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## Men from hell strangle Benue teacher in the presence of his 4 wives, 20 children

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From ROSE EJEMBI, Makurdi

It was a dream he had hoped to actualise seamlessly, and on this cold Wednesday evening of May 17, 2017, he sauntered onto a couch in his living room after savouring a delicious meal prepared by one of his wives for dinner.

For Ambrose Abah, a 57-year-old teacher at the LEA Primary School, Aiko, Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State, it was a hectic day at work and he desired some rest. But thoughts of the contest for the vacant stool of Oche Boka, clan head of his district for which he was an aspirant, roamed in his mental landscape.

Time was about 9pm, and the atmosphere at Aiko-Okonobo, his village, was serene. Then, he was jolted out of his reverie by a deafening bang that shattered his door. A few minutes later, he was gone; gruesomely strangled to death by a gang of blood-thirsty men from the pit of hell.

His assailants were on a mission to kill, as they wasted no time bounding his arms and limbs before strangling him with a rope, soon after they gained access to their target. And as they watched him die slowly, terrified members of his household, including his over 20 children and four wives were all holed up in their bedrooms, consumed in grief as his shrill cry for help faded.


When they eventually came out to behold the lifeless body of their breadwinner after the harbingers of death had vanished under the cover of darkness, damaged items littered the scene, an indication that he succumbed after putting up a fight in which he was overpowered.

But the assailants did not leave without extending a measure of terror to members of his household, who they mercilessly brutalized and robbed of cash as well as valuables, in a bid to conceal their motive, according to witness accounts of the incident.



"We were in our bedrooms when they came; they forced their way in, beat us mercilessly, and then locked us up. When they left and we got to where our husband laid, we found him strangled. If not the contest for Aiko-Okonobo chieftaincy stool, my husband had no quarrel with anybody", lamented Justina, the late Ambrose's second wife. They took my N40, 000, proceeds from the sale of garri, which I had saved over time," Paulina, his eldest wife added.

When it was safe at dawn, the deceased's second son, Christian, reported the incident at the Ugbokolo divisional police headquarters, after which his corpse was evacuated to Anphan Hospital, Effoyo, Okpokwu local council, where it was deposited at the morgue.



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Three weeks after he was brutally murdered, precisely on June 8, his remains were interred at his residence at Aiko, amid tears and wailing. It was an agonizing moment for his wives and children who were helpless as he died painfully, and prayed the long arms of the law will catch up with the perpetrators in no distant time.

Unfortunately, terror seemed to have berthed permanently at Aiko village, and fear has become a daily companion of his family members. Beclouded by uncertainty, they have temporarily relocated to a village few kilometres away which they consider safer; where they could sleep at least, with one eye closed.

"We have not slept in our house since the incident occurred, except for two days when a former minister, Abba Moro, brought policemen during his burial; now, the family is living in fear because the village is yet to know peace. Two days ago, hoodlums invaded the village and robbed several households, but we were lucky not to be around. Now, we sleep in another village and return to work on our farms daily; at dusk, we go back and sleep far away", says Justina.

"The threat is too much; all the women you see here will not be around at night. Last week, there was an attack on this village, we live in fear", one of the deceased's son who pleaded anonymity, remarked. Helen, his fourth wife could not bear the situation, and has taken flight from the village to her parent's home.

Ironically, the traditional stool for which Ambrose was murdered remains vacant, as the election scheduled for sometime in August, was yet to hold before his life was abruptly cut short. Homicide detectives at the Criminal Investigation Department of the Benue State police command had zeroed in on a few suspects said to be standing trial at a chief magistrate court in Makurdi, the state capital, on charges of culpable homicide. Who murdered Ambrose and for what motive? That is a pregnant question buried in the womb of time, as the search for his killers continues.

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