

Raped, Rescued By Soldier, Killed By Reckless Driver

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Perhaps there is some element of luck in everything we do, including our everyday living. For those who believe in the concept of spell and curses, maybe they could easily conclude that someone might have cursed or cast a spell on Ifeoma Chuka because of the circumstances surrounding her death.

The day for the 16-year-old Senior Secondary School Two (SSS 11) student started on a very good note, according to close associates of Ifeoma. But things turned bad when she closed from her school in Ilupeju and after attending a late evening extramural class. Naturally, she had to pass through Oshodi since she resided at the Isolo part of Lagos.

If the victim had a premonition of what was awaiting her, she would have opted for another road home or boarded a motorcycle to Charity Bus-Stop along Oshodi-Isolo expressway, where she could board a vehicle home. But she had no such power of foretelling the future.

It was October 11, a Wednesday. Ifeoma's trouble began at about 7.30p.m. as she was trying to cross the Oshodi-Mosafejo part of the rail track. A woman soldier witness

residing at the Ikeja Military Cantonment, who narrated Ifeoma's ordeal to the *Saturday Independent*, stated: "Ifeoma is a victim of ramshackle security system in our country, a country where human life has no meaning and people have no respect for human dignity."

In an emotional voice, she added: "As I was returning from work that day, and walked through the railway so that I could buy some things I can cook that evening, when I got to that Mosafejo side, I heard somebody struggling with a group of boys. I think I saw something like a woman dress and because rape is rampant around the rail track, I shouted and said I am a soldier that I had a gun, and will shoot if they did not leave the girl alone."

It was at that point, she said, the hoodlums raping the girl abandoned her and fled. "I thereafter went to her, she was in a pool of her own blood, and she told me that three of the five miscreants had already had sex with her. The fourth one was about coming when they heard my voice, so they ran away. I tried to find out where she resided, but she could not talk. She was too weak to talk, but assured me she could find her way home, if only I could take her across to the safe part of the road", she said.

Saturday Independent gathered that Ifeoma was taken across to the other side of Oshodi. "That is the part you have the Papa Ajasco Office, but I don't know what happened again, because as I was going home, I had barely crossed the rail track when I heard people shouting. So, I rushed back to find out what had happened, only to discover that the same girl had been knocked down by a commercial bus driver, who was driving against traffic.

"Even at that, we still rushed to see how we could save her life. The driver of the vehicle had escaped, but we had his vehicle because he abandoned it. We rushed her to the nearby clinic, Mercy and Mercy Hospital and Maternity Home at Ayodele Street, Oshodi. I did not have much money on me, but God brought a good Nigerian, who paid for the initial deposit of N3,500 and she was attended to at the emergency ward", the witness disclosed.

Saturday Independent gathered that the doctor pronounced Ifeoma dead at about 3a.m, concluding that she must have lost a lot of



•Sunday Ehindero, Inspector General

blood. "Imagine what she went through; rounds of sex bout with bastards. She must have lost a lot of blood there, because I have just discovered that she had just been deflowered, then the accident. And look at the extent of her injuries. I had put her chances of survival at six to 10".

The doctor, who would rather want to remain anonymous, also said the residential address they were able to get from the deceased

had been located and the parents informed about the incident.

"It is an unfortunate incident. A situation where an innocent life is just terminated in its prime like that by a group of miscreants is really unfortunate and I want to say here that this is a challenge to our security operatives", the doctor said.

At the family house of the deceased, her mother, who could not control her emotions, said Ifeoma and her younger brother were the reasons she had continued to live in spite of being a single parent.

In her *face-me-I-face-you* one-room apartment at No. 28 Kadiri Street, Isolo, she wept all through the period this reporter was there. "She has been buried, but her spirit will not rest, but will haunt those that killed her" she swore.

Police image-maker in Lagos, Bode Ojajuni, lamented when this reporter asked him for police reaction to rampant incidents of rape in Lagos, especially Ifeoma's case.

He stated that police in the state had beefed up their patrols around Oshodi, "because of incidents of this nature and we shall continue and spice it up with raids at the place, because the duty of the force is to protect lives and property of residents of the state and that we would not compromise".