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Housewife Snatched By LG Boss Dies Mysteriously After Childbirth

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In this report, MATHEW DIKE recounts the tragic end of late Mrs. Theresa Ode, a woman snatched from her husband by a local government chairman, who got her impregnated and abandoned her to die in a Lagos hospital during childbirth.

If Joseph Ode's emotional travail is limited only to his wife being snatched by a randy politician, it wouldn't have been too tragic a loss for him to bear. But the bereaved General Editor at Newswatch Magazine is currently in a state of mourning. Not only was his wife, Mrs. Theresa Ode, taken from him by a former council chairman of Oju local government council in Benue State, Mr. Bright Ogaji. After being impregnated by the council boss, Theresa died on her delivery bed, while giving birth on April 3.

This is one among many unreported cases of affluent politicians, who under the lure of the forbidden fruit, use ill gotten wealth from the public tilt to

seduce vulnerable wives of ordinary citizens. Like the biblical David who snatched Uriah's wife and eventually plotted the cold blooded murder of the faithful and true soldier at his duty post, such human predators, whose past time is covetousness, abound in the society despite the warning of the tenth commandment that "thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife and property"

When Theresa got married to Mr Ode, a senior journalist, there was jubilation. People regarded them as models in their local community, Oju, in Benue State, especially after Ode sent his wife to the Lagos State University (LASU) where she graduated with flying colours from the Accounting department. With God by her side, she became a banker, while her husband believed that the sky was her limit. Theresa was the love of her husband's life and he did everything to make her happy – cash gift, petting – just name it!

They were still enveloped in their love, even after begetting three children, before the devil came in form of politics, using the ex- local government chairman of Oju council, Ogaji, to achieve his goal of destroying a once happy and progressing marriage.

LEADERSHIP Weekend gathered that Ode had contested the Benue State House of Assembly election, but unfortunately luck ran out on him and he lost the election. All hope was not lost as he was compensated with the position of a media aide to the then governor, Gabriel Suswam. His wife, Theresa was said to have resigned from her banking job.

Ode said he loved his party and party men, and so he was one of Ogaji's political ally and staunch supporter when he was vying for the chairmanship position of their local government in 2011. He said he assisted him enough till victory became his. While Ode was busy assisting Ogaji during his campaign, he never had the premonition that Ogaji was nursing plans to snatch his wife in 'swagger bravado' if he succeeded as the chairman.

The devil perfected his homework against Ode when Ogaji won the council poll. Since then, the council boss allegedly started mapping out strategy to make the woman dump her husband for him. He eventually did. After renting a 2-bedroom flat for Theresa and the children, he got her impregnated. But she gave birth to a baby boy who never tasted her mother's breast milk. Theresa died immediately after she was delivered of the child.

The Game Plan

Ode recounted how Ogaji called him and informed him that he was giving him a slot to nominate any woman of his choice to occupy the position of technical chairman of the local government. He said he did not envisage Ogaji had plotted a plan to use the slot and cause problem between him and his wife.

Ogaji was said to have called Theresa and inform her that he told her husband to nominate a woman that would occupy a juicy position in the council, but instead of bringing her, Ode presented another woman's name to him. Ode said that was the point things started falling apart between him and his wife. This, he said, led to the council boss eloping with the woman and his three children. Ogaji went ahead to impersonate Ode, using his name to rent a flat at 16, Jimmy Oyeabanjo Street, Abule- Egba, in Lagos State for his wife.

Ode's story

Narrating his ordeal, Ode said, "In 2012, my wife's character changed. She behaved very strange to me. Her statements made me to be

narrating his ordeal, Ode said, "In 2012, my wife's character changed. She behaved very strange to me. Her statements made me to be convinced that something wrong was happening. She unusually became so arrogant. She would not do what I ask her to do. The relationship deteriorated. That was how we started having issues on daily basis. When I went for an operation after I had an accident, she was visiting but, in some cases, quarreling with me in the hospital.

"I spent 2014 in a hospital in Jos. I told her that the two families- I mean my family and her own family- would come and reconcile us. They came; even her uncle who lives in Lagos, Tony Iji, was among those that came. That was the day they were holding election in April. She packed her belongings and left my house in Makurdi. She moved to the house she was building in Makurdi. After packing out of my house, I saw her three times and we talked about my children that she eloped with and other issues.

"I was always going to school to see my children. One day I went to school as usual to see them, only for me to learn that the children travelled. They said my children did not return to school after Christmas. I was bordered. Some people would tell me that she called them that she was in Ghana. I was shocked to hear that my wife died in a hospital on Sunday, April 3, in Lagos. They said she died after giving birth in a hospital.

"From my own understanding, she must have been charmed by that dubious man, Ogaji. He must have lured her with money and position. I'm not ruling out diabolical means. I cannot rule out money. Let me tell you how the former Oju local government chairman, Bright Ogaji, caused problem in my family. Ogaji told me to submit the name of any woman that will occupy the position of technical chairman. I submitted another woman's name as he did not give time to do consultation. When I gave him the name, he asked after my wife.

"We were in the same party. and I was his supporter. That was why he called me to nominate somebody for an appointment. After that he promised my wife something bigger. He promised her technical chairman when it was time to decide or approve. During one of our festival, my wife told me that he has given her a contract to bring actors popularly known as Aki and Pawpaw to the community during the festival. I asked her how much was approved. She did not respond. I began to wonder how much the local government approved for the festival. My wife is not a politician. They probably promised her she would be very rich".

Commenting further on the betrayal, heartbroken Ode said, "It is typical of him (Ogaji). No good man can treat his political ally like that. No honest person can do that. He is a dubious person. He took away my wife and children to suffer them. It is difficult to describe how I feel- feeling of betrayal and pain in my heart.

"I believe my wife was not in control of herself. I feel sad for such callous people. I feel sad that my children were moved from one place to another. I want God to take control of the situation. Let Him handle him for what he has done".

The suspect, Ogaji's Reaction

When contacted, Ogaji who spoke to LEADERSHIP Weekend on phone said, "The issue is very risky to comment on. The issue is a very sensitive matter because life is involved. I don't want to make comment because I don't want to be misquoted. So, no comment".

The Late Theresa's Landlord Speaks

When this reporter visited 16, Jimmy Oyebanjo Street, Abule- Egba, in Lagos State, the wife of the landlord, Mr Shola Adetele was in another shop opposite her building. Mrs Adetele called her husband on phone and he commented. He said, "When the woman (Theresa Ode) first came to us that she wanted to rent a flat, my wife told her that we would not rent a flat to anybody who did not come with her husband. We cannot rent a house to a single woman except she comes with her husband.

"She later came with the man (Ogaji) who she described as her husband. The man identified himself as Joseph Ode. The receipt we issued to him was written Joseph Ode. It was after the woman died that we knew that the man impersonated the name of the real husband of the woman (Joseph Ode). As she was dying she had to talk to people and gave us the number of her family member to call. I had to call one of them. The man (Theresa's uncle) was surprised to know that she was living in Lagos.

"The fake husband said he travelled to USA a week before she delivered the baby boy in a maternity and died. The man is a very wicked and bad man. God will punish him for what he has done. He has runaway and the Police are looking for him. He betrayed his friend. Took his wife and children and claimed they are his children. He sleeps in the flat in some occasions. At times he would come stay with them and later go back. I thought the man probably had two wives and wanted to rent another flat for the other wife. Both the man and the woman deceived us", he added.

Corroborating the landlord's explanation, his wife, Mrs Adetele said, "I was the person that issued the receipt of payment of the rent to them. They paid for only one year. The children called the man daddy. So, we believed they are his children. The woman hardly come out of the flat unless she wanted to buy something. I did not see the woman driving any car. She is very poor as far as I'm concerned. She is owing a lot of people money in the area.

She bought chicken N750 and did not pay the woman since how many weeks before she died. She also bought baby clothes on credit. She is owing a lot of people money. But as she died nobody is interested in collecting the money from the family. She was a gentle person. She hardly talks. God will punish that wicked man that went to remove her from her husband's house from Makurdi to Lagos.

"The family should follow the case up. See as people were crying when she died. There was nobody to take care of her when the period to deliver approached. Her mother is the one taking care of the new born baby now. She delivered in a church nearby. The church has maternity. But she died in another hospital. Nobody has died in that church maternity before".

Christ Apostolic Church Maternity Reacts

A female Evangelist, Juliana Olalekan who partook in the delivery of the late Theresa's baby at Christ Apostolic Church, Agbala Agbara Itusile Int'l Miracle Centre, 22, Jibowu Street, Abule- Egba spoke to LEADERSHIP Weekend about the deceased. She told this reporter that for decades, thousands of people have been delivered of their babies and nobody has died in the church during childbirth.

She said, "We have not recorded any death at all. When the woman came, she did not drop any money. She had no money to drop. You know this is a church. We do charity work here. We don't charge people money. It is whatever you have you give freely. The woman did not let us know that she committed such sin. We should have prayed for her so that God will forgive her of her sins. May be she

wouldn't have died. She wouldn't have had such complication.

"We had to refer her to another hospital when we discovered that her condition was deteriorating. May God forgive her all her sins and may her soul rest in peace. Amen! I'm one of those that delivered her of the baby boy. We have been offering this kind of charity service for a very long time".

1st Mainland Hospital And Maternity Reacts

The medical director of 1st Mainland Hospital and Maternity, 66, Sanni Balogun Street, Abule-Egba, Lagos where Theresa Ode died, Dr Adegun was not in the hospital when LEADERSHIP visited. He attempted not speak on the issue but this reporter managed to get a comment from him on phone. Hear him: "I don't want to comment on this. But we did our best for her. We cared for her. Who will die will die. She had complication and they brought her to us from another place".

Theresa's Uncle Speaks

Embittered uncle of the late Theresa, Daniel Ocheme (not real name) disclosed that he and some other members of the family were invited by Ode's family to resolve the lingering issue but to no avail, as the woman would not listen to both families. He said, "She was my sister. This is a marriage that lasted for 22 years. The woman later refused to stay with her husband.

"But we never knew that a man in the person of the former Oju local government Chairman, Bright Ogaji was (allegedly) luring her with money and other things so that she would fall into her trap. Theresa and Joseph Ode married in 1994. Joseph is my in-law. Joseph was the General editor of News Watch and Pioneer editor of Financial Standard. He left there to become head of corporate communication of Chartered Bank before he left for politics in Benue State.

From 1994 the lovebirds were living happily with their three children, in Makurdi. Sometime last year the woman packed out of his house in Makurdi to her own house she built in the same Makurdi. She moved with her children. The first daughter is in Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria. The other two girls are in secondary and primary schools respectively.

"The husband was going to see the children in their school during this period of misunderstanding. But in early January, he went to the school only to find out that the children had been withdrawn from the school by their mother. Theresa changed the phone number of her daughter in the university. The man (Joseph Ode) contacted the family of his wife which I'm a member.

"Since then we have been looking for her to know where she was and where she was living. We could not declare her missing because some people said she had called them on phone to tell them she was in Ghana or Paris. Few days before she died she told some people she was in Ghana. No family member knew her whereabouts until Sunday, April 3 that she died of complication after giving birth to a baby boy.

"I got a call from the landlord of the house that Ogaji rented for her at 16, Jimmy Oyeбанjo Street, Abule- Egba, in Lagos State. When I picked the call he asked whether I was related to Theresa Ode and I said 'yes, but she is not in Lagos' because we never knew she was in Lagos. It was then that he told me that Theresa Ode was his tenant but was sick, that gave birth to a baby boy and died, but the baby boy is alive and is with Theresa's mother.

"When he gave us the address we went there. He took us to the church cum maternity where she delivered and another hospital where she died. The hospital had already moved and deposited the corpse in the mortuary at Ajunwon. We went to the place and we saw the body; it was Theresa. We also saw her two children in her residence at Agbule Egba.

Police Begin Manhunt For Suspect

Meanwhile, the Lagos State police command has declared Ogaji wanted and are ready to arrest him anywhere they see him, according to Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Dolapo Badmos. "The Police are investigating the matter. The divisional police officer of Oke- Oba police station has briefed me on the matter. We have commenced manhunt for the suspect. I learnt he is not in the country. I learnt the family had buried the deceased. If they did autopsy before burial that would be okay so that we and the whole world can know what led to her death", Badmos told LEADERSHIP Weekend.

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