

Insight

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short her life. He insisted that he didn't know what the suspects did with her daughter but added: "All I know is that my daughter was killed and her genital removed."

He wants justice to take its course. He said: "I want justice to be done. He who kills must be killed. Today, as the police brought him to this community, he openly owned up to the crime before the entire community. He didn't deny his involvement. He revealed how he carried out the act. He said he was cultivating and watching when my daughter passed. He took them to where he killed and dumped her body."

He wondered why Ndukwe would do such evil to his family when they had been good neighbours for ages. "We have been living in peace. He was born and brought up here in this family. When they were kids, he was always running around with Ngozi, calling her his wife. We never had any problem. I just don't understand how devil used him to commit this dastardly act," he submitted.

Ndukwe's mother, who cried uncontrollably when she saw our correspondent, also corroborated Eze's submission that they had been good neighbours for many years. She stated that Ngozi was like a daughter to her and that she would do anything to make her happy. She also wondered why devil should use her son to commit the dastardly act.

Also speaking, Ngozi's niece, Joseph Ikechukwu Eze, said those who murdered Ngozi should face the law. "What I want is that they should all be killed if they are guilty. The law should take its course," he stated.

In a related development, a 37-year-old barber and father of six, Ikechukwu Ugwu from Inyi Enugu-Ezike in the same Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area of Enugu State was brutally murdered in his sleep on Friday, March 14.

IK, as he was fondly called, was said to have fought with his brother-in-law (names withheld) on that fateful day. His attackers did not only come for him, they equally wanted his wife, Chinasa, dead, but she escaped by the whiskers. She said she fled naked, leaving her wrapper and baby with the assassins when it dawned on her that they wanted to kill her.

The mother of six, whose 13-year-old blissful marriage ended abruptly that fateful day, is alleging that the brother-in-law should be held responsible for the brutal murder of her husband. And her conviction of the culpability of the man is informed by what she found out shortly after her escape from the agents that brutally murdered her husband.

Tracing the genesis of what could have led to her husband's brutal murder, she said: "On Friday March 14, 2014, my husband went to Orié Inyi market and a man, he accused of damaging his bike. He insisted on damaging the man's motorbike in return and that led to a fight between the two. After the fight, he went to Igwe's house to report the matter and to inform him that the man had gone to report the matter at the Ogurute Police Station. Igwe assured him that police would not arrest him without his knowledge since the brother-in-law had not informed him of the case.

According to her: "Later in the evening that same day, Igwe sent for my husband and when he went there, Igwe told him that the man had reported about the fight to him and that he had even reported the matter to the police where my husband's attention was needed. Igwe then told him that he should go to the police station the following day, March 15, along with some members of the Neighbourhood Watch and he accepted."

"When he later met with the Neigh-



Ngozi's father, Mr. Eze



Ngozi's niece

Man murdered over damaged bike

bourhood Watch, they told him that the man would not want the matter to continue if only he could pay for his hospital bill and the cost of his motorcycle repairs. My husband agreed, saying if that was what would make him withdraw the matter from the police, he was ready to pay him all that he had spent. They agreed to meet at the Igwe's palace the following day so that the matter would be resolved and withdrawn from the police."

IK never had the premonition that death was lurking in the air. He went back home, took his dinner and retired to bed, hoping to continue the life's struggle the following day but that was not to be. Messengers of death stormed his residence, forcefully broke into his room and mowed him down in the most gruesome manner. Though they took all the money he made that day alongside that of his wife, their main intention was to take his life and that, they did.

With tears, flowing freely from her eyes, Mrs. Ugwu continued: "About midnight that same day, three assassins, under the guise of armed robbers, pulled down our door and forced themselves into our bedroom. They started beating my husband with deadly weapons and at the same time demanding money. All the money I realised from sales that day was N6, 000 and I gave it to them. He also gave them all the money he made that day

from his own work and they took it. Their mission became clear when he asked them to go to his shop for more money in case the one they collected from him was not enough. It was at that point that they told him that they did not come for his money but for his life and that of his wife.

"They shot him with a gun. They even broke a bottle and stabbed him severally. Having confirmed that he was dead, they came after me but I run for my life. They followed me in a hot chase. I dropped my baby for them when I realised that they actually wanted me dead. They left the baby and still followed closely on me, grabbing my wrapper. I untied the wrapper and fled naked into the dark and escaped to where the vigilante boys were gathered for the coronation of the new Igwe at Umuogbo."

On her suspicion, Mrs. Ugwu stated: "As I was narrating my ordeal, a telephone call came to one of them (Neighbourhood Watch) and after the person had answered the call, they asked me if my husband had any quarrel with anybody at the Orié Market that day and I told them he fought. They then told me that it was the person he fought, who sent the assassins that murdered my husband," she said.

Her suspicion became stronger, following her recognition of two of their attackers.

'I dropped my baby for them when I realised that they actually wanted me dead. They left the baby and still followed closely on me, grabbing my wrapper. I untied the wrapper and fled naked into the dark.'

With the death of the breadwinner of the family, the young mother of six - three boys and three girls - has now been left in the lurch. She is now left to cater for six children. The first child is just 13 while the last baby is only four months and two weeks old. Her husband's death has left her in the cold. She is crying to high heaven for justice.

"I want those who killed my husband to be brought to book. They must not go unpunished. I want justice. I know that I don't have anybody to fight for me but God will not abandon me. But before God, I want the government to conduct a thorough investigation and punish those behind this evil accordingly," she sobbed.

Ikechukwu's sister, Madam Ngozi Ugwu, condemned the brutal killing of her only brother and called for justice.

When our correspondent visited the palace of the traditional ruler of Inyi, His Royal Highness, Igwe Hyacinth Alumo-na, Ikeoha 1 of Inyi, he confirmed what IK's wife said but denied knowledge of those behind the brutal murder. He said it was left for the police to do proper investigation and bring to book those who had perpetrated the evil act. He, however, expressed shock over the gruesome murder because, according to him, "we had scheduled to meet in my palace the day he was killed so that the problem would be resolved once and for all. I was shocked to the marrow when, on that fateful morning, I got the news that IK had been murdered the previous night. It is really terrible and I call on the police to do a proper investigation and fish out the killers for prosecution."

When the Enugu State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Ebere Ama-raizu, was contacted for an update on the two cases, he said the five suspects, who were arrested in connection with Ngozi's murder, had been charged to court. He also revealed that three suspects were arrested in connection with Ikechukwu's murder and they had also been charged to court accordingly.