

Cook jailed 14 years for beating brother to death over meat theft

By Yetunde Ayobami Ojo
16 April 2019 | 4:19 am



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For pleading guilty to beating her eight-year-old brother to death over theft of meat from a pot of soup, Justice Adedayo Akintoye of a Lagos High Court, Igbosere yesterday sentenced a cook, James Janet, to 14 years imprisonment. Janet beat her brother, Saviour Effiong James, to death for stealing meat at their residence in Ilupeju area at about 8:00p.m. on August 10, 2009.

Following Janet's plea of guilty to an amended charge of manslaughter brought against her by the Lagos State government, the trial judge, Justice Akintoye, convicted and sentenced her to 14 years imprisonment. The judge said the 14 years imprisonment would take effect from August 21, 2009 when she was remanded by a magistrates' court. She said the defendant entered a plea bargain agreement with the prosecution and pleaded guilty to an amended charge of manslaughter.

The judge said: "The defendant pleaded guilty to the offence as charged and has been remorseful for the offence of manslaughter committed against Saviour Effiong. "In view of this therefore, Janet James, is hereby found guilty of manslaughter contrary to Section 317 of the Criminal Code, Laws of Lagos State, 2003, and is accordingly convicted of same.

"I have taken into consideration that this is a 2013 case and I have also been guided by the plea and sentencing agreement entered into by the prosecution, the defendant, Janet James, and the defence counsel. "I also note the fact that the defendant has been in remand custody for many years. As a result, the defendant is hereby sentenced to a term of 14 years. The term of imprisonment is to run from the date of remand, which is August 21, 2009."



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It would be recalled that the defendant was re-arraigned before the judge in 2013 on a one-count charge of murder contrary to Section 317 of the Criminal Code, Laws of Lagos State, 2003. She pleaded not guilty to the charge. Prosecution counsel, Mrs. Abiola Gbadamosi, had told the court that the convict killed Saviour James by beating him with a turning stick after accusing him of stealing meat from a pot of soup and then dumped his body in the premises of an insurance company in Ilupeju.

In her confessional statement to the police, she said: “I carried him (the deceased) on my back and walked a long distance before throwing him across the fence. I decided to dump him there because the offices had long been closed. “He used to steal. I even warned him when I went to the village to pick him. I beat him on Monday night at about 8:00p.m., after several warnings not to steal meat from the pot failed. I hit him with this little pestle. But he did not die on the spot. At about 11:00p.m., he woke up to urinate.

“But when I woke up at about 2:00a.m., I discovered he was foaming in the mouth. I called him but there was no response. I tried opening his mouth and even hit him, yet there was no movement. Then I waited until about 5:00a.m. before carrying him on my back and dumped him inside the premises of the insurance firm and returned home.”



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