

METRO PLUS

Apprentice breaks Lagos sales boy's skull with coconut

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• Scene of the incident

Deji Lambo

An apprentice foodstuffs seller, identified simply as Chukwuemeka, has been allegedly killed by his co-apprentice, Chuks Victor, during a scuffle at their boss' shop on Allison Street in the Ikorodu area of Lagos State.

PUNCH Metro gathered that Victor and another co-apprentice, Emmanuel John, were arguing over the space to display the goods of their boss when the argument degenerated into a fight.

During the fight, it was learnt that Victor, out of anger, took a coconut and threw it in the direction of John, but Chukwuemeka, who was watching the fracas, was hit by the coconut.

When *PUNCH Metro* visited the scene of the incident, an eyewitness, Onyebuchi Odoh, said the coconut fractured Chukwuemeka's skull, adding that he was immediately rushed to hospital for treatment.

The 22-year-old stated, "My boss left Chukwuemeka in my care to train him. We were together in the shop when the fight started. As the second manager, I moved closer to intervene, but they kept on fighting.

"I didn't know when Chukwuemeka left where he was standing for the other side of the shop, where the fight was ongoing. Suddenly, Victor took a coconut and used it to attack John, but as he threw it in John's direction, the coconut hit Chukwuemeka on his head.

"Immediately, he started bleeding in the head and he fell to the ground. Although he was still conscious, I quickly carried him and used his clothing to wrap his head. I called my boss to inform him of the situation and he directed me to quickly take him to the Ikorodu General Hospital for treatment. So, a vehicle conveyed us to the place."

Chukwuemeka's boss, Aguyi Mba, said the victim died two days after being admitted, adding that he had handed the three boys involved in the fight that led to his death over to the police.

Mba said, "What caused the fight was that John put his basin of goods at a particular spot, but Victor shifted it from the spot and put his own basin there. This got John annoyed and he started attacking Victor. Even Augustine, who was supposed to separate them, also started attacking Victor. Both of them beat him to the point that they used a stool to hit Victor.

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"It was at that point that Victor ran outside, picked a coconut from a trader's shop and threw the coconut in the direction of those attacking him, it hit Chukwuemeka, who was not involved in the fight.

"The coconut fractured Chukwuemeka's head and I instructed them to take him to hospital on the day of the incident. I spent over N100,000 on his treatment, including taking him to Ikeja to do a brain scan the following day and we brought him back to the hospital.

“On Thursday, March 19, 2020, we were told to take him back to Ikeja and as we were waiting for an ambulance to convey us there, he died. I reported the case at the Sagamu Road Police Station and also produced the three boys involved in the fight.

“When I was asked why I refused to report the incident immediately, I explained to the police that I was trying to ensure his survival first and had been going in and out of the hospital till he died. He just started working with me two months ago and I had been teaching him and his co-apprentices the trade and had agreed that after serving me, I would establish them. I have informed his brother-in-law.”

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Bala Elkana, said Mba informed the command about the incident, adding that the suspects had been arrested and the corpse deposited in the Ikorodu General Hospital mortuary for autopsy.

He stated that further investigation into the incident was ongoing, adding that the case had been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department, Panti, Yaba.

Elkana said, “On Thursday, March 19, 2020, around 10.55am, the victim’s boss, Aguyi Mba, came to the Sagamu Road Division and reported that on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, around 9pm, one of his sales boys, Onyebuchi, informed him that two other sales boys, Emmanuel John and Chuks Victor, engaged themselves in a public fight and that during the fight, the coconut that Victor threw in anger to his co-fighter hit another sales boy, Chukwuemeka, 22, on his head.

“Chukwuemeka started bleeding and was rushed to the Ikorodu General Hospital for treatment, but died on Thursday, March 19, 2020, around 9.30am. Immediately, detectives from the Sagamu Road Division, led by ASP Saidat Okanlawon, were mobilised to the scene of the incident. The suspects were arrested and the corpse was deposited in the Ikorodu General Hospital’s mortuary. The case has been transferred to the SCIID for discreet investigation.”