

The Election

By

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I say, I don't win again! Win what? I don't win the party ticket to contest the position of Governor of Ponnomo State at the next election. The party's name? None other than PPP. People's Progressive Party. I say, I don't win! This is a story of how I arrived at this position. Read and learn.

The Flight

Our detractors call us the Plague and Plunder Party. What do you expect from losers, eh? I have no time for them. They make all the noise in the papers and then at midnight they come by and ask for money. Oh yes! They come offering their constituencies for a ransom. I tell them all to get lost. Rather than spend on their measly voters, I will rig the elections with half the amount of money they demand. Nonsense! First things first, let me tell you about the flight.

When the news first came to me that all the contestants for the Gubernatorial party ticket were flying from Lagos to Ponnomo on a chartered flight, I was immediately suspicious. I decided that if I got to the airport and any of them was missing I would not board the flight. Ah ah, why risk flying into a trap?

The airport lobby was full. Everyone greets a politician prior to election. The fools called the electorate, with their ulterior motives written across their stony foreheads. They greet bowing before me, shaking my hand clasped between their two wretched hands. I can almost hear them think 'make we chop im moni now becos when e enta government house, we no go see im brake light'.

No problem, I have a little green book. All my expenditures are recorded in black ink. When I assume office, I have promised myself to first take back all my expenses as a matter of priority. With interest o! Correct interest. If na you, wetin you go do? Ah ah! I am a free born of Ponnomo. A son of the soil. A foetus in the womb of Ponnomo. I tell you, I will plaster my placenta on the state treasury while I sleep in government house. A beautiful umbilical cord will connect that placenta to my pocket. Is that not what the students call direct entry? I have deep pockets o! Forgive my digressions.

Every idiot in Ponnomo State feels he deserves a visit from me just because I want to contest. And when you go on visits they never listen to policies. 'Dat one na grammar' they think as they scratch their hungry- man byah byah awaiting my obligatory *brown envelop* or *Ghana must go* presentation. These are the same hypocrites who will go on TV lamenting the bad roads. I tell you, when I get to Government house the pot holes will become as deep as wells. Perhaps that will solve the portable water scarcity.

The only road I will be tarring is the one to my foreign accounts. Oh yes. And none of that USA and Europe nonsense for me. It is Dubai and South Africa where my 'moni washerman' will be operating (if you understand my French). I have seen the apartments we will buy already. Well not actually seen as in the flesh but a picture tells a million stories. Make we leave dat one for now.

Take Off.

We were all fixing our seat belts and being irritated by the ye ye Captain. 'Ladies and Gentlemen, this is Captain Yakata welcoming you to Pay as you go Airline's flight to Ponnomo state. I understand most of you are heading for the PPP Gubernatorial contest and I wish all participants success'. Rapturous cries of 'Sir Skido land slide!' filled the aircraft. I waved my horse- tail in recognition of the voice of the people.

My enemies looked on with envy. May pepper enter their eye ointment. Nonsense.
I fool pass Garri sha. Why should I be flying with political enemies on the same flight, eh?
A pregnant woman squeezes down the aisle for the umpteenth time.

‘Madam, we are about to take off’ said our air hostess. The pregnant woman looks ready to give birth. ‘Abeg, tell driver to hold brake, need the loo’ she replied. It was then the action started. Two men in dark glasses suddenly stood and made for the cockpit. I knew something was up.

FRIGHT

Seconds after they went out of view, what sounded like gun shots could be heard.

The man next to me became hysterical ‘I knew I shouldn’t have come on this flight. We don’t come jam all these Niger Delta Militants for here. Kai, I don’t die’. Die ke? Me, I cannot die for anybody. To tell you the truth, all my wealth is finished, and we are still at party ticket level. When I am declared winner tonight, I still need to campaign throughout Ponmon’s length and ‘bad’ breath. Oh yes! ‘Bad’ breath. That is what I call the greedy grandees with rotten teeth who flatter with laudations of ‘our Governor’, while they look for ‘something’. And these same vultures complain when the Police ask for ‘something’ at road junctions. The truth is clear, at least the Policeman has worked for his ‘something’. Wetin these ye ye ‘King makers’ dey do? Sit, drink, impregnate their daughter’s friends and then suck the blood of every aspiring Politician in Ponmon.

I tell you, when I get to Government house eh!

No worries about my financial state (excuse the pun) once I get the party ticket tonight, the sponsorships and donations will flow in. Like I said, I have a green book. Any company that does not donate handsomely to my campaign fund will not get a contract in Ponmon for eight years. (You sabi say na two terms I go do now). They know they cannot survive without government contracts and whoever wins the PPP primaries has won the state. The other grasshopper contestants from the other groups, (‘Children’s parties’ I call them), will be compensated. We know how we do it. Close to polling day when it is obvious they cannot win, we promise them good positions on various boards and they go tell their people to vote for me. Finito!

I must say, it has not been easy for me to be throwing away hard earned money in the name of politics. I have suffered in Lagos for thirty years. First as an electrician, then I moved into the electric generator trade. At one time, I even sold electric chairs. Hard earned money, I had to give out so freely in the last two years. Even sef, all the millions I have in the boxes with which I am now travelling, are borrowed from the bank. My mansion in Lekki is the collateral. Please do not tell my wife o! If she hears, she will definitely call me ‘Ajegunle jejune!’ That woman a bad mouth bad.

I’d rather spend time in jail than hear her evil tongue.

Back to the crisis. The two men now holding guns marched out the pilots down the aisle. The gunmen looked so familiar but I couldn’t place their ugly faces. The shorter one took off his sun glasses to reveal eyes the colour of blood.

‘This is not a hi-jack as you suppose. We are only here to do our job. Once we have finished your flight can continue. Now bring out all your mobile phones’. His accomplice produces a big bag and started collecting phones. He spoke as he moved along. He told how he feared we may make calls to the Police about their operation. He also said he girlfriend sold mobile phones and this would make a nice present birthday present. In this nations we are all well schooled, we don’t argue with the one who holds the gun. When he had finished the brought out some paper from his breast pocket and began to read.

‘Who is Skido?’ he asked. Ha! My enemies have done their worse I thought to myself.

‘I say who is Sir Skido!’ he shouted. It was then I recognised the faces. ‘That is my name’ I answered.

‘O, it is you sir. Well our work sheet says we should assassinate you now. You have two choices head or heart, which will it be?’ the stupid man asked. I then walked up to him and whispered ‘Are you two not from Mile 2 security

services? I paid your boss to stage a mock assassination attempt at Ponmon airport. What is all this nonsense? All I wanted was to discredit my stupid opponents and swing the primaries my way'.

The idiot had no discretion. 'Oga Skido, we have four jobs on our sheet. Two are to assassinate you, one contract from yourself and the other from Chief Professor Tom Tom' he said. I turned to point at Chief Professor 'So you are behind this eh? I have witnesses o! I knew you wanted me eliminated!'

Chief Professor stood and shouted 'I do not know these men. My hands are clean'.

The shorter hoodlum who had been quiet all along pointed his pistol at Chief Professor and simply said 'confess now'. The Chief Professor lost composure and began to cry 'It was bad advise from politician advisers. They said Skido was planning against me and we needed to hit him before he hit us'.

I was in shock.

The assassins went on to read the other jobs. Protect Chief Mrs Chingum during the flight and to protect Chief Professor Tom Tom at the hotel where the primaries would take place.

'This is a mess. How can you take four jobs from contestants in the same gubernatorial race. This is what is spoiling this great country of ours' I said. The rest of the passengers were frozen in their seats.

The short hoodlum began to speak. 'My name is John. I take responsibility for the mix up. You see, I belong to a large family of land owners in Lagos. We sell one plot of land twelve times or more. To all that care to buy. Those are my guiding principles in business. I will collect money and jobs from as many as are willing to pay me'.

It was then the pregnant lady started her screaming 'Ah! My waters have broken o!'

'Shut up woman, can't you see I am trying to talk, why should your waters break now, ah-ah. These Lagos women sef, your mouth like pure water!' John barked at the woman.

The pilot then regained the use of his tongue, 'is there a midwife or doctor on board?' he asked. Two hands went up.

'I think we are wasting time, Kunle let us do our job, so this flight can commence' said John to his friend still holding his work sheet.

'Eh John, if we kill Skido now, do we fly with the body to Ponmo or should these air hostesses open up the door so we can throw the body down?'

'Na true o, I no fit fly with dead bodi. Air hostess, open the door' said John.

At this point all the eba and soup I have ever swallowed flashed before my eyes. Na lie, I cannot die and then miss many more illustrious years of eba swallowing. No way. I had to think of something fast.

'Eh, John. You seem a reasonable man'. John's smile told me I was heading in the right direction. I continued, 'Two things I ask for, one is a last wish and second is for K-TV to film the whole incident'. Ben Benito Junior alias BBJ of K-TV shook nervously in his seat. I knew he had a film crew with him. They were all flying down to cover the primaries. What it not yesterday I gave them brown envelopes in my office?

John thought for a few seconds. 'Okay. I think the publicity will give Mile 2 security services a higher profile. Ngwa, start filming'.

I then told him my last wish. Bringing out a huge *Ghana must go*, overflowing with Naira and Dollars, I told him to add a fifth job to his work sheet work sheet. A kind of fifth amendment if you understand my French. Kill all the gubernatorial candidates on board I requested. You need to have seen their faces. Chief Mrs Chingum began to cry, 'na who send me o? Skido, are you not my husbands friend? Hey!'

John rubbed his hands gleefully. 'Kunle write it down kia kia. Make work start'. After scribbling down the new commission he read out the jobs.' Skido to be killed three times; once for himself, once for Chief Professor Tom Tom and one more for himself. Then kill Chief Professor for Skido and protect Chief Professor at the PPP Primaries in Ponmo. Next protect Chief Mrs Chingum during the flight but before that kill her for Skido. And last but not the least kill Chief Tirebo, for Skido' said Kunle as he raised his pistol.

All concerned and their supporters were in hysterics. John began to scratch his head, 'I don't confuse, air hostess abeg give me Paracetamol and pure water'.

There was now high tension in the aircraft. The back door had been opened and people on the ground were wondering why the aircraft's engine was off. Soon a few police vehicles began to appear. The pregnant lady began to scream from the back of the aircraft. 'It is twins o. We need to get this woman off the plane. I am a Doctor and I demand it' came a voice from the back.

John was not impressed. 'So, una don call police eh. Airhostess, shut that door. If that woman not fit born here, na im know. No bi im mate dey born pickin on top tree?'. The hostess shut the door and the drama continued.

K-TV, start filming. BBJ as professional as ever got started.

'Hi, viewers at home, welcome to the drama. The plane has been hi-jacked by two men who are promising to kill all the four contestants for the PPP gubernatorial ticket. Your award winning station is once again in the thick of the action.

The would be assassins are John and Kunle. And the gubernatorial candidates are Sir Skido, Chief Professor Tom Tom, Chief Tirebo and last and definitely the finest, Chief Mrs Chingum'. Three assistants surrounded BBJ as he spoke. One dangled a Microphone over head while the other two struggled with lighting and camera equipment. The camera man swung his camera from BBJ to the passengers while the light man tried his best to keep up.

I must confess, I had no plan. I thought I must do something no matter how foolish to prolong my life. How absurd we must have looked. All stood on the aisle sweating.

BBJ stretched his microphone under John's chin and began to ask questions. With the look John gave him I half expected him to raise his pistol and blow off BBJ's brains. 'So what has lead you to a life of crime?' BBJ asked. The light was now shining on John's face. Beads of sweat ran down his creased forehead. John relaxed a bit when he realised he might become a TV star. He smiled nervously 'eh, I am not a criminal. I provide bespoke security services on behalf of my boss Mile 2' John spluttered.

'But you have just announced you are going to kill Sir Skido three times. That is both illegal and impossible' John now wore a defensive look as he braced himself to answer, 'illegal ke. Skido paid for job and I will execute. He wanted us to kill him and he paid. I do not see anything in the constitution against that'.

'Okay, he paid. You hold the gun so we have to give you the benefit of being right. Now, how will you kill Skido three times? If you don't you would be in breach of your contract with him, abi you go kill and resurrect?' asked BBJ.

Chief Mrs Chingum joined in 'how would you protect me during this flight and kill me at the same time?' John looked very confused. He turned to Kunle who looked equally confused. The passengers seeing their uncertainty began to chant 'Kill no one! Kill no one! Kill no one!'

BBJ smiled and spoke into the camera. 'Democracy has spoken, the voice of the people has stopped the mouths of the gun. Power to the people'. BBJ then turned to John 'What are you thinking?'

'I am thinking of declaring amnesty to all but I have promised my Juju that I will kill someone today before I left home. I cannot return to the shrine empty handed. Minimum I must kill one' My blood ran cold. It looked like death has decided to hang around me today. Na lie. There must be a way out. Chai! The cabin was getting darker and hotter each minute. The cry of a baby broke the ice. 'Na boy o!' we heard from the back of the plane. There was general applause. 'A gift of life for the curse of death. May that be our portion in this nation and in our beloved Ponmon state!' screamed Pastor Jimoh. 'Amen!' we answered in one accord. Even the ye ye would be assassins joined in. That Jimoh never ceases to amaze me. Twenty years ago we used to attend the same brothel for our weekly 'boys night out'. Now he is more pious than the Pope. Na wa. I was flying him down to the primaries as my spiritual adviser cum prayer warrior. If he doesn't deliver soon, these fools will shoot me. Meanwhile BBJ squeezed past to interview the new mother. Kunle and John had a quick meeting to decide who should get shot. I strained my ears but couldn't hear. I must live o! I have always dreamed of dying in my mansion surrounded by grand children. How can a titled man die in this stinking plane? And you know what? If you die of gun shots, it will be a post mortem. My body will belong to the police to cut up as they please. Not that I worry about being cut up. No. It is what they will find when they undress me that I worry about. You see I was born without testicles. That is my secret. The whole town will now know that all my children are not mine. Kai! I had to tell madam Skido to go out and find children. That was our family planning. Of course the men had to look a bit like me. How would it look if an Oyinbo pickin commot. The shame! All my enemies will run my family out of town.

Then of course they will see the amulets I wear round my waist and the juju calabash across my chest. Remember that I am a Deacon in church. Then there is the condom. I don die o! I had forgotten the condom. No these people cannot shoot me. No way. The condom story is for another day but as you look inquisitive I will cut a long story short if you get my meaning. You see last year I started being visited by this beautiful woman each night. She had flowing long hair and an hour glass figure. We loved each other. She always came when I fell asleep. When I woke up after being with her, madam Skido began to look ugly in my eyes. I told Pastor Jimoh and he said I was loving a mami water demon. He ordered me to appear for deliverance and stop these visits. What! Deliver me from wetin I dey enjoy? Na lie. I started avoiding Pastor Jimoh. I told madam Skido that Jimoh was paranoid. He saw a demon in everything.

I continued my love affair with this beautiful mermaid for weeks. I thought of her all day at work and couldn't wait to go to bed after dinner. I even stopped watching the evening news. Now the condoms, yes. One morning I woke up and asked madam if she eat fish the previous night. 'Darling, but you sabi say I dey forbid fish' she replied. 'So why are you farting fishy gas' I asked. We argued for a few minutes till she screamed 'what are these?' There were clumps of fish scales all over our bed. What! Imagine the cheek. So that mami water had the audacity to appear in the center of my matrimonial bed. God forbid. I still refused to go for exorcism and madam Skido evacuated the bedroom.

I became afraid though. You sabi say if mami water give you AIDS, no one can cure that ailment. You will need a Doctor who can come into the dream world to offer treatments. Where will I find such a Doctor in Lagos? Since then I have always worn a condom. Day and night. Ah ah, you cannot be too careful. I once fell asleep in a board meeting and she appeared. When I woke everyone was looking at me strangely. Till date they have refused to repeat what I was saying in my sleep. So there you have it. The story of my 'always wear a condom' life style. Chai! I would be too embarrassed to be undressed by those lowly mortuary attendants. Surely they will laugh at the absent testicles and the blue condom I have on. I must not die today!

Imagine going off without saying goodbye to madam Skido. Na lie. Was it not her savings I used to buy my first tool kit all those years ago? Did I not use what was left of her savings for my hospital bills after my electrocution three weeks into the job? Ha! That woman has supported me o! All my six children look like me. How she chooses the men, I do not know. Fear women o! That notwithstanding, I love her. This mami water girl or spirit or what ever she calls herself must go. Anything it takes. Even if I have to move in with Pastor Jimoh and fast for twenty one days.

BBJ is now back. 'I have an idea, let us vote on who we want alive. The politician with the smallest votes can be shot. After all this is a democracy' said Kunle. Chief Professor Tom Tom refused flatly. He didn't seem to have much support among the passengers. Chief Mrs Chingum smiled and began to fan herself. She is such a beauty. Even me gaan will vote for her to live before I vote for myself. She knew that this democracy favoured her. Who would shot a woman when there are men to be shot?

BBJ suggested we all be allowed to give a five minute presentation of our manifesto. A sort of mock election campaign. The one with the least votes loses his life. Everyone cheered. The passengers were now convinced they would not be harmed and didn't care what happened to us.

I did my calculations. Chief professor is a born orator. Chief Mrs Chingum is just too yellow and cute. That makes this a race between me and Chief Tirebo. I do hope he has written his will. Let the Ayo begin!

THE FIGHT

BBJ was now on his best form. Screaming down the camera like he had a mixture of rabies infection and kai kai swimming around his brain. 'Trust K-TV to bring you all the action as it happens' and on and on he went.

John motioned to me with his pistol to set the ball rolling. I signalled to two of my aides to bring down the black sports bag from the overhead luggage compartment. If it is a campaign they want them it is a campaign they will get. 'Pastor Jimoh, please pray for us all as we start; that is if John and Kunle are in agreement' I said looking at ulgy John. I say he must have been conceived on a stormy moonless night when all the demons came out to play. To own such a face is a punishment. Wowo criminal!

Pastor Jimoh stood and said 'let us pray'. Caps were removed and heads bowed. 'O Lord of Africa! O Lord of Ponmo! Here we are in the belly of this metallic Leviathan. Oh Lord, do not let any life be lost. As you took Jonah to Nineveh take us to Ponmon. Let us all land in Ponmon airport in one piece and proclaim your glory . In Jesus name!' We all chorused a resounding amen.

I cleared my throat and began. 'You all know me and what I stand for. Light in the face of darkness and the dissemination of the fruits of democracy.' I dipped my hands in the black bag and emerged with a fist full of Naira. I threw it in all directions. They all scrambled. I keep on showering them till the bag was empty.

I told them of how hard I worked to give electricity to Lagos by selling affordable generators. I ended on a high. 'A constant electric supply will generate industries and jobs in Ponmo and thus reduce crime. I promise to give a solar panel to every household in Ponmon within three weeks of assuming office. In my generosity I will extend this good will gesture to the homeless who sleep under the bridges. I shall fix solar panels and ceiling fans under every bridge. Yes that is my electric power supply policy and housing policy all rolled into one'. The applause was thunderous. I say I don win. My aides lead the singing and all joined in the victory song, their voices somewhat augmented by the crisp naira notes in their hands.

Winner, eh, eh, eh

Winner

Sir Skido you don win o

Winner

Pata pata, you go win forever

Winner

I too my seat. I hear a second baby cry. 'Na man she born again o!' we heard from the back.

BBJ went berserk ' Babies are rushing into the world to be a part the Sir Skido new world order'. I dipped my hand into my Agbada and brought out a bundle of notes. 'Anyone born during my speech is my pickin. Tell the mother well done for her pushing'. I gave the money to an aide who made his way to the back of the plane to give the poor woman my monetary gift.

When the noise settled and I had finished milking in the support of the people Kunle still wearing those awful dark glasses asked the pilot to switch the engines on. 'I think we need a bit of air conditioning' was his reply when John gave him a stern look.

'Eh, Captain pay as you go or whatever that your name is, do not radio anybody from that cockpit, ok' warned John. Kunle introduced the next speaker. Chief Tirebo. I felt sorry for him. He had no speech planed. We all knew he was in the primaries so to steal support from Chief Professor Tom Tom (The two of them hail from the same local government area and hence had the same support base) and hand over his 'people' to Chief Mrs Chingum. He was fully sponsored by the Chingum family. Now he had to speak to save his life.

'Fellow citizens, I am the only one worthy of this great office. Sir Skido is a second rate electrician who made his money laundering cash through his electric generator business'. I almost choked. How did he know! So his plan is to rubbish the opposition; a tried and tested approach especially when there is nothing original to say. Chief Tirebo now had everyone's attention. The planes engine and lights came on and the air conditioners came alive. 'See my good fortune, my good head. As soon as I opened my mouth everybody is comfortable. My people you must have noticed I did not employ these useless criminals to do any jobs. My hands are clean.' What bravery, to call the assassins criminals to their faces. John smiled and waved him on. 'Chief Mrs Chingum is a woman of easy virtue. We called her jollof rice; to be tasted by all'

'E no go better for your fada!' screamed Chief Mrs from her seat. 'See the words from her mouth. Pretty on the outward and rotten inside. Is this the nonsense we what in government house?' Chief Tirebo raised his hands as he asked that question. He was greeted with a loud 'No!'. I made a mental note to add insults to my repertoire when I finally hit the campaign trial. (That is if I survive today). Insults work!

Next he turned his venom on Chief professor Tom Tom. 'Tom Tom, where do I begin. Is it from his HIV positive test or the number of girls he has infected on campus. He claims to be creating leaders of tomorrow in that university but I know what he is up to. We even heard there is a skeleton in his bed room ward robe. The skeleton of his cousin that went missing two years ago' There was astonishment written on all our faces. We suspected these were lies but this is Lagos. Anything is possible. We were all too shocked to clap. Too stunned for any reaction. I suppose Chief Tirebo had his back to the wall and had to come out fighting.

Politics is a dirty game.

Next John pointed to Chief Professor Tom Tom. It got even dirtier. 'I wish to apologize to the last speaker. I have been having an affair with his wife for the last two years. And yes I was unwise and I did not *condomise*. If she has passed anything on to the good Chief, accept my sympathy. We did not know where to look'. Chief professor signalled to his boys who began to walk up and down the aisle distributing watches, T-shirts and mobile phones all bearing prints of the Chief professor Tom Tom's face flashing what referred to in some circles as 'the victory smile'. BBJ and his crew kept on filming. When the goodies had been distributed Chief professor told us his plans to provide a secure Ponmon with a zero tolerance to crime. 'I will improve life expectancy in Ponmo' he boasted.

John interrupted ' what is our life expectancy in Ponmo and how many die a year'
'Forty eight years is the life expectancy in Ponmon. As to how many die a year, I do not know. Not everyone who dies receives a death certificate so we have no reliable statistics' replied Chief professor.
'Bifor nko? If I kill persin throway bodi, how e go get certificate?' asked John
'Ah, the big Professor go issue all assassins blank death certificates to dey fill when e win. We kill and issue the death certificate, fiam' joked Kunle. Chief Professor continued his speech. That man knows too much book, a big problem. Book cannot solve Ponmon's problems. Most of the citizens cannot read.

'I will attract foreign investors when I have tackled the security problems. You see, we should welcome globalization with open arms into Ponmon. That is the only hope for our unemployed work force. But tell me, if you sef be Oyinbo man, you go wan come invest in an armed robber infested environment?' Everyone gave a loud 'No!' I was amazed

to see John and Kunle shout their 'No!' with so much gusto. 'Your five minutes are up' said John and we clapped Chief Professor to his seat. I was beginning to fear for my life. Last was Chief Mrs Chingum. She stood on the aisle and took off with all guns blazing. 'My people of Ponmon, so because I fine this useless Chief Tirebo is calling me jollof eh? Why must ambitious women of Ponmon have to make apologies for their beauty? OK, I have a delicious *bakassi* but that does not mean everybody tastes it. They may look but they can never touch. Chief Chingum will confirm what I am about to say, he married me a virgin and no man born of woman has ever touched me! I take what this Chief Tirebo has said very personal. So what if I fine. I have fine face and breasts and I say that with no apologies. Na God do am, abi Pator Jimoh, I lie?'

The ye ye Jimoh whose air ticket I paid for let me down by he response 'you no lie my sister, all things great and wonderful, the Lord God made them all' Ah! The traitor. How can he be supporting my opponent so unashamedly? Encouraged by Jimoh's seal of approval she went on to higher gears, 'I won the first ever Miss Ponmon beauty pageant shortly after the creation of own great state. I have represented this state for the last twenty years with dignity. Do you know what it is to answer the name Miss Ponmon all these years. Anytime I hear Ponmon, I jump to attention. I have Ponmon in my heart always. Was it not I who devised the blueprint for the million Prada T-shirts to a million Ponmon children programme? I have the best interest of our children at heart and know what they need. Some think it is food, housing, medical care and education but I know it runs deeper. They need a sense of self worth and that was why the million Prada T-shirts was such a roaring success last year. I did it for passion and because of the government contract I secured to supply the T-shirts.

I have also put pride in the hearts of all Ponmon women. I have inspired them to rise above the obstacles put in their way and make something of their lives. But these Ponmon men sef. They see a successful women in a flashy car and they either say it's the husband's money or she's Ashewo. I will tell you who is the real Ashewo. It is our poor state Ponmon that these men have raped and abused throughout the years. These men have made Ponmon Ashewo and we must restore Ponmon to has previous glory' Chineke! Complete pandemonium. All the women went wild, shouting ,clapping and taking off their Igeles and swirling them in the air. I don die!

'BBJ, you have a nice voice. Read this poem I wrote last week during a time of deep meditation on the plight of our great state' Chief Mrs Chingum handed over a sheet of paper to BBJ and he went into the recital like it was his life and not mine that was on the line. I must confess sha, the tirade and ranting of Chief Mrs made her look delectable. Her flashing eyes and heaving chest. Chai! I say that woman is even more beautiful when angry. BBJ looked into his camera.

'I give you Ashewo written by Chief Mrs Chingum, the Olorogun of Gucci and the Sultan of Prada, Ponmo State

Ashewo has a job to do
Come planting or harvest seasons
Embracing strangers who have paid
She loves them by the dozen

Right leg is up the Niger
Left leg is down the Benue
Blind men queue up at hot Lokoja
Where lust points out the way

Just anyone can walk in
No qualifications required
Come pay the fee and soon replace
The one whose time has expired

Ashewo is convinced
She is on national service

She soothes the men and averts a war
With magic in her cervix

Money, love and demons
They pump all in Ashewo
Money, love and demons
They want to kill poor Ashewo

BBJ make a good job of the ye ye poem. The women all cheered wildly. Half of the 104 passengers were women. The twins has now been washed and wrapped in blankets and the mother and babies went over to greet Chief Mrs Chingum and she doted over with twins like they were her own.

John announced voting will be by a show of hands but all gubernatorial candidates will be exempt from voting. Everyone must vote or get shot.

Kunle whispered into John's ear and John informed us that the airhostesses will do the counting of hands. 'We will call them CEO. Complacent Electoral Omissions' he laughed as he spoke.

All of us were sent to the cockpit. To our surprise we found security agents all dressed in pilots' uniforms squeezing in through the windows armed to the teeth. Chief Mrs suppressed her scream. They signalled to us to keep quiet and using bizarre sign language got us to point out the positions of John and Kunle.

From what we later heard it happened in a flash. John and Kunle were both shot through the head and the ordeal was over. The plane was evacuated and while we sat in the VIP lounge being questioned by the police BBJ slipped the tapes to a runner who speed off to K-TV's studios. The useless TV station showed the whole sordid incident on live TV including John and Kunle's deaths. (I will miss those two stupid assassins in a roundabout kind of way). The airport was besieged by our supporters and well wishers. I must confess, I enjoyed the attention. Madam Skido came down and we embraced like young lovers when we saw each other.

The PPP bigwigs were so taken by Chief Mrs Chingum's TV performance that they implored her to pull out of the Gubernatorial race and run as Vice President in the Presidential race. Her glamour will surely pull in the voters. After 2 hours we were on another plane to Ponmon and made the primaries just in time.

I won the primaries and by God's special grace, I Sir Skido will be the next Governor of Ponmon state.

BABAWILLY
July 2006

Poem **Ashewo** taken from Unpublished Poetry collection- Babawilly for President. By Dr Wilson Orhiunu

The End