

DETECTIVE TECHNIQUES OF SAM DEDE IN THE FILM, *MISSION TO NOWHERE***Hameed Olutoba Lawal**

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

hameedolutobalawal@yahoo.com or holawal@oauife.edu.ngDOI: <https://doi.org/10.69713/uoaaj2025v03i02.02>**Abstract**

This study investigates the detective techniques demonstrated by Sam Dede in his portrayal of Detective Roger Williams in the 2007 Nigerian crime thriller Mission to Nowhere. The study focuses on how the film adapts Western models of criminal investigation to a Nigerian socio-cultural and institutional environment. The study identifies the central problem as the gap between the procedural efficiency often represented in Western detective narratives and the operational weaknesses common in Nigeria's crime detection system, such as corruption, cover-ups, and the intrusion of spiritual interpretations in criminal investigations. The purpose of the study is to analyze the investigative strategies used by the lead character, evaluate their effectiveness in resolving the murder of Mrs. Naomi Adams, and determine their contribution to the evolution of detective portrayals in Nigerian cinema. The analysis employs content analysis as its principal method. It is guided by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of 2001, which holds that individuals acquire and modify behaviours by observing, interpreting, and replicating actions seen in others. This theoretical perspective is appropriate because Dede's character models disciplined investigative behaviour that reflects learned professional standards, balancing observation, reasoning, and ethical judgement within a challenging investigative context. Findings reveal that Sam Dede's interpretation of Detective Williams embodies deductive reasoning, systematic interrogation, and logical use of evidence in unraveling the mystery. His ability to maintain focus amid deception and emotional manipulation illustrates the value of persistence and intelligence-driven investigation. The study concludes that Mission to Nowhere serves as entertainment and a reflection on the professional standards required in Nigerian policing. It recommends that law enforcement institutions adopt structured investigative procedures similar to those portrayed in the film to strengthen accountability and improve crime-solving outcomes.

Keywords: Detective, film, techniques, Sam Dede, crime**INTRODUCTION**

Mystery films, synonymously referred to as detective films in Nigeria, trace their origin to the celluloid era when Sanya Dosumu pioneered the genre with his 1975 production *Dinner with the Devil*. The film depicts a

corrupt councilor who wields unchecked power through embezzlement, intimidation, and manipulation of the people. However, one man, Adamu, stands up to challenge his tyranny, presenting a vivid portrait of everyday Nigerian realities. According to Onookome (1991, p. 217), *Dinner with the Devil* "is remarkable for

being the first Nigerian film that attempts to translate common incidents that are recognizable in day-to-day Nigerian life into a stylized thriller along the lines of popular psychological dramas of Western cinema.” Two years later, the real-life robbery exploits of ‘Doctor’ Ishola Oyenusi in Lagos and neighbouring states inspired Eddie Ugbomah’s 1977 film *The Rise and Fall of Oyenusi*. This production, which also reflects the influence of American detective cinema, dramatizes the criminal career of the notorious armed robber whose reign of terror turned Lagos in the 1970s into a city gripped by fear and violence.

The law finally caught up with him, but not after a trial of devastating stories of people brutalized, robbed, raped, maimed, and murdered. Eddie Ugbomah played the lead role in this film because nobody wanted to, for fear of reprisal attack. After the transition from celluloid film format of production to Home video format, crime thrillers stepped up with these titles: Tade Ogidan’s *Hostages* and *Owo Blow I and II*, Lancelot Imasuen’s *Issakaba* (2000/2001), Tunde Kelani’s *Kosegbe* (1995) and Fred Amata’s *Anini* (2005), and Adebayo Tijani’s *Mufu Oloosa Oko* (2013).

While acting styles in these films aptly characterised different dimensions of committing crime, ranging from robbery, kidnapping, assassination, ritual killing, fraud, murder, and stealing, detailed attention was not given to a thorough investigation to track down the criminals. The detectives lack the techniques of using clues, intelligence gathering, and probing interrogation to unmask the criminals. Story lines of some of the films were also bereft of unexpected twists and suspense to sustain the interest of the viewer from the point of perpetrating the crime, through the investigation, to the arrest and prosecution.

Given this historical context and the shortcomings in detective portrayals in films, this analysis examines Sam Dede's acting as a

detective officer in *Mission to Nowhere*. A critical reading of the film reveals a focus on interrogation techniques, intelligence gathering, and clue utilization in the investigation of Mrs. Naomi Adams's murder, showcasing a domesticated adaptation of the Western detective film style.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DETECTIVE FILMS

Detective-mystery films, as a sub-genre of crime or thriller cinema, have long captured public imagination through their focus on crime investigation, rational deduction, and moral resolution. According to Bordwell and Thompson (2019), detective films typically revolve around a central investigator whose intellectual ability and analytical reasoning serve as the key instruments for unravelling criminal acts. The genre’s emphasis on logical reasoning, systematic clue analysis, and narrative suspense has positioned it as one of the most enduring forms of cinematic storytelling. Scholars such as Schatz (2020) and Neale (2018) note that Western detective films-particularly those from Hollywood and British traditions- evolved from early film noir and hard-boiled fiction. Classic examples such as *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and *Rear Window* (1954) establish conventions like the morally ambiguous detective, atmospheric tension, and reliance on dialogue-driven exposition. Such films reflect the structuralism model of detective cinema, where equilibrium is disturbed by crime and restored through rational discovery (Altman, 2019).

In contrast, Nigerian detective films often blend rational investigation with social, cultural, and spiritual elements, reflecting local realities. Haynes (2016) observes that Nigerian cinema domesticates Western narrative techniques while incorporating indigenous belief systems, corruption, and moral lessons. For instance, films such as *Dinner with the Devil* (Dosumu, 1975) and *The Rise and Fall of Oyenusi*

(Ugbomah, 1977) demonstrate early efforts to adapt investigative storytelling to the Nigerian socio-political environment. Similarly, Ekwuazi (2020) highlights how Nollywood detective thrillers, including *Mission to Nowhere* (2008), exhibit hybrid characteristics, borrowing investigative patterns from Western prototypes while grounding them in Nigerian social and moral frameworks. The conceptualization of detective techniques involves systematic observation, deduction, interrogation, and evidence gathering (Naremore, 2021). Western detectives, as seen in Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot narratives, employ empirical logic and psychological profiling, whereas Nigerian detectives must navigate institutional corruption, bureaucracy, and spiritual explanations of crime (Okome, 2017). This distinction underscores the localization of cinematic investigation methods.

The theoretical foundation for studying detective techniques in *Mission to Nowhere* is informed by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (2001), which posits that individuals learn behaviour through observation and modelling. This theory is particularly relevant in examining how Nigerian actors, such as Sam Dede, adopt and reinterpret Western detective behaviours, deduction, persistence, and impartial reasoning, in indigenous contexts. The detective's conduct becomes a learned performance, influenced by both cinematic tradition and social expectation. Fischhoff (2022) argues that detective cinema functions as a metaphor for truth-seeking in societies facing moral ambiguity. In Nigeria, where the justice system often faces challenges of credibility, the representation of an incorruptible and methodical detective serves as a form of cinematic advocacy for institutional integrity (Adesokan, 2020). While Western detective films are grounded in empirical reasoning and structured suspense, Nigerian detective films incorporate moral, cultural, and metaphysical dimensions, offering

a domesticated yet critical form of crime narration. The detective in Nigerian cinema thus becomes both an investigator and a moral agent, reflecting society's aspiration for justice and truth through filmic representation.

The analysis of the acting styles of the detective police officer in *Mission to Nowhere* is foregrounded with an insight into what detective films entail and the characterization to be expected. Detective-mystery films are usually considered a sub-genre of crime/gangster films or suspense or thriller films that focus on unresolved crime, usually of murder, assassination, armed robbery, kidnapping, fraud, stealing, etc. It focuses on the efforts of the detective, private investigator, or amateur sleuth to solve the mysterious circumstances of an issue by means of clues, investigation, and clever deduction. The plot often centres on deductive ability, prowess, confidence, or diligence of the detectives as they attempt to unravel the crime or situation by piecing together clues and circumstances, seeking evidence, interrogating witnesses, and tracking down a criminal. Suspense is often maintained as an important plot element.

This can be done through the use of the soundtrack, camera angles, heavy shadows, and surprising plot twists. Detective films are mostly aimed at solving a crime or puzzle. The mystery generally revolves around a murder which must then be solved by policemen, private detectives, or amateur sleuths. The viewer is presented with a series of likely suspects, some of whom are "red herrings" - persons who have motive to commit the crime but did not actually do it, and attempts to solve the puzzle along with the investigator. At times, the viewer is presented with information not available to the main character. The central character usually explores the unsolved crime, unmasks the perpetrator, and puts an end to the effects of the villainy.

To heighten the suspense in detective films, one of the following story types may be adopted: open or closed. The closed conceals the identity of the perpetrator until late in the story, adding an element of suspense during the apprehension of the suspect, as the viewer is never quite sure who it is. The open, in contrast, reveals the identity of the perpetrator at the top of the story, showcasing the perfect crime, which the audience then watches the protagonist unravel, usually at the very end of the story, akin to unveiling scenes of the closed style.

OVERVIEW OF DETECTIVE FILMS IN NIGERIA

Critical reading of some detective films in Nigeria revealed that, while some of these characteristics of detective-mystery film are inherent in the plot of the story and the acting, the commission and detection of crimes are enhanced with the use of charms. Therein lies the magic realism in the commission and detection of crimes in Africa. Criminal elements in some of these films use charms offensively and defensively. “In offensive technique, criminals use charms to overcome their victims and for the successful prosecution of their crime, whereas in defensive method, charms are used to prevent being caught, but if caught, to also facilitate escape” (Odedina 2017, p. 97). In the film *Issakaba*, where Sam Dede (Ebube) acted the lead role as the leader of the vigilante group, *Issakaba*, this scenario played out. A community terrorized by armed robbers and ritual killers engages the services of a vigilante group to restore sanity. To confront these criminals who are well fortified with charms for invincibility, Ebube and his team in combat also resorted to the use of charms to apprehend the criminals. While this traditional approach to the detection of crime shortens the long process of intelligence gathering, interrogation, and use of clues, it is prone to abuse and sabotage by mischief makers, as later dramatized in the film. Nwoke (Mike Ogundu), the most trusted lieutenant of Ebube, betrays

him by perpetrating criminal acts that are at variance with the security mission of the group.

In the same vein, in the film, *Koseegbe*, Mako (Kola Oyewo) is a newly promoted head of the Nigerian Customs Service with the intention of eradicating the endemic corruption that pervades the Department of Customs and Excise. In the arduous task, Mako has the stiff resistance of the smugglers led by Maliki (Wole Amele) and the collaborators among his officers to contend with. The frontal confrontation with the smugglers at the border led to the smugglers being gunned down and arrested in a shootout with customs officers. To frustrate Mako in his anti-smuggling crusade, a two-pronged attack was devised. In the first instance, Mako’s son, Salu, was framed and arrested with fake drugs on his person at a night party, while Mako was also photographed in a compromising position with Silifa (Peju Ogunmola), who was acting the script of Maliki and his group. Subsequent moves to negotiate for a compromise with the traumatized Mako compel him to engage the services of a Detective police officer (Feso Oyewole). A reconciliatory meeting is thereafter convened as a ploy to trap Maliki and his men. The scenario at the venue of the meeting replicates western crime thrillers as recording gadgets have been planted in the nooks and crannies of the meeting place to record the proceedings. Before Maliki sighted one of the gadgets, the motive for the frame-up had been revealed. Realizing that his spiritual fortification has failed him, Maliki pulls out a gun, but the timely arrival of the detective officer and his men saves the situation.

In the film, *Anini*, the terrorist of the notorious armed robber. Lawrence Anini, in the city of Benin, now Edo state, in 1986, is relieved. Emboldened by spiritual fortification, the dare devil robbers lay siege on the ancient city, killing and ambushing policemen and natives while robbing. This is characterized by robbing at gunpoint, raiding banks, and engaging

policemen in shootouts with sophisticated weapons. The dramatic irony in the filmic portrayal of Anini's and his gang's robbery escapades lies in the collaboration between policemen, who provide them with information, guns, and collect money in return, as later revealed. This act of sabotage for pecuniary gains frustrates initial moves to track down the robbers. After identifying and arresting the police collaborators, the new officer assigned to arrest Anini demystified the gang by combing the nooks and crannies of the city for intelligence gathering and clues that linked him to Anini's hideout. A similar scenario is re-enacted in the film, *Mufu Oloosa Oke*, which, like Anini, is a true-life story of a notorious armed robber in Ibadan. Like Lawrence Anini, Mufu terrorizes the city and yet provides for the needs of the masses from his loot. Like his contemporaries in the crime of robbing with a gun, he uses charms offensively and defensively. This spiritual prowess enables him to deploy the magical spell of appearing and disappearing in crime scenes at will. This magical realism aspect in the film makes a nonsense of the police detective techniques used in the film to track him down. The intelligence networking and clues put in place to cage Mufu paid off with his girlfriend and the daughter of the police officer who led the detective team trailing him squealing on him. The emotional attachment of the police woman and the armed robber unravels the secret of his invincibility in crime scenes. This discovery leads to his arrest after impregnating the police officer.

STORYLINE OF *MISSION TO NOWHERE*

The story revolves around Mrs. Naomi Adams, a top Nigerian society lady, stabbed to death inside her study by an unknown assassin. Coincidentally, the nation was undergoing a democratic transition, and the late Adams happens to be the estranged wife of John Adams, the most vocal political opponent of the current administration. Determined to get to the

roots of the gruesome murder and exonerate the government from the widespread complicity, the Nigerian Police launched a manhunt for the elusive murderer. Leading the police detective team, Roger Williams (Sam Dede) spread their dragnet even to rat holes with the detective techniques of probing interrogation, use of clues, drilling, and torture to compel suspects to speak. However, there seems to be a dead end somewhere, with all the interrogation and intelligence gathering leading to nowhere. After much wild goose chase in the process of the investigation and the attendant twists, it is later discovered that Tina (Oju Okeke), the housemaid maid is the culprit who stabbed her boss to death to avenge the death of her husband on the first night of their wedding. She recalls that Mrs. Adams knocked down her husband with her car on the memorable night, and he died instantly. Mrs. Adams zoomed off instead of stopping to assist. The trauma of losing her man on their wedding night made her resolve to avenge his death. The irony of the detective drama lies in the innocent look of Tina that can deceive any detective, as she was characterized as being humble and sympathetic.

Detective Techniques of Sam Dede in *Mission to Nowhere*

In acting as a detective officer in the film, Sam Dede (Roger William)'s interpretation of the role is driven by his determination to squeeze something out of nothing, open-mindedness, knack for details, and working on any clue that can lead to the arrest of the culprit. This is characterized in his probing questions against all odds and embarrassments, and the extension of his intelligence gathering to all possible clues surrounding the murder of Mrs. Adams on the fateful night in her study. The bravery of detective William is discernible in defying the mood and the emotion of the immediate family to commence his investigation. This is spiced up with a forensic report of the fingerprints to trace the visitors to the deceased's residence. This realistic representation of a detective in acting that could be likened to western crime

thrillers is emphasized with good camera shots. This is typified in mostly close-up shots for facial expressions and impressions. Subsequently, as the investigation commences with the only daughter, Pamela (Stephanie Okereke), and other personal staff, namely Tina (housemaid) and Okon (security guard), a realistic interpretation of a smart and intelligent detective in Dede's characterization unfolds in well-thought-out probing questions that generate emotional reactions and possible clues from the suspects. This entails questions on the time of the dastardly act, those present, the last visitors, and inspecting the scene of the incident.

The sense of loss in mood and emotion is captured in the description of Pamela and Tina amidst sobs of how they discover the dead body, as those closest to the late Mrs. Adams. However, emboldened by the desire to get to the root of the matter, the detective, who is not carried away by the emotional outbursts, probes further with questions that evoke an aggressive reaction from Pamela:

William: Miss Adams, I just want to ask you a few questions. Where is Adams, your father?

Miss Adams: My daddy and mum are separated. My daddy lives at Garden Estate.

William: For how long have they been separated?

Miss Adams: For the past two years.

William: Do you know the cause of the separation?

Miss Adams: No.

William: And, I guess you have never bothered to find out?

Miss Adams: No, I wasn't really around since they separated, so I couldn't inquire about their personal affairs. Besides, what has that

got to do with my mother's death?

William: Miss Adams, I would like to know, do you by chance know if your late mother had a lover?

Or was she in any kind of relationship during the period of separation?

Miss Adams: For goodness' sake, what has all that got to do with this case? I don't remember you coming here to investigate my mother's sex life? Like I told you, I know little about my mother.

William: Well, it is alright, if you don't know, in investigative matters like this, we try our best to tighten the loose ends. Good day, Miss Adams. (00:45:05).

In furtherance of the desire to tighten the loose end, William returns to the office to brief the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) on his findings from the preliminary investigation and interrogation. William and DCP (Larry Williams) brainstorm and ruminate on possible clues from the last callers before the murder. They are, namely, the insurance man, Jack Morris, and Reverend Father Nicholas. An additional clue is the blue film found in the waiting room of the study. Later at the cemetery for the burial of Mrs. Adams, William's sensitivity to suspicious moves and actions plays out. As he walks out of the cemetery with his assistant, Chike, to enter the vehicle, he sees the back of Mrs. Adam's boyfriend in a trench coat with a bowler moving towards his car. William eyes him with suspicion until he drives off and laments that, "this guy with the trench coat and bowler hat, I regretted we didn't see his face at all". Why? Chike asks. "I don't even know who he is, but there is something unusual about him, I think, we are missing something because we didn't see his face, let us go" (00:55:27). Ironically, Mrs.

Adam's boyfriend, Sam Kanji is one of the callers to the house shortly after the murder.



Roger interrogating Reverend Father Nicholas

Similarly thrilling is detective William's encounter with Reverend Father Nicholas in his house. The interrogation that follows reveals that his probing questions know no status or personality.

Reverend: So, what brings a high-ranking
Nicholas: police officer to the priest's house?

William: Police business. I would like to ask you a few questions, Father, concerning the death of late Mrs. Adams. I understand you visited her that day, shortly before she was murdered. Exactly what time did you visit Adams?

Reverend: Twenty-five minutes after eight.
Nicholas:

William: Will it be fair if I ask you to tell me what you went to visit Mrs. Adams for?

Reverend: She requested that I see her.
Nicholas:

William: What did she discuss with your father?

Reverend: I don't think that is a proper
Nicholas: question, but as it is a police investigation, I will try to assist. She asked me to come so that she could confess the sins she had committed, and she did that.

William: Well, Father, we must know because it may be a lead to knowing why Mrs. Adams was murdered.

Reverend: It is against Canon law for me to
Father: tell you.

William: Just as it is against the law to withhold information from the police.

Reverend: Your law and my law have a
Father: conflict, and I am not prepared to compromise my law. We are both jealous protectors of our law.

William: Alright, Father, if you insist.

Reverend: I insist (01:03:32).
Father:

After declining details of his discussion with Mrs. Adams based on Canon laws, Reverend Father Nicholas affirmed that he met the insurance man in the house, and he left him drafting a policy for Mrs. Adams. In excitement of the revelation, William retorts that, "I think this is the man we are looking for. Based on this information, William instructs his assistant to get the details of the insurance man described as a short, thick-set man with a baritone voice from the insurance companies. Back at Mr. Adams' residence, the daughter Pamela decides to stay away from the house for some time. While she opted for staying in a hotel in the town, Tina, the culprit, is to be temporarily accommodated by the police. Again, the dramatic irony and the twist in this scenario is the fact that the criminal William is looking for will be living under his roof.

As the investigation to locate the insurance man continues, Chike's visit to one of the insurance companies to make an inquiry about the short, thick-set man did not yield any results. However, a chance encounter with an insurance agent, Terry, on his way out of the premises, provided the necessary clues to link Jack Morris. According to Terry, "You are looking

for him the wrong way. The personnel director does not know him because the man is not a staff member per se, but an agent like me. We look for clients for the company and receive commission.” The man you are looking for, he expatiates, “is Jack Morris, an insurance agent, a short, thick-set stutterer with a bad voice” (00:58:04). Terry thereafter describes the location of his residence.

At the Gold video club, the inquiries by William to find out the borrower of the blues film are almost deadlocked as he discovers that the page that contained the borrower’s name and address had been deliberately turned off. However, the receptionist remembers the registration number of the car with which he uses to trace the owner of the car, who happens to be Dr. Thomas Lucas (Tunde Adeyemo). In his characteristic manner of exploring every clue to advance his investigation, Williams visits Dr. Lucas in his house to get more information on the borrower. The question and answer session that later changes the friendly disposition of Dr. Lucas to hostility eventually links him to the borrower through his son. The interrogation goes thus:

Williams: Good evening, sir.

Dr. Lucas: Good evening, how are you? (cheerfully).

Williams: Fine, sir, I am detective Roger Williams from the Homicide Division, State CID.

Dr. Lucas: I see.

Williams: I am the one investigating Naomi Adam’s murder case. I would like to ask you a few questions.

Dr. Lucas: What have I got to do with that? I mean, I can’t see how I came into this.

Williams: I should think you don’t have anything to do with this, sir. But maybe if you allow me.

Dr. Lucas: It is all right, go ahead.

Williams: Where were you on the 10th of July, within the hours of 9p.m to 11p.m?

Dr. Lucas: France, I was in France attending an international conference on AIDS.

Williams: Did you have any relationship with the Late Mrs. Adams?

Dr. Lucas: No, I had no relationship whatsoever with her.

Williams: That is a clear indication that you never visited her residence.

Dr. Lucas: Why? I have no reason to visit her residence.

Williams: Do you rent movies, sir?

Dr. Lucas: No, I buy.

Williams: With due respect, sir, I would like to ask you this question is just part of our routine questions and investigation. Do you watch blue movies, sir?

Dr. Lucas: (Surprised). Pittance; what kind of question is that? Now listen, listen, I am a Christian, and I object seriously to such an embarrassing question. I mean, what kind of thing is this?

Williams: Pardon me, sir. But I don’t think that, you know that, a rented blues film cassette, which was found in the waiting room of late Mrs. Adams on the night that she was murdered, has been linked to you.

Dr. Lucas: (With anger). Please, I guess you are driving this too far, can you excuse me (pointing to the gate)?

Williams: Sorry for the embarrassment, pardon me, sir. But our investigation reveals that the borrower’s name and address had been deliberately torn off the shop’s records. But the receptionist remembered the borrower to have come in a car

with the registration number, LAG 777AAA. You have a car with such a registration number, sir.

Dr. Lucas: (Now calmed). Oh yes! I guess, I do. But it was burnt to ashes two days ago in an accident, the very day. I gave it to my Personal Assistant as a gift.

Williams: Well, before you gave out the car, who was using it?

Dr. Lucas: I don't think anyone was using it. It was packed and abandoned in the garage for six months.

Williams: Sir, do you have a grown-up son or daughter who is mature enough to drive a car?

Dr. Lucas: Oh! I have just one son, and he has his own personal car.

Williams: Does he stay in the house presently?

Dr. Lucas: Of course not, he is in school.

Williams: Could you give me his name and school address, sir?

Dr. Lucas: He is Mike, and he is studying medicine at the City University.

Williams: Alright, thank you very much, sir.

Dr. Lucas: Thank you.

Williams: I am sorry for the embarrassment

Dr. Lucas: Oh! It is alright, it is your job.

In part two of the film, the investigation continues with the interrogation of Mike Lucas on campus. Inquiries from him reveal that his friend, Jeffery Adams, drove the car on the fateful day to visit his stepmother, Mrs. Naomi Adams. For the first time, Williams discovers that Jeffery is the son of John Adams, the politician and husband of Mrs. Adams. Back at home, Williams steps up his investigation of the new clue by getting additional information from Tina. She reveals that Chief John Adams had two wives, the late Mrs. Adams and the one presently staying with him, and each of the

wives gave birth to a child. Jeff is the son of the second wife.

On Jeff's relationship with Mrs. Adams, Tina affirms that it is cordial. According to her, "Jeff visits Mrs. Adams every week until the last six months; he ceased visiting". "But, sir, if not for the tape that was traced to his name, I would have concluded that Jeff didn't visit Mrs. Adams till after her death. And besides, I didn't know when he came to that house last night", Tina expatiates (01:11:06). To ascertain the extent of the cordiality, Williams end the conversation with this probing question, "do you think Jeff has any reason to kill Mrs. Adam?" "No, O, I don't think so, sir, that boy, he is too harmless to think of that sir." Tina retorts.



Roger and Tina, during the investigation of the murder of Mrs. Adams

Subsequently, after the arrest of Jeffery, in the course of the interrogation on the incident, he confirms his visit to the house that night. Jeffery's chilling account reveals him as the borrower of the blue film but not the killer, as according him:

When I walked into the study room and opened the door, I saw to my greatest surprise my stepmother lying face down on the desk with a knife in her back. I was frightened, so I closed the door immediately. I thought of calling Tina or the police. When I thought of the police putting me as the number one suspect, I decided to wade off the idea and rushed downstairs and ran away. So, when I reached home, I discovered that I had left a videotape in the drawer in the waiting room. I

left it there because it was a blue film and I don't want my step mum to see it. So, when I realized that, I left it there; the thought of going back to the house frightened me. Though I knew that, the videotape would give me away to the police when they begin their investigation. I decided to go to the video club and somehow tore the record book bearing my name and the address. (01:05:43).

Detective Williams punctuates the narrative with the question, "Jeff, did you kill Mrs. Naomi Adams?" "To which Jeff responds that, "I swear to God, I didn't kill her. I mean how can I kill my own mother. I don't have any reasons whatsoever she is fond of me. I never thought of going in there, please, believe me." (00:25:23). While Williams believes him, he insists on keeping him in custody until the end of the investigation. The reason he adduced for detaining him as a witness is that of an accessory after the crime, and also for failing to report the incident to the police. Added to this is the destruction of evidence linking him to the murder. Lack of circumstantial evidence to nail Jeff Adams, coupled with pressure from his influential politician father, compels his release from detention to shift attention to Jack Morris, the insurance man and last caller to Mrs. Adams on the night she was murdered. After interrogating and torturing Morris, he maintains that he did not kill Mrs. Adams but saw her dead. Just like Jeff, the fear of being made the first suspect made him run away instead of informing the police. According to Morris, "on that fateful night, I was in the computer room preparing an insurance policy for Mrs. Adams" (00:49:23). The explanation is spiced with a flashback to the scene of the murder when Morris dashes to the study after hearing her scream, only to see her dead without anybody in sight. Morris goes on to describe the man leaving the building after the murder, and a clue that can link Williams to him.

The man, according to Morris, "is tall, about six feet, heavily built with broad shoulders, dark in complexion. He wore a black French coat with

a bowler hat." Morris, who did not see the face of the man, identifies the car brand as a BMW and releases a gold parker pen he picked when it fell from his pocket to the detectives. Inscription on the pen reads; "Happy Valentine, S.K. from Naomi." With this new revelation, Williams resolves that "we must find this man, even if he lives in the sky". Back at home, for more details on the man, S.K. Williams interrogates Tina:

Williams: Tina, do you remember any heavily built man who visited Mrs. Adams?

Tina: I have never, sir.

Williams: But do you know if Mrs. Adams had a lover?

Tina: I have no idea, sir. But even if she had, I never saw any, sir.

William: Do you know if she had any business associates call S.K.?

Tina: I wouldn't know, sir.

Williams: Think well, you may have forgotten.

Tina: Sir, if I knew anything, I wouldn't hesitate to let you know. (00:52:01)

Confronted with more complexities and twists as he progresses in his investigation of Mrs. Naomi Adam's death, Williams alone ruminates with a voice-over:

The whole setup seems complicated, I don't know, I don't know. Getting close to the murderer of Mrs. Adams, but I am sure we are missing something, somewhere. I really don't know about I am sure of that. Nobody who lived in Mrs. Adams' house seems to have any idea of a heavily built man who is probably the bearer of the S.K. initials and also the lover of the late Mrs. Adams. Only Jeff thinks he saw him twice during his visit to the house. Even then, he is not sure of the facial looks, but somehow, I even doubt Tina. How come she claims not to have ever known or seen the heavily built man in the house. When even Jeff, who lived off the house, saw him once or twice. I must be missing

something somewhere. I regret I never saw the face of the man at the funeral of the late Mrs. Adams. But I must find the matter of course. (00:34:09).

Back in the office, Pamela, the daughter of Mrs. Adams, who is becoming uncomfortable with the extension of the investigation into the love life of her late mother, had a private meeting with Williams to register her displeasure. She decries intrusion into her late mother's privacy with this invective:

I don't like the way you and your men have been going about my late mother's sexual life. The inquiry will definitely tarnish her image posthumously and obviously resort to a sexual scandal, bringing dishonour and disrepute to Adam's family. At least there should be respect for the dead. Besides, your unhealthy investigation is capable of destroying my father's political career, which he has built over the past 20 years. All I want to do is advise that you desist from such things and let Adam's family have a little respect and honour. (00:49:15).

Not perturbed and intimidated by the emotional outburst of Pamela, Detective Williams stuck to his gun with this remark:

Well, Miss Adams, I understand exactly how you feel, and anyone in your position will feel the same way. But I must let you know that I am on a state assignment here, and it does not require any kind of intrusion into personal sentiments. You see, I expect you to understand the magnitude of this investigation owing to the high level of crime involved, and much as we do not like to necessarily interfere in the private lives of people in the course of our investigation, we will not fail to do so if the need arises. (00:57:04).

In pursuit of the desire to track down the man with the initials S.K., an advertisement is placed on the television with a handsome reward of ₦5,000,000 (Five Million Naira) for anyone

who offers any relevant information leading to the arrest of Mr. S.K. Attracted by the prize tag. Tasha, the driver of the late Mrs. Adams, meets Williams the following today to give relevant information on him and his whereabouts. According to Tasha:

Sir, S.K., the man you are looking for, was Madam's boyfriend. His full name is Sam Kanji, a streetwalker whom Madam falls in love with. I never liked him, sir, because he is greedy and selfish. All he wanted was my Madam's wealth, and he did everything at his best to make sure he swindled her. My madam often bought him some expensive gifts, including his BMW car. Sir, he never loved Madam; all he wanted was to suck her. He became aggressive and hostile to her when Madam started dating someone else. They had a violent quarrel twice that month madam was murdered. S.K. even called it quits with the relationship and promised never to come back to the house. (01:04:02).

After this detail on the wanted man, Tasha reveals his location and that of his mother and sister. Coincidentally, as soon as Tasha finishes his submission, Tina barges into William's office and sees him. Shortly after leaving the office, the dead body of Tasha is found along the road. Acting on the premise that Tasha must have been killed by the wanted man, Detective Williams sells the dummy that Tasha is still alive, recuperating in the hospital. Based on this information, S.K. sneaks into the hospital to eliminate Tasha for the cover-up only to discover that he has been trapped. Before he could think of what to do next, Williams and his team barged in on him and arrested him instantly.



The Suspect is being tortured to extract information on the murder

After the arrest, S.K. is tortured in the same manner as Jack Morris was drilled. This entails waterboarding, which is dipping the face in a basin of water repeatedly for confession under duress. After much stress, the only cue from S.K. is that he actually went there to kill her that night, but before he got there, someone had already killed her. On why he planned to kill her, S.K. reveals that, “she ditched me for someone else. I warned her, but she began to date my close pal and stopped financing me” (00:51:08). This shocking revelation of the most sought-after suspect again confuses detective Williams, who ruminates in this voice out on who the killer could be:

This case is getting too complicated. I believe there is something very important that I haven't realised. I think I am missing something somewhere. S.K., S.K., S.K. was the man we were looking for, and we've got him. But he is claiming he did not kill Mrs. Adams, even though he admitted he wanted to. He also confessed, he murdered Tasha, but not Mrs. Adams. With all the torture, he is maintaining the same thing. No, suppose he did not kill Mrs. Adams, then who else? (00:53:03).

After meditation and psychological appraisal of the intelligence gathered so far, Detective Williams dashes back to the residence of Mrs. Adams for another round of thorough search that leads to the discovery of a wedding picture of Tina. The discovery shifts his attention to Tina as another prime suspect. Like the other

two suspects, Tina is chained and tortured by pouring water over her body. This compels her to confess that she is the killer. Justifying the reason for the dastardly act, Tina, amidst sobbing, recalls that five years ago, on the night of my wedding, Mrs. Adams killed her husband with her car and fled. The father-in-law, who was at the scene of the incident, recognized her and followed up. But she surprised everyone by using money and her connections to suppress justice.



Tina confessed to the crime of stabbing her boss to death after she was tortured

Traumatized by the loss of her man on the wedding night, Tina vows to take revenge as her narration, amidst sobbing, re-enacts the scenario that leads to her criminal act.

... I worked my way unnoticed to her residence as a housemaid. I destroyed her relationship with her husband by reporting every bit of her unfaithfulness to her husband, who later caught her red-handed twice with men and abandoned her. And secondly, I snatched her boyfriend, S.K., from her. I made S.K. suck her wealth and spend it on me until she finally broke up with him. And thirdly, I killed her and ended her life, thereby completing my mission in her house. (01:25:35).

A flashback of the horrendous crime later reveals how Tina perpetrated the act. She tiptoes with a knife in her hand to the study and stabs Mrs. Adams from the back. However, the number of visitors to the house on the fateful night leaves no traces to link the murder to Tina.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, the characteristic trait of not giving detailed attention to detective techniques of thorough investigation of crime and arrest of criminals in some Nigerian detective films is highlighted. This is shown in the degree and dimension of crime perpetration in films like *Issakaba*, *Koseegbe*, *Anini*, and *Mufu Olosa Oko*. Closely aligned to this is the absence of detective methods, such as unexpected twists in the plot, in tracing the suspect to sustain tension and suspense, which were usually spiced up with exposition of characters that were hallmarks of detective films, as typified in western crime thrillers. The Western detective method encompasses the deduction ability, prowess, confidence, and diligence of the detective. Presentation of several suspects who may or may not have the motive of committing the crime is another device of heightening the suspense in a detective film. This is enhanced with a soundtrack and captivating camera shots. There are also the unexpected twists in the plot of the story to arouse the curiosity of watching the unfolding scenes to the end.

Inherent in the film in focus, *Mission to Nowhere*, are these characteristic traits that replicate Western crime thrillers. In the character interpretation of the detective Roger Williams by Sam Dede, there is the deductive ability, confidence, and diligence to read personality and situations through interrogation that elicit varying reactions. There is also the patience and attention to detail in piecing clues together to link the suspects. The probing questions to each of the suspects through interrogation and torture give relevant information to intensify the investigation of the murder of Mrs. Adams. Not deterred by the embarrassment, emotional outburst, and intrigues to cover up, Detective Williams can unmask the murderer through intelligence gathering from the clues and suspects. Detective characterization of Dede as Detective Williams is therefore an ideal representation of

how police detectives should go about unravelling mysteries surrounding crime and criminals that are prone to risk of death and temptation of compromise. The bravery in confronting the suspects with an open mind is a template for a new approach to the art of crime investigation in Nigeria's policing system, just as the piercing of clues to link each of the suspects can then demystify all forms of spiritual fortifications to frustrate investigation and prevent arrest.

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