

NIGERIA: Police arrest pastor over N3m scam

Written by Comfort Oseghale
Tuesday, 16 July 2013 00:00

{lang: 'en-GB'}



A man, who claimed to be a pastor, Rev. Praise Bassey, has been arrested by the State Criminal Investigation Department, Yaba, for allegedly duping a contractor (name withheld) of N3m.

Bassey, who runs his church, Household of Destiny, from his three-bedroom apartment at Gani Dabiri Street, Ajao Estate, was said to have collected the money in 2010 under the guise of buying the contractor a 1X35 Hyundai car.

At the time, Bassey who resides in Lagos with his family was said to have visited Calabar in company with a family friend.

A police source told PUNCH Metro on the condition of anonymity that matters came to a head when Bassey, on collecting the money, could neither provide the car nor refund the money for two years.

He said, "The contractor got to know Bassey in 2010 when he visited her home in the company with a family friend.

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“I learnt that Bassey informed the contractor that he lived in Korea and was into the car import business.”

Several months later, the contractor allegedly called to ask Bassey the price of a 1X35 Huyundai jeep.

“Bassey told the contractor that the cost of the car was N3m. She was to pay the amount into his Zenith bank account. After the money was paid, Bassey became evasive,” the source said.

The petition, which was referred to the SCID through the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, led to Bassey’s arrest.

PUNCH Metro gathered that Bassey was able to secure bail the same day he was arrested in 2012.

He was said to have informed the police that the money was not given to him to buy a car, but to pray for the contractor’s success in her business. He was later given bail after he promised to refund the money.

The source said, “Part of his bail conditions was that Bassey would refund the money. At first, he paid N1.25m and promised to pay the remaining N1.75m. After securing his bail, Bassey absconded.”

He was rearrested by SCID operatives who were on his trail for many weeks.

The state command’s Police Commissioner Mr. Umar Manko, said, “I am aware of that case. When it came to me, I referred all the parties to the SCID. Obviously, Bassey was not the person the contractor thought he was. However, he has been arrested and will be prosecuted.”

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