

Delta herbalist arrested as police recover two murder victims' bodies

27th October 2025



File Copy: Public Relations Officer, Delta State Police Command, SP Bright Edafe

Johnson Idowu and Matthew Ochei

The Delta State Police Command has nabbed a 20-year-old herbalist, Amechi Okwuokenye, and his step-brother for the kidnapping and killing of two persons and recovered bodies in Owa-Alidima, Ika-North East Local Government Area of Delta State

The spokesperson for the command, SP Bright Edafe, disclosed this in a statement on Sunday in Asaba, the Delta State capital.

He said, "On September 30, 2025, Mr Friday Liberty, 22 years old, visited his herbalist, whom he had known for some time now, but this time, he never returned. The family, who initially didn't know what happened to their brother, started looking for him.

"The girlfriend of the deceased then informed the family that she heard a conversation about the said Friday Liberty and a certain herbalist, and advised that they should reach out to the said herbalist.

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“The family contacted the herbalist, who denied seeing him but promised to do some spiritual incantations so their brother could return alive. Having spent money on the herbalist, and the result was not forthcoming, they then reported the matter at the Agbor Area Command via a petition on October 14, 2025.

“The Area Command detectives embarked on an intelligence-led investigation. During the course of the investigation, the detectives uncovered the last person whom Friday Liberty contacted, and found out it was the same herbalist who denied knowing his whereabouts.”

The PPRO stated that surveillance was laid around the herbalist’s shrine at Owa-Alidima in Ika North East LGA, for days, until he was arrested on October 23, 2025, while hiding inside a refrigerator. Upon arrest of the herbalist, Amechi Okwuokenye, aged 20 years, he confessed that both he and his brother, Smart Okwuokenye, 26, kidnapped the victim, Friday Liberty, and the motorcycle rider identified as Isioma Ugbeje, who carried him to the shrine.

“They further stated that Friday Liberty had been his long-time customer who frequently visited him to hypnotise clients so they could give him money easily (in his words, ‘to tie clients’). The herbalist said his elder brother approached him that he needed money and advised him to lure any of his clients so they could kidnap him and ask for ransom, and the unlucky person they could lure was Friday Liberty.

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“They kidnapped him and the Okada Rider and demanded a ransom of N10 million. When they noticed that the plan was not working, they murdered him and the motorcycle rider and dumped their bodies in a soakaway pit by the shrine”

Edade stated that the remains of the victims had been evacuated and deposited at the mortuary for autopsy.

“The suspects are in custody, and the remains of the victims have been evacuated and deposited at the mortuary for autopsy.

“The Commissioner of Police, Delta State, CP Olufemi Abaniwonda, assures the public that the command will ensure that justice is served in this case,” Edafe concluded.

The arrest of the Okwuokenye brothers reflects a disturbing pattern of ritual-related killings linked to herbalists across Nigeria.

PUNCH Metro reported in February 2021 that a 28-year-old herbalist was arrested in Bauchi State for allegedly killing four children, aged between two and four, for ritual purposes.

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In May, PUNCH Metro reported that the Ogun State Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps arrested one Samuel Adewunmi, also known as Ifa Science, for allegedly cutting the body part of a two-month-old baby for ritual purposes.

Experts note that such crimes fall within the wider “money ritual” phenomenon, where individuals seek perceived spiritual means to attract wealth—an issue that has prompted repeated warnings from religious and law-enforcement authorities.