

Why I petitioned police over my husband's death – Widow of man allegedly poisoned with apple

By - March 19, 2016

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In response to *Saturday PUNCH's* last week report about a housemaid, 23-year-old Oluchi Obi, who spent 39 days in police custody in Lagos after being accused of killing her 47-year-old boss with poisoned apples, the woman at the centre of the controversy, Mrs. Nkechi Ikoh, has come out to shed light on her connection to the issue.

A lawyer, Mr. Courage Erhuen, had told *Saturday PUNCH* that Nkechi was behind how Obi was arrested and how the police seized a safe containing unidentified valuables of the deceased, Frank Ikoh.

Nkechi told *Saturday PUNCH* in a response to the allegation that she only decided to petition the police when one of her children told her their father ate an apple allegedly brought into the house by Obi before he died.

She also said she was never divorced from Frank but they were separated for some years before his death.

"I have three boys for my late husband and I am only concerned about their welfare. If their father, whom they were living with after we separated, died in a strange circumstance, don't I have a right to ask the police to look into it? That was all I did," she said.

Erhuen had in a petition, called for the release of the deceased's safe taken away from his house by the police, but Nkechi alleged that the lawyer was only acting on behalf of one member of the deceased's family who is interested in his property.

The Ikoh family had reached out to *Saturday PUNCH*, insisting that Erhuen does not represent them. It has been clarified that he is only representing a member of the family,

Mr. Nnamdi Ikoh.

Nkechi told *Saturday PUNCH*, "Nobody is talking about how the three children of the deceased are going to survive. All they are talking about is a safe. What is my problem with the safe? If I was actually the one who sent the police to seize the safe, why did they not release it to me? The safe is still with the police. I even have my school documents still in it after I separated from my husband. Why do they keep talking about this safe?

"My deceased husband's vehicle was sold off even by the same people making all these claims even when he has yet to be buried. Did they even think about the welfare of his children and their education?

"The only reason why the housemaid spent so much time in police custody was that they refused to sign the autopsy form on time. All they needed to do was bring the body from Okokomaiko where he died in his sister's house to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja, but they refused. The police only refused to release the housemaid until the autopsy was done."

Nkechi's lawyer, Mr. Chioma, Okwanyi, explained that attempts had been made to settle the issue within the family without police interference but that Erhuen and his client had refused.

"We even suggested that the safe they keep talking about should be opened in the presence of all parties concerned, they refused. Erhuen said he wants to file a case in court. Why are they so interested in the contents of the safe?

"What would be the locus standi of such a case when the welfare of the deceased's three children, which is the thing we are concerned about, is at stake?" Okwuanyi said.

Nkechi also refuted allegations that teargas was thrown into the compound during the police visit. "Why would I ever stand by and allow the police to throw teargas into a home where my children live?" she said.

Saturday PUNCH had reported last week that the late Frank Ikoh had passed away on December 28, after succumbing to an illness that gave him recurrent headache. The

police had stormed the deceased's home to seize the safe in contention and also arrested the housemaid.

A copy of the autopsy conducted on the deceased's body at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, which was signed by one Dr. Mgbahoma Ikenna, showed the primary cause of death as "acute left ventricular failure" while the secondary cause was identified as "hypertensive heart disease".

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