

How Four Year-Old Boy, Two Other Family Members Died Two Weeks After Father's Death

Family fingers spiritual attack No, it was generator fume —Police

By TUNBOSUN OGUNDARE... On Jun 14, 2020

FEATURES



TUNBOSUN OGUNDARE reports that just two weeks after an Edo State-born father of four died in Fadunsin-Ijoko community, Ogun State, his son and two others also died in the same house in mysterious circumstances that left his wife and 13 others unconscious.

WHEN residents of Fadunsin (Phase 3), Ijoko in Ifo Local Government area of Ogun State went to bed on Sunday, May 24, they had no inkling of the misfortune lurking around the following day. Most of them were still in bed when they were alerted to the strange incident in their midst which threw the entire community into commotion.

Two weeks earlier, 45-year-old Edo State-born Mr Augustine Imonitie, had died leaving the Fadunsi community in a state of mourning. While still in shock over the death of Imonitie, the family he left behind was hit with another tragedy.

Imonitie, a truck driver reportedly died as a result of a mysterious illness. This time the death that hit his family was more mysterious as his four-year old son and two other relatives who came on sympathy visit died while about 14 persons in the house including his widow were left unconscious.

Sunday Tribune visited the gate-less three-bedroom bungalow house to dig up the mystery behind the deaths. It was a herculean task getting there as the major road linking the community – a fast emerging town – from Ogba Ayo-Ijoko junction and the inner routes are in a terrible shape.

While in the community, Sunday Tribune noticed that only a few residents, especially children were sighted outside their homes and on the streets. Sunday Tribune also learnt that majority of residents of the community work in Lagos State and come home twice weekly or only on weekends.

The house where the tragedy happened was under lock and key when we called. It had on its front pillar which is in a semi-circular format an inscription “With God All Things Are Possible” and also Imonitie’s obituary poster pasted on the wall.

Getting residents to talk to Sunday Tribune over the incident was not easily. It was after a few trials that a woman volunteered to connect Sunday Tribune to a male landlord, who happened to be Imonitie’s immediate neighbour.

It appeared the neighbour’s house was empty until the landlord, Mr Sherifdeen Ademola, a businessman, showed up. Ademola has lived in the community for nine years; he was in on that day because he had nothing doing elsewhere.

He confirmed the incident, noting that the late Imonitie’s family packed into the house about four years ago but had been down with an undisclosed ailment since about six to eight months back until he eventually died on Monday, May 11.

He explained that after Imonitie’s death, where to bury his remains became an issue among family members. He added that while those in the village wanted his corpse to be brought home for interment on the premise that the family custom rarely permits their male adults to be buried outside their ancestral home, his immediate family members, especially the widow, gave two reasons why such arrangement would be difficult to go by for Imonitie.

The huge financial implication was one. The second reason was the lockdown and ban on interstate movement due to coronavirus pandemic, more so that the funeral party would have to pass through three states – Ogun, Oyo and Ondo before getting to Edo State.

“So, it took the family a while on that day to reach a common ground on the decision over where to bury him and because of that, residents had to go and come back about five times before they eventually agreed to bury him in his residence, but with a strict instruction – that they should measure his length with a rope and bring the rope home in Edo State same day or latest, the following day.

“(They said) that they would use the rope to carve an image for him and invoke his spirit and then bury the image to represent him, otherwise there would be grave consequences.

“The community even raised some money to support them, but the lockdown as I had earlier mentioned didn’t permit them to go. So, they measured the man’s corpse, but kept the rope with themselves at home and organised funeral rites in his honour six days after on the premise that such celebration is also culturally demanded in their family, regardless of age (of the deceased).”

Speaking further, Mr Ademola said, “I was still sleeping when a neighbour banged on my door around 6.00 am to inform me of the incident and that was how we began to call for help in the neighbourhood.

“So in no time, many people had gathered including policemen from different stations and divisions under Sango and Ifo, but none was courageous enough to enter the house having learnt that it was a spiritual issue, until an herbalist on the street, arrived.

“It was the herbalist who went in, but the spirit also attacked him and he fell twice. But as a traditionalist, he appeased the raging spirit using the deceased’s grave as a contact and then asked us to come in to carry the victims out for attention. Still, we were all afraid and reluctant to go in but he kept assuring us of no cause for alarm.

“Eventually, three of us went in. We met all of them on the floor at different spots and we were confused as to what exactly to do. They were 17 in number and many of them had come on condolence visit to the bereaved family. Three were already dead including the deceased’s last born who was a four-year- old boy. Luckily, the rest, including the widow, were still alive but laid unconscious. They only opened their eyes and were foaming, but they could not move their body let alone talk.”

Mr Ademola however, noted that despite the assurance given by the herbalist, three neighbours who stepped into the house were also affected somehow by the spirit, saying his own experience was that he felt a sharp pain and heaviness on his two legs.

Disclosing that three adult members of the family came the following day to take away the purported rope and begged for the community’s forgiveness over the strange incident, Ademola led Sunday Tribune to the herbalist home for his own side of the story.

The traditionalist, Chief Sufian Adeogun Alawore, confirmed his effort and experience on the matter. He said it was God who saved the situation and minimised the casualties figure and that it was the spirit of the dead man that came to trouble the family.

Alawore, however, pointed out that the community had since performed spiritual cleansing to ward-off the spirit completely and prevent recurrence both in the victims’ house and the others in community.

In his own reaction to the incident, the Ogun State’s police command’s spokesman, Mr Abimbola Oyeyemi, refuted the claim that the spirit of the late Imonitie was responsible for the incident adding that it was purely an environmental-health issue triggered by a power generator fume as a preliminary police investigations had revealed.

“Our officers were mobilized to the scene and saw the generator inside the house with its fuel pipe opened and this implied that they used the generator overnight.

“So, the story that it was a spiritual attack by their late person who was buried in the house instead of his ancestral home and all that is purely superstition and we the police don’t believe in all that kind of stories,” he submitted.