamp was on every page in unmistakable terms. The language was different—breezy, as usual; lively, catchy, uninvolved. Giwa introduced, for the first time in a Nigerian newspaper, the Sunday magazine. The column was splashed on the centre spread of the paper every week to treat, exhaustively, the major event of the preceding week or an occasional feature story. It was this, more than any other, that he used to promote his staff, on whom he showered praise in liberal doses when the quality of their reports satisfied him.

Unlike at the *Times,* the new editor wrote only once a week in the *Concord.* He called his opinion column "Parallax Snaps", a combination of the two titles under which he wrote in the *Times.* This merger was suggested to him by Obi, when his boss agonised over which one of the two titles at the *Times* should be dropped. The column, in time, became much more popular than its progenitors in the *Times.*

There were other features that brightened the pages of the *Sunday Concord*. The sports pages became number one in the country with the later arrival of Sunny Ojeagbase. When Giwa hired May Ellen Ezekiel, groomed her and allowed her to edit the newspaper's society page, it soon became a must reading.

His relationship with his staff was, because of his personal warmth, very cordial. Most of them, even now, regard him as the best editor they ever worked with. His strongest point was his ability to motivate. He developed a very close relationship with his deputy; dispensed with formality; encouraged good cheer, and promoted healthy competition among his staff.

His attitude to his staff's output was a carry over from the *Times*. He celebrated excellent reports; to bad stories he reacted temperamentally. Many of the staff he "fired" by word of mouth, which he never carried out. They soon came to understand that he only spoke in the passion of anger. Only once, in 1982, did he actually fire a member of his staff. Banji Adeyanju, unquestionably one of his best writers of the period, had reported that Tunji Braithwaite, chairman of the then Nigeria Advance Party, smoked at a public function. This was found to be a deliberate falsehood. Giwa dismissed Adeyanju immediately, although a few months later, he took the young man back.

He could go to unusual lengths to acknowledge a good report. Obi once filed a story from Washington DC, during the U.S. presidential elections. Giwa was thrilled by the quality of the report and did not hesitate to openly show his pleasure. He insisted that a photograph of the reporter had to accompany the story. When it was difficult to find one in the Concord files, he instructed someone to go to his house to look through his photo albums. They were about to do that when a mug shot of Obi was located in the files.

One incident rattled him in the first few months on the job. The *Sunday Concord* had published an investigation into a ₦2.8 million drug scandal in Oyo State. An aggrieved party got his lawyer to send a letter to the editor saying his client had been libelled and was claiming ₦5 million in "aggravated damages." It was the young editor's first experience of a libel case. He lost his nerve; he was shaken. For the first thirty minutes he wondered aloud to his staff why he should have to pay ₦5 million for "this small story." he thought rather naively that when a lawyer wrote like that, the court might just grant the requested

amount, and he did not find it funny. It was shortly after, when he had consulted with his colleagues, that he was assured that the judgement may not always favour the appellant.

Abiola and Giwa got on very well in the first year. It was like they were sizing each other up. Abiola did not try to interfere blatantly, once he noticed how obsessed Giwa was with his own understanding of editorial independence. And in any case, he was still very defensive about joining the *Concord*. Abiola, it appeared, had manouvered the paper as much as possible to satisfy his wishes. Giwa also had no problems with Doyin Aboaba, who edited the *National Concord*. His professional career was looking up. His personal comfort had improved significantly. He had moved into a bungalow in a good neighbourhood in Ikeja.

The picture, however, was not exactly as rosy for him on the home front. His relationship with Bridget had deteriorated to the extent that they hardly communicated. Biodun, his brother who lived with him, increasingly found it difficult to cope in the house. The boy was tired of his steward's job at Eko hotel, and the long distance he travelled everyday from Ikeja. When he deliberately turned truant, he was fired. He did not dare to resign for fear of his brother's reaction. Awosanya, his brother's former landlord, helped him secure a job as an advert clerk at the *Times*, without Giwa's knowledge.

The crux of the incessant quarrels Giwa had with Bridget was over the question of marriage. Giwa honestly wanted to marry her, but in his own time. Given his experience with Ann in New York, he was not about to jump into that again without satisfying himself as to the correctness of his decision. Bridget was however quite eager. A good-natured young woman loved by all that came into contact with her, Bridget ran Giwa's home smoothly and efficiently. Increasingly however, Giwa began to forget that she was there. He took for granted the orderliness and the peace of his home. Occasionally, he went out on the town and did not return home for the night. Bridget took it all in her stride.

Initially, she began to take it out on Biodun. She regularly reported him to Giwa, complaining that he no longer participated in house chores, or that he was rude, or some such insignificant thing. Giwa did not pay attention. Once, when Giwa travelled abroad, Biodun had a minor accident with his brother's old Volkswagen Beetle. But he

repaired the car before his brother returned. Bridget nevertheless reported the accident to Giwa, who flew into a rage. He ordered Biodun out of his house. Biodun was forced to find alternative accommodation on his own. When he told Tunde who by then had started working for a firm in Ikeja about it, Tunde too, got angry. Both of them stopped visiting their big brother.

Another person who suffered as a result of the deteriorating relationship between Giwa and Bridget was Frank Olize. Olize and Giwa had been friends in New York, where Olize attended the New York Institute of Advertising. When Olize came back home, he stayed with Giwa for a while. Giwa in fact, through his old boss Saka Fagbo, who had crossed over to television, was instrumental in getting Olize a job at the Nigerian Television Authority. Olize became mixed up in the domestic wranglings and had to leave the house.

With no buffer between them, following the exit of Biodun, Giwa and Bridget argued more frequently. Sometimes the quarrels found physical expression. Giwa stayed out more and paid her less attention. One day, Bridget decided she could no longer take it. Giwa returned home to be greeted by an unusual silence. Bridget was gone.

He first thought it was some kind of a joke, but when the full effect of what had happened hit him, his reaction surprised even himself. Over the next few days, Dele Giwa was consumed by an overpowering sense of loss. He was badly jolted. He became confused and distracted. A normally self-assured man with a sizeable ego, he fizzed about like a suddenly deflated balloon, and felt extremely lonely.

In the office, he talked openly about it with his staff. He was very upset, and felt a tinge of guilt. He started wondering if he had not been too involved with his work and had probably taken Bridget too much for granted. He confessed that at times, he completely ignored her. Now that she was gone, he could see the difference. That coming from Dele Giwa was like a Pharaoh, contrite for having wronged a charioteer! But he suddenly realised that he loved Bridget.

Home, for him, became a dreaded place to go. The emptiness oppressed him. Adedipe, his deputy, tried to console him. He took Giwa to his church, the Evangelical Church of Yaweh, hoping that would relieve his depression. Giwa went for a while but soon stopped, when this did not help him. He took to excessive drinking and smoking, but the aching emptiness could not be filled.

One weekend, he decided to go to Ugbekpe-Ekperi to see his mother. He was accompanied by Biodun. On the way, he distractedly threw an unfinished cigarette on the back seat of his official car, and did not even realise the seat was burning until his brother drew his attention to the smoke.

At the village, his mother tried unsuccessfully to console him. All his life, Giwa had never needed to cry on his mother's—or anyone's -shoulders. With his befogged mind, Giwa's work began to suffer. His writing, normally upbeat, logical, flowing, became jerky, meaningless, depressed. Soon enough, people started noticing the change. Macebuh was alarmed. He called Giwa and pointed out his observation about the slide. Giwa was not pleased. He became defensive and stalked off in annoyance. Macebuh called again. Giwa snapped at him. He challenged Macebuh. "Look," he said, "if you are so concerned with this issue, then you must have evidence."
"Sure," Macebuh replied. "The next time I see you, I'll produce it."
When they met the third time, Macebuh had more than enough evidence. Giwa was convinced and pleased as well that his friend had been following his writing closely. He then tried to improve.

With Adedipe's help, Giwa eventually located Bridget. After some persuasion, she came back to Giwa's home, but only for a few weeks. Her mind was no longer there. She moved out again. At this point, Giwa steeled himself. To hell, he said. As usual, he told his staff about it. That was it, he said, he was finished with women; he would not have anything to do with them again. That sounded like sour grapes, but the worst, for him, was actually over. By January 1981, he wrote in his weekly column an article titled "Reflection," in which he talked of fears about his writing. It was clear that he had climbed out of his black hole.

It was with a renewal of energy and optimism, therefore, that Giwa set about conquering 1981. He began to see Ray Ekpu regularly. The two of them had met in April 1980 in Calabar, during a conference of the guild of editors and they hit it off immediately. Ekpu, editor of the Cross River state-owned *Chronicle,* was chief host. he had read Giwa's articles since 1979 and admired him. Giwa, too, had apparently read something of Ekpu's work, because when in December 1980, Ekpu finally joined the *Sunday Times* as editor, Giwa warned his own staff to brace for a stiff challenge from the rival paper.

And so, when Ekpu reluctantly left the comfort of Calabar for the hassle of Lagos—a city he had never liked even though he went to university there—he looked forward to meeting his new friend again.

Luckily, Ekpu's official residence was walking distance from Giwa's house. They exchanged visits and eventually, they began to see each other everyday. On Fridays, whoever finished the production of his paper first would go over to the other's office, and from there, go home—or out—together.

In December 1980, about the same time that Ekpu became editor of the *Sunday Times,* Yakubu Mohammed vacated his associate editor's seat at the *New Nigerian* to join the *Concord* team as deputy editor of the *National Concord.* This was not his first meeting with Giwa. When in mid-March 1980 the Concord Press was only a week old, the printing machines broke down, and it looked like the papers would not appear the following day. Nobody knew what to do. Fola Ashiru, Abiola's executive assistant, suggested they could use the machines of the *New Nigerian* where he was once news editor. Mohammed, then the Lagos editor of the paper was roused from his sleep, to help. Giwa, along with Abiola, went with Ashiru to meet Mohammed, who instructed the press hall staff to print the *Concord* as soon as they finished with the southern edition of his own paper, and thus saved the day. Giwa was impressed; no less impressed was Abiola, (M.K.O., as he was popularly called) who hired Mohammed nine months later. Giwa and Mohammed became friends.

Even though the Abiola factor loomed large in the public perception of the newspaper, Giwa struggled hard to build up credibility for the *Sunday Concord.* Given his strong personality, his natural magnetism, his friendly disposition, flamboyance and physical attractiveness, he had in a short time, become the centre of attraction in the *Concord.* He was a good talker as well, and was given to a little boasting. There was also a flash of arrogance—which was inoffensive, once you got to know him—that followed him like a shadow. Many people, including M.K.O. himself, liked him. He quickly became Abiola's right-hand man, which further enhanced his stature. He was Aboaba's confidant and friend: when she was about to marry Abiola later that year, Giwa was the first person she told. His son, Billy, visited more regularly. The Bridget experience was behind him. He felt good with himself.

As Giwa got over the emotional trauma resulting from the break-up with Bridget he renewed his relationship with Bose Agbabiaka, the youth corps member he had met at the *Daily Times*. They had had a brief affair shortly after he left the *Times*. It was a flash in the pan. Now Giwa saw her more frequently. The reunion was significant—as Giwa would find out a few months later—but was, again, brief. For, on February 19, 1981, Dele Giwa plunged headlong into a whirlwind relationship which caught unawares, not only those close to him, but also himself.

* * * * *

Florence Ita was 35 years old on February 19, 1981, a month before Giwa's 34th birthday. She was a worldly woman—spoilt, was how she described herself—very comfortable, financially secure, with friends in high places. She had a spacious and tastefully furnished home on Adeniran Ogunsanya Street in Surulère; in the garage was a Mercedes Benz 200 car and at least another car. A member of a royal family, her mother, Beatrice Bassey, a retired journalist formerly on the staff of the *Daily Times, West African Pilot* and the *Daily Sketch,* was a well-to-do businesswoman. Trained as a nurse and later as a hospital administrator, Florence was herself now a successful businesswoman. She traded in medical equipment, ran a pharmacy, amongst other things.

Early in 1981, she flirted with the idea of getting married and so got engaged. But shortly before she was to be married, an unforeseen pocket of clouds appeared in what had been a clear, blue sky. The wedding plans hit the rocks, and she flew to England to recover from the disappointment.

Her closest friend at that time was Vera Ifudu, who up till a year earlier, was a star reporter for the Nigerian Television Authority. In April 1980, she enthusiastically, but, as it turned out, unwisely, investigated allegations that the numbing sum of ₦2.8 billion in oil revenue was missing from the national coffers. She pursued her leads doggedly, and blindly, and got burnt. She was proving to be an embarrassment for the powerful. On April 30, 1980, she was peremptorily fired from her job.

Now, Vera Ifudu was Macebuh's friend. Ita too was Macebuh's friend, a long-time friend. Macebuh, of course, was Dele Giwa's

friend. Ifudu knew Giwa well. They were friendly. But Ita had never met Giwa, a journalist she read most avidly. Every Sunday, because of Giwa, Ita bought the *Concord* religiously. She thought he was very brilliant. She thought he was good-looking too—at least from his photograph in the *Concord*. The only thing was that, well, she had not met him in person. From his writings, however, Ita had analysed him and seen his mind with her mind's eye. She was pleased with her conclusion.

A few days before her birthday, while she was still in London, far away from the bad turn in her relationship, Ita received a call from Ifudu. Why didn't she just come back home, so that a birthday party could be organised for her? Ita said no. "I'll bring your friends," Ifudu tried again. Ita was slightly tickled, but unimpressed. Ifudu persisted. "I may even bring you a surprise." Ita perked up. She was interested now. "Is it a birthday present?" she asked. "Yes," replied Ifudu. "Somebody you like." Ita had a fairly good idea who, but could not be sure. She did not press the point, but agreed to come. On February 18, a day before the party, she was back in Lagos.

On D-Day, Macebuh and Giwa went to the party, both of them having been invited by Ifudu. Macebuh arrived first. Giwa came in through the kitchen, where Ita was busy. She turned round, recognition flooding her face instantly. Those photographs could not be wrong. Oh, my God, she thought. I'm meeting this guy at last. Just then, Ifudu also walked into the kitchen. She introduced them. They shook hands. Giwa was directed upstairs to join the special guests. Already upstairs were Macebuh, Dele Cole, Dora Ifudu, Vera's sister, and a few others.

From that moment on, it was like both Giwa and Ita had been struck by a thunderbolt—the way Sicilians describe it. They kept staring at each other. Macebuh soon noticed, and thought maybe they had not been introduced. He held both of them. "Dele, this is Florence; Florence, this is Dele." From that moment on, they did nothing but devote absolute attention to each other. They danced together throughout the night. At one point, Macebuh tried to interest Giwa in what was going on downstairs. He failed.

Merely dancing with each other was not enough. Presently, both of them moved into Ita's bedroom. There they sat together on the floor. Dora Ifudu saw them move in, and joined them. Ita's cousin, Bassey

Ekpo, also joined the thunderstruck duo who, to all intents, just wanted to be alone. They discussed briefly, politics and other party talk. Apparently tired, Ita dozed off, her head on Giwa's lap. The others drifted off. When she woke up around 6.30 a.m., Giwa was still wide awake. Macebuh had left, and so had all the other guests. Only Vera remained.

Later in the morning, the three of them had breakfast. Then Vera left. They were now alone at last. They talked some more, lolled around till that evening, and Giwa said he was going home, and would come back later at night. Basically, an affair had started. While Giwa went home, Ita called Ifudu on the phone to give her the gist of what had happened, and also to seek her advice. Ifudu was most supportive.

Giwa was back two hours later. For the next two weeks, his new home was Ita's place. They revelled in each other's presence. Giwa enjoyed the luxury around him, and the company of the woman with him. The feeling was mutual. Ita thought his personality was imposing and that he was intellectually sound. By the very next day, they had started discussing marriage. At that point, Ita knew that her other relationship was over.

They practically poured out their hearts to each other or, more accurately, Giwa poured out his heart to her. Never one to hold back, in a couple of days, he had already told her about his failed relationship with Bridget; his derailed marriage to Ann, and his children, Billy, Dele Junior and Tunde. By the following week, at Ita's request, the photographs of the children were in her house, conspicuously displayed on the television set and the mantlepiece.

The day after the party, Ekpu went to his friend's house. To his surprise and slight worry, he was told that Giwa had gone to a party the previous day and had since not returned. Ekpu thought that was unusual. The following morning, on his way to the office, he stopped by again. He learnt that Giwa had come in briefly and had gone out again, and that his driver was taking his clothes to him in his new abode. Ekpu got curious. That Monday evening, Giwa visited Ekpu and told him his storybook tale. Well, well, Ekpu thought.

From that moment on, the pace of events caught everybody by surprise. By Tuesday, February 22, Giwa started talking about getting married. Some of his colleagues were bewildered. This was a man

who, only a few weeks back, had sworn that he was finished with women. That same evening, he took Adedipe to meet his new-found love. On the way, Giwa told him that he had now found someone on his "level." He always knew, he said, that water would find its own level. This was the woman for him.

Giwa went back to see Macebuh. "Stanley," he said, "I am going to marry that girl."

"Which girl?" Macebuh asked.

"The one we met on Saturday," he replied.

"Florence?"

"Yeah."

Macebuh was amused. "You must be out of your mind," he said.

"Buzz off." But Giwa just looked at him. Macebuh really did not immediately comprehend what was happening. Surely he must be joking? He looked Giwa straight in the eyes. It was then he realised it was not a joke. Christ, he thought, the son-of-a-bitch is serious.

Subsequently, at the next opportune time, Macebuh was in Ita's house. Giwa was there as well. They were supposed to have dinner out. Macebuh took Ita aside. He wanted to be absolutely sure of what Giwa had told him.

"Hey, Florence, what is this I hear about you and Dele planning to get married?"

"Well, there is something there," Ita replied. "Didn't you see your friend, he says he wants to marry me." Macebuh was speechless. Absent-mindedly, as he is wont to do in such situations, he scratched at his beard and nodded repeatedly. So, that was it?

Events continued to move at a dizzying speed. All discussions between Giwa and Ita centred on their plans for marriage. Occasionally, Ita would express, half-heartedly that she would rather they lived together without getting married; but Giwa was not to be put off. He just went bullishly into it. Ita constantly briefed her friend, Ifudu, and sought her opinion at every turn. She protested mildly to Ifudu, but she sensed that marriage was what Ita really wanted. So she encouraged her. "The guy is the kind of person you like," she would say. "Try it, you will settle in."

Within the first week, Ita had absolutely no doubt as to the outcome of her new affair. She went back to the man to whom she was engaged, a director of her company, and told him of the development. She asked him to resign, and he did. Meanwhile, she asked Giwa to bring around his two brothers, Tunde and Biodun, who liked her instantly. She also asked Giwa to invite his mother, Elekia to Lagos. Giwa's mother also liked her prospective daughter-in-law.

Within two weeks—so much was packed into the first two weeks, Giwa had written to Ita's mother in Calabar, at Florence's insistence, asking her permission for the traditional engagement. Ms. Bassey immediately consented. She was very pleased that her daughter was going to marry a journalist.

Before the engagement, which took place only three weeks after they met, Ita took Giwa's mother home to her own mother in Calabar. Elekia fell in love with Calabar and Ms. Bassey. In spite of language problems—Giwa's mother spoke Yoruba, Ita's mother, English and Efik—the two women hit it off perfectly. So perfectly, in fact, that Ita left Elekia behind in Calabar and came back to Lagos alone. On the day of the engagement, Ita's mother took to Giwa immediately. The ceremony went off without a hitch. When the visiting party left for Lagos, Giwa's mother stayed behind until the wedding in early April.

Preparations for the wedding went into high gear. Giwa did not have to do much, because Ita had everything worked out. He merely went round informing his friends and colleagues. Abiola, his employer, backed him. So did Aboaba and his other colleagues at the *Sunday Concord*. His friends were a little uncomfortable. Some of them thought the thing had no chance of success from day one. But once he had made up his mind, they went along with him.

Giwa also took care to inform Ann his estranged wife back in New York, who apparently had given him a carte blanche, to do whatever he pleased with his life. He also told Stella Ogunseitan, Billy's mother. She had a mind to be indifferent, but her friends advised against it, saying it was a sign of the respect that the father of her son had for her. She therefore sent Giwa good wishes for a happy and successful marriage.

Ita told her friends as well, about her wedding plans and, in particular, about her fiance. Some of them thought it would not work because they knew the kind of life she was used to. How would she

cope with living with a salary-earning journalist? She replied that it would work. . . well, she would make it work. All she needed was their help. Her fiance had a lot of potential that needed to be tapped. All he needed was a little push.

The wedding was a big affair and attended by most of his colleagues at the *Concord* (only Lewis Obi was left behind to produce the Sunday paper), Giwa's friends, and quite a few political heavyweights, including Abiola. It was highly successful, although Giwa still managed to annoy his new wife on their wedding day. On seeing Amma Ogan, he embraced and kissed her—in full view of Florence. The bride frowned, but quickly dismissed it. She would not allow anything to spoil her big day. Both families were pleased.

With the wedding behind them, Giwa and his new spouse came back to Lagos. On the basis of comfort and some level of luxury, Florence's house seemed the logical place for them to live. But this could not be done. Giwa was determined to be in the pilot's seat despite the considerable difference—to his disadvantage—in their levels of income. Giwa decided they should move into his own house. Florence was in agreement. Besides, she did not want her husband to be accused of opportunism.

What she did was to embark on a refurbishing and redecorating job in 11, Adolphus Davies Street, Ikeja, Giwa's official residence. She was determined to make the place more comfortable and, in her view, more presentable.

In the early days of the marriage, Giwa had a brief embarrassing diversion. Agbabiaka informed him that she was pregnant. Giwa reacted angrily and demanded that the pregnancy be terminated. Agbabiaka was horrified. She simply refused. In her family, she said, no one ever did that. On September 15, she gave birth to a baby girl. The baby's father was absent at the naming ceremony; the Agbabiakas named her Olufunmilayo Giwa. When Giwa eventually showed up, he was accompanied by Ekpu. He needed to face the Agbabiaka family with somebody at his side. Giwa's wife did not know about the incident until it no longer mattered.

The newly-weds settled down rather quickly. They set about getting to know each other, in a sense, for the first time. Giwa's main worry was how he would satisfy his wife's extremely high tastes—certainly too high, for his income. He also worried about the kind of people

Florence associated with—high ranking army officers, senators, secretaries to government and an unending list of other rich and influential big business barons. The question, for him, was how to be the husband, not just a figure head.

On the other hand, Florence had her worries too. She was used to very generous assistance from her friends for her business. She enjoyed a lot of protection and she found it easy to get most things she wanted. Now she had to get accustomed to the fact of being a wife; and more than that, being a journalist's wife. Early into the marriage, Florence soon found that her husband did not have the kind of power she needed to get along. She therefore resolved to juggle the situation carefully: she would try to be a good wife and, at the same time, keep her friends. She convinced herself that the two were not mutually exclusive. What she would do was try to push him along—with a little help from her friends. Afterall, what were friends for?

Florence set about achieving her goals with an enviable resoluteness. Within a month of their marriage, she suggested to Giwa that they host a luncheon in their Ikeja home, to which she would invite many of her big friends. The objective was for him to get to meet the powerful elite of the Shagari government on his own turf. Giwa agreed. The party, held in May 1981, was attended by all the big shots—from ministers to senators. It was a roaring success. It was also, in a way, the political circumcision of Dele Giwa. It was also the beginning of a shift in his studied aloofness, professionally and personally, in relating to politicians. As the months rolled by, this began to be reflected more and more in the character of the *Sunday Concord*, and especially in Giwa's writing.

Florence did not particularly enjoy her unaccustomed role as a wife. Her business office was located about thirty kilometres away in Ghana House on Lagos Island. Being an ambitious, strong-willed person—like her husband—she would not do anything to jeopardise her business, which was why the long distance she had to travel daily to work, plus the fact that she had to get back home early enough to play wife, sometimes made her irritable.

Even then, she threw herself into blending this dual responsibility—to herself and her husband—with considerable determination. She was a very good cook, a fact that Giwa admired, and tried to please

her husband as much as possible. On one occasion she actually travelled to the North to buy her husband's favourite fresh fish in order to satisfy his rather peculiar palate.

Giwa also struggled hard to play husband. Not satisfied with just driving about in his wife's Mercedes Benz, he took a loan to buy a Honda Prelude. In addition to his official car, there were now two cars at his personal disposal. The Volkswagen he bought at the *Times,* he gave to his friend, Tunde Thomas, who by then had finally returned home from America.

A sentimental person, and to a surprising degree conservative in affairs of the home, he insisted that his wife, and not the househelp, prepare his meals and brew his morning coffee, which he then enjoyed taking in bed. In the morning, he also had the habit of filling the house with music. Florence often complained about this; also, she began to regard Giwa's insistence on her personally brewing the morning coffee as a needless show of male superiority.

Such minor things, of course, only became ammunition, or justification, for the strains that developed early in the marriage. Florence was a difficult person, and rather reticent, perhaps even secretive, in contrast to her husband. She found Giwa's openness totally obectionable, and never quite came to terms with his ability to make friends— and confide in such friends, trust them implicity — in five minutes flat. She also thought his bluntness was foolhardy: if he had a grudge against someone, he made sure the person knew.

Florence also began to nag her husband increasingly about his dependency on Abiola, that even the house they lived in belonged to his employer, who could decide to throw them out at a whim. She longed for the security of her own home. Dele, however, could not be bothered with such misgivings. He did not fear for his future financial success, although it was apparent to outsiders that Florence was a difficult woman to satisfy. One day he told Florence that he was going to take a car loan from Concord to buy her a Honda Prelude as a present. His wife's reaction stunned him. She said she had already ordered one from the U.S. Giwa said she had to withdraw her money because he wanted to buy her a car, and that in any case, she ought not to have ordered a car without letting him know. Florence replied, "you can't use Abiola's money to buy me a car." That terribly deflated his ego. Their relationship was further strained as a result.

There were all kinds of problems that constantly put him under pressure, because they were a reminder of his wife's financial superiority. She did not make it easy for him. During the Miss Nigeria beauty contest in 1981, Florence was made the chairperson. She had donated a Volkswagen Passat as prize for the runner-up. When her donation was being announced in the packed hall, Florence was introduced as Mrs Giwa. Right there, she objected strongly, and asked the announcer to reintroduce her as "Mrs Florence Ita-Giwa, managing director of Flobett (Nig.) Ltd."

Giwa was very angry and terribly upset. On their way home that night, an argument ensued. Giwa was boiling. "Even if you donate a Rolls Royce or an aeroplane, you are my wife," he exploded. "You have to be addressed as Mrs Giwa." Florence stubbornly refused to shed her maiden name. She pointedly told Giwa that he had not married a girl fresh from the university who was unknown. With all modesty, she said, she had made her name before they met. The argument became rather heated and barbs were tossed with abandon. Giwa angrily parked (by that time they had got to Ikorodu Road) to sort out the matter once and for all. He would not accept a situation like that, he insisted. At which point Florence unveiled her final ace. "I did not use the salary that Concord pays you to donate this car," she said evenly, gazing defiantly at her husband. Giwa's pride was mortally injured. The tension between them could be cut with a knife. Not a word was exchanged on the way home, nor for the next few days.

That incident gulped a large amount of the oil they needed to run the engine of their marriage which, at full rev, could only subsequently, operate in fits and starts. Giwa's confidence in the marriage was gradually eroded. Another incident, a few days later, only worsened the situation. A mutual friend was hosting a party. Ekpu came over to the couple so that they could go together. Ekpu found Giwa in the living room, ready to go. Florence was yet to come out. When she did, she wore on a left finger, instead of her wedding band, a gold ring with a crown of diamonds. Giwa had not seen the ring before. He asked her to remove it and wear the wedding band. Florence refused. Giwa was angry. His wife was unperturbed, even though they were running late. Ekpu appealed to Florence, in Efik, their mother tongue, to respect her husband's wish. She was adamant. If the marriage was going to break up because of the ring, so be it.

She subsequently got into her car and drove off. Giwa did not wish to go to the party any longer. Ekpu succeeded in convincing him otherwise; since the hostess was a mutual friend, it did not matter if he did not come with his wife. Both of them spent only about two hours at the party and left. They were supposed to travel out of town the next day, so Giwa took a bag from home and went home with Ekpu, from whose place they both took off early the following morning.

What really made life miserable for Giwa at this period was that he was caught between his home and the office. Abiola had gotten used to the fact that he now was a publisher, and had begun to enjoy it. He began to interfere more directly with the running of the *Concord.* After sometimes bruising battles to hold off his publisher and preserve the independence of the *Sunday Concord,* Giwa came home thoroughly exhausted. He complained about it to Florence, whose standard response was, "If you cannot stomach it, honey, get out of the place." She never hid her aversion to her husband being somebody's employee. Giwa was faced with a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea.

But by far the most tormenting aspect of the marriage for Giwa was Florence's relationship with her powerful friends. The VIP's in Shagari's government called her up at home frequently. Giwa's ears were filled with all sorts of unpalatable stories — whispers, gossip, innuendos — so much so that he sought to bar his wife from taking such calls. Whenever he challenged her relationship with these men, Florence explained that they were her friends even before they met, and that she could not stop seeing her "friends" simply because she was married. Giwa was not convinced by her explanations. He particularly suspected that her relationship with a high ranking army officer was more than ordinary, and that he, Dele Giwa, was being sentenced into cuckoldry. In her office in Ghana House, Florence had a photograph of a very close friend prominently displayed. Giwa asked her to remove it. As usual, she refused. For all his suspicions, of course, Giwa never had a shred of evidence. He began to consider the possibility that his second marriage in seven years might have irredeemably failed.

By the last quarter of 1981, less than six months after their whirlwind courtship and wedding, Giwa had accepted the possibility as a fact. Florence, for her part, made up her mind to sacrifice her

marriage for her business. She stopped cooking, spent less time in the house, more hours on business-related activities, and abandoned virtually all marital responsibilities. She travelled out of Lagos more frequently, as Giwa himself did, and they sometimes met at the airport —one coming in, the other going out. Giwa dispensed with all sentiments about trying to patch up a balloon that kept leaking as soon as a puncture was fixed.

He became miserable again. To lighten the burden, he opened his heart to his friends—especially Macebuh, who was in a dilemma because of his relationship with both Giwa and Florence. One day Tunde Thomas visited Giwa in the office. As soon as he welcomed his friend, Giwa flopped into his seat and regarded Thomas, in silence, for a few seconds. Thomas was still on his feet.

"Tunde, sit down," he said. "I have a problem," he continued, not permitting Thomas to interfere with his train of thought. "How would you feel if, in the middle of the night, a man calls your wife and suddenly she jumps up and off she goes? How would you feel?"

Thomas was silent. He had never been happy about the marriage from the beginning, had even tried to, but could not discourage Giwa from going ahead with his high-velocity affair with Florence. At length, he said simply: "Look at the problem critically. If you are not happy with marriage, get out of it." By November, all the marriage needed to topple over was a slight tip.

That tip came in December. As Christmas approached, Florence told her husband she would like to spend the holidays out of Lagos. She said she did not like being in Lagos during Christmas, and suggested that they go to Ugbekpe-Ekperi. That was perhaps intended as a joke, because she knew as well as Giwa did, that there was nowhere for them to stay in the village. Giwa said no, he was not interested, thank you. Florence said in that case, both of them should go to her own home in Calabar. Given the altogether unwholesome relationship between them by now, Florence appeared to know that his reply would be, again, no, thank you, which it was. Florence said, well, she was going home. Her husband said, well, she could do whatever she jolly well pleased. She packed her things and left for Calabar in a huff. He gathered himself together and said bloody hell.

As soon as Florence left, Giwa told his friends that, as far as he was concerned, the marriage had come to an end. He also said a few

uncomplimentary things about his wife, a kind of much-needed outlet for his pent-up emotions of the last few months. When Florence came back in January 1982—she had been away not only for Christmas, but the New Year holiday as well. She heard, as she was probably meant to, all that Giwa had said about her. She confronted him. "It seems we can't keep our problems to ourselves in this house," she said icily.

"So it seems," he replied, equally frostily.

"I don't see any reason for my staying here anymore," she said.

"You are free to go," he said.

"Fine." That night, they slept in separate rooms.

The following morning, Florence Ita carefully packed all her belongings from 11, Adolphus Davies, Ikeja and headed back to Adeniran Ogunsanya, Surulere and Giwa went back to work.

9. Breaking Out

THE relationship between Giwa and his publisher, M.K.O. Abiola was certainly unique and one which thrived on a continual argument of "what was fit to print." Abiola, not unexpectedly, believed that since he set up *Concord* "with my own money," (as he never tired to remind anyone who would listen), anything he wanted published should not be challenged.

Such materials were, in the main, his numerous speeches at various development projects, (a vocation that earned him the nickname of 'Father Christmas'). Few politicians can resist the temptation of seeing their names and faces splashed across the pages of the dailies and, Abiola loved it more than most. And being a publisher, he expected it as a right. He did not think that it was too much to ask.

Giwa had other ideas. He believed his job as editor was simply to produce the best newspaper possible, and that it could not be done if he covered his lead page with M.K.O.'s molar-to-molar grins all the time.

He did defer to his boss on several occasions. But most of the time, Abiola had to fight for every inch, a situation that never ceased to puzzle him. Giwa was particularly averse to anybody telling him what to do. To him, most issues were simply a matter of black and white—and he certainly knew far more than his publisher the business of journalism. He therefore could not understand why Abiola would want to tell him what to do.

Sometimes, M.K.O. would muse, in frustration, that journalists must be the only people you paid who did not want to take

instructions. He was certainly not used to being contradicted by his employees. In ITT Nigeria, the chief's word was law. Not so in *Concord*.

This difference in perception often led to heated arguments and threats to either fire or to resign, depending on who made the threat. Cole, Giwa's former boss at the *Times*, was used by both men as a sounding board. Abiola called Cole once in a while to complain about Giwa, and vice-versa. Cole soon realised that both men never really meant, deeply, what they said, and, accordingly, he stopped paying serious attention to what he came to understand as a quarrel between friends.

Such quarrels never lasted more than a few days, after which one of them would pick up the phone and inquire about something not particularly relevant or important, whereby the other would pick up the cue and the disagreement forgotten. It was this kind of up-the-hill, down-the-valley relationship that Florence Ita could not understand. How could someone be either angry or depressed today, and tomorrow be the best of friends with his adversary?

That was the nature of the Giwa-Abiola show. Giwa was certainly M.K.O.'s main man in the *Concord*. Abiola loved his editor like a brother. He once told Giwa, by way of proverb (a manner of speech that he loved) that "you can choose a friend, but not a brother." He said if that were possible, he would have chosen Giwa as a brother. There was no doubt that he meant it.

He called Giwa on the phone almost everyday. He was his favourite conversation companion. He also took special interest in Giwa's children, especially the two boys in New York. He visited them, as they visited him, whenever they were in Lagos on holidays. And if Giwa's mother came to Lagos to spend a few days, Abiola never failed to stop by to say 'hello' in the way for which he was famous.

Each of them probably saw a reflection of himself in the other. They were both blunt, self-confident, friendly and slightly unconventional. Neither of them were afraid of a fight. Abiola, apart from that, loved the fact that he had a dashing, competent young editor working for him.

This special relationship was well known by everybody in the *Concord*. For a strong, assertive person to have that additional

advantage, it was no surprise, then, that few people tried to cross Giwa's path in the company. It rubbed down on his Sunday staff, who were enviously referred to as "Giwa's children." Giwa fiercely defended the interests of his staff. They could not be harrassed like others. Once Giwa approved a particular amount of money for an official assignment for his staff, nobody in the accounts department dared contradict him. Moreover, he frequently sidetracked the in-house bureaucracy to hire his own staff, fixed their pay and sent it to the accountant to act upon. That was the manner in which he hired May Ellen Ezekiel in 1982 for the paper's society page.

At the same time Giwa was on the ascendancy, fierce domestic squabbles in the Abiola household crippled the former Doyin Aboaba, now Mrs Abiola. In April 1982, she was removed as editor of *National Concord* and pushed upstairs as little more than a figure-head editor-in-chief. Mohammed, her deputy, became the new editor. Duro Onabule, a former staff of *Headlines,* a *Times* publication, and who was on the features' desk in the *Concord,* became Mohammed's deputy.

It was only natural, perhaps, that the new editor-in-chief should be jealous of her husband's special relationship with Giwa. It was a very unusual situation in which she found herself. She sometimes called the *Sunday Concord* editor "Abiola's wife," with a slight trace of envy. Before the end of the year, she was to go on exile in the form of a several-month prolonged leave, on M.K.O.'s orders.

By this time, Giwa had begun to step into the political arena, a departure from the first eighteen months he spent as editor. This was largely influenced by his marriage to Florence. It was through her that he made the acquaintance of many of the 'heavyweights' of the Shagari period.

On December 7, 1981, he spent seventeen hours with President Shehu Shagari at the State House. The purpose was to interview the president informally, observe him at work and at home, have dinner with him and his family, and then write his impressions. He ran a series of uncritical, almost patronising articles on the encounter. This earned him severe partisan roasting, but he seemed to have enjoyed his first major close encounter with power.

The *Concord Forum,* set up in 1982, also provided a platform for meeting powerful politicians, and invariably writing about them. The

Forum was an interview programme in which a special guest, usually a high office holder or aspirant, was invited to the *Concord* premises for a question and answer session with the editors.

During this period, he did a series of political articles; he interviewed the key players and wrote about them. In the course of this, he became acquainted with Bello Maitama Yusuf, Shagari's minister of commerce. While getting closer to politicians, Giwa was also wary of compromising his position. As a journalist who sometimes could use strong language in critisizing or laughing at the foibles of politicians, he could not afford to become sentimental.

However, an incident in 1982, forced him to do a lot of soul-searching. He had ordered a Mercedes Benz 200 from Belgium, and Maitama Yusuf as minister of commerce, offered to assist him in clearing the car at the port. Giwa's dilemma was whether or not, by accepting the offer of assistance, he would be compromising himself. He consulted, among others, Amma Ogan, who remained his close friend even after he left the *Times*. He needed only a little encouragement, having more or less convinced himself that such political favours would not compromise him. He accepted Yusuf's help.

As for compromising his position, he took care to prove to himself that his conclusion was correct, in terms of his subsequent dealing with, not only Bello, but all politicians. In 1983, Bello tried very hard to convince Giwa to run a newspaper he wanted to set up. He said the funds were adequate; the newspaper would have the best facilities in the country; he would not interfere; Giwa would run it 100 per cent. Giwa did not even think about it. He rejected the offer on the spot, as he did subsequent attempts to get him to change his mind. His thinking was that, if he left the *Concord*, he would not work for anybody again.

His purchase of a Mercedes Benz, Nigeria's status symbol, reinforced the image he had always carried in his head, since the years of soaking gari in water for lunch, by Esinminrin stream in Ife. He wrote an article or two about the new breed of journalists who wore Gucci shoes and savoured fine champagne and cognac. He definitely did not view himself as a poor journalist.

Giwa never liked the fact that his employer was a card-carrying NPN man, as it made his own job more difficult, since Abiola con-

tinually wanted to use his papers to project himself, and also to pander to the wishes of his political associates. Therefore, in subtle ways, Giwa tried to wean Abiola from politics. The very close relationship they had was an advantage, and Giwa regularly brought to Abiola's notice, any instances, in which the NPN was taking advantage of him. In any case, Giwa did not see what Abiola had to gain by remaining in the party, or in politics for that matter. He persisted doggedly in this line of action. And then, by chance, events played into his hands.

Abiola wanted very much to wrest the chairmanship of the ruling party from Augustus Meredith Adisa Akinloye, (A.M.A). A.M.A., however, was one crafty, wily and experienced schemer. He had a quick mind that helped him to devise extremely complex plots that few people could unravel until its objective was achieved. It was even said that, while discussing with Akinloye, the man, peering expressionlessly from behind his thick bifocals, was not interested in what was being said, but in why it was being said. That way, he kept several steps ahead of the competition.

Abiola, on the other hand, did not care for such circuitous routes to a goal. He preferred to bulldoze his way through with his considerable energy as well as his substantial wealth. The contest, therefore, was similar to a match between a sumo wrestler and a kung-fu expert. Abiola carefully planned his strategy to oust Akinloye in Kano, where the convention was held. Abiola believed that there were delegates sympathetic to him everywhere. Not even bad weather, which necessitated the cancellation of domestic flights to Kano, deterred him. He hired hundreds of cars to transport his supporters distances in excess of one thousand kilometres.

The idea was that a motion of no-confidence would be moved against A.M.A., which would then clear the way for a fresh election of chairman, which, M.K.O. was certain, would be himself. Unknown to Abiola, however, Akinloye had outflanked him. Instead of a no-confidence motion, the contrary happened. Abiola watched his challenge fizzle out, the effervescence stung his unbelieving eyes. Deeply disappointed, he skulked back to Lagos to reassess his political future.

From that point on, Giwa did not need to do much more. From the way Abiola talked, it appeared that his departure from the NPN and

the politics of the Second Republic was only a matter of time. Besides, others close to Abiola, including his immediate family, urged him to quit.

Even then, Giwa was still taken by surprise when around June, 1982, Abiola told him he had written his letter of resignation from the NPN. He produced the letter. Giwa thought it was too good to be true; the man may still change his mind. He therefore took the letter from M.K.O. and asked him to go home and think about it, to see if he would not change his mind. Abiola did not change his mind.

That singular act represented the liberation of the *Concord* newspapers. Overnight, readers witnessed a dramatic turnaround in the character of both the daily and Sunday editions. There was a sudden burst of energy and imagination. It was like removing the top of a pressure cooker when the temperature was above 100 degrees Celsius. The *Concord* group came alive.

A normally boisterous Giwa set his team on fire. He too went to town. The *Sunday Concord* started to publish reports embarrassing to the Shagari government. Abiola himself did not particularly mind. He, in fact seemed to encourage it, and suggested story ideas of his own. Giwa not only wrote articles, freely employing strong language, to attack top functionaries of the Shagari government, including Shehu Musa, secretary to the government, he also fought Abiola's battles for him. He strengthened his staff with the employment of a few more journalists, including Soji Akinrinade, then a deputy editor of *The Punch,* as assistant editor.

The government felt the heat quickly. It waited for an appropriate opportunity to fight back. That opportunity came on October 24, 1982, when Giwa published in the *Sunday Concord* the government White Paper on the report of a commission of inquiry that investigated the destruction by fire of the Republic Building in Lagos. The building housed the Ministry of Defence. The White Paper had not been officially released to the public.

Sunday Adewusi, the inspector general of police, was beside himself with rage. He would deal with those 'subversive elements.' He ordered the immediate search of both Giwa's office and home, and his summary arrest amd detention.

At 5.40 a.m. on Friday October 29, a sharp, insistent ringing of the bell penetrated the several layers of sleep to rouse Giwa out of bed. His initial thought was that armed robbers had made a return journey to his house. The previous year, they had stolen his Honda Prelude. He anxiously moved to the front door, on tip-toe, in order not to disturb his mother who was asleep in the next room. He calculated that if he cooperated, the robbers would not do him physical harm.

"Who are you?" he asked at the door.

"The police," several voices chorused in reply.

He asked to see their identification. The police obliged, pushing in some cards through the window that Giwa opened. When he threw open the door, seven policemen, led by a superintendent, plodded into the living room. Giwa asked them to move noiselessly because he did not want his mother disturbed.

The police told him their mission. They had a warrant to search his office and his house. They would like to start from the office.

Giwa got into the car with them and they headed for the *Concord* premises. There, they confiscated a copy of the White Paper and a copy of the edition in which it was published. Then they went back to his house, accompanied by six other policemen who had waited for the original party at the *Concord*.

When the team returned to Giwa's house, his mother was wide awake and alarmed. She demanded to know the people following her son about. Giwa said there was no problem, they were policemen. The superintendent confirmed it. After a thorough search, nothing incriminating was found. The police, however, took Giwa with them to the headquarters of the Lagos police command.

They asked who made available to him the government White Paper. He said he was protected by law from disclosing his source of information; he would answer no further questions on the matter. They left him to cool his heels in the office. After about eight hours of detention at the police command, Yaya Awosanya, the general manager of Concord Press and Fola Asiru, Abiola's executive assistant, were able to get him out on a ₦4,000 bail. He was asked to report to the police every morning.

When Abiola heard the news, he threw himself into it immediately. That was the kind of situation he enjoyed, like Giwa himself. Abiola contacted Gani Fawehinmi, the brilliant and controversial lawyer who

never shied away from a good fight either. Fawehinmi took charge of the proceedings.

Giwa was supposed to have travelled out to New York at the end of October to see his children, but the police order on him to report daily put that on hold. After a few days, when police slackened the noose, Giwa consulted with Fawehinmi and Abiola, who advised him to proceed on his planned trip.

What they did not know was that they just fell into a police trap; they left themselves open to blackmail. The police knew Giwa had travelled. To embarrass him and the *Concord,* they threatened to declare him a wanted person, a criminal. Abiola, Fawehinmi and Awosanya who signed the bail papers considered their next move. Fawehinmi said he would write the police clarifying the legal position. His tough letter did not impress Awosanya, who wrote an apologetic letter to police, in which he asked for an extension of time to produce Giwa. The heat was turned off.

Abiola was furious when he learnt of Awosanya's action, and so was Fawehinmi. They did not like his approach at all; they preferred a showdown. Abiola accused Awosanya of sabotage and cowardice; that he had disgraced the *Concord Press.* He asked him to resign. In his fury, he did not even wait for Awosanya's letter. He fired him.

When Giwa returned to Lagos, he went over to see Awosanya, whose appointment to the *Concord* he had helped to arrange. Giwa bluntly told Awosanya that he supported the Fawehinmi approach, but that he thought the publisher's action was not commensurate with what he considered to be a mere error of judgement. He expressed his personal regrets over the incident.

So it was, however, that Giwa's first altercation with Adewusi petered out. But it was only the quiet before the storm. A major battle lay ahead.

Giwa spent less than three weeks in New York. Two issues forced him to cut short his vacation. One was the police affair; the other concerned his friend, Ray Ekpu. He had telephoned Ekpu from his New York hotel, only to be told that Ray had been reassigned, rather inexplicably, from his chair as editor of *Sunday Times.* His new assignment, according to the Time's management, was as editor of *Business Times.*

No reasons were given for the action, but it appeared it had to do with an article Ekpu wrote in which he condemned Giwa's arrest. It was an especially bizarre action, because Ekpu's appointment as editor had only recently been confirmed. He already had several letters of commendation from his employers for the improvements he had made in the paper. He thought the action amounted to witch-hunting, and when a reporter interviewed him on the matter he said those who removed him had "a diabolical sense of humour," but that he took it with "philosophical calmness;" he would go to *Business Times*.

The man named to his position, Andy Akporugo, was also Giwa's former colleague on the *Times*. Andy Akporugo's reaction to Ekpu's removal was less than friendly. He said there was no need to make a fuss, and that, in any case, he was not excited because he was taking over from his junior.

Giwa's intense feelings of personal loyalty to his friend were immediately aroused. Once Giwa took someone as a friend his loyalty was unyielding; whether the friend was right or wrong could be settled later.

More than most other people at this stage of his life, Dele Giwa loved Ray Ekpu like a second half. As far as he was concerned, the same blood flowed in their arteries. Therefore, as Ekpu narrated the story of what happened to him, the bile rose slowly in Giwa. He was convinced that Ekpu was being victimized because of him. The battle automatically became his own.

What annoyed him most was Akporugo's 'uncharitable statement.' He decided to deal with that matter first. The very first column he wrote was devoted to a personal attack on Akporugo. Giwa lambasted him as an obscure writer and implied that he might have been under the influence of alcohol when he made his public statement. Anyone would have thought that Giwa was the aggrieved party. The following week, Akporugo replied in kind.

The intensity of Giwa's anger — his article dripped with it — even caught Ekpu unaware. Ekpu eventually, somewhat embarrassed, arranged a settlement of the rift between his friend and his successor.

It was not the first time Giwa openly looked after his friend's interests. Three months earlier, at the Guild of Editors conference in

Minna, Niger State, Ekpu ran for the presidency of the Guild. Giwa was his campaign manager. While his style of campaign may have put-off many prospective supporters, he worked assiduously and enthusiastically. Yakubu Mohammed also lent a helping hand. The conference, however, broke up in recriminations over allegations of political corruption.

Ekpu was prepared to take up his new posting. But his statement to the press angered his employers. He soon had a shouting match with Adagogo-Jaja the managing director of the *Times* and resigned. That was exactly what Giwa wanted.

Prior to Ekpu's resignation, Giwa had discussed his matter with Abiola, who expressed interest in having Ekpu on the staff of *Concord*. Giwa moved fast and submitted a proposal suggesting the creation of an independent editorial board for the *Concord*. Ekpu could be appointed chairman of the board.

Abiola accepted the proposal. Ekpu, however, did not personally negotiate the terms of his employment. He gave his friend the power of attorney. Giwa did not hesitate to argue that all the perquisites of office he enjoyed, including his exact pay, be extended to Ray. Abiola said it was not done; Giwa had been there almost three years before. The "attorney" then suggested that, in that case, Ray could earn ₦500 less than his own annual salary. And that was what Ray Ekpu was offered, and which he accepted, to cross over to *Concord* in December 1982.

Ekpu's arrival further boosted the editorial quality of the *Concord*. His column, which already was popular in the *Times*, was transferred to the *Sunday Concord*. In a move that further illustrated both his loyalty and fierce competitive spirit, Giwa placed Ekpu's column on the same page as his. Ekpu, on his own, is an excellent writer. He has an impressive command of the English language and the unusual ability to maintain discipline in long sentences. Readers probably would be divided right down the line in determining who among the two was the better writer. Giwa knew this, but nonetheless shared his page with his friend.

Ekpu had his own staff on the editorial board. Shortly after resuming duties, he met with Giwa and Mohammed to discuss the areas of both newspapers which the editorial board would handle. Ekpu's board wrote editorials for all the newspapers in the group,

handled the letters' page and edited the opinion columns. In addition to his personal column in *Sunday Concord,* he maintained another, at Mohammed's suggestion, on Thursdays for the daily paper.

The three men became good friends. Abiola was now completely satisfied with the calibre of people running his paper. Doyin also returned from "exile" as editor-in-chief. However, Giwa had grown even bigger while she was away. Everything in *Concord* seemed to revolve around him, including the way Abiola related to all of them. Meanwhile, the *Concord* papers continued to be a source of severe embarrassment for the Shagari government.

Late in January, Giwa obtained copies of correspondence exchanged between Adewusi and Richard Akinjide, the federal attorney general and minister of justice. The correspondence was of great interest to Giwa. Adewusi had written to the attorney general, virtually instructing him — (that was the tone of the letter) — to prosecute Giwa for publishing the report for which he was detained on October 29th, 1982. Akinjide replied that he did not think there were enough grounds to make such a prosecution stand a fair chance of success in court, and that he had told the president so. Adewusi was angry. He took the matter to Shagari and, following more pressure, Akinjide agreed.

Giwa was ecstatic. He published the letters in full in the Sunday Concord. Adewusi was incensed. He ordered the immediate arrest, detention and prosecution of Giwa for 'contravening the official secrets act.' On Tuesday morning, February 1, at 6.45, six policemen arrived at Giwa's door. They went through his home and, later, the office, with a fine-tooth comb, but they found nothing to interest them. Obviously, the police were not happy, to go back to base empty-handed, so they took Giwa with them to Alagbon Close, the force C.I.D. headquarters.

There, plainclothes men requested that he make a statement. He would not, he said, unless he was cautioned. They cautioned him and he then wrote a single sentence on the statement sheet: *I don't have anything to say since anything I say would obviously be used against me.* Further appeals to change his mind bounced off the surrounding walls. He was ordered to be held in detention until the following day, but the following day grew to several.

Meanwhile, Ekpu had received a letter from the police inviting him to an 'interview' with the police. When he discovered that Giwa had been arrested that Tuesday morning, he decided to honour the invitation. On getting to Alagbon Close, Ekpu was, to his utter consternation, placed under arrest. He would never have dreamed that he would soon face capital charges. They took him away for interrogation over an article he wrote on the growing incidence of torching public buildings. He warned, in the article, that the 32-storey headquarters of Nigerian External Telecommuncations on the Lagos Marina might be the next target. The columnist's attempt at crystal ball gazing proved tragically accurate. The article, in fact came out only a day before the Lagos landmark went up in flames. During his interrogation, Ray Ekpu learned that he would be charged with murder, arson and conspiracy. Ekpu could not help laughing out-loud at the ridiculousness of it all.

It was not however, to be a laughing matter. Adewusi ordered that Ekpu, too, be detained. Abiola was anguished. He had been with the two men all day. They told him not to worry, they were fine. Abiola contacted Fawehinmi again. Giwa was told he would appear in court the following day. Ekpu was taken away. When he showed up again, he had been relieved of his shoes: he now walked barefoot. His tie and jacket, as well as belt and trousers, were also taken away, ostensibly to prevent him from commiting suicide. He was taken to the *Kalakuta Republic,* a dungeon in the premises so named by Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, who spent long weeks there in the seventies.

Giwa asked if he could spend the night 'behind the counter' on a bench placed behind the desk sergeant. His accusers said no, since there were two women already in the place. They could not allow Giwa for fear that he might rape them! The police then instructed Giwa to stand behind the door, in full view of the women, to remove his trousers! (The two women were asked to look away). Having been thoroughly searched down to his briefs for 'dangerous implements', Giwa was marched into *Kalakuta Republic.*

Already in the 'Republic' were the top executives of NET, victims of the mass arrests ordered by Adewusi following the NET building fire. Among them was Bayo Olowookere, a former colleague of Giwa at the NBC in Ibadan. When Giwa walked in, all the detainees rose to welcome him. He shook everybody's hands. Olowookere stepped forward to embrace him. They spoke briefly. And then everyone

started asking him questions at the same time. Why was he in detention? What was the mood outside? Giwa explained the situation as he understood it, enjoying the deference accorded to him by the other more bewildered prisoners. He made a mental note of everything — for Giwa every experience was more grist-for-the-mill, and he knew how to make the most of such unpleasant situations.

The walls of the 8 x 8 foot cell, nicknamed the "presidential palace" were covered with graffiti. The only factor that qualified it for the term 'presidential' was the foam mattress, now thoroughly compacted to the thickness of a blanket. This was brought in by Fela and kindly left behind when he regained his freedom. Every morning, at about nine, the inmates awoke from their fitful, mosquitoed sleep to pray. Giwa and Ekpu did not join them. It was at that time when suddenly there was ample space to stretch out comfortably.

Crammed into this cell, with various white-collar detainees, Giwa met a number of unfortunate victims of mass arrest. A university of Lagos student, Gerald Antai, had been herded off into detention with his entire family. His mother was detained at the counter. The father, too, was in the cell with his son. The old man, a diabetic, had put in nearly 34 years in NET. During the mass arrests, the police swooped down on their home and packed everybody away, including his son's two friends from the university, who happened to be visiting at the time. The old man's affliction worsened in the cell. He could not eat. One day, Giwa threatened the police on guard that he would lead all the inmates on revolt if they did not give the diabetic man the necessary medical attention. The man was subsequently taken away for treatment.

Giwa also met Abdul Oroh, a journalism student who had the ill-luck of being at the scene of the NET fire to report the event for his training journal. Police arrested him along with everyone else.

"You are a student of journalism?" Giwa asked the boy.

"Yes, sir," he replied.

"Good, good," Giwa said, holding the boy by the shoulder.

"You can see the hazards of the profession. You are learning journalism the right way. You already face hardship, personal discomfort. So if you are in Vietnam, you'll be able to endure."

Oroh's relations came to visit him in detention. He told them that Giwa was Afemai, like them. They spoke to him in the native tongue. Giwa did not understand, and Oroh became the interpreter. They advised him to visit home more often. Giwa told them he planned to build a bungalow for his mother at the village, and that when the house was completed, he would go home more often, and probably learn the language then. His listeners expressed shock that such a "big man," was only just planning to build a house in the village. He painstakingly explained that he had no money. They were not convinced.

After his eventual release, Giwa, in the company of Ekpu, attended Oroh's graduation ceremony at the Institute of Journalism and posed for photographs with the proud boy. Giwa was also instrumental in getting him a job at *The Guardian,* which had just come on stream. Meanwhile, Abiola mobilised the Nigerian press behind the struggle to free his men. Fawehinmi took charge of the court battles. Doyin Abiola visited them in detention every day. Giwa's staff on the *Sunday Concord* enthusiastically supported their boss. The ladies prepared meals; the men went to both Alagbon and the court daily. After initial setbacks in Justice Fred Anyaegbunam's court, Fawehinmi finally sprung Giwa from detention. Ekpu was to follow a few days later.

Throughout his ordeal, Giwa was in very high spirits. He in fact, seemed to enjoy the whole experience. As he boarded the dreaded Black Maria, in his rolled-up jeans, unshaven face and flying shirt, always smiling, he painted a picture of defiance which was splashed across the front pages of the nation's dailies. He was an instant celebrity. After that, if anybody mentioned Giwa, no brow would crease in non-recognition: Dele Giwa had become a household word.

After his release on bail, the criminal case against him went on and, eventually, failed. But before then, he went to see Fawehinmi in his law chambers. Notwithstanding the criminal matters against him, he would like to take some action against the police. He then brought out pieces of paper on which he had jotted reference cases to back his argument with Fawehinmi. "Leave the legal aspects to us," an amused but impressed Fawehinmi said. "Just tell us what you want to do." "I want you to pursue any aspect of the law that you can find to teach these people a lesson," he said. His line of argument, as usual, began to consume him. Fawehinmi saw the fire of commitment light

up Giwa's eyes. This was his kind of man, he thought. Giwa continued: "Chief, can this case set a precedent? I want a good precedent for this profession."

Fawehinmi assured him that an action, under the constitution, could be taken against the police. Damages could be claimed and, more importantly, the police could be made to tender an apology to Giwa.

When he heard the apology bit, Giwa jumped. "A-ah! They would apologise to me publicly?"

"If we win, yes," said Fawehinmi.

"Oh! That would be a great day for journalism in this country," Giwa roared. "You see, now, egbon, that is the precendent that we need. No foolish police officer would arrogantly lock up journalists again." The crude methods of Adewusi gave Giwa just the opportunity he wanted to grab more headlines in the cause of freedom of the press: "Dele Giwa Vs Government." the newspapers would scream. Giwa loved it.

In the weeks following their release, Giwa and Ekpu wrote a series of articles on their experiences in detention. Abiola thoroughly enjoyed the whole affair, too. Giwa, Ekpu and Mohammed moved closer still. The after glow of their experience was enduring. Giwa, in fact, became something of a superpower in *Concord.* No one dared cross his path. He was the centre of attention. The *Concord* newspapers, by then, had become credible. Giwa and Ekpu and Mohammed become the subject of envy. Some of their professional colleagues made snide remarks about them. The three of them cruised around in their Mercedes cars. Writing in the *New Nigerian* gossip column, Dan Agbese referred to the three as "Benzy journalists."

Giwa himself launched a personal attack of his own against Adewusi. He sank his teeth into Adewusi's hide and would not let go. His language even became somewhat vitriolic. He regularly referred to Adewusi as "an ill-informed police officer," a "fiend" who was "bad news for democracy and good government," and who would "achieve by Gestapo tactics" what he could not by due process of law. The personal abuse was ceaseless. Even Adewusi's facial marks did not escape his mention.

But it was not only the inspector general of police, who clearly intended to put an end to Giwa's career in journalism, who was the subject of his attack. Many high-ranking officials of the Shagari government came under the hammer, especially Shehu Musa, who, Giwa found out, had conspired with Adewusi to make his life uncomfortable. Increasingly, he made scathing remarks about the president himself.

Doyin Abiola, of course did not like the turn of events. She and Giwa began to have long arguments, mostly to no avail. Her position was understandable. Musa was her friend, and had infact helped her get the *Concord* job in the first place. Secondly, the high-rising status of Giwa along with Ray Ekpu and Yakubu Mohammed was becoming untenable to her. In a situation where she was supposed to be the leader of the team, she could not, "in all sincerity," accept what was going on. She had, to all intents and purposes, been relegated to the back benches. When Giwa and Ekpu came out of detention, the fanfare became too much for her. Her authority was virtually bled to death. Before the end of the year, she was again to leave *Concord,* this time for almost a year, on maternity leave. That left Giwa in charge, unchallenged and largely unchallengeable.

Cole, the man responsible for Giwa's return to his home country, was also uncomfortable with the swing in Giwa's writing. He asked him to come over.

"Dele," Cole began, "you have left journalism now. You are using your paper to go after somebody. . ."

"But the man is evil. . ."

"It doesn't matter what the man has done," Cole continued. "That the man did something to upset you is no justification for chasing him. This is now a vendetta."

Giwa protested. "You don't understand, Dr. Cole. This man is sinister, wicked. He misuses his office to terrorize people, against the laws. . ."

Cole cut in: "I don't care whether he was a murderer. You cannot pursue him, you can't use your paper in that way."

Giwa argued with his former boss. He was not convinced that Adewusi did not deserve all that he had written about him, and more.

But he cooled off somewhat, mostly in deference to Cole, for whom he had a lot of respect. His domineering personality however, rose to the forefront at the *Concord.* Prouder than ever, wherever he was, every other person had to take second place. The staff held him in awe. Where the staff used to call him by his first name, he was now Mr Giwa, or Editor. His stature, in others' eyes as well as his own, demanded no less. It was around this time he met Miss Funmi Olaniyan.

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The first time they actually set eyes on each other was outside Ray Ekpu's office, shortly before Giwa's second encounter with Adewusi. Funmi had just completed a post graduate programme in Mass Communication at the University of Lagos. She was in the same class with Ray. When she wanted a job, she consulted Ray, who promised to arrange something for her at the *Concord.* Dele breezed through Ekpu's out office, and then turned back to look at the serious looking young lady who was obviously waiting to see Ekpu.

"Hello, madam," he said in greeting.

"Em. . . er. . . hello, sir," she replied. Giwa went in.

Ray's secretary turned to her. "Don't you know who that is?" she asked, almost incredulous.

"Not at all," Funmi replied.

"Ah, that is Dele Giwa," she said, with the air of someone who had just disclosed a state secret. Funmi thought, big deal. She then vaguely remembered that the man had been in the papers a few months before, something to do with his being detained briefly by police. An occupational hazard, she thought, and wondered why the secretary should think she would be impressed.

When Giwa got inside, he mentioned the young lady he just saw in passing. "Who is that outside your office?"

"Oh, just somebody I know looking for a job," Ray answered.

"Mmm, quite a stern-looking fellow," Giwa said, dismissing her from his mind.

Funmi subsequently got a job with *Business Concord,* after Ray spoke to Stanley Egbochukwu, the editor and Giwa began to see her more often around the office. They began by exchanging casual greetings. Giwa invited her over to his own office several times, but she declined these invitations, until he cornered her. "Why have you been running from me?"

"Well, I'm not in the habit of visiting married men in their offices," she said defensively.

"Who told you I am a married man? I am single."

Funmi contemplated the veracity of that statement, but finally agreed to give him her telephone number. She liked Dele, she was, however, understandably cautious, knowing his reputation with women. Giwa also liked Funmi, but with two bad marriages behind him, he did not want to overplay his hand. Giwa soon went to Ekpu for advice. He liked the girl, he said. Ekpu said if Giwa was looking for somebody to marry, she might not be a bad idea. All the time they were on campus together, she always appeared level-headed and well-behaved. He did not hear any funny stories about her. Giwa was encouraged.

One day in May 1983, he told Funmi that he had asked his secretary to book a table for the two at the Bacchus Restaurant on Awolowo Road, Ikoyi. It was their first date. Relaxed in the company of not only a professional colleague but a good friend, Giwa opened the pages of his life to Funmi: his family, his youth, his two previous marriages, his children. It was a very sentimental evening; the atmosphere was right.

Not one to waste time, the subject of marriage was already on Giwa's agenda. There was no formal proposition. It was rather, a foregone conclusion, which found expression in their daily conversation — "when we get married. . ." He took her round to meet his friends. Although he constantly said he did not want to rush into anything, going slow was not his style either. Funmi on her own part was not anxious to marry, but the fact was, that the indomitable Giwa was completely in charge of the show. He laid down all the plans, and they were so meticulous and reasonable that Funmi found herself agreeing to most of the things he suggested.

The only bone of contention was Giwa's yet to be concluded divorce from Florence. Funmi insisted that Giwa divorce Florence before they announced their engagement. Giwa had planned that they travel to Dakar in December 1983 for a private engagement. Funmi balked. Giwa countered with a hurt countenance. He knew she was not serious about marrying him. If so, why was she putting a spanner in the works? Funmi reluctantly agreed, on the condition that the marriage proper would not take place without a formal divorce.

And so, in December, the two of them flew to Dakar. It was a very private ceremony—just the two of them. Giwa had bought a ring. He began by calling on both their fathers in heaven—Funmi's father died in 1982—to witness the solemn vows. They returned to Lagos to a gathering storm.

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The portents were already visible since mid-'83. Ironically, the Adewusi crisis, which both Abiola and Giwa enjoyed, could be regarded as the secondary reason for their eventual split. Coming out of detention, and the attendant hero status that Giwa had now acquired, represented his coming into his own.

Giwa no longer felt himself under the shadow of Abiola. He began to regard himself more definitively as a distinct personality that could be recognised, as was now the case, without reference to Abiola, his employer. Abiola also was beginning to notice this, a situation which led to a subtle competition.

A clever manifestation of this was Abiola's appointment of Mrs Dupe Ajose, the *Concord* chief accountant, as chairman of the management committee of the company, following Doyin's second exit. This was in mid-1983. Giwa, probably as M.K.O. expected, was against the move, which he saw as a challenge to his position, as well as that of his colleagues atop the editorial ladder. In this he had the support of Ekpu and Mohammed.

Abiola invited the three of them for a discussion. They told him that it was not right to appoint an accountant who would not understand the peculiar nature of a media house and the sometimes break-neck urgency required to get things moving. They could not reach an agreement, and the publisher in any case was not about to change his mind.

He summoned an inaugural meeting of the management committee The meeting was disrupted by the troublesome trio. They refused to participate. They insisted that it was better to get a media person, maybe M.C.K. Ajuluchukwu, to take up appointment as genera manager. Doyin's departure had created a vacuum. Abiola was very angry. "Can't I appoint anybody I like in my company?" he fumed. "You people are insulting me."

The conflict was not resolved until, tragically, Mrs Ajose died on August 2, 1983 from an illness. Abiola eventually hired Ajuluchukwu, but he held the debacle against them.

Giwa's relationship with Abiola continued to sour. He was regarded by his boss as the evil influence on Ekpu and Mohammed. For the rest of the year, they quarelled more frequently.

This tender co-existence was further bruised by a minor totally innocent publication in the *Sunday Concord* at the end of December of that year. For the society page, May Ellen Ezekiel conducted a poll of the paper's readers on the 10 best-dressed Nigerian men and women. On the men's list, Jim Nwobodo, (governor of Anambra State), was placed first. Giwa was rated, at number four, above M.K.O. who placed fifth. The lady then produced, with the help of Soji Akinrinade, the newspaper's own list, from which was excluded any person associated with *Concord.* Both lists were published side by side.

The publication infuriated Abiola, who thought Giwa stage-managed the poll to ridicule him. It also served as an illustration of how he came to perceive the rivalry bubbling below the surface between them. Giwa infact had no knowledge of the poll, as the author confessed. At a gathering of *Concord,* Abiola rather bitterly remarked (with an appropriate Yoruba proverb), that he had "never seen where a 'slave' dressed better than the 'master'."

During this same period, the tottering Shagari government collapsed, with a slight shove from the military. Buhari took over the reins of power, and Abiola had rightly concluded that he was not likely to get on well with the new military government. His subsequent encounters with that regime, especially with the seizure of newsprint worth millions of naira which belonged to the *Concord* group, proved that his assessment was correct.

As was usual in such situations, Abiola complained loudly about the government to his editors—a rather undisguised way of telling them he did not like the regime, and , by association, they should not like it too. He expected them to start criticising the government in earnest.

Giwa and his two colleagues ignored him, thinking it was too early to embark on such a course of action. At the same time, the Buhari government sent feelers to Giwa—through a retired permanent secretary—to sound him out on the possibility of his taking an appointment with the new government. Giwa was non-commital until he discussed with Ekpu, who advised strongly against it. Giwa abandoned the idea.

Abiola also was contacted on the possibility of Giwa serving the government. Without discussing with Giwa, Abiola told the emissary that Giwa was not interested at all. Afterwards, he mentioned it in passing. Giwa, although he had turned down the overtures, was annoyed that Abiola was taking his decisions for him, and he said so. Abiola defended his action by saying that Giwa and his colleagues, along with himself, had a lot yet to do together in *Concord*. "We do not want any distraction," he said. The incident was an additional pull on the already taut string binding them. It also served as a pointer to Abiola that his employee was getting a bit too *big*.

In the first major interview granted the local press, the new head of state, Muhammadu Buhari gave the likely direction of his government to the *Concord* editors. The interview panel, which grilled Buhari for an hour, comprised Giwa, Ekpu and Mohammed. It was during the interview that Buhari made his oft-quoted speech that he would tamper with the freedom of the press.

Excerpts from the interview were run for seven days, the last being in form of a supplement in the *Sunday Concord*. While writing the stories, the three of them took an I.O.U. of ₦1,100 to stay for two days at the New World hotel in Ikeja. Their reason was that it protected them against distractions in the office or at home. The series for the first time launched *National Concord* above the 400,000 circulation mark, while the Sunday edition went up to 450,000. This matter of taking an I.O.U. however, resurfaced in an anonymous petition a few weeks later.

Before then, there was a six-page report on the operations of the Concord group which Abiola sent to the three of them. The paper catalogued how there were too many personal columns in the newspapers; the papers were doing badly (in fact they were at their peak); the quality of the editing was low. The report was flavoured with communication theories, content analysis and such stuff.

The three men at which the paper was directed concluded that it was written by Doyin from abroad, and was not really Abiola's idea. They thought she was fighting back.

Giwa went to Mohammed. He said to him: "Yakubu, can you guess who wrote this memo?"

"This is not M.K.O.," Yakubu answered, "this is his wife."

"Yes," Giwa went on. "I know you are a bright guy. This is Doyin's handiwork—all these theories about mass communication." Ekpu was of the same opinion.

When Abiola called them to discuss the memo, they not only told him that the assumptions were inaccurate, but that his wife was the author. "Are you suggesting that I cannot write?" Abiola snapped.

"Giwa replied: "No. I know you can write better than this!"

Abiola said in that case, Giwa was insulting his wife and verbally fired him. But he did not carry this out.

In protest, they stopped writing their columns. They raised the memo with Ajuluchukwu and voiced their objections. Ajuluchukwu promised to discuss the issue with Abiola.

The overpowering effluvium that enveloped the *Concord* at this time, with all kinds of loyalty cells dotting the place, produced an anonymous petition against the three men. The faceless petitioner alleged that they were ruining the company and had misappropriated funds. The ₦1,100 hotel bill was mentioned.

It was the kind of impetus that Abiola needed. He queried the three men on the allegations and, in addition, instructed the new chief accountant,Mr Akinwande, to probe them. Nothing incriminating was found against them. Abiola was reported to have subsequently remarked to Akinwande that he trusted them, but merely wanted to remind them who was the boss.

By then, it had become clear that the incessant bickering with Abiola would eventually lead to the exit from Concord of the three

friends. Giwa in particular was destined for a final show-down with his erstwhile friend and employer.

That show-down came on February 12, 1984. Two weeks earlier, the *Sunday Concord* ran the first of a two-part interview with Tunji Braithwaite, chairman of the defunct Nigeria Advance Party, NAP. In the interview, Braithwaite claimed that he won the 1983 presidential election, even though Shagari was declared winner. Abiola said that was nonsense, and he instructed that Giwa should not run the second part of the interview. He did not want, he said, such preposterous claims published in his paper. Who was Braithwaite, anyway?

The following week, Giwa ignored, in the main, Abiola's directive. On the Friday, which was the paper's production day, he took ill and could not report to work. he therefore called his deputy Adedipe, from home to tell him to use the story, not as a lead, but as a back-up to the main story. Adedipe obliged.

Abiola saw this as a direct challenge to his authority. On the night of Friday, February 9, five days after the paper came out, he summoned Giwa to his house and told him he was fired. He wanted his resignation on his desk by Monday morning. Giwa went back home and told Ekpu, who advised him against resigning. "Let the man fire you," Ekpu said.

The same night, Giwa got a call from Mohammed who was away in New York. "Oh, you are the son of your father," Giwa said to Mohammed exuberantly, meaning he had been trying to reach him.

"What has happened?" Mohammed asked.

"I just spoke to M.K.O. about 10 minutes ago," Giwa said. "He says I'm fired."

"What?"

"He said if I did not resign by Monday, I should consider myself fired."

Like Ekpu, Mohammed also asked him not to resign and thereby give Abiola the responsibility of actually firing him, thinking Abiola would back down. Mohammed told Giwa he would be in London the following day, and that he would call again from there. In the New York hotel room with Yakubu Mohammed, was Mohammed Haruna, the general manager of the *New Nigerian* newspapers.

Giwa waited. On Monday, he did not go to the office. Likewise, Abiola did not arrive in the Concord offices until about 7 p.m. When he got there, he dictated a letter to his secretary. A copy of it was sent to Ekpu for his information.

Ekpu was still in his office at 7.30 p.m. when he got the copy of a letter addressed to Dele Giwa informing him of his 'reassignment to the editorial board,' of which Ekpu was the chairman. Abiola obviously had decided not to go ahead with his original plan.

Reading through the letter, Ekpu was perplexed. His dark, sombre face creased into a frown. At that point, Abiola barged in, straight-faced.

"Ah, chief," Ekpu said, "what is the meaning of this?" He held the letter forward in his left hand, the right hand deep in his trouser pocket.

"Well, that's it," Abiola said.

"Ekpu raised the points he made and tried to debunk all of them. Abiola expressed his anger about the Braithwaite story, the management committee incident. His believed that Giwa needed to have his wings clipped, so there would be peace in the place.

Ekpu was not convinced. He tried to dismiss by force of argument, all the points raised by Abiola. Abiola did not expect Ekpu to remain adamant. When he saw he was getting nowhere, he took another line of attack and accused Ekpu of being disrespectful for putting his hand in his pocket while talking to him. He yanked the offending hand out of Ekpu's pocket and stormed out of the room.

Giwa got his letter the following day. The atmosphere in the *Concord* was tense. In the evening, his staff and other *Concord* employees trooped to his house. Some of them suggested they could go and talk to Abiola to change his mind. Giwa was never one to beg for favours. He asked his deputy, Adedipe, to continue with the work on his paper of four years; it was not a problem that concerned him. He also said he did not want the standard of the paper to fall.

Giwa reported for work at the editorial board, under his friend, Ekpu. From that point on, his mind was no longer on the *Concord*. He did not do much work—he wrote two or three editorials in the next

five months—but devoted much of his time to laying the groundwork for the next phase of his dramatic career.

While on the editorial board, Giwa went into his former office thrice to talk to his successor, Adedipe. Despite all the bravado, Giwa loved the office of editor of *Sunday Concord*. Afterall, he was the first and sole occupier of that position for four full years. It was difficult to get used to a situation in which he no longer ran a paper.

On the third and final time he entered the office—long before his final departure from the Concord—Giwa walked in slowly. He saluted Adedipe, who got up to welcome him. Giwa remained standing. So did Adedipe. He swept the room with a gaze—one could almost see the mist in the eyes. Some of his personal belongings, he left behind: photographs, books, art work. Giwa sat down in the visitor's seat, and so did Adedipe in the editor's seat. There was a prolonged silence. "This used to be my office," he said. Adedipe nodded.

"And I am no longer here." Adedipe stared away at other objects.

"Sina, remember we shared some good moments in this place." Sina nodded, not knowing what to say.

"Look after some of my things left here," he said finally, getting up. The weight lifted from Adedipe's shoulders. When Giwa walked out, shoulders square, chin up, he never looked back. The rites of ablution had just been conducted. The *Sunday Concord* was behind him from that point.

Giwa was already planning a new project with Ekpu and Mohammed. They all decided to resign within three months. But their planned resignation had to be delayed until after the arrival of Doyin Abiola's baby. The three of them decided they did not want to becloud the happy occasion.

Giwa himself had a private matter to settle: his marriage to Funmi Olaniyan, to whom he was engaged. The resignation could wait a little while.

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The young lady, given the fact that Giwa already had four children from three women and had married twice, had some difficulty in convincing her mother about her plans to marry Giwa. Her brothers and sisters really did not mind, but during their courtship, Funmi's mother did everything to discourage the marriage.

She thought her daughter just did not know what was good for her. It behoved her, as a good mother, to make sure the young lady straightened out. She was only 24 when she met Giwa. There were 12 years between them. What could she possibly have seen in him?

One day, Giwa visited Funmi at home. Her mother had tried to be as civil as possible on previous occasions. But this day, she politely told Giwa that she thought it would be a good idea if he did not visit her daughter any more.

Giwa was bewildered. At times, he had been very annoyed. Why was Funmi's mother treating him like a small boy? He was however, determined to marry the girl. At times he would bemoan the hostility, "One day, your mother would realise she has been very unkind to me."

Funmi too was madly in love with her finace. She enjoyed the fact that he was much older than her. He opened an entirely new world to her. He did things by himself—he did not have to refer to "daddy." And she thought he was very handsome, and very intelligent. She could not believe that those who went to such *bush* schools—that was how she rated Oduduwa—could be that polished and knowledgeable. She was very snobbish about such things, having gone to Queen's College, Lagos. The tradition was that anyone other than a student of Queen's or King's College was somehow inferior.

Giwa also reminded her of her late father. She thought that he had an uncanny similarity of views with her father, and she told her sisters and brothers so. It was Giwa's irrespressible charm that completely bowled her over. They had a dream courtship—appropriate cards, intimate dinners, love notes, nice little presents. Giwa knew how to make a woman feel special.

Eventually, it was Funmi's grandmother who resolved the issue. Like all grandmothers, she frequently pestered her grandaughter about the subject of marriage. "Who do you plan to marry?" she asked one day.

"The man I want, my mother says is not acceptable," she replied, looking pleadingly for support.

"Why is that?"

"He already has four children," Funmi replied truthfully.

"So what?"

Funmi could not believe that coming from her granny. She plunged on. "And he had married twice before," she said, expecting her to break to pieces.

"Is he married now?"

Funmi was relieved. Half way home. "No."

"Then what is the problem?" asked granny. Funmi shrugged. Granny asked her not to worry. She spoke to her daughter. From then on, the opposition virtually evaporated.

It was part of Giwa's romantic nature that he suggested that they get married on Funmi's birthday—July 10, 1984. The bride-to-be's relatives accepted the date.

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A few weeks before the appointed date, Giwa went up to his estranged wife, Florence, to ask for a formal divorce. She asked him to sue her, because she did not know what to sue him for. Besides, he could use her lawyer, Dapo Orelaja, to make matters simple. Giwa said he would sue for desertion. Fine by her, said Florence.

Just one week before July 10, both of them went to Surulere Customary Court 3. Florence was put in the dock for the first time. When the charges were read, she pleaded guilty. The marriage was dissolved accordingly, and she was asked to refund the bride price, which she did. As they got to their cars outside the courtroom, Giwa kissed her lightly on the lips, wished her good luck, and drove off. That was their last meeting.

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July 17, 1984, Dele Giwa was expected from Abidjan, capital of Ivory Coast, where he honeymooned with his new wife. A couple of days back, Mohammed had told Abiola of his intention to resign. An incredulous Abiola asked him to go and think about it.

Mohammed was convinced, however, he had looked carefully enough. On this pre-arranged date, he went back to Abiola in the morning with his resignation letter. The poisoned atmosphere of the office was too much for him to bear, he said. Abiola accepted the letter and wished Mohammed good luck.

Ekpu left his home early for the office. In his jacket pocket was a two-paragraph letter thanking Abiola for his years at Concord. At the office, he gave the letter to Abiola's secretary and went in to meet his staff on the editorial board for one final meeting.

"This is a valedictory meeting," he told the subdued staff. They saw it coming. They could only exchange good wishes. Ekpu went into his office and started packing his personal belongings. While he had given the mandatory three-month notice, he had no doubt at all that Abiola would ask him to leave immediately.

He was right. When Abiola arrived to reply to Mohammed's letter, he found Ekpu's waiting for him. Exhibiting a dramatic streak of his own, Abiola arranged a two-minute send-off party, a tense affair, for the two men. Mohammed went back into his office, emotionally drained, he packed his belongings and left.

Giwa arrived in Lagos later in the evening. Ekpu and Mohammed met him at the airport. "You guys did not even wait for me," he complained playfully. He wrote his own letter, a detailed three-page affair, that night. It was submitted the next morning.

Thus did Dele Giwa end another important phase of his life. Henceforth, every ounce of energy in that restless soul would be dedicated to his own creation.

10. At the Top

EARLY in January 1984, retired General Alani Akinrinade, the former chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, was shot by unknown assailants in his Ikeja home. He was taken to the nearby First Foundation Medical Centre for treatment.

Dele Giwa was one of the first callers at the hospital. The general was critically wounded, but he would survive. Before he left the hospital, Giwa spent about an hour with his friend, Dr. Tosin Ajayi, the medical director of the hospital. They discussed his growing discontentment with the Concord publisher. Ajayi advised that, being no longer a young man, it was time Giwa began actively to prepare the ground for establishing a news organisation of his own.

Ajayi was well-placed to advise on such a course of action. Giwa's age-mate, he already was the proud owner of one of the biggest and best-run private hospitals in Lagos.

The notion of setting up his own news media was not a new idea to Giwa. It had always been his ambition, even when he left the *Daily Times* for the *Concord Press*. In fact, his calculation was that, if he left the *Concord* for any reason, he would never work for anyone but himself.

It was this early January, 1984 that for the first time Dele thought very seriously about the type of news medium he would like to establish. Ray Ekpu was always consulted, being part and parcel of this plan, so having considered the options open to them, they decided that a weekly news magazine would be their best bet. The only thing left was when.

Abiola decided for Dele less than five weeks later, when he was removed as editor of the *Sunday Concord* and sent to the editorial board. By February 13, 1984, twenty-four hours after he was reassigned, Giwa had already discussed the broad outlines of the project with Ekpu.

Meanwhile, late in 1983, Yakubu Mohammed had been approached by Ibrahim Yusufu, a businessman from his home state of Benue, on the possibility of setting up a news magazine. Mohammed told Yusufu then that the time in his view, was not right. If the need arose in the future, he would let him know.

So, on February 9, 1984 (the day Abiola asked Giwa to resign or be fired) when Mohammed called Giwa from New York and learnt of the development, he correctly guessed where the events would eventually lead. He phoned Yusufu in London to tell him what had happened, and that he would like to stop over and see him before returning to Lagos. Yusufu sent Yakubu a ticket.

In London, Mohammed learnt at the U.K. office of *Concord* that Giwa had been reassigned to the editorial board. He told his host that the time had come for discussions to be opened on the project. Yusufu asked Mohammed to arrange for Giwa, Ekpu and himself to come to London without delay. Mohammed then returned to Lagos on February 14.

Giwa and Ekpu went to the airport to meet Mohammed, but they missed him. They then headed for Mohammed's residence, where they filled him in on the events of the last few days and their plans. Mohammed told them of the discussions he had with Yusufu. They were all excited, and decided they would resign at the earliest convenient time.

Within a few days, Giwa obtained permission from Concord to go to London for a "medical check-up." His two colleagues soon found an excuse to be out of town for a weekend, and joined him in London.

Yusufu put them up at the Intercontinental, where they held their preliminary discussions. Yusufu offered to bankroll the entire project and hold 40 percent. They said, no, he should take 20 percent and the chairmanship of the company. They would like to bring in other shareholders. Yusufu agreed, and promised to make the first instalment of his contribution available on their return to Lagos. The three men left London in high spirits.

Yakubu Mohammed suggested that Mohammed Haruna, his former colleague on the *New Nigerian,* be brought in on the project. Haruna had some reservations, and did not show any enthusiasm. Mohammed then suggested Dan Agbese, editor of the *New Nigerian* who was having problems with the new military government.

Agbese was not new to either Ekpu or Giwa. He was Ekpu's classmate at the department of mass communication of the University of Lagos, (class of '73). Ironically, it was while discussing that subject in Mohammed's house that the military government announced on national television that Agbese had been relieved of his post. Agbese no longer had the privilege of comparing the security of his job to the pie-in-the-sky being dangled in front of him.

Meanwhile, no money was forthcoming from Yusufu in London. After several phone calls, he said one of them should come to London to collect the cheque. Ekpu went and brought back a cheque for ₦100,000 payable to Yakubu Mohammed. The company had yet to be registered and so had no account.

Mohammed paid the cheque into his account, but it bounced. After representing the cheque two more times with the same result, they began to look elsewhere for money. Ekpu had made the acquaintance of Dr Ime Ebong, a former managing director of Icon Merchant Bank. Ebong, a cultured, somewhat reserved man, was willing to be of assistance. Apart from providing technical advice on business management, he paid their expenses for the registration of the company, which was done on June 27, 1984.

Giwa no longer paid attention to his job at Concord. He collected old issues of *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines and clinically studied them. He read books on magazine editing and production, made lengthy notes, measured editions of the magazines with a newly-acquired pica ruler, studied the page-planning and counted the number of words on a page. Within a few weeks, he had memorized the essential mechanics of production.

He devoted his considerable energy to the new project with religious passion. As he waded daily, through piles of material and his thinking became sharper, his enthusiasm bubbled over, which meant that he worked harder still. He turned his attention to the technicalities of producing and running a magazine. He paid several visits to R.T. Briscoe to familiarize himself with typesetting machines and to seek advice on suitable models.

As they met more frequently to plan the magazine, Agbese was summoned to Lagos for further discussions on the project. The four of them, began, together, to deliberate on the finer details. Giwa suggested that the proposed magazine be called *Newswatch,* the title of a column occasionally written by the venerable Thomas Griffith and published in the *Time* magazine. His colleagues agreed with him. The magazine was to be published by Cardinal Communications Limited, but Agbese offered that the company's name should reflect that of the magazine, which was accepted.

Giwa got Levi Ogundina, who had worked with him in Concord before joining *The Guardian,* to design the logo of the magazine. The preparatory meetings were held in Giwa's official residence on Adolphus Davis Street. While his new wife, already heavy with child, served them drinks and snacks, the four men sequestered themselves in Giwa's study and put in place the building blocks of the new company. Things were moving fast.

But there was still the problem of financing. After Yusufu's cheque bounced, Mohammed contacted him on phone. He directed Mohammed to his bank on Victoria Island, Lagos, where, after several visits, Mohammed was given a bank cheque for ₦50,000. It was on the strength of this, the first substantial amount of money they had for the venture, that they all resigned from Concord in July.

Yusufu called another meeting to take place in London. Giwa, Ekpu and Mohammed went, but Yusufu kept them waiting for days at the hotel without showing up. He became inexplicably elusive. When he finally turned up to meet his already annoyed visitors, he gave no concrete assurances as to what he would do, but merely promised to pay an additional ₦170,000. Unconvinced, they returned to Lagos with grave doubts as to the reliability of their prospective business partner.

For some reason, Yusufu never honoured his pledge. They, therefore, intensified efforts to interest other investors in their venture. Tosin Ajayi, who had continually urged Giwa to set up his own newspaper linked them to Dr. Ime Ebong who advised them on budgeting and their feasibility study. It was Ekpu's long standing friendship with Ime Umana, a businessman from Cross River State which gave *Newswatch* its first push toward life. Umana, a short,

balding, soft-spoken man, owned a general business chain called Imesco Enterprises. He expressed great interest in the project, and as a mark of his seriousness, put down ₦400,000.

Another person who came in early was Alex Akinyele, a former director of the Customs and Excise who later went into business and then became president of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations. Mohammed had known Akinyele since 1977. While Giwa was editor of the *Sunday Concord,* he published certain reports about Shehu Musa, then secretary to Shagari's government. Musa was something like Akinyele's mentor. Akinyele knew Musa was unhappy about the report and offered to go to Concord, where Mohammed was editor of the daily paper, to try to sort things out. Here, Giwa met Akinyele for the first time.

When they were looking for financiers, therefore, Ekpu and Giwa went to talk to Akinyele. The former customs' director promised to back them, and eventually put in ₦100,000.

Their resources grew, but being a capital-intensive project, far more money was needed. It was by chance that Giwa contacted Abdulaziz Ude, a property investor. The suave, urbane Ude (Oxford, Columbia) came into the picture through a mutual friend. Giwa was discussing the financing of the magazine with a fellow, who then suggested that Ude might be interested.

A meeting was arranged. Although they had met socially a couple of years back, it was the first real contact between the two men. Giwa could be very persuasive once he had set his mind on something. Ude was impressed with the openness and clarity with which Giwa set forth his proposal. He thought Giwa had a pretty good idea of what kind of magazine he wanted. His only concern was the business aspect of it, which he thought had yet to be carefully and realistically projected. Nonetheless, Ude was sufficiently impressed with the first overview, not to mention Giwa's infectious optimism. He put down ₦250,000.

Despite an understanding with his colleagues to keep the project under wraps, at least in the planning stages, Giwa regularly discussed it with, among a few others, Macebuh. He constantly sought his advice. Macebuh, at the time, had only just completed the first phase of *The Guardian* project, and had acquired a bit of experience in founding a paper from scratch.

They discussed several times a week. During this period, Giwa confided to Macebuh: "I will never put myself in a position where someone has direct control of my job again." This was the basic position that informed the structure that the four partners conceived for *Newswatch*. Their number one goal was to protect the magazine, at all cost, against interference from outside the group of the original founders. Certain steps were taken to safeguard this independence.

The first had to do with the three major investors. All of them agreed that all of the investors be non-partisan and that they remain so. More important, the four of them agreed that, no matter the circumstances, they would hold the majority shares. The shareholding was then arranged in such a way that they had 15 per cent each, making 60 per cent. Umana, was named chairman of the board and held 10 per cent, while Ude and Akinyele got 10 and 5 per cent respectively. The idea was that even if one of them colluded with any of the directors, the other three would still hold controlling shares to determine crucial matters. Five per cent profit-sharing was reserved for the staff, while subsequent investors would take the rest.

Another major step in this direction was the idea of a legal agreement between the four founders, an idea introduced by Giwa. He thought it was not enough just for them to hold majority shares, but also for them to ensure that such power was not misused in the future.

Consequently, they bonded themselves for the first ten years of the magazine, to the magazine, to the effect that, during the stipulated period, none of them would take any political appointment or engage in partisan politics of any sort. The penalty for contravention was severe. If anyone decided to take a political appointment, he must resign from the magazine and forfeit his shares to the level of 5 per cent holding. Participation in politics, on the other hand, would result in, not only resignation, but a complete forfeiture of shares. When the magazine finally got on stream, the undertaking was adopted as a board document, which meant it was no longer just a gentlemen's agreement. This particular issue would in future create some problems.

The allocation of official responsibilities was one of the issues the quartet handled last. From the start, there seemed to be no question who the leader of the editorial team would be. The question was, what the others would take. This issue was for some time, the subject of

speculation in professional circles. There were fears that it would divide them.

As it turned out, it was one of the easiest decisions they took. Ekpu solved the problem. During a meeting held to sort out the matter, Ekpu simply suggested that Giwa (who was regarded as a carefree administrator) be editor-in-chief, and that Agbese, on the other hand, who was relatively conservative and, something of a penny-pincher be managing director. Agbese had held management positions before, and in any case had worked in government-owned media all his professional life. He would be a good counterpoise to Giwa, especially in fiscal matters. There was no argument, therefore, when Agbese was nominated by Ekpu for the post of managing director. Both Ekpu and Mohammed were given the title of executive editor. The titles themselves, however, did not really matter so much, as the four worked together, solving the various problems as they arose.

The arrangement, initially, appeared to be the most sensible thing to do. Giwa had overall responsibility for all editorial matters. Apart from that, he would personally edit the cover stories of the magazine, after a once-over by Ekpu, and go through all opinion columns.

Agbese was in charge of the accounts department, staff matters and circulation. In addition, he would supervise the business and economy section of the magazine. Ekpu, for his part, was to supervise the advertisement department and oversee the back-of-the-book section of the magazine. Mohammed was placed in charge of the news section, in addition to supervising the library and handling the provision of communication facilities for the company.

With that behind them, Giwa and his colleagues approached the home stretch, their final preparations for the impending publication of the magazine. Office space was leased at 62 Oregun Road in Ikeja. Giwa personally arranged for a printer, since the young company could not afford a press of its own. He approached Alade Animashaun, chairman of Academy Press, Lagos, whose company later signed an agreement with Newswatch as their printers. He also approached Poatson Graphics owned by Jide Adeniyi, to handle weekly colour separation for the magazine.

Giwa and his colleagues were all but dissuaded from pressing ahead with the publication of a weekly news magazine of the quality they envisaged. The printers, although adequately equipped for the job,

nevertheless expressed fears over their ability to cope with printing the magazine weekly, along with the other jobs they handled. The colour laboratory was also afraid it would not be able to meet the continuous deadline.

The new publishers were therefore assailed with discouraging reactions. Some tried to persuade them to start the magazine as a monthly, and gradually work their way up. Others said, maybe the best they could do, taking their apparent determination into consideration, was a forthnightly. "If you insist," one of them said, "you will fail, and so will we."

Giwa, in his boundless optimism and natural upbeat inclination, waved aside all such doubts. If anyone could do it, he and his colleagues would, or they would burn themselves out in the process.

When they would not be dissuaded, the printers played safe by setting a tough deadline: all materials must be at the press by Monday afternoon for the following week's edition, which was supposed to come out seven days later. Poatson wanted all materials for colour separation at least ten days in advance. Giwa did not argue. In the first few weeks of the actual publication of the magazine, neither of the deadlines were met. The printers did not receive the artwork until Thursday and in emergencies, even Saturday. He shaved three or four days, sometimes even five, from the deadline given by the colour lab. They all, soon enough, learned to cope.

Giwa also personally conceived the artistic layout of the magazine—how he wanted each section to look, how the headings should be displayed, and then, later, got the artists to turn the ideas into reality. He loved the professional look of *Time* magazine and borrowed many ideas from it.

He and his colleagues laid out the sections of *Newswatch*, the basic departments that must appear in each edition and an array of others that would be published occasionally. There was the 'Preface to the cover', a *Newswatch* original that took a thematic look, in philosophical undertones, at the major story in each edition. There were the opinion columns of the four founders, originally planned to be published together weekly until responses to the preview edition compelled them to 'let news rule views.' The columns were limited to two per week.

Giwa, as editor-in-chief, was also to write a half page statement from the editor, which he called *From the Editorial Suite.* In it he would explain, weekly, the effort that went into the production of each edition, and also some background of the key personnel involved in the major stories, photography or any other specific input.

There was also the matter of staff recruitment. The core of the original cast of the editorial team was formed by former staff of the *Concord.* Discussions, as usual, were held with them in Giwa's study between August and October. By the first week of December, Soji Akinrinade, assistant editor of *Sunday Concord,* Dele Omotunde, the features editor and Dayo Onibile, the group news editor had all crossed to *Newswatch* as associate editors. They were supplemented with four staff writers, three of them senior reporters from the *Concord.*

Skeleton staff for other departments were also hired. To man the library, considered to be a critical segment by the founders, was Nyaknno Osso, an experienced, hard-driving librarian who went on to build the best newspaper library in Nigeria for *Newswatch.*

The first editorial meeting was held in mid-November. In attendance, apart from the co-founders, was the full complement of the editorial staff of six and a few photographers and artists. At the head of the table was Dele Giwa. He swept the tiny room with his eyes. This was the beginning of a long journey. Wherever it led, it must be the top. He was finally on his way. And, God help him, he was going to do all in his power to make the magazine the very best. Second place was never good enough for him.

Giwa cleared his throat. "Well, gentlemen," he began, "none of us here really has worked on a magazine before. So, what do we do?"

There was a momentary silence, and then everybody began to give their views on the form the magazine should take; what kind of stories to assign, who would do what. Before the meeting ended, it was decided that a preview issue of the magazine be produced for December 3rd. This was to test the preparedness of the staff, as the maiden edition was scheduled for publication in the first week of January 1985. When it arrived from the printers, there was palpable excitement in the *Newswatch* offices. Mohammed brought a copy into the newsroom and the handful of staff gathered to assess their work. The general verdict was that it was a fair effort. There was no

substantial difference from the way the magazine was to subsequently look, except that it was about half in extent. But Giwa was subdued. He thought the preview issue did not sufficiently resemble the picture of the magazine he had in his head—he went back to the drawing board.

As preparations switched into high gear for the first edition, certain hitches appeared. First, the magazine was allocated an import licence for a paltry value of ₦200,000 by the Buhari regime. In fact, the hostility between the press generally and that government, which peaked with the conviction of two of *The Guardian* reporters in April, flared again with the deliberate policy of the government to make life doubly difficult for, especially, the private media.

Second, even with the grossly inadequate licence (most materials had to be imported, from paper to photographic materials), the order placed for the crucial newsprint was yet to be honoured by the suppliers in Europe. It became clear that the publication date had to be postponed for a few weeks more. In addition, money was running low and no income could be generated by just sitting down.

Giwa made up his mind. "Let's go for broke," he told his colleagues. "The magazine must come out by all means before January runs out."

Negotiations were conducted with the printers to loan the magazine enough paper for the first four editions. Animashaun, who was very supportive in those fledgling days, unhesitatingly concurred. And so, with only two desks and four chairs in the newsroom; no typewriters; no power generator, even though NEPA was merciless; no duty car; no compugraphic machines, nothing, Dele Giwa led his team on a journey into uncharted waters. On January 28, 1985, the first edition of *Newswatch,* dated February 4, was put on the stands. By noon of that day, at least in Lagos, the 30,000 copies of the 40-page edition had sold out. When newspaper vendors stormed the magazine's offices later in the afternoon to ask for more copies, the staff stared at them, incredulous. The magazine had not been given the traditional *launching.* Advance advertisements had been spare—no television coverage, just a few inconspicuous insertions placed in newspapers. Some advertisers had been invited to a luncheon at the Ikoyi Hotel. Although a sceptical lot, they were very impressed with the preview edition, but they were genuinely worried about the survival of a news

magazine in Nigeria. They had seen too many magazines come and go; the mortality rate was high. No sensible advertiser could rely on such a medium, and they said so.

Interested observers were therefore not a little surprised when it turned out that the reception was very favourable. Giwa began to regain his confidence. Never one for modesty, he declared that he knew he had a winner. The first edition, which had as its cover story the growing incidence of drug trafficking in Nigeria, had proven it decisively. *Newswatch* was on its way.

The London office of the magazine became operational early in the year. Kayode Soyinka, who was appointed bureau chief, had been the London correspondent of the *Concord* until 1983, when he left to work for *Africa Now*.

In Lagos, Giwa quickly asserted his authority over the magazine. His forceful, occasionally abrasive personality and obsession with hard work soon made it clear who was in charge. The place, as in *Concord,* revolved around him. He had a likeable, informal way with the staff, which seemed to come naturally to him.

He was assertive and impulsive, but cared for his staff, even personally; he inspired, and was generous with praise for what he considered outstanding reports. On such occasions, his style was to jump up, while reading a story, and run, yelling, into the newsroom to pronounce the writer unbeatable. Of course, the following week, he would have a different *unbeatable* writer. He genuinely appreciated excellent work, and he gratefully acknowledged it.

More than anything else, he shot himself into the forefront by working long, hard hours nonstop. No one could claim to work harder than he in *Newswatch*. He paid attention to every detail and strove to make the production more efficient. Within a short time, he had become familiar with the business side of the magazine, including the tortuous process of procuring import licences. He dealt with the banks, harrassed and cajoled the printers and others outside the production crew. There was no aspect of the company he was not familiar with.

Giwa, Ekpu, Agbese and Mohammed, sometimes called the four musketeers, worked together very cordially. On a personal level, Giwa and Ekpu tended to drift closer to each other, while Agbese and

Mohammed also did the same. There was no sharp demarcation. Ekpu always provided a useful bridge. As former classmates in university, he and Agbese were very friendly. They sometimes referred to each other with nicknames, apparently picked up in school.

Giwa's home, like his office, also rapidly took shape. The new home at 25, Talabi Street, Ikeja was, for him, peaceful refuge. His wife, Funmi, his son, Billy and his youngest sister, Abiba were all living there. On February 20, 1985, a Thursday, Funmi Giwa delivered a baby girl. It was a source of great joy for Giwa, who behaved almost like someone having a child for the first time.

The previous day was Wednesday, and therefore production night at *Newswatch*. Mrs. Giwa was already in hospital, going through labour. Dead in the night at about two, he left the office to see his wife. He was with her until she delivered the baby. Giwa named her Aisha, after Stevie Wonder's daughter.

Newswatch continued to grow. Giwa and his colleagues, and the staff, virtually lived the job. Giwa, of course, needed the centre stage. In spite of Agbese's title of managing director, he regarded himself as *number one* in the hierarchy. He did not think it should be otherwise. For Giwa, at that stage, it was either the driver's seat or nothing.

The management structure of *Newswatch*, however, as originally constituted, had a fundamental flaw, in that the editor-in-chief and the managing director were in parallel positions. There was no overall boss, and as time went on certain conflicts arose.

Giwa was action oriented, he did not easily tolerate delays in carrying out his projects. Agbese, on the other hand, liked to meet and thrash out every single item before taking a decision. Now this fussiness was directly antithetical to Giwa's management style. He always wanted to get things done immediately. he was contemptuous of bureaucracy and did all he could to avoid contact with it. But since there were limits to his authority, there was not much he could do about it, except occasionally bulldoze his way through.

By April 1985, it was apparent that the structural arrangement in Newswatch was not working. A board meeting was called to resolve the issue in the first week of May. It was clearly a leadership coup, but which the four of them rationalised as streamlining: the title of managing director was cancelled and Dele Giwa became editor-in-

chief and chief executive. Agbese was given a new title of managing editor. He still handled administrative matters, but there was no longer any doubt about who was the leader. A clear hierarchical order was established with Giwa at the top followed by Ekpu as deputy editor-in-chief, a role he had been performing throughout the short history of the magazine. Agbese became number three in the new hierarchy while Mohammed was number four, and remained executive editor.

Over the next few months, Giwa consolidated his authority in *Newswatch*. In the first place, his colleagues conceded certain decisions to him, without reference to themselves. They gave him a free hand to operate. Secondly, the fact that his good friend Ray was his deputy meant that there was no one snapping at his heels.

Newswatch quickly took on the Dele Giwa persona. Fresh, incisive, a little ebullient, *Newswatch* was the unchallenged leader in the market. It set stock on investigative reporting, especially political news. The style was not unique in newsmagazine journalism, but it was good. It generally followed the tradition introduced by *Time: Backward ran the sentences until reeled the mind.*

Giwa was finally in his element. A man born to run, he did not allow those around him to slow down. He pushed and shoved and sometimes kicked. His policy, which invariably became the magazine's policy, was: *first with the news,* and whenever *Newswatch* got an exclusive scoop, Giwa never let it go unannounced. 'World Exclusive' would be splashed across the magazine's cover.

Giwa's can-do spirit filled the organisation. He was very clearly the creative force of the magazine. He regularly sounded off *From the Editorial Suite,* which he stamped with his optimistic, slightly arrogant signature. By the time the magazine was a year old, its technical quality had improved significantly. There were many more staff; the poet, Niyi Osundare and columnist, Adebayo Williams, soon added variety to the magazine's opinion pages.

Giwa had been thinking about instituting a Board of Economists, a body of academicians and businessmen, to periodically analyze the state of economy at *Newswatch's* expense. He also mooted the idea of a special interview programme in the magazine to be called *The Summit.* These he hoped would not only boost the magazine

qualitatively, but also polish its image. The image of the magazine loomed importantly in Giwa's mind.

As the magazine grew in stature, which meant that Giwa and his colleagues did, too, it became increasingly influential. This was proven conclusively when, in April 1986, it published an exposé on the unusual circumstances surrounding the conviction and incarceration of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the controversial and unconventional musician. The judge involved was, within days of the publication, fired from service, while the victim was unconditionally released.

It was not surprising that some of the controversial stories published in the magazine sometimes got *Newswatch* entangled in court cases. The first major legal tango concerned the cover stories published in its first anniversary edition on January 27, 1986, dated February 3.

The reports focussed on a contentious and emotional decision of the Justice Samson Uwaifo Judicial Panel. The panel was constituted to investigate activities of politicians of the ill-fated Second Republic. The Uwaifo Panel said it found nothing to incriminate former President Shehu Shagari and recommended that he be released from detention.

This finding caused an immediate uproar. Writing the following week in *Newswatch,* Ekpu, an outstanding wordsmith, dismissed the entire proceeding as 'a hollow ritual.' Ekpu wrote: 'It was clear . . . that the whole thing was a farce, inelegantly contrived much in the manner of a kangaroo court made even more *kangarooic* by the abject naivety of the presiding judge.' He concluded that Uwaifo himself would be remembered as 'one Nigerian who was given a national assignment but who discharged it with unparalleled perfunctoriness.'

Giwa knew immediately that the opinion would cause trouble, but decided to publish it anyway. He loved its direct approach; why mince words? Ekpu's straightforward report would not be made ambiguous by the trappings of syntax. By the following day the expected came in form of a summons to appear before the tribunal for 'contempt of the tribunal'. Giwa's reaction was immediate and predictable. He called his secretary. "Get me Gani Fawehinmi's chambers," he said.

Giwa's relationship with Fawehinmi developed after his celebrated detention by Adewusi, in October, 1982. The precedent he also wanted to set when he asked Fawehinmi to institute a case against the

police for illegal detention had been settled. On July 20, 1984, two days after he resigned from Concord, a Lagos high court judge ruled that Giwa was illegally detained by the police. He awarded ₦10,000 damages in Giwa's favour, and ordered the inspector-general of police to tender a public apology to Giwa. This was done on August 31st of the same year.

Later in 1984, when *Newswatch* was still on the drawing board. Giwa discussed the project with Fawehinmi and offered the lawyer a retainership with the magazine. Fawehinmi declined, his reason was that it was against his policy. He was a freelancing advocate, he said, but that he could always be contacted. The opportunity had finally arrived.

And so, when Fawehinmi took the call, Giwa said: "Chief it has happened."

"What has happened?" Fawehinmi asked.

"These bas ... s think they can gag the press, chief," Giwa replied. "We have just received a summons from Uwaifo. He wants Ray Ekpu and some of the staff to appear for contempt . . .". Giwa said he would like the matter to be taken up quickly; he would send the summons immediately. Later in the day, Giwa went over to Fawehinmi's chambers to discuss the issue further. While the lawyer handled the legal aspect, he would mobilise the press. "We shall give them a fight, chief," he said enthusiastically. "Uwaifo will regret this."

Giwa's dynamism always impressed Fawehinmi whenever he discussed anything with him. Giwa's intense involvement in whatever he said left Fawehinmi exhilerated. He saw commitment and the lack of hesitation to take risks. For this reason, Fawehinmi never discussed professional fees with Giwa. And throughout the period their stars crossed, he neither demanded nor took fees for cases he handled for Dele.

The following day, at the tribunal, Uwaifo was outraged by the ebullient Ekpu. He wanted nothing short of immediate detention of Ekpu and the others accused. Fawehinmi called on all his oratorical and dramatic prowess to forestall that outcome. Uwaifo finally convicted Ekpu and fined him twenty naira. Fawehinmi paid from his own pocket and immediately signified his intention to appeal.

After the case, Ime Umana, the chairman of the *Newswatch* board, accosted Fawehinmi. He told the lawyer that he was inviting him and his team to the Federal Palace Hotel for lunch. He had already reserved a table.

That was not the first time the two men would meet. Late in 1983, Fawehinmi had gone to Abak, Cross River state to handle a case for Clement Isong, ousted as governor of the state by his party, the NPN. After the court session, Umana met him and said he must know his house. He had heard so much of Fawehinmi. It would be an honour if he could just spare a few minutes. Fawehinmi obliged. Umana, the good host, gave Fawehinmi a bottle of scotch, and then put some money in an envelope as well.

Fawehinmi was astonished. "But we never met," he protested. Umana pressed hard. He said he admired Fawehinmi and had heard that he would be in court. He had been so impressed. Fawehinmi thanked him but declined anyway.

Therefore, when Umana approached Fawehinmi after the Uwaifo case, the lawyer did not understand. He decided to consult his deputy in the chambers, Jide Odetoyinbo, if they could accept the invitation. Odetoyinbo said it was okay.

At the hotel, Umana's honoured guests had only started with their lunch when he cut in.

"I would like to thank you," he said, "for helping *Newswatch,* our magazine ..."

Fawehinmi's head snapped up abruptly. "What did you say?"

"I was talking about our magazine ..."

"You have anything to do with *Newswatch?*" Gani asked, incredulous.

"I am the chairman of the board," Umana replied, wondering what all the questioning was about.

Fawehinmi at that stage, lost his appetite completely. He did not know that Umana was involved in *Newswatch.* So he engaged the others in small talk, hurried them up, and departed for his office. On arrival, he called Giwa on the phone.

"But you told me you and your colleagues own *Newswatch,*" he charged. "Who is this Umana?"

"Oh, he is one of our nominal directors, those who have shares," Giwa replied.

"I see; I see." He rang off.

Six months later, in July, Dele Giwa and Gani Fawehinmi crossed paths again. *Newswatch* had received a writ asking the editors to appear in court for a ₦10 million libel suit instituted by Rotimi Williams, Senior Advocate of Nigeria. Williams was claiming the sum for an alleged damage to his personal and professional reputation caused by a report in the *Newswatch* edition of February 28, 1985. The report, titled 'Death to Simply Mr,' detailed the reasons for the demise of *The Guardian's* house-style of not using honorifics for individuals. The paragraph that Williams found offensive said: "Williams, in a discussion with representatives of *The Guardian* in his chambers, said he would wash his hands of the case if his title of 'chief' was not prefixed to his name." The case in question was the trial under Decree 4 of two *Guardian* journalists, Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor.

It was a solemn Giwa that sat across from Fawehinmi in the latter's office. Fawehinmi recognised an unbending determination when he saw one. Giwa's eyes flashed with anger. Something terrible must have happened.

Giwa first explained why he had come. Williams was suing for libel. But what really irritated Giwa were some unkind remarks which Williams reportedly made about Giwa's family. Furthermore, he was convinced that Williams was determined to ruin *Newswatch* by entangling them in a lawsuit which they could never pay in their lifetime.

Giwa formed an inverted 'V' with his arms, his fingers pressed tightly together, elbows on Fawehinmi's desk, and began to tell the lawyer the story of his life. How his father was a wretched washerman who had toiled endlessly and was eventually claimed by poverty, bent, broken, defeated, dead. Now, he said, someone wants to use his established family line to oppress him. It was too much. He then banged a clenched fist on the desk. "I will fight this man to the bitter end," he roared. "Chief, we must do everything. Everything."

Fawehinmi was deeply touched. It was the first time he would hear about Giwa's background. His client's present image was so different

from the picture he painted of the past. He could never have imagined that the young, sophisticated man sitting in front of him was born into such unfortunate circumstances. His admiration for Giwa grew and he assured Giwa that everything would be done; he should leave the matter to him. Giwa left.

Fawehinmi sat back and rocked on his seat. At last, he thought, at last—opportunity knocks! For some time, Williams had been the target of the radical wing of the bar, unofficially led by Fawehinmi and Alao Aka-Bashorun. The radical wing had been doing battle against the *old order*. They saw Williams as the bastion of this old order. To be sure, Williams was a collosus at the bar. He had already been called to the bar when Fawehinmi was only two years old. He had clashed with Fawehinmi several times. It was a long-running battle. This new case was another opportunity to escalate the war.

His respect for Giwa made it especially gratifying for him to personally handle the case. He saw himself in Giwa in at least one important respect: the magnetic personality of a daring man, who, like him, liked a good fight, for a just cause. Together, they will show them.

Fawehinmi set his well-oiled engine running. He burrowed deep into the archives with the intensity of an Iranian mullah. At last, he found what he wanted: a June 1949 ruling where the presiding judge described Williams in perhaps what might be construed as unflattering terms. He got on the phone to Giwa.

"Dele", he cried, "I have found the bombshell!"

Giwa dropped the phone, grabbed his jacket and raced like a horse to the lawyer's chambers. Fawehinmi placed the papers in front of Giwa, who read through quickly. His reaction was physical. Giwa jumped up, grabbed Fawehinmi's burnished-wood desk and lifted it off the floor. Part of the joint gave way. He screamed for joy.

"Chief, this is the happiest day of my life," he cried. "With this, we will finish the man."

Fawehinmi smiled in satisfaction. Giwa continued: "Chief, you must use any method to get this document in."

"Don't worry," Fawehinmi reassured him.

Fawehinmi, at the second hearing of the case in September, filed in the devastating discovery with the statement of defence. Williams filed a motion seeking to expunge the ghosts of the past from the statement of defense. The trial judge over-ruled him.

Giwa was overjoyed. In his office, he gleefully talked of "fighting to the end". When the account of the court proceedings was published, other snippets of information began to emerge from the past to support their case.

These bombshells would come one by one, Dele said, in the battle to prove that Williams had no reputation that could have been damaged by the *Newswatch* report.

Even if Newswatch lost the case, he knew the matter would be dragged all the way to the Supreme Court, and in the process, Williams' name would also be dragged along. Win or lose the case, *Newswatch* could not lose.

The embarrassment caused by the revelation in court made a number of people uncomfortable. There were moves to settle the dispute out of court. Retired General Olusegun Obasanjo apparently was contacted to intervene. He informed Giwa that he would like to mediate in the matter. Obasanjo was a man Giwa respected and usually deferred to. He had gone to interview the former head of state at his farm in Otta late in 1983, as editor of *Sunday Concord*. The general asked him to switch off the tape and he would just talk. As soon as Giwa left, he wrote everything down from memory and published it afterwards. The accuracy of the report impressed Obasanjo, a man not enamoured of the press. He invited Giwa for a 'proper' interview, during which he drove the final nail into the coffin of the ailing Shagari government. They became friends immediately.

Giwa went to Fawehinmi to seek his opinion. Fawehinmi, as to be expected, advised against withdrawing the case. He, in turn asked what Giwa thought. Giwa said his position was that the matter could not be settled until Williams was defeated. That would show Williams that some children from unknown parents were not afraid to fight. He then asked Fawehinmi to ensure that, even if Williams attempted to withdraw the case, that he should do everything to oppose it. This, in particular, illustrated the determination with which Giwa pursued the case.

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While he wrestled with problems in the office, his home was his solace, the spring of internal joy. He took immense satisfaction in watching Aisha grow. Billy, like Giwa's youngest sister Abiba, was already in university. Dele Jnr. and Tunde came in from New York.

He was happy about himself too. He had become somebody. His writing was better than ever before. As editor, he was even much better. The terror of financial insecurity was fading into the past. He was getting increasingly influential, not only as the editor of the most credible magazine in Nigeria, but also as a friend of powerful people in the government.

11. Hanging Tough

WHEN, on August 27, 1985, Ibrahim Babaginda became president of Nigeria, the public was indifferent. Nigerians were clearly fed up with military coup d'etats, and just could not be bothered, it appeared, about which soldier had again seized the national radio.

Not for long. As events unfolded, it became clear that Babangida knew what he was doing. He apparently had anticipated the initial lack of enthusiasm and knew exactly what to do. First, he made use of his personal charm (in contrast to Buhari's blank countenance), to warm his way into the people's hearts. Secondly, he pursued, initially, populist measures that got the audience, the Nigerian public, roaring in approval.

But all these needed to be properly packaged. Babangida realised the importance of appearance as opposed to reality, and that most times, appearance is more important than reality. This was where the press came into his plans for running the government.

The first signal President Babangida sent was clear enough. Decree Four, the vindictive and highly restrictive law against the practice of journalism, was abolished by the president "with immediate effect." Interpretation: let's be friends. The press was won over immediately. Hail! they cried in unison, to the new chief.

Being an intelligent man, Babangida knew he had to go beyond that to sustain the praise-singing. The man who coordinated his press relations, the nation's new top security agent, was a retired brigadier Aliyu Mohammed. The brigadier was given the task of contacting top media executives already known to the president and, through them, the others.

One of the first people the brigadier got in touch with was Stanley Macebuh, managing director of *The Guardian*, early in September 1985. He asked Macebuh to suggest names. One of the names Macebuh gave was Dele Giwa's. The brigadier said, he had never met Giwa before, could Macebuh please set up a meeting?

Macebuh called Giwa. "There is a friend of mine I'd like you to meet," he said, and gave the brigadier's name.

"Ah, Stanley, there you go again ..."

"Oh, shut up, just have a chat with him."

"Okay, what's his number?"

Giwa called the brigadier. "Macebuh says I should talk to you," he said. They arranged a lunch date. When they met, they discussed things generally, and kind of sized up each other. Before the meeting was over, he gave Giwa a number, on which the president could be reached.

That was in September 1985. The Babangida regime was only about two weeks old. The brigadier then set up a meeting with the president. Giwa had been trying, along with his colleagues, to get an interview with the new president for *Newswatch*. He saw his meeting with the brigadier as a good opening, and pursued it. The brigadier promised to help.

Dele met Babangida in Dodan Barracks in early November, when the brigadier first arranged the *Newswatch* interview. The interview, for some reason, did not hold. The meeting was light-hearted; they cracked jokes, and made small talk. The interview was later fixed for November 22.

Aliyu Mohammed and Dele Giwa quickly became good friends, at least as Giwa saw it. The brigadier's friendship with the president, went back a long way. As coordinator of all the intelligence services — Directorate of Military Intelligence, State Security Services, — he was the superboss of the intelligence community. Articulate and well trained, Mohammed had the ear of the president and moved in all the top circles.

Giwa occasionally visited him both at home and in the office. In addition, they talked from time to time, on the phone, invariably

discussing topical issues — what the new government should do and how the president should conduct himself.

As usual, Giwa spoke freely and without inhibition. Giwa was impressed by Mohammed's humility and apparent openness; and more important, Giwa trusted him implicitly. Even later, when he thought the government had begun to fumble, he did not associate the brigadier with it.

Giwa soon forgot that, primarily, the brigadier was only doing his job and that his first loyalty was to the president. The brigadier, however, still briefed Dele regularly, gave him advance information on government intentions and appeared to like Giwa. Besides, Mohammed was Giwa's link to Babangida, the most newsworthy individual in the country. As a result, Giwa's relationship with the president appeared to warm up, although they had only met once or twice.

Towards the later part of 1985, Giwa mentioned that he received some personal notes from the president, of which he was very proud. It was shortly after that, that Mohammed came back to Giwa and told him that the president wanted a paper from him on Nigeria's political future.

Giwa sat down and wrote a fairly long paper advising the president on steps to take during his tenure: the importance of giving a specific handing over date for civil rule; conducting a census before then as an imperative; deciding what to do with political detainees — the issue could not be allowed to hang on the neck of his government.

That was not the only time the president asked Giwa for advice, as the president, presumably sought the same from other important media personalities. They exchanged messages and in time, a friendship seemed to be developing.

When the government announced the allocation of import licences for 1986, *Newswatch*, as during the Buhari era, was given a licence of only ₦200,000. Giwa was horrified. There was no way the magazine could survive on such a paltry allocation. He complained to the president, who then made it possible for another ₦1.1 million to be added to the original amount. Giwa was grateful to the president; he thought it was a sign of the good relationship between them.

Giwa was beginning to enjoy his improved stature. He had always admired powerful editors who advised presidents and influenced the

course of events. He wanted to be like Abe Rosenthal, the legendary editor of the *New York Times,* and Harry Grunwald, the editor-in-chief of *Time* magazine. Increasingly, he began to see himself in this light.

Some of his friends felt he did not handle the relationship well; that he threw himself headlong into it and sometimes did not notice the fine line dividing his personal and professional commitments. Some of his colleagues felt that Giwa virtually went overboard in his support for the president. Some of his more discerning friends began to notice that he was becoming far less critical of the things they told him, than he should have been. He began to believe too much without sufficient critical examination, based on other information at his disposal and the fact of Nigerian political history.

Quite conceivably, he was carried away by all the attention he was getting. Here was an editor, who believed, rightly or wrongly, that he could find out about anything that was going on in government. In truth, his contacts, by then had covered virtually every level of government. This was generally reflected in the depth of stories published by *Newswatch,* and in the fact that a reader could sense the things that were not being said, but were known. Something about the eloquence of silence.

Giwa steered *Newswatch* for the first five months of the Babangida government in the direction of support for the president and his policies. He felt so strongly disposed toward the president that in his opinion column at the end of 1985 he wrote, "Ibrahim Babaginda has turned out to be the main event of 1985 ...".

Two other editorials favourable to the Babangida government were published by the magazine, one 'Lessons in Power' which was in support of Babaginda's take-over from Buhari, appeared in the 9 September 1985 edition; a second editorial, 'In Whose Interest?' appeared on 6 January 1986. The coup attempt by Mamman Jiya Vasta was the subject. The coup plotters were roundly condemned and the armed forces called upon to support Babangida.

The president himself appeared on the cover of *Newswatch* four times — the first three within three months of his coming to power. Giwa's opinion column criticized anyone, (such as Ali Chiroma of the Labour Congress in November, 1985), who attempted to make life unpleasant for Babangida.

What some people saw as his over-enthusiasm was firmly rooted in his belief that the president and his new government appeared sincere and needed help. And since they were friendly to him and took him into confidence, it was his duty to support them and encourage them to succeed. As he saw it, the Babangida coup was the last that Nigeria may be able to withstand, and that the political setup might collapse into chaos, if the government should fail.

Politically, Giwa was basically an innocent. He was in a way very naive and absolutely without guile. What Florence Ita used to complain bitterly about — his ability to make friends and trust such friends in five minutes flat — inevitabiy led him, blindfolded, into major errors of judgement. While still editor of *Sunday Concord,* a well-dressed young man once walked into Giwa's office to seek his assistance. He had to place an advert in the paper and he did not bring the ₦1,000 needed. If Giwa could stand in as a guarantor, and he place the advert, he would show up with the money in the next two days. Giwa liked the appearance of the fellow, trusted him implicitly and guaranteed him. The boy, as other more suspicious people would have assumed, never showed up again. in a country full of wily characters, this naivety is a major, and often disastrous, weakness.

A close friend of Giwa who knew quite a few major newspaper editors and publishers, soon found out the extent of his naivety. Giwa believed, that he had a special relationship with Brigadier Aliyu Mohammed. He also believed that most of the things he was told by Mohammed were for his ears only. Giwa's friend found out from other newspaper chiefs, that most of the discussions Giwa had with the brigadier, which he regarded as privileged information, were actually the briefing, almost verbatim, that the brigadier had given to other press chiefs.

This merely portrayed Mohammed as a super-efficient professional who rehearsed his show well in advance and had the uncanny ability to make each individual feel as if he was number one in his rating. Thus, he was able to create an illusion of grandeur in the individual concerned. That way, the brigadier got his job done, and the press pandered.

After about five months of the government, however, the novelty, for Giwa, began to wear off. Regularly, he began to pause to ponder. He encouraged a self-criticism in the office which helped break the spell. The controversial entry of Nigeria into the Organisation of Islamic Conference, OIC, woke Giwa from his reverie.

However, *Newswatch* continued generally to support the government. Besides as a very credible medium that influenced public opinion, the government desired always to influence its thinking. The only direct interference that the government was known to have done, however, was a request that *Newswatch* put Olu Falae, secretary to the government, on its cover. The government wanted to strengthen the secretary's hand. Titled "Babangida's Point Man," the story appeared on the cover of the May 19, 1986 edition. High federal government functionaries, as well as a very highly-placed official of the Lagos State government, also sought, successfully, to prevail on the magazine to ignore the involvement of an influential industrialist in the Johnson Mathey Bank, (JMB), scandal. Subtle blackmail was employed. A top-ranking state government official reminded Giwa, "by the way," that the Lagos State government was in the process of finally approving a tract of land in Ikeja for the development of the *Newswatch* headquarters building. The exposé, published in the issue of January 13, 1986, omitted to mention the industrialist. To Giwa fell the embarrassing task of explaining to the angry writer, Kayode Soyinka, before the story came out.

The great paradox of Dele Giwa was that, however close he was to anybody, or however beholden to the person he might appear to be, he always turned out, in the end, to be uncontrollable. There was something in him that ultimately rebelled, if he found it necessary to do so. Regardless of his closeness to Abiola, he eventually asserted his independence. A former wife tried, perhaps unconsciously, to dominate him. She failed in the end. All through his life, at some point, he always had to preserve fiercely his individuality and independence, and in the process, dominated others.

It was no surprise, therefore, that his personal column began to criticise the government. There was also a noticeable shift in the tone of *Newswatch*. The Babangida government, indirectly, let it be known that it was unhappy with the state of things, even apprehensive.

This was done rather subtly by a few discreet invitations to Giwa, as and when necessary, by the security agencies. The first one came from the Directorate of Military Intelligence, DMI. Giwa was asked to please report on a Saturday. On getting there, he was taken to see a captain who ill-advisedly tried to brow-beat Giwa. The allegation against him was that he had a report on the investigation into the Vatsa coup plot and planned to publish it.

Giwa, lost his temper. He told the captain that he had no intention of answering his questions any further. Did he think that, simply because he was in uniform, he had the right to talk to people as he pleased? Or did he not know who he was talking to? He did not blame the captain, he said. If he had decided to join the army, he would have become a general a long time ago. He had better bear that in mind before he continued, Giwa said. Otherwise, he would just walk out and the captain would have to decide whether or not to arrest him.

The intelligence officer somehow managed to conclude the proceedings speedily. Giwa left with a parting shot: "Don't ever in your life invite me for this nonsense again." He was very angry. He thought the security agencies were trying to embarass the president who had openly declared a human rights policy. The public should know that the intelligence community had not changed from the publicly and officially condemned National Security Organisation of the Buhari era.

The police also became apprehensive, as soon as they got wind of *Newswatch's* intention to publish a major story on how Nigeria got into the OIC. They contacted Giwa the weekend before the edition hit the streets. He assured them that the story had been played down as much as ethically possible. While it established that the president was directly responsible, despite strong objections from the minister of external affairs, for Nigeria's admission into the Islamic body, the report was not shrill or openly condemnatory of the government. In order to avoid an unnecessary showdown with the police, Giwa let the inspector general of the police read an advance copy. Nothing offensive was found in it.

Then, in 1986 *Newswatch* published a major story on ex-governor Nwobodo of the defunct second republic who was being investigated for allegedly corruptly enriching himself. *Newswatch* attempted to show that the governor had been given a raw deal by both the tribunal that originally tried him, and the one that reviewed his case.

This time it was the SSS that invited Giwa. In one breath they accused Giwa of trying to blackmail the government, and in the next, they accused him of taking a ₦70,000 bribe from Nwobodo to print the story.

Giwa flew into a rage. As he later recalled after he left the SSS headquarters. "I told the deputy director of the SSS that he should not try

to blackmail me, because you know you are lying. You and I know who is stealing Nigeria's money. I am not a thief. Just because we decide to keep quiet does not mean we do not know what is going on."

Giwa was very annoyed by the accusation and what were turning out to be regular 'invitations'. He complained to his friend Brigadier Mohammed, who placated him and said he was not aware that such a thing was going on. He promised to look into it. Based on Giwa's confrontation with the SSS Ekpu wrote 'A Hangman is a Hangman', where he accused the security agencies of trying of subvert the government's human rights policy by surreptitiously violating such rights under-the-counter.

The alleged bribe, as reported by Giwa, was clearly an attempt to discredit *Newswatch*. Ironically, the story of Jim Nwobodo had been avoided by Giwa until he was convinced that the governor had not gotten a fair hearing. Giwa did not trust politicians at all. It appears that when the Mohammed Bello review of the cases of ex-politicians of Shagari's regime was done, the ex-governor found that not only was he not recommended for release, but he was asked to refund various sums of money which had already been refunded. Friends of the ex-governor contacted Giwa and related the whole account. Even then Giwa continued to make himself unavailable, because he thought the former politician just wanted a whitewash. After persistent and desperate efforts, Giwa sent out two editorial staff to investigate the matter. The staff discovered in reading the unabridged reports of the trial, that there were indeed many discrepancies, although, the evidence did not point to a clean slate.

Thus convinced that there were irregularities, Giwa finally accepted to speak to some intermediaries of Nwobodo. As a safeguard he asked Ray Ekpu and the two staff reporters to accompany him. The ex-governor's friends explained his plight in great detail, lacing it generously with sentiments. They said Nwobodo would appreciate *Newswatch* highlighting his dilemma. Giwa did not promise anything, but if after careful study, he found the story to be genuine, he would see what he could do.

Before the party left, the intermediaries carefully implied that they could finance the project. "We don't want money to be the problem," they said. Giwa protested immediately this insinuation. He said he regarded the statement as an insult. In any case, *Newswatch* was capable of running its own show. They quickly apologized. They did

not mean it to be interpreted like that. Giwa and his colleagues left, and the matter ended there—no more messages, no more meetings. In fact, Giwa announced the incident openly at an editorial board meeting. If he was actually so accused, it was a fabrication on the part of those concerned.

On September 19, 1986 Giwa had another clash with the security agencies. It was a confrontation with the DMI over a column he had written the previous month on SFEM. In the article, he said SFEM was a delicate programme which, if carefully handled, may gradually put the economy back on track. However, "if SFEM fails, ... the only problem for the government is that all its leaders will be stoned in the streets; and everybody will be hungry and things will be like in Ethiopia ...". The only reassuring thing, Giwa concluded, was that Babangida was determined to make it work.

When Giwa briefed his colleagues and friends later that day, he described the encounter as a shouting match. He said Akilu, complained about the phrase "all its leaders will be stoned on the streets ...".

The director of military intelligence Lieutenant-Colonel Halilu Akilu had actually been trying to meet Giwa through Imesco Umana, the *Newswatch* chairman of the board, but this approach failed. Giwa had no interest in meeting Akilu. He did, however, mention the incident to his friend Brigadier Mohammed, who saw no harm in their meeting, and in fact encouraged Giwa to meet the DMI. When they finally did meet on 19 September after the SFEM column, it was not a pleasant encounter.

"Who the hell do you think you are in this country, writing the rubbish you write?" Akilu fired the opening shot.

Giwa said he shouted back: "You too, who do you think you are? Simply because we allow you people to come here, you feel you can run over all of us and do what you like!"

"You can't just write any rubbish against the government," he persisted.

"I can write what I bloody well please," Giwa retorted. "Whether or not you like it, the truth has to be told and it is not for you to tell me what to write."

"We can close down your magazine ..." the DMI threatened. Giwa would not be outshouted. "You will? God help you! But don't threaten me!"

As the shouting continued, everyone was on their feet one of the security aides asked Giwa to sit down, or did he not know the people he was talking to? No, no, Giwa said. Not on his life. They had to sort out this matter once and for all. They abused themselves a little more and then sat down and discussed in a more gentlemanly manner. Giwa, in fact, suggested that the intelligence agencies should organise a meeting with the media chiefs, so that they could all have a frank talk and identify grey areas, in order to avoid friction. The conference, in which Giwa was an active participant took place on 9 October 1986.

As Giwa's eyes became more opened to the workings of the government, and as real information, rather than 'official leaks' began to reach him, he became gradually disillusioned with the government Some of his friends noticed a new cynical edge in him, which was strange for a normally optimistic man.

He began to talk more carelessly about things he had heard. At times like that, some of his friends tried to caution him but Giwa characteristically did not believe in secrets, and he appeared incapable of keeping one. He thought the level of official corruption was intolerable, and that it did not appear as if the government made a conscious effort to stem it. He recklessly confided in total strangers. Inevitably, these remarks filtered back to official quarters.

The fact that he always talked was a real problem. If somebody informed him that somebody else had stolen money, it was not beyond Giwa to meet the person and say something like: "Ah, my friend, I did not know you were a thief until so-and-so told me yesterday. Tell me, why do you do that?"

By this time, of course, he was already under surveillance. But he did not seem to care. Late in September, he told a friend who lectured at the University of Ife: "One day, Nigerians will find out they were being ruled by a man they never knew." It was the all-time low of his disillusionment. As the month of October 1986 rolled in, Giwa did not know that his days, literally. were numbered.

12. Eclipse

THE month of October, for Giwa, opened on an upbeat note. He was looking forward to his short vacation scheduled to begin at the end of the month. In his heart, the afterglow of his kids' summer vacation from New York still had not dimmed. For the first time, during the long summer holidays, he had all his five children under his roof at the same time. The children were all fond of each other. He was a proud father.

Finally, he had settled down. Despite occasional, short-lived misunderstandings, what he vowed would be his final marriage was doing beautifully. He loved his wife. He especially, respected the way she had been able to gain the affection of all the children. Her relationship with Dele Junior and Tunde was special. The boys were fond of her. Aisha, daddy's pet, already could communicate with him.

Giwa was very protective of his family and sometimes overreacted to matters which should have been ignored. He nearly ate Stanley Macebuh alive once for displeasing Funmi in a German airport. Macebuh, on his way to Lagos from New York, was in transit at the Frankfurt airport in West Germany. In the terminal building, he met Mrs Funmi Giwa. For five brief seconds, Macebuh stared at her absentmindedly, before realising who it was. As far as Mrs Giwa was concerned, what happened subsequently, after recognition flooded Macebuh's face, was irrelevant.

When she got back to Nigeria, she reported to her husband that Macebuh met her in Frankfurt and did not even recognise her. That

same night, Giwa called Macebuh on the phone. It was close to midnight.

"I am coming to see you tomorrow," he said testily.

"What's the problem?" Macebuh asked.

"Ah, this is very personal," he replied. I will not disclose it on the phone."

The following day, Giwa arrived in Macebuh's house. Thinking it was a matter of grave importance, Macebuh ushered his visitor into the study.

"So, what's going on?" he asked anxiously. "Funmi tells me you saw her at Frankfurt and you did not even know she was my wife. You?"

"Oh-oh! Is that what's bothering you?" Macebuh breathed easier.

"Oh, yes! If you don't recognize my wife," he said, "who would?"

"Relax," said Macebuh. He explained what happened. Come Sunday, he promised, he would come over to Giwa's house and apologise to Funmi. Giwa was mollified. "That would be great," he said, relieved. "You know how women are." The matter was quickly settled. "So, where is the cognac?" Giwa asked.

At the office, the magazine was also getting stronger and better. Even though the competition had increased, *Newswatch's* position remained basically unchallenged. The pace of work was more leisurely after the special independence anniversary edition which came out early in October. The week of October 6 was not tough. And then, Ebitu Ukiwe, chief of general staff and Babangida's second in command, was relieved of his duties.

Newswatch had the incredible ability to respond immediately to events. When a major story broke, everyone at *Newswatch,* including the editor-in-chief, automatically became a reporter. Giwa said, because the Ukiwe story was delicate, extra care must be taken. Therefore, he said, every piece of information should be corroborated by two other sources. Giwa himself decided to go out and see what he could piece together.

For a while, he had not communicated with Mohammed. He obstinately refrained from calling him because he said he did not want

to appear to be cuddling up to the man. Now that Ukiwe had been removed, and he needed information for his magazine, Giwa decided, as he put it, to "eat humble pie" and go find out what really happened.

When he got to the brigadier and spelled out his mission, he directed him to one of his colleagues.

Giwa went over to see him. They discussed the Ukiwe matter, and from what he told him, the story was not intact. Giwa meticulously edited the final copy; he took extra steps to make sure the story was neither sensational nor fictional.

Nonetheless, Umana, the chairman of the board, gave the impression that the government was still apprehensive about what *Newswatch* would publish. By Friday, October 10, he called Giwa, frantically, to get him to expunge any potentially offensive parts. Giwa was really annoyed. He never tolerated the directors interfering in the editorial content of the magazine. He explained impatiently to Umanah and banged the telephone.

Only Umana, of all the external directors, made overt efforts to interfere with the editors' judgement. Akinyele never bothered about such matters. And Ude, who was the closest to Giwa, preferred to discuss privately and in general terms the issues he wanted to raise concerning the magazine. He liked Giwa a lot anyway, and trusted his competence to do what was right. When the edition was put on the news stand on October 13, whatever fears Umana had, proved unfounded.

The following days were uneventful. But on Thursday October 16, Giwa got an invitation from the SSS. They wanted to see him the following day.

Giwa, though fairly irritated at the nuisance the SSS had begun to constitute, was not unduly worried. In any case, he was positively distracted. That afternoon, he received the good news that the year's Nobel Prize for Literature had been awarded to Nigeria's Wole Soyinka. Like everyone else, Giwa was ecstatic. Beyond a natural curiosity for why the SSS might want to see him again, the invitation was virtually dismissed from his mind.

Giwa got home that evening about 8.15 to find Dele Olojede, an assistant editor of *Newswatch,* waiting for him. He called Olojede,

who was accompanied by a friend, into his study. They both discussed the coverage of the Soyinka story, which automatically became the cover subject for the next edition.

They also exchanged small talk, and drank some cognac. Giwa then mentioned, in passing, that he had a date with the SSS the following morning. He would like Olojede to accompany him to the place. On second thought, he said, since Olojede would be involved in reporting the Soyinka story, he would ask Ray Ekpu who lived next door to go with him.

Giwa picked up the phone and dialled Ekpu's house to see if his friend had arrived home. He had. Ekpu said he was on his way over. When he walked in, the Soyinka story was discussed again. Giwa told Ekpu of the impending visit to the SSS, and the entire group then moved to Ekpu's house to watch the network news at nine and see how the NTA would handle the news from Stockholm.

Friday October 17: In the morning, Giwa and Ekpu got into Giwa's car and headed for the state security headquarters. There, Ekpu was asked to wait outside while Giwa was ushered into the office and asked to comment on four specific allegations.

One: That you, Giwa, based on conversations you held with people close to Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe, are planning to publish in *Newswatch* a follow-up story on the removal of Commodore Ukiwe as chief of general staff;

Two: That you, Giwa, have told some people that you intend to fight on behalf of CSP Alozie Ogugbuaja, the public relations officer of the Lagos State police command, and that, should he be fired, you stand ready to employ him;

Three: That you, Giwa, have been holding talks with labour unions, student groups and other leftist groups who are trying to radicalise the country and looking for ways to destabilise the society in order to make their dream of a socialist Nigeria come true; and

Four: That you, Giwa, have been holding talks with some people on the possibility of importing arms into the country.

Giwa was dumbfounded. How on earth could somebody concoct such unbelievable tales? He first thought the whole thing was some

kind of joke. But the man in front of him did not look like a joker. On the contrary, he seemed to be taking the issue very seriously indeed.

Almost speechless, Giwa asked them if they themselves believed the allegations. They were the facts , he was told. Giwa became troubled. He totally denied all the allegations.

He told them that he had never spoken to Ukiwe either in person or by any other means, nor had he talked to any of his associates on any issue. No sequel or 'other side' of the Ukiwe story, he said, was contemplated by the magazine. Giwa also denied holding any talks, jovially or seriously, with any alleged leftwing group or person.

On the more serious issue of planning to import arms, Giwa said he found it totally ridiculous and even mad. How could anyone associate him with such plans?

They were unperturbed. Giwa was perplexed. He then reached his hand into his pocket and brought out his packet of Benson and Hedges and a lighter. He removed a cigarette and held it up, the lighter at the ready. "Look at my hands," he said. "Do they shake? Do they look unsteady?"

Giwa tried to disabuse their minds. But they gave no explanations; offered no clues. After a while, Giwa was allowed to leave.

His perplexity turned to fury. Outside, he narrated the incident to an equally confused Ray Ekpu. What could the allegations mean? Giwa's conclusion was, "if they can think this of me, then my life is not safe."

Giwa's friend and former colleague, Tony Momoh, the minister of information, had his office next door to the SSS headquarters. Since the matter was that bad, Giwa and Ekpu decided to stop over and let the minister know.

Giwa complained that somebody was trying to frame him; he could not, with any certainty, even say his life was safe. Momoh found the story unbelievable and tried to reassure him. "Maybe they just want to rattle you," he said, and offered to look into the matter.

Giwa left Ikoyi and went straight to Fawehinmi's chambers. The more he thought about it, the more worried he became. His worries turned into agitation. By the time he got to Fawehinmi's office at about 3 p.m., he was almost hysterical.

"You see, now, chief, these people want to give me a bad name in order to kill me," he said.

"What has happened?" Fawehinmi asked.

"Did you hear, chief, they said I am a gun runner. Can you imagine that?" He shouted hysterically, pacing up and down mumbling to himself. Then he addressed Fawehinmi again. He listed the four allegations. Then he said: "Now, chief, you've got to do something. They could do anything to me, you know. I mean, chief, these people could kill me, could actually kill me!"

Fawehinmi tried to calm him. If that was the case, he said, then Giwa should let him have everything in writing so that he could take action immediately. Giwa darted out, and within forty five minutes, the letter got to Fawehinmi. In it he narrated his interview with the security agents. He ended his letter with a passionate plea: "I ask you in the name of God to take up the concern expressed (above) with the SSS and the federal military government."

Giwa sent a despatch rider to deliver the letter.* But he was still restless. After about fifteen minutes, he rang Fawehinmi again.

"Have you got the letter, chief?"

"Yes, I have."

"Please, chief, you must start work on it."

"Don't worry; no problem."

Giwa relaxed a little. Earlier, while preparing the letter, he had taken a twenty naira bet with Yakubu Mohammed and lost. After narrating his experience with the SSS in the morning to the incredulous Mohammed, he brought out the letter he was about to despatch to Fawehinmi and gave it to his still unbelieving colleague to read. Mohammed discovered a spelling error in it.

"I have caught you today," he said triumphantly. Giwa had always accused him of bad spelling, but he took a look at the letter, and found that Giwa had spelt 'foment' with an 'r'. Still, Giwa argued that it was correct. They took a bet, checked the dictionary, Giwa lost, and paid up.

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* *see appendix 1 for the original letter.*

The two of them also dwelt briefly on the operations of the magazine. Giwa had only one working week to go before proceeding on vacation. He counselled thoroughness and level-headedness in editing stories. "When I am gone," he told Mohammed, "please let us keep the standards high."

By 8.30 p.m., Giwa, Ekpu and Mohammed left the office. Agbese was away in England on holiday. The four executives had carefully arranged their vacation to reduce any effect on the magazine. Ekpu went first, and had only just come back when Agbese proceeded on leave. Giwa was to follow after Agbese's anticipated arrival within the next week. Then it would finally be Mohammed's turn.

The three of them went directly to Mohammed's house. Giwa joked with Rekiyat Mohammed and played with the children. He collected some video tapes from Mohammed and, at 9.15, left with Ekpu.

Later in the night there was a party for the Nobel Prize winner, 'Wole Soyinka who had flown in from Paris earlier that evening. It was hosted by Vera Ifudu in her Surulere residence. Giwa went to the party in the company of Ekpu and Kayode Soyinka, (no relation to the Nobel Prize winner) *Newswatch's* London bureau chief who had arrived in Lagos earlier in the day.

Giwa's mood was a mixture of gloom and fury. How dare they deliberately tell lies against him? There must be a dangerous plan against him being hatched by somebody.

He was restless. He got up and walked to the phone in Ifudu's house and called Fawehinmi again. "I hope you are working on this thing, please, *ẹgbọ́n*. My life is dependent on this thing."

Fawehinmi could hear background music on the line. He reassured his caller. "Everything is on," he said.

Still, Giwa did not feel relieved. He was deeply troubled and, for somebody like him, rather quiet and withdrawn. When Macebuh arrived at the party and saw him, he immediately noticed the change in Giwa's mood.

"Hey, hey," he called out to Giwa walking over to his side of the room. "What's biting you? You need a vacation or something?"

"Ah, Stanley, it's not a vacation, man. It's a lot of problems. I have to talk to you." The two of them had arranged earlier to meet in

Macebuh's house on Sunday. They had not seen each other for a while and had planned to bring each other up to date. Macebuh reminded him that since they were to meet on Sunday, they could discuss it then. Fine, Giwa said.

Giwa also met Patrick Dele Cole at the party. He narrated his experience to his old boss, who noticed that he felt more insulted than angry. How could they? Why would they? Cole cautioned him. "Dele, do be careful," he said. "Think about what they said to you and try and make a picture of what's going on." Giwa nodded.

He was sitting in a corner when Amma Ogan walked in. No chair was available for Amma's use. Giwa asked her to sit on his lap. He did not know when next he would have that "opportunity," he said lightly. He was very nostalgic. And then he spoke about the SSS. It was a dangerous thing, he said. Maybe they were trying to get him. He had told his lawyer, he was not going to let it go like that. Giwa left the party in the wee hours.

October 18: Giwa woke up late, having gone to bed late on account of the previous night's party. His wife was in the garden with Kayode Soyinka. Giwa dressed up, called Ray Ekpu next door and went to a luncheon for media executives in the home of Wole Adeosun, managing director of NAL Merchant Bank.

The two of them sat at the same table with Akporugo of *The Guardian,* Segun Osoba, managing director of the *Daily Times* and Nduka Obaigbena of *This Week.* In between discussions, Giwa narrated in great detail to anyone who cared to listen, all of his recent problems.

Osoba told other media executives that Augustus Aikhomu, the new chief of general staff, would like to see them in his home. All of them drove down after they bid Adeosun goodbye. Giwa rode with Amma Ogan, who had also been present. He spoke about the SSS again.

The meeting with Aikhomu was informal. Effiong Essien of *The Guardian* said men on the lower rungs of the ladder of authority often regarded the press as an enemy, in spite of what those at the top, like Aikhomu, tried to do.

Giwa cut in at that point and addressed Aikhomu directly. "To be specific, I was called yesterday by the SSS," he said. "You cannot

believe some of the things they said to me. They said I was a gun-runner. Can you believe that? Me, a gun-runner?" Everyone laughed. It was preposterous. Somebody quipped: "Dele, you better show us where you keep the guns so that we can use them to fight armed robbers."

Aikhomu asked Giwa not to worry, he was aware of the problem. Momoh had contacted him earlier. At the end of the meeting, Giwa gave the vote of thanks. He made a distinction between the interests of the government of the day and that of the nation. It was the nation's interest, he said, that the press was bound to protect. Nonetheless, he called for continued dialogue between the government and the media. At 5 p.m., everyone left.

Earlier, shortly after he left for Adeosun's luncheon, a call came through to Giwa's home. Mrs Giwa suspended her discussion with Kayode Soyinka and went inside the house to take the call. The man on the other end said he was calling on behalf of the director of the DMI.

"Can I speak to Mr Giwa?"

"He is not in. He may be in the office," Funmi said. "Why don't you call him there?" She gave him the office number and rang off.

Shortly after, the caller was on the phone again. He could not get Giwa in the office, he said. Could she hold on for the director.

Akilu came on. "Madam, how are you?"

"Very fine, thank you."

"Dele is not in the office." Akilu said, more a statement than a question.

"Apparently not," Mrs Giwa said. "Maybe he has gone out."

"Okay. Where is the place you stay? What is the address?"

"25, Talabi Street."

Akilu said he was not familiar with the place. Mrs Giwa described it. "Thank you," he said. "The ADC has something for him — an invitation or something like that."

Giwa came back home late in the evening. With him was Yemi

Ogunbiyi. Both men went into Giwa's study. Kayode Soyinka joined them there. His wife related the telephone calls to him. "That must be from the president." Giwa guessed.

"He was not that explicit," Funmi said, "he mentioned something about an invitation." She went back to the kitchen. Giwa had dinner with Soyinka and Ogunbiyi, then went to bed.

Sunday, October 19: Funmi Giwa got out of bed earlier than her husband. For a while, she regarded her husband, still asleep beneath the sheets and then quietly left the room to prepare breakfast of moin-moin and ogi for the family.

9.30: Giwa, still in his pyjamas, plodded downstairs to the kitchen to brew coffee for himself and Kayode Soyinka. The two men sat in Giwa's study to talk. The phone rang. The caller wanted to speak to Billy. Giwa asked his son to iron a pair of shorts for him, which he intended to wear to the office later.

10.00: Funmi grumbled to Soyinka that the study table was too cramped to set breakfast on. But that was where Giwa wanted it. She went back to the kitchen. The moin-moin had not set properly. She tried to patch things up.

10.30: Billy informed his father that the shorts had been ironed. He went back to his room. Shortly after, Funmi set down breakfast for the two men, who were still talking about the events of the last two days.

11.00: Giwa remembered Akilu's calls of the previous day. He decided to find out what the colonel wanted. The colonel said he had called to assure Giwa not to worry about the allegations made by the SSS. "I worry," Giwa replied. "It is an attempt to ruin my name. I have already written to my lawyer about it."

"Dele, this is not a matter for lawyers," Akilu said. "Don't bother yourself, the matter is now settled." Nothing was mentioned about the message from 'the ADC.' Giwa did not remember to bring it up either.

11.25: Funmi Giwa, in the living room, picked at her moin-moin in front of the T.V. set. The programme being aired was *Love Boat.* She did not pay any particular attention to it. Aisha was feeling sleepy. She started crying. The little girl went upstairs to sleep.

11.35: Two men drove up to the gate of 25 Talabi Street in a white Peugeot 504. Both of them had low cuts. They summoned Musa Zibo, the guard, and asked if *oga* was in. The guard nodded. One of the strangers handed him a parcel to take in to *oga*.

11.40: The bell rang. Billy, whose room was next to the door, peeped out to see who it was. He opened the door and took the parcel from the guard. The large brown envelope sealed with red wax and stamped *confidential* appeared to have come from the president's office. The Nigerian Coat-of-arms and "from the Commander-in-Chief" were printed in one corner. It was addressed to Chief Dele Giwa . And the words, *To be opened by addressee only* were printed on one side.

Funmi saw Billy bring in the parcel. She thought it contained the week's edition of *Newswatch,* and considered, but dismissed the thought of asking Billy to give her a copy. Ten advance copies of the magazine were delivered to the Giwa's every Sunday.

Billy held the parcel forward and, having read the inscription, said to Funmi: "The president has sent your husband something again." He headed for the study.

Giwa and Soyinka still picked at their breakfast. Soyinka saw Billy enter the study and he playfully thumped the boy's chest. Billy handed the parcel over to his father, saying the gateman just brought it in, and walked out again.

11.41: Giwa held the parcel in his left hand, having seen the inscriptions, said to Soyinka: "This must be from the president." He moved his seat back, holding the parcel just above his thighs, and proceeded to tear the flap open.

A blinding flash of light, followed immediately by a deafening explosion, shattered the serenity of this Sunday morning. A ball of fire sprang into the ceiling. The house shook. The desk disintegrated. The door dissolved into splinters that scattered onto the staircase just outside the study. The window was blown out. Soyinka was thrown back from his chair. He felt an electric shock, and momentarily lost consciousness. His pair of glasses had flown off.

The sudden explosion caused Funmi to jerk up from her seat, at the same time that Billy ran into the living area from his room. Seconds later, Soyinka staggered out of the study and ran out into the street. Funmi raced into the study, Billy on her heels. She thought it was the

airconditioner that had exploded. Why did he not come out now?

In the far corner of the room, where he had been flung, lay Giwa in a pool of blood. Pockets of fire dotted the place. Smoke filled the room rapidly.

Funmi rushed to his side, screaming. He was conscious but his face contorted in pain. "They have killed me," he cried. Billy, confused, ran out for help. Funmi tried to drag him from the room, away from the choking smoke. The skin of his arms peeled in her hands. She screamed for help. Giwa cried out in pain.

Giwa's night shirt caught fire. His wife tore it off him. It was then she saw his thighs. Both of them were shattered. The bones stuck out, splinters of bone meshed with shredded flesh. Funmi's mind shut out the image. Her only thought was to get him out before the smoke—he was already coughing—choked him to death. In the ruined study, the airconditioner still worked.

Help came in trickles. Some people rushed into the room, saw the spectacle, and ran out in horror. Billy and a few hands assisted Funmi in dragging out her husband. Blood trailed them into the living room.

Somebody removed the glass top of the dining table. It would serve as stretcher. Very gingerly, fearing his legs might drop off. Giwa was placed onto the makeshift stretcher. While dragging him, the skin of his two arms peeled off down to the wrists to cover his fingers. For some moments, he was alert, and then he would slump, at which point Funmi would rouse him.

She tried to open the glass doors so they could carry him out. The doors would not budge. Frantic, Funmi smashed the glass and cut her wrist in the process.

Outside, a crowd had gathered. No one could drive any of the cars parked in the house. A passerby brought an open-van. Giwa was placed in it, and Funmi climbed in with him. Billy joined them. The van sped to the First Foundation Medical Centre.

Giwa shut his eyes against the pain and the sun, which shone directly on his grave wounds. He complained about the sun. Funmi told him not to worry, they would soon get to the hospital. "They have killed a great mind, you know," he said. Funmi said they had only tried. When he got well, both of them were going to show them.

Giwa became silent as he sank slowly into unconsciousness. Billy urged Funmi to keep talking to him. She called his name. He did not answer. Funmi cried out. "I will go mad, o!" Giwa opened his eyes briefly, almost reassuringly, and closed them again.

At the hospital, a surgery team was quickly assembled. Dr Tosin Ajayi, Giwa's friend with whom he originally discussed the *Newswatch* project, was in panic. Much of Giwa's lifeblood had drained out of him. As they took his blood sample, he told the nurses his genotype and asked for an analgesic. Funmi was taken out of the room.

The doctors scrambled to save his life. They frantically went through the pre-surgery motions. But it was a lost battle. The patient said he was getting tired. Then he started gasping. Ajayi tapped him on the shoulder and shouted his name. He opened his eyes, which had become rather dull. Calling on last reserves, Giwa said faintly: "Tosin, they've got me." He closed his eyes again. A cherubic peace settled on his face like dew.

At precisely 12.27 hours, on this Sunday, October 19, 1986, Dele Giwa's struggle came to a tragic end.

*** *** ***

The news, as tragic news does, spread quickly across the land. A shocked and bewildered nation was enveloped in grief. Ray Ekpu officially announced the vicious termination of his friend's life. In his statement, he outlined the events leading to Giwa's death, and the fears he had expressed concerning his personal safety.

The *Newswatch* board of directors called on President Babangida to institute an "independent judicial commission of enquiry to investigate all the circumstances surrounding the assassination." The board suggested that the panel be headed by a retired high court judge.

In addition, *Newswatch* called for the suspension from duty and detention, of the security officials who were circumstantially linked with the killing, pending the outcome of the inquiry.

Most newspapers spoke in a similar vein. *The Guardian* in particular, called for the appointment of a special prosecutor, "who is given the power to question anyone, examine all relevant documents,

pursue all leads, and direct all police investigations of Giwa's murder."

Apart from professional unions and pressure groups, eminent Nigerians also sought to galvanise the government into action. Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka who said Giwa's death turned the celebration of his achievement into "ashes in our mouths," said the least the government could do, if it wanted a credible investigation, was to relieve the security agents mentioned, from their posts.

On Monday, October 20th, the day after Giwa died, Aikhomu met media executives at Dodan Barracks, over the tragedy. It was a confidential briefing designed to absolve the government of any involvement in Giwa's murder. The briefing, as *The Guardian* noted, 'turned out to be a self-defeating gesture.'

With Aikhomu at the meeting were Gwarzo of the SSS and Akilu of the DMI, who were there to render their own account of events that happened in the recent past. The SSS boss confirmed that his agency had been 'interviewing' Giwa on the allegations. The DMI also confirmed his phone calls—that he spoke to Mrs. Giwa and asked for Giwa's address and also that he spoke to Giwa on the 18th of October, the day before he was killed.

At the same briefing, the DMI attempted to dispel rumours of his involvement by pointing to his expertise: "I am a trained man," he said. "If there were any sinister motives, I could not have told Giwa's wife my name. I could have asked someone else to tell me his address. I wouldn't have been stupid enough to phone the wife two times and keep telling her that I am the one phoning."

The government probably believed that that briefing was enough. It announced, through their information minister, Tony Momoh, that the issue was a matter for the police to investigate, and that a special probe would serve no useful purpose. On the day Giwa was assassinated, Momoh after viewing Giwa's destroyed body, told all present, that the Babangida government would probe the murder. Later that day, at the premises of *Newswatch*, Momoh restated his pledge. But while defending the new decision, he said the word probe did not necessarily mean a special investigation.

Following the signals that government gave on its attitude to the investigation of Giwa's murder, his lawyer, Gani Fawehinmi decided

to institute proceedings in court for a private prosecution of both Akilu and Togun. He was determined not to let the matter rest.

The press on its own sought to interview A.K. Togun on the issue and an opportunity came on 27th October 1986, in a chance meeting with reporters at the airport. He commented freely on Dele Giwa's tragic death and explained that Giwa was well known to him and was one of the media executives who had recently come to a security seminar on government and the press, in which the media agreed that the SSS review any material which may be damaging to national security.

On the same day, Monday, October 27th 1986, while attending a hearing in the *Williams* Vs *Newswatch* case, Fawehinmi told Ray Ekpu of his intention to prosecute the two government officials. He said he would not use anyone's name but his own. Ekpu did not oppose the move. Giwa's family never opposed it.

But *Newswatch* directors, convinced that the action was premature tried to dissuade Fawehinmi from going to court. When Fawehinmi refused, on November 4, 1986, the directors of *Newswatch* disassociated themselves from Fawehinmi's action.

Even though he had no intention of involving *Newswatch* directly in the case, Fawehinmi was nonetheless bitter that they disavowed him publicly. He did not see the reason for it. He did not think his action clashed with the objectives of *Newswatch*. If they were interested in finding Giwa's killers, they could use their own tactics as journalists. He was using the only one he knew, the legal process. Fawehinmi took out pages of advertisement in the papers to reply *Newswatch*. In the end, the case was thrown out of court.

Chris Omeben, deputy inspector general of police, said in an interview with *The Guardian* on Sunday, nine months after Giwa's death, that all their leads had been exhausted and had come to naught.

If not who, then, why? Why kill Dele Giwa? Was it because of something he knew? Was it something he was believed to know? Or something he did not know he knew? Was it something he did? Or something he said, or something he planned to do? Why kill Dele Giwa?

*** *** ***

November 8, 1986: The long convoy of cars following the hearse slowly approached the tiny village of Ugbekpe-Ekperi. Up in the sky, the sun sent white, hot rays to earth, bouncing off the gleaming automobiles.

Along the way, the villages of the Ekperi clan turned out their impoverished kids, who stared, sadly, at the invaders bringing the dressed-up remains of their famous son.

The convoy snaked into the final destination, met by a crowd of mourners with tear-streaked eyes. The wails mixed with the dust clouds and rose into the clear skies.

The bereaved grieved. The mother expressed her sorrow with funereal, haunting sounds from deep in a mother's heart.

The mourners moaned. Traditional burial rites were conducted for a man who had little patience for tradition.

The actors talked, with impressive grandiloquence. The sun grew weary and the sun went down. Dele Giwa, shut away in a black casket, went down into the grave.

Forever.

Alone.

Epilogue

WITH Dele Giwa gone, *Newswatch,* his most beloved baby took a trip into the cesspit of misery. The staff of the magazine, now led by Ray Ekpu, the new chief helmsman, carried on, despite the deep depression which hung in the atmosphere. Everyday was a big, deflating sigh. Relations between the magazine and the government had hit an all time low.

The overpowering, and suffocating, embrace of nostalgia, of what might have been, like a heavy steel band, locked around the throat of the magazine, dragged the staff down, made them wallow in self-pity. The constant companion was wistfulness—If . . .

In the recesses of Ekpu's mind—darkness was the halo around his heart—the inevitable question, if he took a decision, was *If. If* it were Dele Giwa, how would he have reacted? *If* it were Dele Giwa, how would he have fared?

That was the major emotional hurdle with which Ekpu had to contend. The weight of his unexpected responsibilities pressed down on him, stooped his shoulders, plastered a vacant expression on his eyes. Ekpu walked about with the weight of the whole world on his broad shoulders. He was distracted, crestfallen, uncertain.

Week after depressing week, stories published in the magazine, by *Newswatch* standards, were poor and unimaginative. The staff, including the three remaining founding editors, felt a big gash in the structure, a hollow, empty space that echoed in the subconscious.

Even though circumstances had thrust on him the responsibilities hitherto borne by his friend, Ekpu did not immediately take charge.

He could not. Just as he could not move into his friend's office. The ghosts were too many. Ekpu moved his secretary into Giwa's office.

In December, Agbese took a controversial step that violated the original agreement he had signed with his colleagues. About a month before Giwa was murdered, he had been offered a seat on the NTA board by the federal government. He discussed the matter with Giwa and the others. It was decided that he could not accept the appointment because of the original agreement they had, to the effect that none of the founding editors could take a political appointment in the first ten years of the magazine's life, and if any of them did, he would have to resign from Newswatch. The matter was not pressed because the government in any case did not appear ready to inaugurate the board.

Late in November 1986, the government announced that the board would be inaugurated on December 5. Agbese was formally invited to take his eminent place among the honourable members to be sworn in.

This again brought the matter to the surface. Ekpu refused flatly to accept the possibility of Agbese taking the appointment. Agbese too said he had no intention of doing so.

On Thursday, December 4, a day before the ceremony, Richard Ikiebe, who was a member of Giwa's team on the features' desk at the *Daily Times,* and who had joined *Newswatch* shortly before Giwa was murdered, met with Agbese and the other editors. Ikiebe had been offered a job as personal assistant to Tony Momoh. He wanted his bosses to allow him an automatic return to *Newswatch,* whenever he left the ministerial aide job. Agbese unequivocally told him that it was impossible; *Newswatch* did not have any such policy.

On the following day, however, Agbese met Ikiebe at the inauguration of the NTA board. The NTA is a parastatal under the Ministry of Information, where Ikiebe now worked. The young man, to say the least, was shocked to find Dan Agbese, who had opposed his taking a political appointment with the facility of automatic return to the Newswatch job, seated with the new board members, ready to take his oath.

Ikiebe was not the only one who was so shocked. Earlier that morning, Ekpu was summoned from his bedroom. Agbese was in the house to see him, he was told. Ekpu found Agbese fully dressed. Where would he be going that time of the morning, in formal clothes?

Agbese informed Ekpu that he was on his way to the inauguration of the NTA board. Ekpu was perplexed. Up until the previous night, the understanding they reached had been that, in view of their earlier agreement, it was impossible and a breach of a legal agreement for Agbese to accept the job. Why the unilateral turnaround?

Agbese explained that, if he refused, the president would be angry. He had tried to dodge the issue, had even sent some of his friends in the military, to say that he could not accept because of the agreement he had signed.

However, according to him, Umana, the chairman of the board, had told the president, inaccurately, that the agreement had been amended. And there he was. His hands were tied. He had to go. Otherwise, the president would be very unhappy with him.

Ekpu was dumbfounded. Agbese presented himself for the swearing-in. The agreement, at the first test, had been thrown to the winds.

The staff became suspicious of Agbese's intentions. His credibility took a nose dive. Ekpu could not enforce the provisions of the agreement. He had, in the state in which he was, neither the will, nor, apparently, the authority to do so. He had to accept Agbese's vague promise to resign 'soon.' He has since resigned.

The magazine plodded on into 1987. Early in the year, Ekpu journeyed to India for a meeting of the Commonwealth Journalists Association. He was away for one week. When he returned, it was apparent that Ekpu had undergone a transformation. The trip was just what he needed to drag himself out of the depths of despair and, especially, the lonely life he had come to lead.

Some of the old sparkle returned to his eyes. He felt generally better. All the staff unconsciously responded to this renewed energy. The magazine itself underwent some improvements. The response to issues and events became faster and much more profound. There appeared to be an imminent end to the gloom.

On Tuesday, March 31, 1987, Ray Ekpu was especially upbeat. A victorious smile danced in his eyes. He summoned a meeting of the editorial board. The cause of his elation was the receipt, within the hour, of the report of the political bureau just submitted to Babangida, which detailed suggestions on Nigeria's political future.

The editorial board, unanimously, went ahead with preparing the reports for the magazine's edition of April 6 dated April 13. All ten members of the board were excited. Not one of them suggested that the reports could be handled otherwise.

The April 13th edition was produced within 24 hours. It was a special edition, the political bureau report bestrode the magazine from cover to cover. By Thursday, April 2, the magazine had gone to the printers.

On Friday April 3, Yakubu Mohammed received a call from the director of Military Intelligence. It was about 10 p.m., and the conversation lasted less than two minutes. The director told Mohammed that government was aware that *Newswatch* planned a story on the Cookey report and that it would not be happy about it. Mohammed replied that there was nothing to it—in truth, the report was genuinely boring—and that it was actually in the interest of the government. Mohammed offered to discuss fully with him the following day, to put his mind at rest. The DMI agreed, but was unavailable throughout that Saturday.

By Sunday night, police had occupied the premises of the magazine, after making sure the magazine was circulated. By Monday afternoon, Dodan Barracks proscribed *Newswatch* by word of mouth and, on Friday April 10, issued a decree, appropriately backdated, to give the verbal proscription order a force of law.

It was a devastating blow to the magazine which only was beginning to emerge from the shock of the killing of its editor-in-chief. The government it seemed was not interested in just proscribing the magazine, but in rubbing in the dust, the noses of its three remaining founding editors. Without a whimper the three of them, like cattle on the block, meekly and, perhaps, wisely submitted themselves to public humiliation for doing what they believed was right. *Newswatch,* as originally constituted, was basically dead.

"What happened was a partial eclipse," Ray Ekpu told an interviewer. "The sun will shine again."

While a threat of prosecution under the official secrets act hung on their necks, the government sent feelers to the beleaguered editors and stated its condition: a public apology and a written one to the president to be personally delivered to Dodan Barracks. Having vacillated from the start, leaving all the shots to the opposition, the

three editors, led by Ray Ekpu, found themselves boxed into a corner. It was a final act of humiliation. The government collected its pound of flesh without promising anything in return. *Newswatch* was banned for six months; the threat of prosecution still followed its editors like a shadow.

*** *** ***

Alone in his life and now in his final resting place, Dele Giwa found fame an elusive and fatal master. He was a man who made things move, whose sheer force magically electrified a gathering; now betrayed and murdered, reduced to a nostalgic *if* ... .

Born to run, Dele Giwa escaped from the misery of abject poverty, from middle-class mediocrity, from obscurity. In the short span of 39 years, with the blessing of a good brain and through the sheer dint of hard labour he rose from being the shoeless boy of a washerman to the undisputed number one investigative journalist in Nigeria. His flare was brief; he lived his life as every professional journalist should, ticking on life's time-bomb.

Appendix I
Dele Giwa's letter to Fawehinmi.

Dear Chief,

I have just at this moment returned from the State Security Service where I had a meeting at its headquarters, known as 15 Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, where I had a talk with Lt. Col. A.K. Togun in the presence of a Mrs Aliyu, also a staff of the SSS. The meeting started at about 10 o'clock this morning, and lasted one hour, and it was as a result of a verbal invitation delivered to me yesterday at 6 p.m. by an officer of the SSS.

The matters discussed at the meeting were troubling, to say the least. One, I was told that I was planning a second story on the removal of Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe as the Chief of General Staff, based on what Lt. Col. Togun said were conversations that I had held with people close to the former CGS. Two, that I had told some people that I would take on the mantle of battle for Alozie Ogugbuaja, the police public relations officer now having problems with his employers and that I would employ him if he was fired. Three, that I had been holding talks with certain elements in the country who are trying to radicalize the society and looking for ways to cause instability to make their dream of a socialist Nigeria a reality. And four, the most serious of the allegations was that I had been holding talks with some people on the possibility of importing arms into the country.

I told Lt. Col. Togun that none of these allegations was true; that I had never met Commodore Ukiwe for a discussion, and that the only time I met him was at a dinner he organised for media executives, and that even during that dinner I did not have any private conversation with him, and did not sit with him. Specifically, I had not met the gentleman since his removal nor did I have a telephone conversation with him or any of his associates present or past. I also told the SSS officer that *Newswatch* was not planning any sequel on the 'Other Side' of the Ukiwe story as Lt. Col. Togun alleged. On the issue of socialising and destabilizing the society, I told Lt. Col. Togun that I had never had any such conversation either jovially or seriously with anybody, any such organisation as the NLC, ASUU or the student bodies.

Now to the more serious allegation of holding talks with certain people to explore the possibility of importing arms into the country, I am still in a state of shock, caused by the fact that anyone could contemplate an idea and then involve me. To start with, I do not know people who could be holding such views, who could be planning such evil, who could think of involving me, who could conceive of a situation such as that to which my honourable name would be dragged. While I am willing to indulge in a

philosophical discussion of the first three allegations, to wit, th
Newswatch was planning a sequel to Ukiwe's story or planning
give Ogugbuaja a job, or discuss the possibility of socialising t
society, I am not in a frame of mind to view lightly or let rest t
most dangerous allegation that the Federal Military Governme
was in the possession of any information linking my name wi
discussions or plans to foment a campaign of armed insurrecti
against the present government and ultimately the people
Nigeria.

I am sure you will agree with me, as my lawyer, that these a
grave accusations or allegations of which I must do all thin
possible to clear my name and disabuse the mind of the authority
this country that I, Dele Giwa, would be linked to something
asinine and dangerous as to plan with people to cause social unres
and thus to go as dangerously far as to hold discussions wi
unknown people on the possibility of importing arms into t
country. I ask you in the name of God to take up the concer
expressed above with the SSS and the federal military governmen

Thanks for your usual cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd.)"
Dele Giwa