

Management of Imo hotel where my son died sees me as nobody, never called or visited me

—Father of 'electrocuted' prospective NYSC member

Seventy-year-old Mr Peter Obasi is the father of a fresh graduate of the Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri, Imo State, Emmanuel Obasi, who died recently in a hotel where he worked while awaiting call-up letter for national youth service. The bereaved father speaks to **CHIDIEBUBE OKEOMA** about the tragic incident

How did you learn about the death of your son?

It was a man who introduced himself as a manager of Degios Hotel that told me that my son was dead. He told me that he got electrocuted in the hotel. This was after I kept calling without anybody answering it. Somebody finally answered around 3:30pm on Monday and told me that Emmanuel, my son, got electrocuted and his remains had been deposited in a morgue.

What went through your mind when he told you that?

That story is very strange to me. It sounds a movie script. The truth of the matter is that I didn't know that my son was working at the hotel as a staff member and that he had been working there for up to two weeks. Emmanuel was my third and last child. He was born on September 29, 1993. He studied Quantity Survey at the Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Owerri. He finished his studies and was awaiting his call-up for the NYSC scheme. The story that he was electrocuted while working in the hotel doesn't add up. And for the fact

that they refused to call any member of my family or invite the police before taking his corpse away shows that there is more to it. The government should investigate that hotel.

Have you seen the corpse?

I have not seen it. From what I am hearing, his body doesn't look electrocuted. It is fresh. That raises our doubt that the electrocution story could be a smokescreen. There is more to it.

What do you intend to do now?

I want justice; whichever way the government would assist my family to get justice would be appreciated. I don't have money. I am just a retired driver. Let the actual cause of death be established. Let the government carry out an autopsy on his body. This is very devastating.

Has the hotel management reached out to you?

Not at all; they see us as nobody, and that must be why they have yet to visit us or even call us on the phone. They think they will use their connections to intimidate us. One thing I know is that God is alive and he will ensure that my son, my family get justice. I am just a retired driver from Lagos.

Has the case been reported to the police?

The matter is at the homicide department at the state police command in Owerri. The Commissioner of Police in Imo State ordered that the case file be transferred from Agbala Police Station where the hotel management reported the matter after the state director of State Security Service intervened. The matter is at the command headquarters now. The CCTV footage they brought, according to what I was told, is not clear. There is more to the death of my son.

What kind of a person was your son?



He was a very quiet person. He was an introvert. He hardly talked. He liked staying on his own; he was very calm and never looked for troubles.

Did he share some of his plans with you?

He wanted to become a responsible person. That was why we sent him to school. He was awaiting his call-up for the NYSC scheme before he took that hotel work. If Nigeria was working well, he wouldn't have undertaken a hotel job. The essence of training a child in school is for the child to take care of his parents at old age but look at where I am today. This is heartbreaking.

