

# Woman's rage: Housewife kills mother-in-law for meddling in her marriage

— 25th November 2017

From LINUS OOTA, Lafia

A peasant community in Nasarawa State was recently thrown into confusion by the bizarre action of a housewife who committed cold-blooded murder in a bid to solve a protracted marital problem. It turned out the homicide was a culmination of months of running battle between the beleaguered housewife and her mother-in-law whose scheme to kick her out of her matrimonial home and bring a replacement wife for her son was on the verge of materialising. At her wit's end, the embattled wife had resorted to the desperate measure of killing her mother-in-law. The tragedy happened in a farming community located in Awe Local Government, 97 kilometres from Lafia, capital of Nasarawa State.

## Root of the problem

Juliet Alu, 38, an indigene of Itilo in Buruku Local Government Area of Benue State and her husband, Barnabas Alu, 41, native of Awe Local Government, had an only child as a testament of 11 years of marriage. What was worse, the eight-year-old was a daughter—a source of anguish to Juliet's mother-in-law, who according to neighbours' account, was vocal about her refusal in the first place to accept her son's choice of wife. Therefore, by all accounts, the Alus had one hell of a marriage, described by one witness as "matrimony fraught with disagreements over petty issues that are frequently settled with fisticuffs."

Witnesses alleged that the mother-in-law became a thorn in the flesh of her son's wife by pressuring her son to either marry a second wife or divorce the 'unproductive' wife she frequently accused of witchcraft.

The old woman herself, a mother of one son and two daughters, wished her son to have a house full of brood, rather than being a father of an only child.

While Barnabas is a farmer, his wife Juliet lives off petty trading in her small provision store in the village. The mother-in-law also blamed Juliet for diverting benefits of her husband's labour to her own family. The trouble climaxed when Barnabas began to succumb to pressure from his mother who had threatened to curse him should he fail to hearken to her advice.

Eventually, the family feud turned tragic on Friday, November 3, 2017. Unable to bear the situation any longer, the embattled housewife took her fate into her hand. In the small hours of the morning, while everybody was still fitfully asleep, she walked into her mother-in-law's room with an axe and hacked the old lady to death.

## Desperate measure

*Saturday Sun* correspondent visited the village on November 8 and had an exclusive interview with the suspect, Juliet Alu who remained adamant that her late mother-in-law was a threat to her marriage.

She calmly gave her account of the story.

"My mother-in-law insisted that I must leave the house. She vowed that her son must get married to another woman in her lifetime. True to her decision, she openly wooed girls in the market square for my husband, convincing them to marry her son. Gradually, my husband keyed into the idea. Some of the girls started visiting my matrimonial home on my mother-in-law's invitation.

"She accused me openly of cheating on her son, calling me all sort of names. I was embarrassed and so ashamed I couldn't walk around the village. I didn't know what I had done to her. The intimidation became so unbearable for me I was forced to eliminate her before she finally disgraced me out of the village.

"In the midst of all these, my husband who loved me so much suddenly changed and was completely obeying his mother's directives. I had watched him sleep with other women and it was clear he doesn't have feelings for me anymore. I took that decision because I was ready for the worst. The marriage had become boring and characterized by crisis, courtesy of my mother-in-law.

"At a point, when it became obvious to me that the marriage had irretrievably broken down, I suggested to my husband, 'since you are convinced by your mother, let's call it quit, so I can move on.' He refused. So I concluded that eliminating her will stabilise my marriage and restore my happiness. I hatched the plan in October, but it wasn't until last week I made up my mind to execute it."

Juliet however regretted her actions, prayed for forgiveness, and hope God would grant the soul of her mother-in-law a perfect peace.

### **A marriage troubled from the start**

Her husband, Barnabas Alu, also spoke with *Saturday Sun*.

"I am yet to come to terms with the reality that my mother is no more. I don't want to believe she is gone. I lost my father in 1995 and since then, my late mother has been very supportive." What is his next course of action? "I won't do her anything. I leave her to her conscience," he avowed.

Alu gave a brief background to their marriage.

"I met her in Government Science Secondary School Lafia in 1998 when I was rounding up my secondary education. At the time, she was in SS1. We continued our relationship even after I graduated from the institution. I was visiting her in school and she was coming to my village to spend the weekend."

He continued: "I love her so much. But my mother did not like her. I insisted and we got married. Shortly after, trouble set in. Her father, a railway staff in Lafia, retired shortly after our marriage and he went home. Her parents had travelled here on a number of occasions to see how the crisis can be resolved to no avail. On my part, I made serious efforts including involving friends and village heads to see how peace can be brokered between my wife and my mother. My wife kept accusing me of listening to my mother. My mother kept insisting I must listen to her. I never thought it would degenerate to this level. It is unfortunate. May her soul rest in perfect peace."

### **No report to police**

Alu hinted he would personally go to the police station to report the matter. He, however, hoped to convince the police to stay action on the case, without arresting his wife for murder. Meanwhile, the State Police Public Relations Officer Idrisu Kennedy told *Saturday Sun* the case has not been reported to the command.