



CRIME REPORTS

Man fingered in poisoning of cripple son

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• I have no hand in it —

Father

YOUNG Ochi Peter was born to Samuel and Esther Peter from Benue State. Though the mother put his age at four, his father, Samuel, said he was born six years ago. But the child grew from a baby to a child to find himself disadvantaged: He was crippled in both legs. He always made feeble efforts to walk but his weak limbs

could not support his weight. He lived with his parents at Jarija Village via Moniya, Ibadan, Oyo State till November 29, 2014.

For the years he lived, his parents had to cope with him, until that fateful Saturday when Ochi writhed in pain till he died. A can of herbicide lying on the floor and the strong odour of chemical he emitted from his mouth before he died gave a hint of what led to his death. He was suspected to have been poisoned.

Accusing fingers were pointed at Ochi's parents who were believed to have killed him because of his condition and when information reached the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Moniya Division, Remi Balogun, a Superintendent of Police he sent a team of police detectives led by ASP Salami Ganiyu to the scene where the story was confirmed. The herbicide can was recovered and the remains of the boy were deposited in a morgue while the parents were taken into custody.

In Crime Report's interview with the couple at the Department of Criminal Investigation, Iyaganku, where the case was transferred to, Mr and Mrs Peter denied killing the boy, but the statement of the mother of the deceased indicted the father.

According to 29-year-old Mrs Peter, a farmer, who is currently six months pregnant, "on Saturday November 29, I went to clinic at Ijaiye. When I returned, I asked my husband to take care of our son because I wanted to get some firewood. When I came back, my son sat beside me on the floor. Suddenly, he laid prostrate and called 'mummy'. I carried him and he said 'daddy'. He became weak and I perceived the smell of chemical in his mouth. I wondered what happened and I rushed him to our kinsmen's place.

"They started giving him palm oil as antidote and advised that we take him to hospital in town. The child died as we were preparing to do that. My husband was at home but didn't respond when I was calling him. He was the one who bought the chemical as herbicide used on plants in his farm. We kept the item on the window sill, but my child's hand could not

have reached the sill.

“When my husband came to meet me, he said he was not the one who gave the child chemical, wondering who could have done such a thing. Long ago, he said he was tired of the child. My child was four years old when he died. I gave birth him child on May 29, 2010.”

“I have lost two children after the birth of the deceased boy. They died shortly after delivery. I noticed Ochi’s cripple status when I saw he could not stand for long. He was always trying to stand but would fall. His head was also not standing very well on his neck.”

But the husband, Simon (30), also a farmer, denied killing his son. “I came to Ibadan in 2011. My wife gave birth to the boy in 2008 in Benue State through Caesarean Section. When he got to the age he was expected to walk, he could not walk. Even he could not talk. We took him to hospital but the doctors assured us that he would still walk.

“At a time, we were advised to appease gods from my mother’s family and we did, but to no avail. We also took him for prayers. Subsequent pregnancies by my wife resulted in still births. I became tired and we relocated to Ibadan.

“On the fateful day, I wanted to go and collect money that I was being owed after my wife returned from ante-natal clinic. But she said she wanted to go to the farm to get firewood for cooking, asking me to look after our son. I told her that she should stay back so that I would go out first to my debtors but she left.

“After she left, I also went out to collect the money I was being owed. I returned home and slept. My son was beside me and I did not lock the door of our room. I did not even know when my wife returned from the farm. I did not hear when she was calling me. It was later someone came to call me from my kinsmen’s place.

“I saw my boy who was being given palm oil as an antidote. The people told me that my son took chemical and I asked who could have given him the chemical. We took him to a health centre in the village and we were referred to Ijaye. As we were arranging for a motorcycle, he became weak and to take us there, died.

“I was not the one who gave him chemical. I put the chemical container on the window sill and my son could not have stretched his hand to the level. I don’t know whether someone came in while I was sleeping and planned the evil. It is true I once said I was tired of the stress of taking care of the boy because of the financial strain. I didn’t say I was tired of the boy.”

Confirming the story, the state police public relations officer (PPRO), Adekunle Ajisebutu, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, said the case would be charged to court on December 15, 2014.

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