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## Pupil drowns in Lagos hotel's swimming pool

FEBRUARY 21, 2014 BY SAMSON FOLARIN 6 COMMENTS

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**Hotel and Toheeb**

| credits: Samson Folarin

A 14-year-old boy, Toheeb Idowu, has drowned in a swimming pool belonging to Romeo Suites and Apartment in Ipaja, Lagos State.

Toheeb's mother, Moriamo, explained to our correspondent that she was merely told her son fell into the pool and got drowned, adding that attempts to get further details had been frustrated.

She said the management of the hotel hurriedly wrapped up her son in a white cloth, took him to the mortuary and prepared him for burial, while she was not allowed to see his body.

By the time *PUNCH Metro* visited Moriamo on Wednesday, an affidavit dated January 29, 2014 had been signed by the family not to take up any legal case with the hotel, just as the sum of N300, 000 was also said to have been paid.

Moriamo said she had yet to touch the money, and was bothered about how her child died.

She said, "He was my first child out of three children. His sister died about four years ago. He was in SS1 when the incident happened.

"On that fateful day, I had registered him with a private school after he insisted he was tired of going to public schools. He was a brilliant boy and even sang hip-pop, which made him popular among the residents here.

"Around evening, he left the house for the hotel. He had never been there before and he had never swum.

"His father, who lives in Ogun State, was first to get a panic call that Toheeb had gone to swim in the swimming pool and he had hit his head against the side walls and died."

She said Toheeb was rushed to a private hospital in the area, where he was confirmed dead and was later taken to the Alagolo Police Station by the hotel.

She said instead of a post-mortem, which the police had wanted to do, an affidavit was prepared for her to sign that she would not take up any legal matter with the management of the hotel.

"The police came to collect my picture and that of his father. They said they wanted to do a post-mortem. Later, they did an affidavit instead. They took me to the police station. I was asked to sign papers and they gave the family N300,000 afterwards.

"I didn't see my child's corpse. I told them that I wanted to see him, but they kept me away. By the time they


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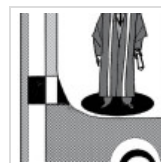


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brought him from the mortuary, they had wrapped him up. We just buried him."

Toheeb's father, Sunday Idowu, a driver, however, told our correspondent on the telephone that the family decided not to pursue the case because they had received the incident in good faith.

Idowu said the only person arrested by the police in connection with the death was released on the order of the family since there was no evidence against him.

"I have yet to recover from the shock of his death, but I have taken it in good faith as a good Muslim," he said.

However, a family source who did not want to be named wondered why the hotel management did not have a lifeguard around the vicinity of the pool to forestall such avoidable death.

He said, "Don't they have anything to check such tragedies? Are they claiming that nobody was there when the boy took a dive?"

Our correspondent visited the hotel on Amodu Odede Street, Abesan Ipaja, but the manager, Segun Okunola, was not available as he was said to have gone for a meeting.

When contacted on the telephone, he said, "The matter is dead already. The whole story is gone and we have forgotten about it. We have done all the necessary things and police have taken over the case. We have also shouldered the responsibility of the boy's burial, so there's nothing more. Although I am new in the hotel, I know we have a lifeguard around the swimming pool."

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Ngozi Braide, said investigation into the matter was stalled by Toheeb's parents' insistence on closing the case.

"The police recovered the corpse from the hotel. As the police were about conducting preliminary enquiries, the boy's parents refused.

"The following day, the policemen at the station filled the post-mortem form. While they were still at it, the parents swore to an affidavit and presented it at the station for the corpse to be released to them; that they don't want any case. All these documents are in the case file and can be made available to you," Braide said.

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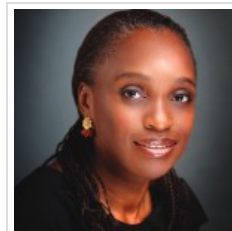
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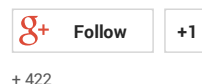


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