

# Man killed by siblings in presence of his daughter, wife

## His wife caused his death - Mother

From Geoffrey Anyanwu, Awka

**NO** matter how stone-hearted you are, like granite, you can't hold back tears listening to little Chidera Cynthia Ezeabikwa of Umunebo village in Ogbunka, Orumba South local government of Anambra state, tell the blood-curdling story of the gruesome murder of her father, Chukwuemeka Ethelbert Ezeabikwa, allegedly carried out by her uncles, under the firm supervision of her grandmother.

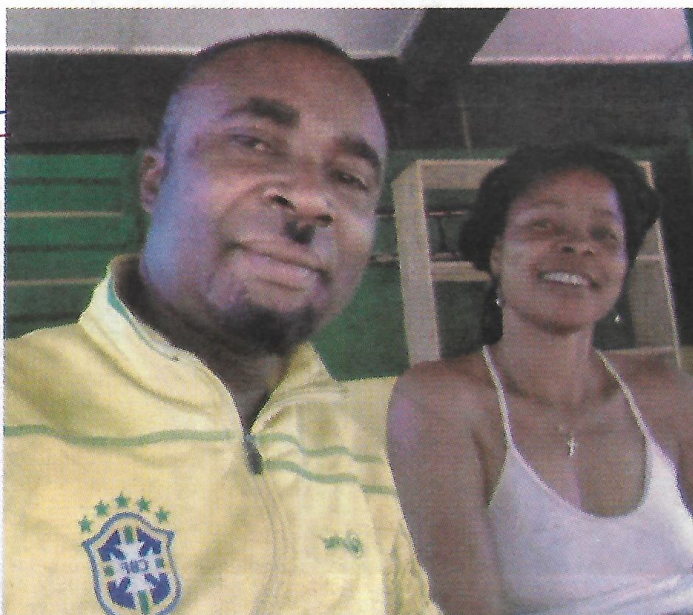
Narrating her heart shattering story amid tears, the 13-year-old said despite her cries and passionate pleas and that of Rev. Father Ikenna Nwankwo, to her uncles to spare the life of her father and their elder brother, they ignored her and stabbed him several times before finally hitting him on the head with a heavy stone. All the while, as she alleged, her grandmother, Mrs. Agnes Ahuekwe Ezeabikwa urged her younger sons on until the murderous deed was done and finished. And Chidera was forced within minutes into the Fatherless Children Association.

In her narration of the long history of bad blood that set the stage for the unfortunate demise of her husband, Mrs. QueenPeace Chidebube Ezeabikwa, recounted the ordeal she experienced in the hands of her mother-in-law and brother-in-law.

More worrisome is that the police have allegedly freed the suspects, who have since they regained freedom been allegedly threatening QueenPeace with death. Fearing her for life and the safety of her children, she has made a plaintive appeal to the Inspector General of Police and all other relevant authorities to come to save her and her children and ensure that her husband gets justice.

But the mother of the deceased, Mrs. Agnes Ahuekwe Akuvuokwu Ezeabikwa, on her part blamed QueenPeace for the death of her husband, and questioned why she would want her own son who took care of her, dead.

The Police Public Relations Officer of the Anambra Police Command, Haruna Mohammed (SP), who confirmed the homicide, said some



Late Chukwuemeka and his wife, QueenPeace

daddy stabbed himself in the chest. I then asked her who stabbed him and hit him with big stones in my presence? She shouted at me to shut up my mouth. Since then, every morning when you greet her, she would say, it was your mother that killed your father."

### Narration of QueenPeace

Giving her own account, QueenPeace who resigned from the Nigerian Army after her marriage to the deceased, 45-year-old Chukwuemeka in 2001, recalled that her ordeal began from the day she married into the family.

family overseas. "Now, on January 15 this year, my husband came back from Gabon and stayed the whole month. In February he discovered that I was still buying palm oil from the market to cook, so he went to his mother and asked her to allow me harvest palm fruits from the land my father-in-law gave me but she refused. He asked her to allow me harvest from the other land but she still refused. My husband decided to clear the bush in the land, to harvest palm fruits there. When he took some men to clear the bush, my mother-in-law raised the alarm, and vowed that my husband would die on

home all of them where in the parlour including one woman, Mrs. Oyibo Ngenegbo, who is not from our family. Father started praying and while he was still praying, Sunday and Kelechi rushed at my husband and began slapping him and dragged him outside while the ladies descended on me and started beating me.

"According to Father Ikenna I fainted because they broke my head and stabbed me on my thighs. They stabbed my husband in seven places and Sunday hit him on the head and he shouted chai and died instantly. I heard my daughter's voice and got up and we all rushed out. As soon as my mother-in-law saw people run into the compound, she turned off the light in the compound. Father was crying and begging them to help him put my husband in the car to take him to the hospital and they refused.

"Sunday jumped on his motorcycle and zoomed off but Father Ikenna held Kelechi and with the assistance of other people forced him to help put my husband in the car and taken to hospital. They were arrested but their lawyer got them released without investigation or autopsy, bragging that he would release Kelechi on June 15th."

### Account of the mother-in-law

In her own account, the mother-in-law, Mrs. Agnes Ezeabikwa, dismissed the claims of QueenPeace as lies. Her words: "What she said are lies because that woman has no truth in her mouth. I am a mother and you know what it means to be a mother. This thing that happened was caused by QueenPeace. When we went to marry her the father told my son not to marry her because she had bad character. He said that she doesn't have the character to live in a man's house as wife. But my son ignored that and insisted he would marry her. I am from the same village with her - Akwaoba Ogbunka; so I told my son that the lady had previously been married to four husbands and they all divorced her, she already had children in two of the failed marriages and my son was going to be the fifth. I asked if he could cope. He said yes and went ahead and married her.

"My husband and I are known in this village as peace makers but since this woman came into the family, it has been fire everywhere and since then



arrests were made in connection with the killing but only one suspect was detained and charged to court after preliminary investigation.

He said, "The suspect has been charged to court. The suspect, one Kelechi Ezeabikwa has been charged to Umunze Magistrate Court. Only one suspect was charged to court."

This is Chidera's narration of how her father was killed: "In the afternoon of that Saturday, when Rev Father Ikenna came to our house, he told my grandmother that he wanted to wade into the matter and settle it but my grandmother told him that it was late, that he could not settle the matter. She said that he could still come back that evening when the family would discuss the matter and he could make any contribution at that time. Father Ikenna accepted this. By that time my father's siblings, Sunday, Kelechi and Baby, had gone out in anger while my father went to where my mummy was cooking for a ceremony.

"In the evening, Father Ikenna came as was agreed. When Kelechi and Sunday were called, they came out waving machetes and laughing. I didn't know it was because of my father that they came to the meeting with machetes. As I wanted to sit down in the parlour where they were all gathered, my daddy asked me to go and plug his phone to charge. While on the errand, I heard screaming and I ran out only to see Kelechi and Sunday dragging my father outside and stabbing him with their machetes and blood was gushing out all over him. I started crying and begging them to leave him. They ignored my pleas and continued. Then I rushed towards my daddy. Kelechi and Sunday threw big stones on his head; Kelechi's own missed him but Sunday's stone hit him and my daddy fell down. The last word he said before he fell on the flower was 'chai.' I tried to carry him from the flower but he slipped from my hands to the ground.

I started shouting and people rushed to the compound and took my daddy to the hospital, where the doctor said he was dead. The next day I asked my grandmother what happened that led to killing of my father, she said it was my mother that killed my father, that it was when they were praying that my father went to the shelf and took a bottle and broke it on the table and as Sunday tried to take it from him, he stabbed Sunday on the head and Kelechi then rushed at him, that when my daddy wanted to stab him too, Kelechi dodged and my

Prior to marrying Chukwuemeka, QueenPeace was a sergeant in the Nigeria Army until she resigned. Hear her: "We got married in 2001 in Ogbunka. I am from Akwaoba village in Ogbunka. My husband's elder brother, who was a Catholic priest, Rev Father Charles Ezeabikwa, died in 2007, while my father-in-law, Mr. John Ezeabikwa died in 2009. My late husband and I gave birth to children - Chidera, Chimobi and Udochukwu (one girl and two boys).

"Three months after the marriage, my father-in-law gave me four plots of land, to welcome me into the family. He said that he didn't because my mother-in-law had hatred for my husband. Then he gave Kelechukwu, his third son and immediate younger brother of my husband, his own portion close to my own, which is near the house of Father Charles. He then said that my husband as the first son after the death of Father Charles, should handle all his other property. My father-in-law warned me to be careful, that the younger sons and my mother-in-law had deep hatred for my husband.

"I returned to Abuja where I was living in 2005, to prepare to join my husband in Gabon. Then we came back in 2009 to bury my father-in-law. My husband spent all we had to give the father a befitting burial. The two brothers did not contribute one kobo."

Continuing her narration, she said that after the burial, her husband travelled back to Gabon and asked her to stay back briefly. Not long after he left, Agnes along with the two sons beat her up and connived with some members of the local vigilance group and forcefully removed her from the family compound. She claimed that they forced her into a bus with her children and took them back to her father's house, saying that her husband should build his own house if he wanted her to return to the village.

"So my husband came back to build our own house and we packed in on February 14, 2015. While I was staying with my parents, Sunday sold my Mercedes Benz V-Boot car. After some months, my mother-in-law came with some people, including Sunday, to beg me to forgive them for all the maltreatment they gave me. I asked for my car and my mother-in-law said that Sunday would buy another car for me when he gets money. From then I began to take care of the entire family. My husband used to send money to all of them. Last year he sent the last child of the

same land. She asked whether Father Charles knew that he would die before the father. She said Emeka would die and she would bury him.

"She called two of our neighbours, Cons Okoro and Hyacinth Obi and in the presence of my children and my husband, she said that as the pear in the compound falls down, that is how my husband's heart would fall in that compound. My husband asked her, whether she wanted to kill him the way she killed Father Charles. She said yes that she would kill and bury him in the house. My husband then warned us not to eat any food prepared by her.

"On April 4th, my mother-in-law prepared *abacha* (local cassava salad) and gave to my husband and he ate. That evening as I got home, I saw him sitting with my husband. This was something that had never happened before. As soon as my husband saw me, he rushed at me and held my neck, saying that he would kill me, that his mother said I was the problem in the house. I was totally confused and my friend, Uloma, who was with me then begged him. Right there, his mother began shouting, calling on her children with her phone, saying that my husband had killed her.

"The next day all of them came to the village, but before then I had left for my business. Later my husband came to the place where I was cooking for people doing ceremony and said he was looking for his bunch of keys and I asked him whether he left the house open. He said yes and I asked him about the documents in his bag. He said that he gave the bag to our daughter, Chidera, to hold, so that he could go and buy new key to change the one for the main entrance. After my husband left, his mother called Chidera and took the bag from her. Then on May 7, which was a Saturday, my husband came to the place where I was cooking for a ceremony. While we were talking someone came and said that Father Ikenna wanted to see me and I went out to talk with him. He said he had just come from our house and said that all my husband's siblings were there, fuming that they would deal with him, demanding that he should send me away because my mother-in-law said that we beat her. Father said he begged her but she said it was already too late, that Father Ikenna did not come on time. Father then said he would follow us home because the mood he saw them was not okay and that my mother-in-law said people were coming to discuss. So when we got

my son, her husband, did not rest till his death. My son was living in Gabon. What caused this particular trouble was that her husband returned from Gabon and was with her. They built their own house and I live in my husband's house. One day, they fought. But before my son came back she told me that he had married another woman in Gabon, threatening that she would deal with him. She called me, called my son Sunday and Obioma that she must deal with him. I said that Emeka did not tell me anything like that and that even if he married another wife that they built a duplex, one of them could live downstairs and the other upstairs. I added that her father married two wives, but she vowed she would never accept that.

"She began to visit native doctors. On the Tuesday of the week he died, my son gave me wrapper and money. She became angry. My son had connected electricity to my house, but that Tuesday she disconnected the cable and on Wednesday she fought with him and people came to separate them. She left them there and ran to me where I was sitting and started beating me. My son called people to come and discuss the matter. People who saw her when she went to the native doctor in Awka with all manner of things testified.

"It was my son Emeka that summoned the meeting to know why Peace beat me. I told my son to leave her because she had once locked me up in police cell for three weeks after my husband's death.

He called many other people including Umunna but before they could come, Reverend Father came that day and said he wanted to take over the matter and settle it and I told him no, that one person does not settle case alone. Those they called did not come, Father said he would settle for us and as prayer was going on weapon fell down from Emeka's body, an iron rod. We did not know that they had weapons for fight. My two daughters who are married were there. As one of my sons went to pick that rod Emeka hit him, and the other one took it and hit Emeka; Emeka then broke the louver and used it to stab his brother and a fight broke out. I started shouting calling people to come and help and they continued the fight outside that was how I saw it.

"How can I, a mother, say come and kill my son, my son that feeds me? It was that same day she went to the native doctor that this thing happened; she caused the death of her husband."