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## Jilted lover sets corps member, friend ablaze

AUGUST 9, 2013 BY ENIOLA AKINKUOTU 56 COMMENTS



When in November 2012, Winifred Okey, received a call-up letter to begin her National Youth Service Corps programme in Rivers State, she was extremely happy. This was because she wanted to be posted there so that she would be close to her friends, who were staying there.

The 23-year-old graduate's happiness was however cut short after she was set ablaze at the corps's lodge in Asari Toru Local Government by her ex-boyfriend.

It was learnt that Winifred, a graduate of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, was in her room in company with her roommate when her ex-boyfriend set their room ablaze.

Our correspondent, who spoke to members of her family in Lagos, learnt that the incident occurred on July 19, 2013.

A member of the family, who wished to remain anonymous, said, "Winifred was the first child of the family. She has a younger sister, Ruth. We were all in Lagos when we received a call from NYSC that Winifred was in a critical condition so her parents travelled to Rivers State immediately.

"We learnt that her former boyfriend in the university, went to her room at night, emptied a keg of petrol on the door and set the building on fire. Other residents rushed to the scene and were able to rescue Winifred and her roommate, but Winifred had been badly burnt.

"They were rushed to the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital."

It was learnt that Winifred's parents stayed with her at the hospital till July 31, 2013, when the graduate of Home Economics died due to the burns she had sustained.

**PUNCH Metro** learnt that the State Criminal Investigation Department immediately swung into action and began investigations into the matter. It was learnt that the police arrested the culprit, who had burns on his hands.

When our correspondent asked Winifred's family why the suspect committed the act, they said they did not know as they had never met him before.

A cousin of the deceased said, "Winifred and the guy met in school, but the guy lives in Port Harcourt while we live in Lagos. The incident is still a shock to us."

Friends of the deceased, however, said the ex-lover had been sending threat messages to her for leaving him. They were not, however, able to state, the cause of their estrangement.

Winifred was said to have been dating someone else, which did not go down well with the suspect.

Winifred's father, Mr. Okey Okey, who spoke to our correspondent on the telephone, said his daughter's death was a shock. He, however, said he could not speak at length because he was having a family meeting over the incident.

The state command's Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Angela Agabe, could not be reached as her phone rang out while a text message sent to her phone was not replied to.



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However, the Public Relations Officer, NYSC, Rivers State, Mrs. Violet Apollo, described the incident as "very sad."

She added that the NYSC would ensure that that the matter was followed to a logical conclusion.

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The nysc we know is quite different with what is obtainable these days...if its not the camp commandant beating them up or died in terrorists attack or allowances with held even in most cases,host communities attack them through rape as well. if their security cant be assured then the programme has outlived its usefulness and should be disbanded

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The sad thing is...replaced with what? NYSC unfortunately is a means of dealing with they high unemployment in the country...even if it is just for a year.

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As a matter of fact, you have touched issue that needed to be addressed but I don't think you have make any justification to the issue at hand. I don't think N.Y.S.C have any role to play as such than contacting the family of the deceased and which is reported they did. the lady was an adult who has right to accommodate friends in her home without anyone infringing her right just that

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