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Murdered in her apartment

By TOYOSI OGUNSEYE

Sunday, 23 Jan 2011

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Chinyere Okoli

Chinyere Okoli was found dead in her apartment three days after she was attacked by her assailant. TOYOSI OGUNSEYE reports that her relatives are yet to be found

CHINYERE Okoli was a new tenant at No. 24, Calling Street, Langbasa, Ajah, Lagos State.

The young lady got the N80,000 per annum one-room self contained apartment on December 27, 2010 and by January 13, 2011, she was found dead in her kitchen.

Unfortunately, no one knows anything about her, apart from the fact that she worked at Halogen Security, a security outfit in Lagos, before her demise.

Even Peter Odie, the man who stood as her guarantor when she was to be employed, said that he knew very little about Okoli.

Odie told the police that he met Okoli at the Alpha Beach in Ajah area of Lagos State. According to him, the late girl used to sell

food at the beach and she was quite friendly. This, Odie said, endeared her to everyone.

He said, "She was actually selling food at the Alpha Beach and was polite to everyone. I was one of her regular customers and that was the relationship I had with her."

Odie added that sometime last year, Okoli brought a guarantor form to him. He said, "I remember that she brought the form to me around June 2010. Before then, I noticed that she had stopped coming to sell food at the beach. So, when she came with the form, she told me that she had gotten a job and I signed it for her, only for me to hear that she has been murdered in her room a few weeks ago."

Everyone living in the house where the murder took place claimed that they knew little about her, and that they also did not know how she died.

One of the tenants, Rosemarv Uoorii, however said that she heard strange voices emanating from Okoli's

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room around 2a.m on January 10.

Ugorji, who is pregnant, said that she heard the deceased shouting in Igbo language that she wanted to be left alone. She said, "I heard Chinyere screaming in her room in the middle of the night. I was very scared because I was the only one in the house. My husband had travelled to Edo State and I could not come out alone. In the morning, I called my husband and told him what happened. I also told him that the electricity cable had developed a fault and he asked me to call the electrician."

It was gathered that while the electrician was trying to fix the electricity from the roof of the house, he told Ugorji that he saw traces of blood on the window and door of the late lady's apartment.

Ugorji said, "When my husband returned, I told him what the electrician said and we went to tell the owner of the house. The landlord listened to us and we went back to our apartment."

Two days later, the company that Okoli worked for sent someone to come and check on her because, the messenger said, she had not reported for work for two days. After knocking on Okoli's door which was locked from the inside, the member of staff decided to ask the neighbours.

After the enquiry from Okoli's colleague, they all went to meet the landlord before going to lodge a case of missing person at the police station. They, however, told the police that they suspected that something was amiss because of the unpleasant odour that was emanating from Okoli's room.

When the policemen from Langbasa Police Station got to the house, they forcefully opened the door and found Okoli's corpse in the kitchen, with blood stains everywhere.

SUNDAY PUNCH learnt that her assailant locked the door and went away with the key to the apartment. The Public Relations Officer of the Lagos State Police Command, Mr. Frank Mba, said that the police were working with the theory that the person that murdered Okoli was known to her.

He said, "First, that house is not a place that someone who is not familiar with the environment can just go to because it is located in a swampy area and there is bush behind it. Also, there was no sign of forceful entry into the apartment and this is an indication that the deceased let in whoever it was by herself.

"The neighbours heard her shout around 2a.m.; you can't be with a stranger at that time of the night in your house. All this makes us suspect she knew her murderer very well and the person knew her too."

While homicide detectives battle to establish the probable motive for the murder, the disappearance of Okolie's phone gives them more grounds to worry about the nature of her death.

Mba said, "To compound matters, the person that killed her took her phone too. Luckily, we got her number and we have written to the telecommunications provider to furnish us with the details of all calls made to and received on her phone.

"We hope to receive a response from them very soon and I strongly believe that it will lead us to the person that killed her because she must have called the person that day or, maybe they exchanged text messages and this made the murderer to take the phone with him."

Meanwhile, the police are yet to contact any of her relations because she lived alone and her phone that would have been used to contact her family members can't be found.

Comments :

- Another clear case of why we need the CSI in Nigeria. No doubt, there will be finger prints all over the place as well as human tissues. Clues that are very vital to catching the killer. But the police can only work with what they have. In this case, just phone tracking. I think we deserve more as a nation. When criminals know that they can get away with murder, life will become very cheap.

Posted by: Julius , on Sunday, January 23, 2011

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- RE: The police said they wrote the lady's phone company and are awaiting reply. I consider this a joke and utter incompetence.

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Where murder is involved and Police electronically requests for the victim's phone record the phone company ought to (be able to) furnish the record in a few hours. The reason is to get to everyone that called or received call from the deceased's number early enough to check their alibi or marks (and DNA) on their body in case the deceased fought back her killer/killers

Posted by: Chike Afanna, USA , on Sunday, January 23, 2011

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Posted by: don , on Sunday, January 23, 2011

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