

By NGOZI
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MANY people thought the late Abigail's case was a suicide, until the aftermath took a dreadful twist, culminating in a complicated travail for ex-naval officer, Tamunokuro Douglas, billed to be arraigned soon for murder.

Already treated to dishonourable detention, and discharge, Douglas' predicament stemmed from a September 1, 2016 tragic discovery of the lifeless body of his girlfriend, 19-year-old Abigail Udoh Sunday, inside his room at the Naval Unit of Abuja Mogadishu Barrack. His position has become more precarious by the fact of a little misunderstanding they had over money the previous night and a suicide letter in which the deceased pointedly wrote: "Douglas, you will not see happiest (sic) in your life."

Money, the root of the problem

Douglas Tamunokuro, 22, a native of Akuku-Toru Local Government area, Rivers State, told *Saturday Sun* his side of the story. "I attended PCN Primary School Calabar and NAS Aborowema, Rivers State. I was recruited into the Nigeria Navy on May 18, 2015. Before my dismissal, I served at the Naval Headquarters, Garki, Abuja. I had been dating Abigail Udo Sunday for over six months before she came to visit me that fateful day. We had a little misunderstanding over money when she



CP Muhammed Mustapha, FCT police commissioner

asked for N50, 000 and I told her I could only give her N20, 000. She disturbed me so much I went to sleep in my friend's house. I came back home around 5:47am, and she opened the door for me. I entered the house, dressed and left for work.

"I was at work when she called and told me I should prepare a place to bury her by the time I come back from work. I reported this to my superior officer. Soon after, my neighbour called to tell me that my girlfriend had hanged herself. I promptly reported at the Naval Police Headquarters, Abuja, around 4pm.

"The next day, September 2, 2016, I was detained by the Special Anti-Robbery Police Squad alongside some of my neighbours who were later released, while I was transferred to Mogadishu Barrack where I spent two weeks and two days in detention. I was subsequently subjected to open arrest, but the Naval Office Unit granted me permission to go for her burial. My elder brother, Minii Douglas, who went for the burial on October 15, 2016 at Ini Local Government area, Akwa Ibom State, was openly threatened."

Double Trouble

Being the primary suspect in the mur-

der of Abigail Udoh Sunday is not the only trouble for Tamunokuro.

The problem has already cost him his job, as he has been dismissed on the ground that he lied to the Nigerian Navy when he claimed to have no family at the point of recruitment, a claim that has been proven to be false by facts that emerged in the aftermath of the murder.

The shady circumstance surrounding the death of the teenager, nay its potential for a scandal that could bring Nigerian Navy into disrepute, galvanised naval authorities to swift action.

Douglas gave a brief account of Nigerian Navy's reaction. "A month after the incident, on November 10, 2016, the naval authority charged me for lying to the recruiting officer that I have no child. For that, I was sentenced to prison with hard labour for which I spent 80 days instead of six days in the guardroom.

"On January 27, 2017, after my dismissal from service was verbally conveyed to me, I was handed over to the FCT Police Command State Criminal Investigation Department. I have been in their custody since."

He reiterated that he was not given a formal letter of dismissal.

A cock-eyed story

For every crime, including murder and suicide, there is a motive. Can misunderstanding over money be enough reason for a teenage girl to take her life?

The motive for suicide did not add up, thereby leaving room for speculations.

Homicide detectives who assessed the crime scene said there was no sign to indicate the deceased hanged herself because her corpse was found sitting in a chair.

Post mortem report cast further doubt on the suicide theory. Commissioner of Police, Mr. Mohammed Mustafa told *Saturday Sun* the report from the Histopathology and Morbid Anatomy Department of the National Hospital, Abuja, showed death was due to "asphyxia and strangulation."

Detectives argued that if the deceased had hanged herself, she would have died with her tongue out of her mouth as a sign of strangulation.

According to Mr. Bala Ciroma, Deputy Commissioner of Police, State Criminal Investigation Department, Tamunokuro would be charged for culpable Homicide according to Section 221 of the Penal Code.