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# Masquerader fled to Lagos after killing my dad – Anambra man

Indigene of Umuawulu in the Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State, Chidubem Okoye, tells **IKENNA OBIANERI** how a masquerader killed his father

**H**ow many of you did your parents give birth to?

My name is Chidubem Okoye, I am 35 years old. I hail from the Umuawulu community in the Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. I work in Abuja. I am the first child of my parents' five – three boys and two girls.

Are you married?

No.

What is your level of education?

I am a university graduate.

There was a report that went viral recently on how a masquerader beat your father to death. How did it happen?

Yes, my father, Chief Shadrach Okoye, was beaten to death by a masquerader called 'Udo'. The incident happened on December 26, 2023, when a friend of my father visited to celebrate Christmas with him. My father left his house alive to accompany his friend, who is also a resident of the community. The friend had visited him in the spirit of the Christmas season, and on that fateful day, my father went out only for his corpse to be brought back moments later. He stepped out to see off his friend and on their way, they met about four masqueraders on the way, but one refused to allow him to pass even after the other three had moved on.

The unyielding masquerader, who accosted both men, requested money from my father and insisted that he must give him money before he could pass. My father told him that he didn't have any money on him, and explained to him that he just came out to see off his friend. But the masquerader insisted, calling him a cunning person, and vowing that he would never allow him to pass if he didn't give him money. The masquerader said my dad's friend was free to pass, even if he didn't give him money. They initially thought it was a joke until they noticed that the masquerader was serious about it. So, my father's friend dipped his hand in his pocket, brought out N500, and gave it to the masquerader to save the situation and bail out my father, whom the masquerader was pushing and threatening with a cane as he was talking.

After several threats by the masquerader, my father insisted that he had no money but the masquerader refused to listen and continued threatening my father to give him money. When he saw that my father was not yielding to his demand, he now punched him in the chest and my father slumped. He died before he could be rushed to the hospital.

What did the masquerader do when he noticed that your father had slumped?

When he saw that my father had slumped, he walked away, but while he was going, people around the scene and my father's friend called his attention, and he told them to ignore my father that he was only pretending.

Was the masquerader identified?

He was identified. When he was harassing for money and punching my father, he took off the masquerader regalia from his face just for my father to see who he was. Had it been that he didn't reveal his face, nobody would have known who was inside the regalia, but as God would have it, he took it off after punching my father and he boasted that nothing would happen. When my daddy was slumping, people were saying, 'Come, come, you have killed this man, come'. He said they should leave my father and that he would be fine as he was just pretending. That was how my father gave up.

Is the masquerader also a member of your community and is he someone familiar to you?

He is from a neighbouring community, but his mother is from our community, which is why he is called 'Nwadiana'. He is a familiar person in the community and people know him.

Is he a traditional masquerader he just wore the costume?

He is a traditional masquerader. When it's the festive period, they wear masquerader costumes and use them to extort money from people and to harass people.

Has your father been buried?

No. His remains are still in the mortuary. We are looking for money to bury him.

Did you report the matter to the police and was the masquerader arrested?

We have reported the matter to the police at the CPS, Awka, but before they could swing into action, we learned that the boy ran to Lagos. He is 19 years old.

What effort are the police making to apprehend the culprit?

They have not done anything tangible yet. They have not done anything. The IPO is not saying anything meaningful. He said that the police could not do anything until they got the boy. That if we saw the boy, we should tell them, and they felt that the boy had run to Lagos.

Did the police say they cannot go to Lagos and get him there?

They said it would require funding. That is what I don't know. Because it will require funds to do that and we don't have the funds.

Since he is from a neighbouring community, did you contact his family members?

Members of his family have been coming to beg us, but we told them that they should provide the boy who killed my father first; we need to see the boy to ask him why he killed our father and who sent him. This is because we got to know that he later told some people that he did it deliberately.

At what level is the matter at the police?

The police said they have tracked him and found out that he is presently in Lagos, but they are hampered by finance to continue further investigation and action on it. The chief security officer of the community has also been trying his number, and he also confirmed that they tracked the boy's number and that he is in Lagos. That was the last thing we heard.

Was there any relationship between him and your father before the incident?

There was no personal relationship whatsoever except that he might have encountered my father on some occasions. When the incident happened, he ran away. If they had caught the boy, it would have



What of the leaders of both communities, are they aware of the development and has there been any sanction?

They are aware of the development; they knew the boy to be a troublemaker in the community, yet they allowed him to carry the masquerader. The president-general of my community has not reacted; even the traditional ruler too has not reacted. We went to him and he said he heard about the incident but that we should settle it amicably because the boy is our 'Nwadiana' since his mother is from our side, it is something we should settle amicably.

I said okay if we are going to settle it amicably, where is the boy? He said he would get back to me, but we have not seen him.

What is the name of the boy's community? The name of his own village is Umuenu, while we are from Enugwu; both communities are in Umuawulu in the Awka South LGA. His mother is from Enugwu too.

What last moment can you recall of your father?

The last time I spoke with my father was when I was travelling out of the country. That was when I graduated from the university. I had not seen my daddy for five years. When I came back, I decided to start working in Abuja.

Which country did you travel to?

I travelled to Peru and Ghana.

It means for over five years you did not see your daddy?

I did not see him; we only talked on the phone.

The last time we spoke on the phone was on December 23, 2023. We were just talking and he was trying to tell me to come back. It had been a long time since he saw me. Then I told him that I couldn't come back empty-handed as I needed to be very buoyant so I could do some things. Then he said that one was not important and that he needed to see me. Then he said anyway, my younger sisters and brother would be coming back, that that would be fine. I said okay. So, on Christmas Day, I was supposed to call him in the morning, but on second thought I said no, let me call him in the evening so that I could ask him how the celebration was, only for my brother to call me that they got a call from the village that my father was dead. When I heard it, I fainted.

What kind of person was your father?

Everyone knew him to be a kind and likable person. My father was a member of the Lord Chosen Charismatic Renewal Ministries. He was the one who single-handedly brought Lord's Chosen from Lagos to my community. He was so jovial.

How soon do you want to bury your father?

We are looking at the Easter period to bury my father. When my kindred and the boy's kindred were having meetings in December when the incident happened, the boy's family said they would foot the bills for the funeral if we gave them the list. Then, we were looking at January ending to bury him. But when we gave them the list, they said they couldn't do it, that the money was too much. So, they brought their list, which was not even enough to buy a casket or to settle the mortuary bills. So, we disagreed and they left and it's been over a month now that we haven't heard from them. But what we are hearing now is that they said we should go and bury our father by ourselves, that they were not going to contribute anymore. So, that means they are not showing any remorse or concern. Everybody knows what it means to take someone's life. We are begging the community and the government to do the right thing and come to our aid.

How has the death of your father affected you and your siblings?

We can't sleep again. The pain is there. We are now orphans. As it stands now, they call me for everything. So, it's a painful thing for us right now. My siblings and I are in pain right now. If our father had died a natural death, it would not be this painful.

been a different ball game.

That is why we want him to come and explain to us the reason for doing what he did.

In what way did the community intervene and has it reached out to your family?

Our concern is that nobody in the community has asked a question about this development. We have been having a series of meetings with some of my kindred and everybody, including the boy's family. They said we should write a burial list that they would sponsor the burial, but when we wrote a list and gave it to them, they rejected it and they brought their list, which we rejected as well. Since then, we have not seen anyone again; we have not heard from anyone. All we have been hearing from some quarters is that they said we should go and bury our dad ourselves. Now, we are helpless and we don't have money to pursue the case.

How did you hear about the news of your father's death since you were not in the community at the time?

My younger brother called and informed me of the development on the telephone and I came home and was given the details.

Did your father have any underlying sickness and how old was he?

He was 71 years old. He was having a heart problem, which he was managing.

What of your mother?

My mother is also late. She died some years ago. We are now orphans.

When is the family planning to bury your father?

We are making efforts to bury him, but we cannot do that alone because of the present state of the economy and that is why we are crying for justice for him.

What kind of justice are you seeking?

Justice begins when the family of the boy provides him. They cannot say they don't know the whereabouts of their son, but they have chosen to conspire to keep mute. Our mother is late and now he has killed our father, making me and my siblings orphans. I want to know who sent him. But since then, nobody in my community has asked any questions, and nobody has said anything. They have been playing politics with it. So, I don't know why all these are happening.