

Edo community boils as ritualists murder schoolgirl

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The late Glory

- Killers slit her throat, stomach, heart –Villagers
- I don't know why my daughter was cruelly murdered –Dad

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Sixty-six-year-old Abiodun Ohiole wholly enjoyed the *fufu* (staple food) and delicious soup served him by his 20-year-old daughter, Glory, that Saturday at Imwena quarters (near Saint Joseph Catholic Church) in Otuo community in the Owan East Local Government Area of Edo State.

It was 10pm on February 22, 2020, after he finished the meal and Ohiole was already yawning by the time he called his family of 12 including one of his wives, 54-year-old, Omua, for them to pray before going to bed.

Glory read a Bible passage to the family before her father said the prayer. As they were about to disperse, Glory took an excuse to urinate outside as her brother switched on a generator; the only source of electricity in most homes in Otuo community for the past seven years. But none in the family knew that would be the last time they would see her alive.

Few minutes after she failed to return to the house, the family became anxious and started searching for her. Amid the anxiety, Lucky Idia, a farmer and landlord of the Ohioles, told the search party that he saw Glory outside a while ago.

After an hour of futile search, Idia asked them again if they had found her but none suspected him as one of those behind Glory's disappearance. Unknown to the Ohioles, Glory's dismembered body was at the time lying in a bucket in Idia's room; her throat slit, heart removed, pubic hairs shaved and stomach ripped open. The murder was done in such a way that no grunt or struggle was heard by the neighbours.

Saturday PUNCH learnt that while the Ohioles were praying, Idia sat near their entrance and was invited to join them and he did for the first time. The family was said to have been delighted that a man who always ignored them as Catholics was touched by their prayers.

Unknown to them, he came to keep an eye on Glory as he kept two other accomplices waiting in his room. Our correspondent gathered that immediately Glory left the room, she was ambushed by her attackers who used juju to hypnotise her and dragged her to Idia's room.

The search for Glory continued till the following day until Sunday night when her remains were brought out and dumped at the back of the house. A passerby who saw the body drew the family's attention to it.

The police came to the area on Monday and traced the deceased's blood to Idia's room. The police broke the entrance door and what they saw was horrifying.

"We saw the knife used to kill the girl. Her blood was collected in a bowl with blood spillage on the floor," said Ogbonwe Ben, head of the vigilance group called to the scene by the Divisional Police Officer, Otuo Police Station, Mr Mathew Asemo. Our correspondent gathered that after Glory was murdered, her vital organs were removed and taken to an Okene woman in another area in Otuo.

Neighbours alleged that the woman traded in human parts and moved into the community six months before the incident after buying a newly built house in the neighbourhood. After the incident, the house was torched by irate youths of Otuo.

On the day police came to the neighbourhood, the DPO immediately called Ben who is also the youth leader and a search party was set up to fish out the killers of Glory. At the time, the news of the incident had spread to the neighbouring communities and people started trooping into Otuo. The Ohioles immediately vacated the house as angry youths destroyed the building.

It was not long before the alleged killers of Glory comprising three men and a woman, were caught by the armed youths and taken to the police station. In a fit of rage, the mob outnumbered the police, dragged the suspects to the road and set fire to them.

Ben
said,
“On



Sunday night, I received a call from the DPO of Otuo. He said I should organise my boys to Imwena quarters to witness what was happening there. I immediately called some of my members and we met in my house before moving to the place. When we got there, I saw the dismembered parts of the girl. Her private part removed, stomach ripped open and the heart cut. I felt sad because it was not the first time such a thing would happen in the community.

“Immediately we started investigation and we learnt that it was in the home of one Idia that the act was perpetrated. We searched for him and fortunately, we found him on Monday morning. We took him to the police station. He confessed that he was not the only one that killed the lady. He mentioned one Okene woman then one guy he identified as ‘No fuck up’ and one Lukman.

After his confession, the vigilantes searched for ‘No fuck up’ and he was also arrested with the woman. It was ‘No fuck up’ that confessed that he was the one who killed Glory.

“We took all of them to the police station that day. But when we got to the police station, the youth were angry. I struggled to ensure their safety but the mob said no. I was manhandled, my clothes torn and I also sustained injuries.”

Speaking about the incident, the Ovie of Otuo, Julius Ojeabuo, said it was the DPO who informed him that the vigilantes had arrested those responsible for Glory’s death.

The monarch said he pleaded with the crowd to release the suspects to the police so that they would not be given jungle Justice but they refused.

He said, “This will be the last time such a thing will happen in Otuo. We placed a curse that anyone who comes to this land with evil intent will be destroyed.”

Glory desired to become an accountant and already registered for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination and the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination as an SS3 student of Azama Grammar School, Otuo.

She was also an apprentice cloth designer, a training she was already three years into and about to graduate this year.

Glory was born in February 2000, a leap year and murdered in February, 2020 which is also a leap year.

Glory’s father who wore sad looks when our correspondent spoke with him, gently said, “Glory was a good cook. She was the one who prepared the food I ate the night she was killed. She pounded the *fufu* and prepared the soup. She never complained and was always busy doing one thing or the other. I don’t know what I did to anyone to take my daughter away from me.”

He paused at that moment, shed tears and said dejectedly, “Glory is gone.” The late Glory’s mother sat half naked on a mattress on the ground when *Saturday PUNCH* visited the home of the Ohioles. Her eyes were red after excessive tears.

She said she couldn't believe Idia would be her daughter's killer, adding "I took him as my brother. As we were praying that night, he came to us to say he wanted to join us. We were glad as we sang together. We told him to dance with us. We told him that before then he usually watched us without joining us and now that he joined us to pray, happiness had entered his home. He said, 'amen.' Then we encouraged him to always join us in prayers. It was later that we called Glory to open the Bible and read to us. She read from the book of Hebrew that night but I can't remember the chapter and the verse."

At Azama Grammar School, Otuo, one of the teachers who spoke on condition of anonymity, described Glory as a brilliant student who hoped for a bright future.

The teacher said, "She was a good pupil and asked questions brilliantly in class. She was one of the pupils we are hoping to give us good results in SSCE."

None of the classmates of the deceased was willing to speak with *Saturday PUNCH* about Glory's death. Her boss at the fashion institute, Gladys Imoyi, was distraught about her death. She told our correspondent that Glory was a reliable apprentice who handled everything perfectly in the shop whenever she was not around.

Imoyi said, "There was nothing in the shop that she didn't know about. As a matter of fact, this year was her third year of training and year of her graduation. My plan was to buy a sewing machine for her to start her own business after graduation.

"The last time she came to shop was in August last year. When I called her to ask why she did not come, she told me not to worry that she would return after the SSCE and UTME. She told me that she wanted to face her study and prepared well for the examinations. She was a pleasant and hard-working person loved by many."

In its reaction, the state police command said the development was an unfortunate one.

Speaking through its spokesperson, Mr Chidi Nwabuzor, the command regretted that the mob took law into their hands by burning the suspects and did not allow the police to complete investigation and prosecution of the suspects.

As of the time of filling this report, Glory's body was still in the mortuary. The family said they could not bury the corpse until the police released it to them.

“We are not even thinking of burial now. We are devastated by her death. She was close to me. There is nothing we didn’t discuss or share. She was my confidant. Most of what she knew about me, our parents don’t know. I have lost a friend and a sister,” lamented Reuben, Glory’s elder brother.