


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## After accident, my son on NYSC posting bled to death on Jigawa hospital's floor –Bauchi schoolteacher

Armstrong Bakam  4 December 2021

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Late Matui and the Mother

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**Mrs Diana Esky, a schoolteacher in Bauchi State, is the mother of a 24-year-old graduate of Architecture, Matui Esky, who died in a car accident on his way to the National Youth Service Corps orientation camp in Katsina State. The bereaved mother speaks to ARMSTRONG BAKAM about the pain of losing her son**

*Please briefly tell us about yourself.*

My name is Mrs Diana Esky. I am a teacher and mother to the late Matui.

*How did you receive the news of your son's death?*

I came back from the office that day and was eating with my husband outside when two of his (Matui's) friends came to the house and said they wanted to see me privately. I asked them what happened but they said I should just come. Surprisingly, the first thing that came out of my mouth was that, "Was Matui involved in an accident?" They kept quiet and we went outside and then they said yes, it was so. Then I asked, "Has he died?" They said he wasn't dead but he

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courage and broke the news to him. I told him that Matui had been taken to the General Hospital in Dutse, Jigawa State and I would be going there. He tried to stop me from going because it was already getting late. He said I should wait till the following day but I told him that anxiety wouldn't let me sleep.

I set out for Jigawa with one of my neighbours. My neighbour phoned one of her sisters that works in Jigawa and asked her to go to the hospital to see Matui's condition. While on our way, we kept communicating with my neighbour's sister.

When that woman got to the hospital, she told us that my son was still alive but was unconscious. She said my son and the others weren't getting any medical care. She said they were just dumped on bare floor in the hospital. She told us she saw the driver who had a fracture on his shoulder and it was the driver's father that brought in someone from outside the hospital to fix the fracture.

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She said my son was left on the bare floor, struggling for life with blood streaming out of his mouth and nose. He was hit on the head during the accident.

What was your reaction when she told you that?

When I heard that, I became restless and very troubled, so I began to pray. I was singing and praying at the same time. When we got to Birnin Kudu in Jigawa State, we called that woman again but she sounded low. I told my neighbour to ask her if there was any private hospital around, so she could help me transfer my son there immediately. I said whatever the bill was I would pay. But she told us that the police were involved and they wouldn't let her move him just like that, because it was the police that brought them (accident victims) to the hospital. She said for her to move him, she would have to involve the police and that would be a long process. At that point, I felt in my mind that something wasn't right.

What happened next?

As soon as we got to the hospital, the women came out, held me and asked me if Matui was my biological son and I told her yes. Then she told me to go in and see him. Then, I said to her, "Tell me, is my son dead?" But she kept quiet. I asked her again but she kept quiet, so I told her that I would not look at him. I then started glorifying the name of the Lord. I fainted right there at the hospital and it was through people's efforts that I was resuscitated.

We later went to the house of that woman to sleep but while we were there, the hospital called that we could not leave a corpse just like that. We didn't want the corpse to be taken to the mortuary because releasing it to us would require a long process and we wanted to take it to Bauchi the following day.

Early the next day, we hired a vehicle and I used my wrapper to cover the body. I was told to travel in another vehicle but I told them that the corpse was that of my son and I had to stay in the same vehicle with it. So, my son's corpse was placed at the back with my neighbour and a policeman that accompanied us. I sat in the front with one other woman I met at the hospital who insisted on accompanying us.

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What kind of a person was your son?

Matui in our dialect means “we have found him” because before I had him, I lost my first pregnancy and that was the reason we gave him that name. Matui gave me tough time when he was young but later on, he changed. The joyous part of it was that he later realised that it was time for him to change and take up the responsibility of being the first child in our family.

We told him that after his service year, he must bring a lady he would get married to. His father said he wanted him to get married early because he (his father) married late. The father told him that he was nearing retirement and his last born is in SS 1, so he wouldn't want Matui to also get to retirement age and still be struggling with payment of school fees.

The truth is that Matui was stubborn and gave us tough time but he suddenly turned a new leave. When he went back for his HND, I struggled and struggled. When he graduated, he didn't even want to go for service with the first batch. The day he told us that his result was out, his father immediately gave him money to go to the cybercafe and print it. He came back that day and told us that NYSC had opened its portal for registration, so I gave him money to go and register. I then contacted a woman I know who works at the NYSC headquarters to help redeploy him close to us since she knows the condition of my husband. We sent his name and call-up number to her but at the end of the day, it didn't work out. So he had to go to Borno State where he was posted but his camp was in Katsina State. The woman said while in camp, he should fill a redeployment letter and choose either Gombe or Plateau State.

What course did your son study?

He studied Architecture at the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi. He was 24 years old. The boy suffered. In fact, after his last semester exams, he had to be hospitalised because he read Architecture and he was always working both day and night. Since he decided to change for good, his father and I became happy with him and anything he wanted, we gave him and did for him.

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them that we spent money on like Matui. I have another son that is studying veterinary Medicine, but I haven't spent as much money on him as I did on Matui. He had to write WASSCE four times before he got the requirements to further his education and this was all because he didn't have time to read his books because he was into music and that was a distraction to him.

***His burial was attended by a huge crowd. How did that make you feel?***

Honestly, I was comforted with the way people kept trooping in and I believe that was how the angels were troupng out to receive Matui because he made a U-turn and gave us joy; he took the responsibility for this family. If he had money, he would buy things for the family and if we told him that we needed anything, if he had money, he would provide for us. The last thing he did was to refill our gas cylinder and that is what we are still using till date and it was the money he got from a programme he did recently.

He told me to calm down that he would drive his father to wherever he wanted to go. He told me he would relieve me of the duty of bathing his father, which I have been doing for about eight years. But he told me to handle it for the three weeks that he would be away at the NYSC camp.

***What was your last moment with him like?***

My last moment with him was that morning before he left. We gathered for our morning devotion and he came out from his room with his toothbrush and I said, “Matui, you’re leaving this morning and we want to pray and you don't want to join us?” He went out to brush his teeth and when he was done, he was moving back toward his room when I ordered him to join us in the prayer. Then his father prayed for him.

When we finished, he went into his room and put his things together. I went into his room and asked him if he had put a Bible in his bag but he told me he hadn't. I told him that he couldn't be travelling for three weeks and not go with his bible; so, I gave him a Bible and counselled him to ensure he read it in camp. He collected the Bible and thanked me. I told him to have breakfast before leaving but he said he was already running late. That was my last moment with him.

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***Did he tell you about his dreams and aspirations?***

He wanted to be a musician. He said if he got a job, he would take it but he would still pursue his music career.

His father is a lecturer and his colleagues knew about his health condition, so they promised to get Matui a job after service.

Initially, he (Matui) said he wouldn't go for youth service now but I convinced him to go and reminded him of the promises of his father's colleagues to get him a job. So, he agreed to go for youth service.

His father and I raised money for him to go to camp. We struggled to make money available so that he could buy things he needed for his service.

But in all these, what gave me joy was that Matui settled down before his death. One thing that gave me serious concern was that Matui said he wanted to be a musician. He and his

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pastor to pray for him because I kept on trying to stop him but he said that was exactly what he had chosen. The pastor told me that he could see that my son had a bright future and that I should just let him continue with what he was doing. He said that I should not forget to be praying for him and he advised my son never to forget his God and the pursuit of his education.

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When I realised he was dead I fainted but later encouraged myself and give glory to God. He gave him to us and He has taken him away. I concluded that God did his will.

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