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murdered with six-inch nail driven into his skull

- 31st December 2016

From: OKEY SAMPSON, Aba

Obinna Ezeononigbo from Ekwulimiri in Anambra State was a shrewd businessman who started lowly from dealing on tricycle (keke) spare parts on Jubilee Road in Aba, Abia State.

Like an average Igbo man, as his business grew, Obinna needed a house of his own and to Asa Umunka in the outskirts of Aba, he went, bought a piece of land and built a house there for his family.

Obinna, wife and their six children

The neighbourhood began to experience some swift changes, with the arrival of Obinna to the area, so much so that he single -handedly donated an electricity transformer to the community, which hitherto had no electricity supply. He was praised by many in the area for his philanthropy. He lived peacefully in the area, until the night of August 19, 2016.

The day started like any other for Obinna, but for Gift, his wife, it was a day like no other, as some men from the pit of hell gave her a scare she would live to carry to her grave. Obinna had woken up on this fateful day hale, hearty and after performing his normal early morning chores, hurriedly went to the market.

Not used to night life and the shenanigans that go with it, at the close of business that day, Obinna having made it a culture, made straight to his Asa Umunka home in Ugwunagbo Local Government of Abia State, to meet his family –the wife and six children. Obinna had done this in the past 14 years of his marriage to Gift, a union that produced two boys and four girls; the eldest being 11 while the youngest was over one year.

Obinna, after keeping the company of his family in the night of August 19, retired to bed on time so as to wake up early the following morning to prepare for another day's business, but that would not be.

According to Gift, by 2.00am, they received visitors no living soul would like to have, more so, at that ungodly hour. About eight men of the underworld, armed to the teeth swarmed their house like frenzied bees. Four of them found their way right inside the bedroom of the Obinnas, while another four kept watch outside, ostensibly to keep 'intruders' away and cut off any possible help from the neighbourhood.

"The men were about eight, but four of them came into our house while the same number stayed outside, apparently to keep watch. They came in through the window and had their faces covered. When they came in, I began to shout and they started pulling the protector and within a short time, they succeeded in bringing it down and they ordered all of us to lie down.

"Immediately the hoodlums came, they started beating my husband and ordered him to go and dress up and follow them and he obeyed. They then demanded the key to the main gate to our house. We gave them the key, thinking they wanted to carry the car that was parked inside. When they collected the key, they opened the gate and took by husband outside and they were beating him as they were going. At a point, he started asking them what he did that should warrant such beating. As they were beating him, I was crying and my children too, pleading with them to leave their father. But all the pleas of the kids fell on deaf ears as they took him along", Gift narrated.

Gift made frantic efforts to see if her husband could be freed from the hands of people she initially thought were kidnappers. "Immediately they took him outside, I climbed the wall of the rear fence and escaped to alert our neighbours, but unfortunately, nobody came out and they took my husband away"

She did not end at that. When none of the neighbours came to her husband's help, Gift at that hour ran to a nearby hotel where policemen used to stay, but nobody came out from the hotel after she knocked severally. The same fervour to see if the husband could be set free, took Obinna's wife farther to Flyover on the Enugu/Port Harcourt Expressway where soldiers used to stay.

But unfortunately, "When I got there, I saw only one soldier and I narrated to him what happened to my husband; he asked me where the incident happened and after telling him, he said he was the only person on duty and that he could not leave his duty post alone".

Hapless Gift returned, and by then, the hoodlums had taken her husband away. All hopes were not lost on her side as she expected that the following morning, the men of the underworld would at least call to demand for ransom after which the husband would be released, but that was not to be.

After a day of Obinna's abduction from his house and nothing was heard, from him or his captors, a search party was raised. The next thing the search party saw was Obinna's corpse by the side of one of the roads where a six inches nail was driven from his forehead, straight into

his skull

On why her husband was so gruesomely murdered, Gift, carrying her last child on her lap and sobbing uncontrollably said, "To me, they killed my husband because it was like he recognized one of the criminals who came to our house, to be a mason that once worked in our house, because as they were taking him out, I overheard him call the man's name and kept asking, 'even you, what did I do to you'?"

As soon as Obinna's corpse was found, soldiers swung into action and were said to have arrested some of those suspected to have abducted and killed the business man in cold blood.

Gift was grateful to the army and prayed that the remaining culprits would also be fished out. "I was told that some of those who killed my husband had been arrested, I will like justice to take its course".

If the gruesome murder of Obinna has brought an unending agony to Gift, the thought of how to train their six children all alone, has constantly been sending chills down her spines. She has, therefore, made a passionate appeal to the Anambra State governor, Chief Willy Obiano, to come to her aid, even if it meant taking over the training of the children.

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