

INTERVIEW

I can't imagine life without my daughter– Bank worker whose six-year-old child was killed by gunmen

Published November 9, 2019



Mr Maurice Onyibor, 38, is a bank worker whose six-year-old daughter, Kendra, was killed by gunmen in his hometown – Eke – in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State following an attack on October 27, 2019. He tells RAPHAEL EDE how the loss of his daughter has brought pain and gloom to his life

Your daughter was recently killed, how did you hear about her death?

My daughter died in my presence at Our Saviour Hospital, 9th Mile on Monday, October 28, 2019 as a result of gunshots she sustained from gunmen attack in my village – Oma Eke – on October 27. After a surgical operation, her condition got worse. Her mother and I were there and we prayed while the doctors and nurses tried to manage the situation but she didn't make it.

We were in the hospital together because my wife also sustained gunshot wounds. So she was also admitted and I was taken care of them. My friends, well-wishers and so many people were with me. She was supposed to be seven years old by January 22, 2020.

How was she killed?

We travelled to the village for the burial of the wife of one of our people there. It was on a Saturday. On Sunday, my family and I went to celebrate with a Catholic priest friend who was dedicating a new church building in his parish, at Abunuzor in Imezi Owa, Ezeagu Local Government Area of the state. We worshipped there.

After the service and celebration, we decided to go back to the village to get one or two things before returning to Enugu. On our way back to Enugu, I took a short-cut through Oma Eke village that we call Ishi-Ugwu. Then I saw a ditch that held some water so I slowed down but immediately we passed the ditch, I heard a gunshot. It came from the bush and was actually targeted at us but because the vehicle was in motion, I didn't expect any trouble. Nobody was on the road and nobody stopped us.

We were even discussing and joking before the incident. Unfortunately the bullet hit my daughter who was sitting directly behind me. The bullet pierced the car and hit her in the stomach. So when she shouted and her mother turned back to ascertain what was wrong; she was hit too as some pellets were removed from her body when we got to the hospital. I actually looked through the side mirrors and saw a man pointing gun at us. It was at that point that I knew there was danger and I had to speed off.

Immediately rounds of gunshots were fired indiscriminately at the vehicle; one hit the roof of the vehicle so I suspected that one of them was on a tree. I was driving an SUV; some bullets hit the boot and some deflated the two back tyres. So I was able to get us out of there driving on rims.

I was with my entire household; my three children, my wife and our home help.

They were still shooting at us while I was speeding off; they were about five and they all had guns. So I managed to get to Osita Okechukwu's house and started shouting because there was a reasonable number of people there that could help and some policemen were also there.

When I narrated my encounter to them and after seeing the condition of my daughter who was in a pool blood, they brought a police van and took us to a nearby hospital. I was afraid she might not be able to make it to Enugu if I decided to take her to the university teaching hospital there. While in the vehicle the food she ate few hours before the incident were dropping out from her intestine. When we got to the hospital, they took her to the theatre. They went into the theatre around 8pm because the hospital didn't have a blood bank and they needed some blood before going to the theatre.

I could not donate blood to her because mine didn't match hers. Her mother could donate but at that point, her blood pressure was high and she had also lost some blood because the bullet also hit her. So, they said she could not donate blood in her condition and that we should either buy blood or find someone that would donate to us. I started calling the people I knew in Enugu and my friends whom were at the event with us.

They went to hospitals in Enugu but couldn't get blood and while they were looking for somebody that could donate blood to her, the hospital called a donor who gave her blood. That was when they wheeled her to the theatre. Between 4:45am and 5am, they came out from the theatre and before 10am my daughter was awake. There was hope as she was talking sensibly but around 11am she started having crisis which the hospital tried to manage but they couldn't and between 1:30pm – 2pm, she died. She actually died in our presence – me and my wife because my wife was also admitted. When she started having crisis, my wife had to leave her ward for my daughter's ward.

Before she was shot, she was sitting calmly in the car. She was even telling me that she made a new friend at the event.

What came to your mind immediately you noticed that your daughter had been shot?

I was shocked. I couldn't believe it because I never knew that I could be attacked in that manner in my village. Some of us that live in the cities believe that if the cities are not safe, we can go to our village. I still cannot understand what happened up till now. So, I am so shattered.

The killers have been described by some people as Fulani herdsmen, do you know if they were herdsmen?

Actually, I don't know the killers but I was told by security operatives that the assailants would likely be herdsmen, citing several cases within the area. If those criminals come here now, I won't be able to recognise them because they were shooting at us from the back. And while driving, I was also trying to dodge the bullets. I was driving in a zigzag fashion. All I know is that I was attacked by gunmen and you can see the proof of that on the vehicle and my daughter who died from bullet wounds.

What are the things you remember about your daughter when you remember her?

Oh! So many things. This house will always be boring without her. She was fond to be with and an extrovert. Wherever she found herself, she would adjust; she was very intelligent. If you heard her talking, you would never believe it if she told you her age. She was so beautiful. Whenever I talked with her, I always felt proud being her father. She was outstanding in anything she participated in school and in church. She had a way of making friends within a very short time.

How often do you remember her in a day?

I can't forget her; remember that she was my first child. I still cry. It's been difficult and traumatizing for me. What I do, I try as much as possible not to cry in my wife's presence because of her condition. I remember her every minute of the day and there was strong bond between us. You know how strong the bond between a father and his first daughter can be. At a time, her mother was jealous of the kind of bond we shared. This little girl would not sleep until I returned from work.

She would always say: I want to wait for my daddy to come home before I go to bed. And even when she slept off before I returned home from work, once she woke up, she would come to my room. Any day I travelled and did not return on that day, I must explain to her the reason why I would not return on the same day. I must discuss it with her.

I couldn't just travel without telling her and if I travelled and was not able to make it, I must talk to her on the phone and discuss it with her. She had a phone that she would call me with anytime I was supposed to be at home and not back yet.

She would call and ask: "Daddy, where are you? Come home, I am missing you."

What were her dreams and aspirations?

Her dreams were quite high. She wanted to be a medical doctor. Even in school, she acted a doctor in dramas. She always told me that she would be a doctor when she grew up. She had a tender heart and was always willing to help whenever she could. She hated trouble, so she tried as much as possible to avoid anything that could lead to trouble.

What kind of girl was she?

She was a loving girl. She was fun to have around. She was an extrovert because she was not intimidated by anybody or any environment. She could acclimatise herself to any environment. She was in primary two and so brilliant.

How tough has it been for you to deal with her loss?

It's been extremely tough. It has not been easy ever since I lost her. She was my pride and treasure. I still cannot imagine life without her, but what can I do other than to look forward?

Are you able to sleep at night?

Yes, after taking medication. I have been taken medication prescribed by the doctor. When I can't sleep, I start to think about her and soon I will start shedding tears. I had beautiful moments with her. I had fantastic moments with her. So I remember those fantastic and beautiful moments we shared and from there, I will start crying.

Does it feel like life has lost its meaning?

Yes, for sure. Though I have other kids, I am not finding it easy at all. Even my wife was counselling me the other day, saying I should take it easy. When we went to hospital for her appointment and they checked my blood pressure, they noticed that my BP was extremely high. I had never had that before. They gave me medication immediately. But I can't help it; even when I try everything not to think about it, my mind wanders back to her. The only consolation is that every now and then, people come here and I try to follow their discussions but they eventually leave.

In the middle of night, I'm on my own and the same thing I try as much as possible to avoid come to me. These days, nights are like a dreaded disease to me because in the night when everybody has gone to their various houses, I'm on my own and with my thoughts.

Do you want justice for your daughter?

Yes, but I have not heard from the police or the government. I don't know what they are doing but I believe they are doing something. I believed that they try not to reveal too much of the things discovered investigation. I am hoping that Enugu State Government will assist in fishing out the perpetrators of this gruesome murder of my daughter. I am also hoping that the local government will assist to fish out those behind the attack because if it is not done, who knows who will be the next victim.

Copyright PUNCH.

All rights reserved. This material, and other digital content on this website, may not be reproduced, published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed in whole or in part without prior express written permission from PUNCH.

Contact: theeditor@punchng.com

DOWNLOAD THE PUNCH NEWS APP NOW ON



Receive Alerts on: Whatsapp: +2349090060943, Twitter: @MobilePunch, BBM: C003D3DC0

Share your story with us: SMS: +2349090060943, Whatsapp: +2349090060943, Email: punchonline@punchng.com

Retired Abuja based Pharmacist Reveals a Natural Healing Formula That Completely Reverse Hypertension & Lower Blood Pressure. [Click Here](#)

