

## INTERVIEW

# Police shielding cop who killed my brother – Rivers petitioner

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**Published** February 6, 2021



*Mr Anitie Joseph is a petitioner before the Rivers State Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Police Brutality and Related Offences sitting in Port Harcourt. He tells DENNIS NAKU how his elder brother was allegedly killed by a policeman in 2016*

*Tell us your name and what you do for a living?*

My name is Anietie Joseph. I am an engineer.

*You petitioned the Rivers State Judicial Panel over the alleged killing of your brother by the police. When and how did your brother die?*

A police officer killed my elder brother, James Okon, on November 21, 2016, and all efforts to investigate the case proved abortive. So, I was happy when the setting up of this commission was announced and I sent in my petition.

***Where and how did the incident happen?***

The incident happened at Elelenwo in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. It was about 5pm on November 21, 2016. I was called that a police officer shot my brother. I rushed to the scene, where I saw him writhing in pain. I immediately rushed him to the hospital. At the first hospital I took him to, the doctor refused to attend to him. He was asking for a police report. Because of the gridlock in town, it was hectic trying to take him to another hospital. But I managed to move him to another hospital. Unfortunately, he was confirmed dead at the second hospital. Up till today I don't know why my brother was killed. The police refused to investigate the case.

***When you got to the scene of the incident, were you told what happened before he was shot?***

Nobody was able to tell me what happened. But I noticed that he was trying to speak, but I saw that he was weak and his strength was dropping. So, I was more concerned with taking him to the hospital to save him first. I had hoped that he would be able to tell me what really happened while receiving treatment in the hospital.

But somebody who was there said four policemen passed by and one of them just turned and started searching him. It was like after searching his pocket and everywhere, he didn't find anything and my brother challenged him by saying, "Now that you searched me, did you see anything?" But the policeman got angry and opened fire on him. The four policemen ran away after the shooting.

***Did you report the matter to the police?***

Yes, I made a formal report to the police. I made the report at Elelenwo Police Station. I was told that the policeman who fired the shot was arrested and the matter was transferred to State Criminal Investigation Department. But I haven't heard anything about the case

again since 2016. The police refused to investigate the matter. All efforts to make them investigate it were unsuccessful. I believe they don't want to investigate one of their own. A senior police officer at the Elelenwo Police Station later told me in confidence that the policeman who shot my brother had been released and posted outside the state.

***What kind of a person was your brother?***

He was a complete gentleman. He had a good job. He always minded his own business. I lived with him before I left to marry and rented my own house.

***What was your brother's occupation?***

He was an instrumentation and control engineer with the Eleme Petrochemical Company Limited. He was 41 years old.

***On what part of the body was he shot?***

He was shot on his leg.

***What do you want the panel to do for you?***

I am asking for justice and adequate compensation for the family that my brother left behind to the tune of N50m, though no amount of money can be adequate compensation for his killing.

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