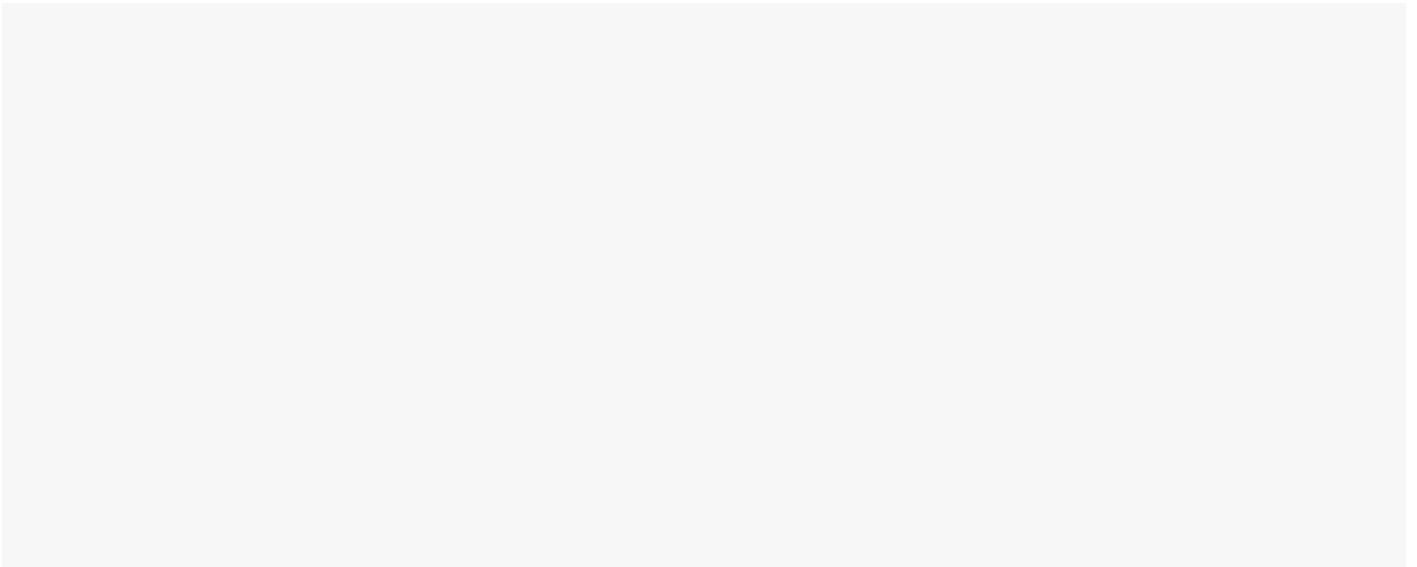


Indian hemp farmer beheads friend over soup

December 19, 2020



By Osagie Otabor, Akure

A 27-year-old Indian hemp farmer, Owalum Benedict Ochin, has been remanded in prison custody by an Akure Magistrate's Court for beheading his friend and roommate identified as Ekon.

Benedict was said to have committed the act after a brawl over ingredients to be put in a soup.

He was also alleged to have attacked one Blessing Opor with a machete after beheading his friend.

Benedict said he hails from Calabar but came to Ondo State in search of job and was introduced to Blessing Opor and others who cultivate Indian hemp.

The incident was said to have happened on November 29, 2020, at about 6:30pm at Jungle Forest, Ipele, Owo Local Government Area.

Both friends were said to be labourers who engaged to cultivate Indian hemp for drug lords at the forest reserve in Ipele.

They lived together after working in the farm.

Benedict however said he killed his friend during a fracas.

According to him, "I killed my friend, Ekon because he provoked me. We were cooking soup and he went to pluck a leaf he knew would upset my stomach and put it inside the soup.

The defendant reportedly told investigators that he used to have stomach upset anytime he consumed the leaf.

He said the both of them went for their cutlasses and began to fight with it which made them sustain injuries but he had the upper hand and was able to hack his friend all over his body, before he made the last stroke at the head.

Benedict said he packed the head inside one bag and hid it inside the bush so that his crime would not be discovered.

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On why he attacked Blessing, Benedict said he was angry after killing his friend and remembered that Blessing owed him some money.

He said it was the alarm by Blessing that attracted others to the scene and he was arrested.

Benedict was arraigned on a two count charge of “murder and attempted murder”.

Police prosecutor, Inspector Uloh Goodluck, said the offences were contrary to sections 516, 316 and punishable under section 319(1) and 390(1) of the Criminal Code Cap 37 Volume 1, Laws of Ondo State 2006.

The plea of the defendant was not taken when the charge was read to him.

Blessing was said to have fled from the Federal Medical Centre Owo where he was receiving treatment.

Presiding Magistrate, N.T. Aladejana, ordered that the defendant be remanded in Ondo Correctional Centre pending the outcome of advice from the office of the Department of Public Prosecution.

The case was adjourned to January 21, 2021 for hearing.



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