

Policeman guarding Lagos hotel kills UNIZIK graduate

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• The hotel; Jude Photos: File, Family

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A 28-year-old graduate of the Nnamdi Azikwe University, Jude Okoronta, has been allegedly shot dead by a policeman guarding Ileviaoje Hotel in the Ijegan, Ikotun area of Lagos State.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the incident happened around 11pm on Wednesday.

Our correspondent gathered that the victim was waiting for a motorcycle to take him home and was in front of the hotel when he was allegedly shot by the yet-to-be-identified policeman.

An eyewitness, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said there had been a fight between two men in the hotel.

He said, “When the men came out of the hotel, they continued their fight. The mobile policeman locked the hotel gate to prevent people from entering.

“The man shot into the air to scare away the crowd that had gathered in front of the hotel because of the fight. The bullet hit the man that was waiting for *okada* (motorcycle) to take him home.

“The man that died was not among the people fighting. He was hit by a bullet and died on the spot.”

The brother of the deceased, Paul Okoronta, told *PUNCH Metro* that Jude was a customer at the hotel, adding that he usually went there to catch fun.

He explained that he had gone out of the hotel and was heading home when the fight broke out in the hotel.

He said, “He had been going to the hotel for months now; he was one of their customers. Because we usually have power problems, we also sometimes go there to charge our phones and relax. But he had left the hotel when he was shot and killed.”

Paul lamented that since the incident, the management of the hotel had kept mum, accusing the police of also seeking to bury the case.

PUNCH Metro observed during a visit to the area many patrol vans and policemen in front of the hotel.

“The management of the hotel is trying to bury the case. That was why they called the police to secure the hotel. They want to scare people away so that they can forget about it,” Paul added.

Paul also claimed that although the management of the hotel said the killer cop was in custody, the Divisional Police Officer of the Isheri Police Station said the policeman was at large.

The mother of the deceased was too distraught to speak with our correspondent during a visit to their residence on Lawson Street.

The Chief Security Officer of the hotel, who did not identify himself, denied that the late Jude was a customer.

He alleged that the victim struggled for the control of a gun with the policeman.

He said, “The man that died went to meet the policeman to challenge him for shooting and disturbing the neighbourhood. The cop, who is a Mopol, asked what his business was in the matter and he (Jude) abused the policeman.

“The policeman tried to reply him and he attempted to put a finger into the cop’s eye. The policeman cocked his gun and they started struggling for it. That was when the bullet went off.”

The Police Public Relations Officer, Chike Oti, who confirmed the incident said, “Two guys got into an argument and a mobile policeman around tried to settle them. But one of them, called Jude, attempted to snatch the policeman’s gun.

“In fact, they struggled for the gun for a long time. He tried to wrest the gun from the policeman’s hand and the bullet went off.”

He, however, added that investigation was ongoing into the matter.