

The man died!

A brawl over the door of a bathroom led to the death of 25-year-old Obinna Mezie. But the suspected murderer says, 'I stabbed him to death while trying to fight back'

JIBOLA OYEKUNLE

SURELY, a man who starts the war is quite aware of its beginning, but how it is going to end is far beyond his comprehension. If this saying ever conveyed any meaning to 23-year-old Segun Oyetola, he would perhaps have avoided the fight that ensued between him and 25-year-old Obinna Mezie. It happened in the evening of the penultimate Monday. It was gathered that Chinaka, the younger sister of his challenger, wanted to use the bathroom only to realise that the door to the place had been locked up. She was said to have complained to her brother, Obinna, who went there with rage and attempted to force the gate open. But Oyetola, who claimed to have had his sleep disturbed, would not allow Obinna to break the door open. With this, came a bloody battle that eventually sent the latter rolling in a pool of blood. The man died!

How did it all happen? Oyetola, the suspected killer, recounted, "I was fast asleep in the church when I heard the noise from outside. Somebody was trying to open the gate that demarcates the church building and the boys quarters built within the same compound. It was a woman that first heard the noise. She also sleeps in the church. When I woke up, I realised that it was the same noise that had murdered her sleep too. She began to panic, thinking that it was a thief. I told her not to worry that I would go out and see who was there.

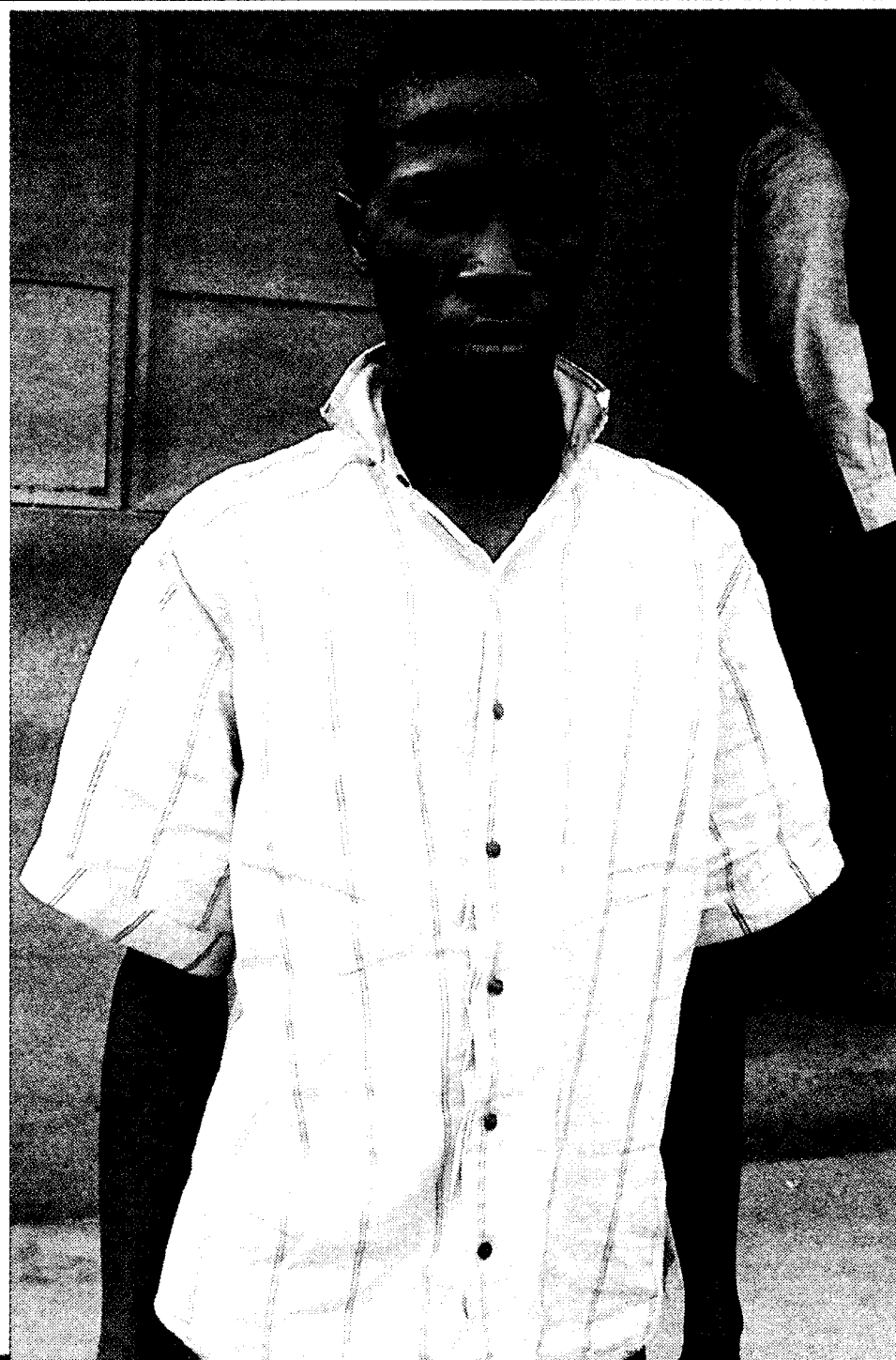
"When I went out, I realised, to my surprise, that it was Obinna and his younger sister, Chinaka. Obinna was trying to force the iron door open, but I warned him not to, because there was another bathroom attached to the boys quarters that his sister could use. But he

insisted that I must open the iron door. Before I could say a word, Obinna had forced the door open. The door hit me on my head and I fell down. Then, both he and his sister pounced on me and started beating me. His sister went to carry a pestle and attempted to hit me, but I dodged it. When I realised that the attack was getting too much for me, I decided to fight back. That was how we started fighting. Later, I went to pick a knife, which I used in the market to sell cow meat. I stabbed him in the stomach and he fell down and died on the spot."

Oyetola said he was born in the church compound, where his parents were resident until his mother died. "Then, I was still a baby. I did not even grow up to know my mother. It was shortly after the death of my mother that I was taken to Oke Imesi, my home village, in Ekiti State, where I had my primary school education at the Local Authority Primary School, Ekiti State. In 1997, I came back to Lagos and sought admission into Askia Secondary School, Badia. But when I could no longer cope with my studies, I had to back out when I got to JSS Two. The woman who owns the church is like a mother to me. When I was taken to Oke Imesi as a baby shortly after the death of my mother, it was my grandmother, who lives in our village, that brought me up. But since I came to Lagos, it is this woman, the owner of the house where I killed Obinna, that has been responsible for my upkeep, because my father also died a few years after the death of my mother.

"I was the only child of my parents. After I dropped out of school, the woman (the landlady) paid an electrician around the area to teach me how to repair elec-

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The man died!

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tronics like radio and TV. I just recently entered into butchery business, selling meat at Orile market so as to be able to feed myself. I have never killed anybody in my life before. This one that happened is the work of the devil. If Obinna and her sister did not fight me, I wouldn't have killed him. I stabbed him to death while I was trying to fight back."

The house, where the incident happened, is located along Atanda Road, Shari Iganmu, Lagos. When *Sunday Punch* visited the place last week, it was gathered that Chinaka, the younger sister of the deceased, had vacated the house to abide with one of her friends who lives in a couple of blocks away from the house. Other tenants resident in the boys quarters were said to have also moved. Investigations revealed that since the incident happened, the landlady, also the owner of the church, and her children have decided to stay away from the house in the day time and stealthily walk back at night to rest till the following morning.

Although the incident does not seem to affect other people living around the house as they all carry on with their daily activities, no one spoken to, was ready to speak about the matter.

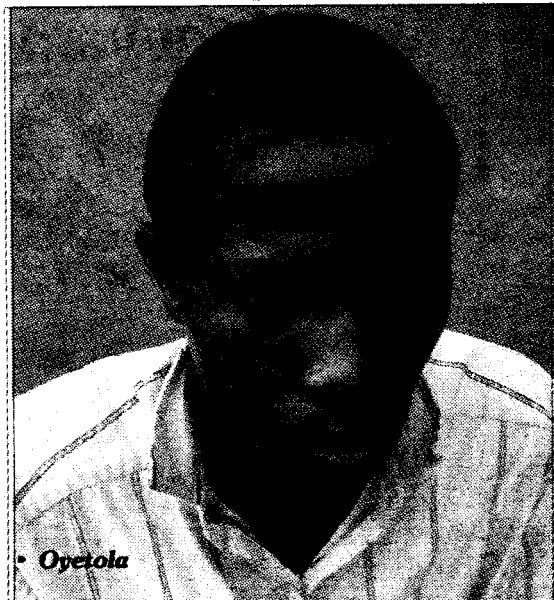
A woman, who also was reluctant to utter a word about the matter, however later offered to direct this reporter to where Chinaka now abides.

The poor girl was met sitting in a meditative position on a bare floor close to her friend's room. Her hair appeared dishevelled and her eyes – troubled with tears – were reddened. "Look at my elbow, my back! Two of them killed my brother. They conspired with the landlady to kill my brother, and also beat me black and blue," she lamented, showing her bruise-ridden elbow to this reporter.

She also showed a part of her back with bruises all over it. "They stabbed him in three different places. Even yesterday (last Wednesday) when I went to the house, the landlady's sons still wanted to beat me up.

But how exactly did it happen? "It happened at night around 9 p.m....." As she began to recount her experience and the events that led to the death of her brother, a lady, identified to be her elder sister, came and mumbled some words in Igbo language.

"Brother, I cannot say anything to you until my father comes," Chinaka later said. "He (her father) has told me not to say anything to anybody on the matter. My sister just called him on the phone now and told him that a journalist was around to investigate the matter. But he ordered that she shouldn't allow me to



• Oyetola



I went to pick a knife, which I used in the market to sell cow meat. I stabbed him in the stomach and he fell down and died on the spot.... Even the landlady was not around when the incident happened. After I realised that he was no longer breathing, I ran away

grant any interview. He said he was on his way that you should wait for him," she said.

About four hours later, it was obvious that the girl had been instructed not to talk to the press at all, as Chinaka later came and said that her father was not coming anymore.


"Sorry for keeping you waiting. Please, you can leave now. My father is no longer coming. I won't say anything to you and I won't allow you to snap me unless my father permits me to do so," she declared. Efforts to reach her father fell through as nei-

ther she nor her sister disclosed his address, claiming that he (the father) did not have a phone line through which he could be contacted.

Investigations however revealed that Chinaka, an 18-year-old teenager, had just recently completed her secondary school education. A woman who pleaded anonymity told *Sunday Punch* that Chinaka had been living with her deceased brother, Obinna, in the house since she started her secondary school, Oweri Girls High School, Orile Iganmu. "Her deceased brother, Obinna, was a trader, selling clothes at Yaba, in Lagos. He (Obinna) had lived in that house for 10 years," the source said.

Meanwhile, Chinaka had earlier admitted that truly, she was a secondary school leaver and that her deceased brother was a trader. "I just finished from Oweri Girls Secondary School. It is true that my brother was a trader. He had a shop at Yaba, where he sold clothes," she disclosed. She also said that although her family resides in Lagos, they hailed from Imo State, in Eastern Nigeria. In response to the allegation that one of the landlady's sons also joined him in beating up and killing Obinna, Oyetola, who is currently being detained at the State Criminal Investigation Department, Panti, Lagos, said, "Nobody joined me in killing Obinna. Even the landlady was not around when the incident happened. After I realised that he was no longer breathing, I ran away. But the police later came to arrest me."

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Lagos Command, Mr. Bode Ojajuni, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, while confirming the incident and the arrest of the suspect, said, "The boy was arrested last week and the case is being investigated. He will be charged to court as soon as all investigations are concluded."



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