

Domestic violence: Pastor in trouble over wife's death My dad killed mum, daughter alleges

— 5th March 2016

By CHIOMA IGBOKWE

THE Imo State Police Command already has in its custody, Pastor Mark Chukwudi of Victory Pentecostal Church, Ogbaku, in Mbaitolu area of the state, over the death of his wife, Perpetual Udoka. Her lifeless body was found in their family house with both hands cut off and a kitchen knife suspected to have been used for the crime, stuck on her face. Initially, Pastor Mark was said to have denied ever raising a finger on his late wife but accused armed robbers of killing his wife. He later admitted to the alledged crime when his 13-year-old daughter, Ogochukwu accused him in the presence of the police, of killing her mum. She stunned policemen when she gave details of the act with dates and how his father tried severally in the past, to kill her mother.

Saturday Sun learnt that Pastor Mark who was overwhelmed by the evidence against him alleged that his wife was not submissive to him. He claimed that it was during a heated argument that they started fighting and out of anger, he picked the kitchen knife.

Recalling her statement to the police, Ogochukwu told Saturday Sun that she was 100% sure that her mother was brutally murdered by her father.

She alleged there were obvious signs that his father was out to destroy her mother. "On that faithful day, my mummy, in her usual manner, woke up around 5.00am, prepared us ready for school, gave us food, and asked me to lead my younger sister to her school and return the key to her in the church, where she went for early morning prayer meeting. I finished dressing up and told my daddy who was in his room that I was off to school. He told me to lock the gate to our house from outside and I asked why? He shouted me down.

"I did exactly that and returned the key to my mum in the church. I went back to my mummy's shop around 1:00pm but did not meet her in the shop. That was unusual knowing full well, the time we usually return from school. I called her line, but she was not picking. I asked her neighbours her whereabouts and they said she told them my daddy called her. I then took my siblings along to the house. On getting to the house, everywhere looked deserted. We usually access the house through the kitchen door, but on that faithful day, the kitchen door was locked. I called my dad to ask him if he had seen mummy. He asked me where we were. I told him we were at home but the doors were all locked. Within two minutes, daddy appeared. Unusual of daddy, he decided to follow the back door instead of the usual front kitchen door and asked me to stay outside. I could not comprehend my father's body language and I quickly followed him and went straight to my mum's room while he made his way to his room. The sight of flowing blood in mummy's room got me more frightened. When I shouted blood, my dad ran straight to the kitchen where my mum's body was placed to block the kitchen door, the same door my daddy strategically avoided while entering the compound. Later, I saw my mum's phone near the kitchen window with three missed calls from my dad's phone number", she narrated.

Determined to convince the police that her father remains the prime suspect, she said: "My mother does not owe anybody. My mum does not have any problem with anybody. My daddy was always chasing us about with cutlass. He had severally, threatened to kill mummy but her people won't do anything. In one of the cases, he drove us out of the house with kitchen knife and threatened to kill us. This was one of the reasons why my mothto kill mummy but her people won't er decided to stop attending the same church with him.

"The last time that they fought in my presence, I thought my mummy was dead when she was brutally beaten with cutlass by my daddy and blood was gushing out like water from her body. I called my uncle but he did not respond. After that, I went to the police to report him and he was arrested. Two days before he killed mummy, I saw him from the bath room cutting the ceiling of our house. The following morning, I heard him telling my mother that armed robbers came to the house and that they entered through the ceiling. He showed my mum the note he claimed, the robbers brought which read "Pastor Mark be careful, this is to tell you we can come and go." I told mummy that I saw dad cutting that ceiling two days previous and that the opening was not done by armed robbers. I told mummy we should go to my aunt's place, that dad was up to something cruel but mummy refused. Now look at where she has brought us to. Daddy has simply achieved his wish and God will judge him". Tracing the possible reason (s) behind the incident that led to the death of Perpetual, her elder brother, Jude recalled that her

marriage to the pastor in year 2000 was vehemently opposed by their family.

"My sister was a successful banker and very religious. She believed so much in seeking God's hand in everything that she was doing. Shortly after she got a job, she had three suitors, a medical doctor, a fellow banker and a public servant. Confused at that time, she consulted Pastor Mark who was the leader of the prayer ministry of her church then.

"She was asked to observe some days of fasting and praying while he would personally join her in prayers. Days later, Pastor Mark during their private prayer sessions pretended to be carried away by the Holy Spirit and announced to my sister that he was the one. My sister told me that she was confused but since Pastor Mark was very spiritual, she accepted him."

According to him, the family pleaded with her, especially, concerning the danger of getting married to a secondary school drop out and wheel barrow pusher as at year 2000. "She insisted that she heard the revelation very clearly that during the so-called prayer session, the Lord spoke through Pastor Mark that if she dared marry another man, she would forever regret it. As a man, I know a gold digger when I see one but my sister was carried away. She was able to convince the family that if they did not allow her to marry Pastor Mark, she would remain single for the rest of her life. No mother will want her daughter to remain at home forever, so we allowed her to marry him.

"As expected, she sponsored both the traditional and church wedding. Without wasting much time, she opened a mini supermarket for him, bought him a car and collected loan from the bank to build a house for the family. The land and business were registered in the name of Pastor Mark because she was committed to the marriage and wanted to make her husband as rich as she could. They were blessed with three children while Pastor Mark convinced her to assist him start his own ministry.

"All went well until she lost her job in 2012. She collected several loans on behalf of the family but could not meet up with repayment. Meanwhile, it was her attempt to find other possible means to pay up the loans that later led to her sack," Jude narrated.

Jude alleged that it was when her sister could no longer provide for the family that she became a punching bag by her husband. "Her husband's family turned against her because she was no longer bringing money for them to spend. Despite all the challenges, she was committed to her marriage and offered to help her husband in his ministry. Since, she refused to leave him, we contributed money and opened a mini supermarket for her. On several occasions, the mother-in-law would come all the way from the village to order Perpetual out of the very house she built. He was fond of jumping from one church to another. That was why my sister decided to remain permanently with Winners chapel.

"She was hospitalised severally and when we asked her to end the marriage, my sister who remained spiritual replied it was the devil at work to destroy her family. In 2013, my sister's 13-year old daughter once reported to the police how the father had beaten her mum till she became unconscious. The matter was formally transferred to the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID) but he was later released.

"We were concluding plans to forcefully move her out of the house with her children when we received a call from her daughter that my sister had been killed. He planned and successfully killed my sister while staging the scene to look like a robbery incident. I thank almighty God that Ogochukwu witnessed most of the abuse and can remember each and every one of them," Jude alleged.

Saturday Sun gathered that police had concluded investigation and will soon charge the suspect to court.

On why the Pastor was arrested, a reliable source at the state CID explained that the police had been called to intervene in several cases of abuse by the pastor. "We have received a lot of reports and he was made to sign an undertaking that he would not beat his wife again. He was lucky that Perpetual did not die and pleaded that the matter should be resolved. We were all dumfounded at the sight when policemen got to the scene. Both hands were cut off and she was stabbed on the face severally, before her assailant plunged the knife into her eyeball. Whoever did that must be psychopath and should not be allowed to exist amongst men.

"Her husband who is the prime suspect in the matter alleged it was the handiwork of armed robbers or hired assassin. No one can confirm that armed robbers visited that house and the manner at which she was murdered makes it difficult to believe that version of the story. It wasn't a case of ritual killing because; no part of her body was removed. We will charge him to court and we hope that justice will be served", the source added.