

# JUSTHUMAN

## Grief As Final Year Student Of FUTO Dies In Controversial Circumstances

### Family Seeks Justice

From Charles Ogugbuaja, Owerri

The initial story was that he slumped but the story later changed that there was a fight at a birthday party and he was attacked, leading to his death. Still in pains, the parents have urged the police to get to the root of the matter and let the world know how their son, Chidiebere Onyemauwa, a final year Geology student of the Federal University of Technology (FUTO), Owerri, truly died and bring the culprits to book.

THE dream of every parent has always been to train his/her children to excellence and live to see him or her excel in life. That is why in the present day Nigeria, many parents, especially those that have come to terms with the power of education, defy all odds to ensure that their children acquire at least a first degree from a reputable university. They do this, having at the back of their minds that, that is the stepping-stone for their children's success in life, which would enable them to see that they don't suffer at old age. But the case of Mr. Barry Onyemauwa, a 2002 retired Assistant Manager of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and his wife, Vera, who have been toiling to train their children has turned out differently. They are currently in pains and seeking to understand the circumstances that led to the death of their hitherto promising 20-year-old son, Chidiebere Onyemauwa, whose death occurred on September 14.

Before his death, Chidi who was a final year student of Geology at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO), had only one course to write to round off his degree examination.

Chidiebere was born in May 21, 1991. According to his parents, he had remained very "promis-



The late Chidiebere on his matriculation day

ing" until his unexpected death. The duo had always been hopeful that their first son of the three children (two sons and one daughter) would one day turn to be a relief to the entire family, only to hear about his sudden death.

According to Mrs. Onyemauwa, "I got a call about 5am from a female informing me that Chidi had slumped. After few minutes, I called my sons number and she picked the phone and said he had been taken to the clinic for medical attention, insisting that I should come immediately."

Continuing, she said that they went to Ihiagwa,

precisely at the hostel of the deceased and the FUTO clinic to ascertain the truth. Mrs Onyemauwa said that before then, both the lady who made the distress call and others around had not told them that their son was dead. "They were saying he had asthma."

But Mr Onyemauwa and his wife discovered a different thing. "I lifted my son's hand and it was lifeless. Then, the friends of my son told me that they brought him to the clinic dead. We took the body to Aladinma Hospital, Owerri, Mortuary. We discovered latter that his face was swollen, with bruises on his body. We started suspecting that something was being hidden from us and went to the Command Headquarters to report. The police there told us to go to Umuguma police station in Owerri West. We went there to report and also went with the police to the hostel they told us - "Mary K", eagles wing, Ihiagwa. That was not my son's hostel. Latter we discovered his real hostel, Kings Luxury, Hostel, Ihiagwa. Police then arrested the three boys. They had an examination to write the next day. They were released to go and write the exam, latter they were detained."

"I saw my son last on Monday, September 20, 2011, when he came to collect some money from us. There was strike then, but we had to manage and get money for him. I did not know that was going to be the last to see him alive," Mrs. Onyemauwa lamented.

The family told The Guardian that they were told that after a birthday party attended by their son, their was an alleged fight between Chi-



Chidiebere's lifeless body

diebere's friends and a villager, adding that when the deceased arrived the scene of the fight, the villager turned to him and beat him. These revelations, they said, were not made open ab initio.

Investigations showed that the police authorities have commenced investigations into the matter and have obtained statements from the suspects. It was also discovered that preparations for autopsy was in top gear at the Federal Medical Centre, Owerri, to ascertain what actually led to the death of Chidiebere.

At the moment, Mr and Mrs Onyemauwa shuttles to the State Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Owerri, every now and then to ascertain the extent of police investigation of the case. Meanwhile, the suspects, all the late Chidiebere's friends in the university, are still in police net.

The family has, however, vowed to leave no stone unturned to ensure that the cause of their son's death, which they feel was not natural, is unraveled and the culprits brought to book.

They expressed dismay that the authorities of the university have not visited to commiserate with them and to know the extent they have gone with the case.

Public Relations Officer (PRO) of FUTO, Adaeze Akany, could not be reached to get the school's side of the story as efforts to get in contact with her yielded no positive results. Even her mobile phone could not be reached.

The Imo State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Linus Nwaiwu, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, claimed he could not comment on the matter since he was not briefed on it. "I have not been told about that. But I will find out and get back to you." He had not as at press time.

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