

Crime

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Why I set my stepchildren ablaze, by suspect

• Biological dad seeks help for surviving kids

MR. Joseph Ojo, the man who set his five stepchildren ablaze, has said he did it because he children joined their mother to beat him up.

He spoke when he was paraded at the police headquarters in Akure, the Ondo State capital.

"I am 64 years old. I have married four wives. I did not strangle my first wife. I have 10 children from different women. The one I married last, if I gave her money and she bought food, she would not give me food. She did not wash my clothes. She always fought me. We have been together for two years. She and her children used to fight and beat me. We fought the day I set the children ablaze," he said.

Police spokesperson Fumilayo Odunlami said Ojo kept his twins in another room before carrying out the act.

Odunlami said two of the children have died, adding that the suspect would soon be charged to court.

Mr. Laidi Akinfolarin, the biological father of the five chil-

From Osagie Otabor, Akure

dren set ablaze, has sought help for three of the surviving children now battling for life.

Ojo had poured petrol on them while they were asleep and set them ablaze over a minor misunderstanding with their mother.

It was gathered that the children usually slept on the passage way of the house while their mother and stepfather slept in their one-room apartment at Ayesanmi Street in the Odojomu area of Ondo West Local Government.

They usually stayed with their mother whenever their father spent days at his place of work.

Speaking with journalists, Akinfolarin said: "I work on a farm as a tractor driver. The children used to stay with me whenever I did not go to the farm. At times, I would stay on the farm for three to four days before coming home. And during that period, the children stayed with their mother till I came back.

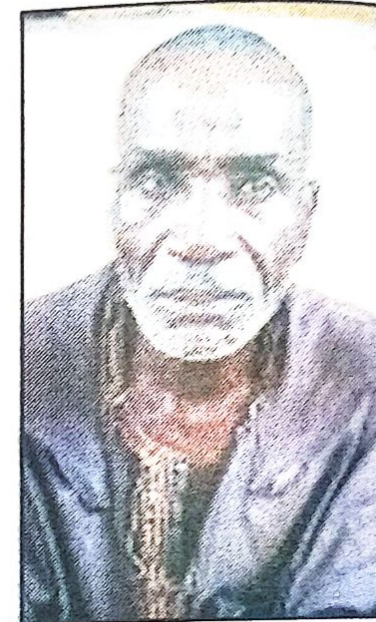
"Most times when I was back from the farm on Fridays,

I would call their mother to tell them I was back. And they would stay in my place till Monday, when they would go to school. After closing, they would go to their mother till I returned.

"On that fateful Friday, I returned home late from work. Around 4pm, I received a call from an unknown person, who told me that the house of my former wife's husband was on fire.

"My phone rang again around 6pm, and the person said my children wanted to speak with me. I heard my first daughter's voice that our stepfather set us ablaze with petrol and they have been taken to the general hospital in Ondo. On getting there, I saw my children writhing in pain. Some were burnt beyond recognition. One died first while the second one died on our way to FMC Owo. The one that died first was Tayo, a seven-year-old boy, and the second one was Aanu, a nine-year-old girl.

"Now, I'm left with three out of five children. The remaining three, Bisola, Tope



•Ojo

and Tobi are at the FMC Owo with the support of oxygen.

"I have promised them that after this trip to the farm, I will stop going and look for something else to do so that I can take care of them properly. They only stay with their mother in her husband's house whenever I'm not at home. I don't want my children to suffer. That is why I did not remarry, to prevent another woman maltreating them."