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## My husband died a week after his brother was murdered –Widow

FEBRUARY 22, 2014 BY KUNLE FALAYI 1 COMMENT

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**James and Madubike**

Mrs. Ijeoma Okoye has yet to get to grips with the double tragedy that has befallen her family. She still cannot reconcile the fact that her hardworking husband of six years is dead and that would never see him again.

The death of 46-year-old James Okoye and his nephew, 31-year-old Peter Madubike, within one week has set tongues wagging about the mystery of life in their neighbourhood in Ikotun.

The tragedy in the family was immediately apparent when our correspondent visited the family. The atmosphere was thick with grief, contrasting with the exuberant chatter of James' two

young children, whose mother said she had only told them that daddy travelled.

The chain of events that would culminate in the death of the two relations started late in the night of **January 27, 2014** with Madubike's simple crave for a cigarette.

Madubike who lived in another rented apartment in the area, reportedly went to a nearby joint to satisfy his craving. But when he paid for his cigarette, he still had to collect the balance of his money but the attendant at the bar advised him to use the balance to buy a drink.

James' wife said the story was narrated by a member of the Oodua People's Congress in the area, who reported the incident to the police.

She said, "We were told that when he finished his drink, he still had a balance to collect but the attendant still said he did not have change.

"They were exchanging angry words as we were told that the attendant still maintained that he did not have any money to give him as change and could do nothing about it. The argument led to a fight in which a fan broke.

"As we were told, the manager of the joint insisted that my brother-in-law must pay for the fan. But when the fight intensified, he chased both the attendant and my brother-in-law out of the compound."

*Saturday PUNCH* learnt that unknown to Madubike, the attendant had called his friends for assistance and soon, a group of them armed with sticks and other objects appeared.

Okoye said, "One of the boys drew a chisel and stabbed him in the neck and chest. He ran towards home but they pursued him and hit him with sticks. Yet he ran. Few metres to his house, he collapsed.

"The OPC member who spotted the men quickly held the attendant. He said he had to take my brother-in-law who was bleeding heavily to the hospital but before the doctors could do anything, he died."

It was learnt that the young man who stabbed Madubike escaped but the attendant and some of his friends were handed over to the police by the OPC members in the area.

In the middle of the night that day, James got a call and his life was doomed.

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Okoye said, "My husband was the one who brought Peter (Madubike) from the village and taught him auto spare part business. He (Madubike) had learnt welding since he was in the village. He later got a job with a cocoa factory in Ikotun.

"My husband was okay before the incident. But as soon as he was called to the scene and saw how much blood his nephew had lost, he changed. He later told me that he had not been feeling well since he saw the blood."

Saturday PUNCH learnt that Okoye visited the police station many times, went to court for documentation for an autopsy and ran around as a result of his nephew's death.

His widow said he came home a few days after the incident and said he needed to go to the hospital as he was not feeling fine.

"He was tested and put on medication for malaria. But he came home from the police station exactly one week after his nephew was killed and said he was really weak and needed to go to the hospital for more tests and treatment.

"We went to the hospital around 10pm that night and he was treated. But some minutes after 11pm, he told me that he could not breathe properly, I ran to the junction to get a commercial motorcycle.

"The motorcyclist helped him on the bike while I climbed behind him and supported him. But just few minutes from the house, I felt him go limp. He died before we got to the hospital."

It was learnt that members of the village association which James belonged to in Lagos had promptly arranged for his body to be transported home.

James was buried in his village in Anambra State eight days after his nephew died.

It was not really clear what could have killed James so suddenly as no autopsy was conducted on his body.

Okoye said her life had lost direction as she could not imagine how she would survive without her husband.

"We had been surviving because of his hardwork. I have no idea how I am going to take care of these three children," she said.

Okoye is nursing a toddler, who was said to have clocked one month old exactly the day James died.

The mother said she was engaged in petty trading that could barely feed her alone.

"We had not travelled to the village for six years after we got married because my husband said he had to finish the house he was building there before we could travel home," she said.

Meanwhile, Madubike's body lies in the mortuary, still awaiting the necessary police procedures that would make it possible to release it to the family.

The suspects in his murder have been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department, Panti.

Spokesperson for the Lagos State Police Command, Ngozi Braide, said the case is still under investigation as the police would charge the suspects to court at the appropriate time.

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