

Why Edo activist's son killed father with sledgehammer – Police

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The Edo State Police Command on Wednesday said Arthur Angel Jr., the 17-year-old son of the 70-year-old deceased human rights activist, Arthur Judah Angel, killed his father with a sledgehammer over monetary demand at Ugboha, in Esan South East Local Government Area of the state.

The anti-death penalty advocate, Angel, was killed and buried in a shallow grave behind his house, on Sunday, *PUNCH Metro* gathered.

The spokesman for the command, Chidi Nwabuzor, told our correspondent on Wednesday that a preliminary investigation revealed that the deceased's son had threatened to kill his father and carried it out when he hit him with a sledgehammer.

The PPRO said, "On July 15, 2024, at about 09.00 hours, the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Ugboha Division in Edo State received a complaint that one Arthur Angel Jr. (17 years old) brought a complaint of a shallow grave discovery at the backyard of the compound where he lived with the deceased.

"Immediately, the DPO mobilised his men and they moved out to the scene. On getting there, they saw a shallow grave and decided to exhume the body. When the body was exhumed, they discovered that it was the lifeless body of Arthur Angel, 70, and at a closer look, they saw a sharp injury on the back of the deceased's head. The body was taken to the Uromi Hospital mortuary.

"According to the DPO, a preliminary investigation revealed that Arthur Angel Jr. had on several occasions threatened to kill his father because his father was expecting some money from Amnesty International."

He noted that the suspect had a feeling that the money had been paid to the deceased and decided to use the sledgehammer to hit him behind the head while he was asleep.

“As we speak, the suspect has been successfully transferred from Ugboha to the homicide section of the Edo State Criminal Investigation Department for further investigation”, he said.

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PUNCH Metro gathered that having been sentenced to death in 1986 for a crime he said he did not commit and was on death row for nine years, Angel, who was also a human rights defender, used his foundation, Life Wire International Foundation, to fight for the use of death penalty in the country.

He was said to have travelled to over 15 countries to speak out against the death penalty through his art exhibitions and drawings.

When our correspondent contacted Angel’s cousin, Michael Ihaza, on Tuesday, he confirmed the assassination of his uncle.

He said, “I cannot tell if he had any problem with anyone. He won several cases over family land but I don’t know if that brought issues between him and anyone.

“He never reported any threat to his life to me. However, his 15-year-old son who reported the case to the police in Ugboha has been taken into custody for questioning but I don’t think he has a hand in his father’s death.

“His son was arrested the same day he was killed. The narrative that is making the rounds within the police circle and in town is that the boy is also a suspect.

“My late uncle fought for humanity in his lifetime. He worked on prison reform and was a gentleman. I never heard that he had any problem with anyone. The police said they are investigating the matter so we don’t want to say anything that will jeopardise the investigation. Hopefully, the culprit will be identified and brought to justice,” he added.