

Family accuses Kwara chief of killing daughter with *juju* after illicit sex

By **LAYI OLANREWAJU**, Ilorin

ODO-OWA in Oke Ero Local Government Area of Kwara State is an agrarian community with a serene environment where residents had lived over the years in peace.

That was the situation until penultimate week, when a 31-year-old female graduate of the Kwara State College of Education, Lafiagi,

Joke Bamidele, allegedly died in mysterious circumstances. Her death has not only jolted the peace of the community, but also opened a can of worms.

Fingers are being pointed by members of the deceased's family, at a high chief, kingmaker and native doctor (name withheld), of having illicit sex with their daughter while she was

receiving treatment for an undisclosed ailment under his roof.

This is amid claims that before her death, an attempt by the once ebullient Joke, a graduate of Agricultural Science, to open up on the alleged serial sexual abuse she was subjected to on her sick bed by the chief said to be her mother's cousin, was spiritually aborted as she

was said to have momentarily went dumb. Her hands also reportedly got paralyzed in a further attempt to put her sad experience in writing.

The deceased's mother, Mrs. Florence Bamidele, alleged that the chief severally had illicit sex with her daughter and extorted money

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from the family on the pretext of finding a permanent cure to her (Joke's) health challenges. She further alleged that after every round of sex, the chief would wipe her late daughter's private part with handkerchief, the purpose of which she could not comprehend. She said Joke was also made to consume various concoctions over a period of one year.

She told Daily Sun that Joke was afflicted with an undiagnosed disease in 2014, for which efforts at seeking medical help at various hospitals within the state and beyond, drew blank:

"Despite medical treatment, her health condition deteriorated, and this was what made us to take her to the chief for native cure. The chief said he could handle the case and get her cured. Five days after he admitted Joke into his house, he intimidated us of the need to perform some rituals that would solve her health problem.

"He collected from us, a sum of N50, 000; one bag of rice, three big fowls and the backache and stomach pains my daughter was experiencing before, suddenly disappeared. After about five months in his house, her condition became stable and she returned home. She even reopened her business of foodstuff trading at Omu-Aran."

But Joke's condition relapsed after some time, a situation that led to a chain of events that trailed her tragic end: "Early in the year, she came to me and complained of severe pain in her private part.

"She took ill again, but refused to go back to the chief for treatment. This was after I had received a phone call from the chief that my daughter had refused to perform the last ritual for a permanent cure to her illness, an act, he threatened, had dire consequences. All efforts to persuade her to go back to the native doctor proved abortive and she refused to give reasons for her action.

"When the condition became life threatening, we consulted another herbalist at Egbe, Kogi State, who told us that the chief was the source of my daughter's problem. He told us that the chief is very powerful, and excused himself from the matter. Then, when Joke was about to reveal what transpired between her and the chief, she became dumb and her right

hand paralyzed when she was about to write it on paper.

"Joke let the cat out of the bag during a visit to a pastor. After a prayer session, she let out the secret and said the herbalist (chief) had warned her that she would die if she ever told anyone about the sexual abuse."

Members of Joke's family dragged the chief to the Olota of Odo-Owa, Oba Joshua Adeyemi Adimula, who promptly ordered him to ensure the lady was cured of the strange disease. When she eventually lost the battle, the monarch did not mince words in holding the chief culpable.

Oba Adimula spoke with Daily Sun in Odo-Owa: "Two weeks ago, Gbemisola Bamidele came to me and said her sister wanted to say something about what one of my chiefs had done to her, but that she suddenly went dumb. I gave them water, which my forefathers used for morning prayers, and she could talk again. She narrated how the chief slept with her when she was in his custody receiving treatment.

"Following the development, I summoned a meeting of the community, where I instructed the chief to ensure that the deceased was cured. The case was reported to the Divisional Police Officer at Oke-Ero, before whom the victim repeated the allegations in the presence of the chief, which he did not deny.

"I ordered him to treat the girl and he promised to do so, but later refused after leaving the palace. The youths later took the girl to his house. Unfortunately, the girl died in his custody. This is not the first time the chief would be suspended from the Council of Chiefs over similar incidents.

"He was suspended last year for six months over a similar allegation leveled against him by one Gbemisola Oladepo Amile of Oke Esi, in Odo-Owa, but I was able to save the victim. While on suspension, he committed another crime which was reported by one Titilayo Kola-wole of Ikotun, but I couldn't do anything about it because he was on suspension."

The monarch is angry over his invitation and interrogation by the authorities over the circumstances surrounding Joke's death: "I was embarrassed because as a second class traditional ruler, I was made to write an undertaking over an issue reported to the palace. Odo Owa community does not harbour criminals; that was why we allowed the police to arrest the suspect and he is currently at the state CID."

Police Public Relations Officer for the state command, Ajayi Okasanmi, confirmed when contacted that the chief was in police custody: "I was told that the chief priest had been having an affair with the lady, but after sometime, the woman failed to continue with the relationship and she died. We are still investigating the case to know if it is a case that can be handled by police, as we do not hold fetish belief. However, we are still investigating."

But at about 5pm on Tuesday, the PPRO said the chief was charged to court and remanded in prison custody.



• Late Joke Popoola



• The suspect