

From LINUS OOTA, Lafia

**FOR** four years, the disappearance of Joy Kunde remained an unsolved mystery. The 20-year-old had vanished without a trace in 2014 under a circumstance that defied logic—seen one moment, gone without a trace the next minute. With the passage of time, family and friends got over their sorrow and life goes on.

The mystery was recently unravelled by an ironic twist when the relationship between the two men who midwifed her death went sour and one of the pair blew the lid off their heinous crime.

Finally, the details of the death of Joy Kunde came to light, and what a terrible tale it is—a story that brings tears to the eye and enraged everyone who hears it to the point of demanding the harshest of punishment for the men culpable for her death.

Kunde, who hailed from Nyiev, Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, was an orphan for the most part of her short life. At four, she lost her parents in a car accident along the Lafia-Makurdi road. As the only child of her late parents, responsibility for her upbringing was passed to the next of kin, her uncle, Matthew Tange, who lived at Assakyo area of Lafia, Nasarawa State.

Tange, a carpenter, enrolled his niece in school and by age 20 in 2013, Kunde completed her secondary education. Barely a year later in March 2014, she disappeared and no one could account for her whereabouts.

### Facts from confession

Fast-forward to June 2018. New facts emerging implicate three men in the disappearance and death of the adolescent.

The dramatis personae comprised of her uncle, Matthew Tange and Messrs Jacob Atume and Musa Chondu, nurse and doctor respectively of Hupe Hospital where she reportedly died due to a botched abortion. The deed would have remained forever hidden had not Atume decided to play the Judas.

Speaking exclusively to *Saturday Sun*, Jacob Atume the nurse recounted the event of that dark day in March 2014 when a young girl walked into the hospital at 12 noon, meekly identified herself as Joy Kunde and requested to have a private discussion with him.

According to him, he had led her into his office where she narrated a most pathetic story to him, of how she lost her parents and ended up living with Mr Tange, her father's brother, who impregnated her but could not afford to foot the bill for abortion because of family and financial problems.

Jacob Atume claimed Kunde told him her uncle, a carpenter who was struggling to make ends meet, was hugely indebted to a local bank and was running up and down to settle the issue and could not at that point address her own issue.

"She told me that Mr Tange warned her not to let his wife know about this relationship," alleged Jacob. "Based on her sad story, I promised to discuss the matter with my Oga and after extensive deliberations, we requested to see the man responsible for the pregnancy but she claimed he had travelled to Benue State to

# CAN OF WORMS AS DOCTOR, NURSE FIGHT DIRTY

How we buried a patient secretly after failed abortion -Nurse  
He wants to ruin my medical practice, says Doctor

raise money to address the huge debt hanging on his neck."

Atume continued: "We looked at her case and out of sympathy decided to carry out the abortion with the intention that whenever Mr Tange returns, she would explain this development to him and make arrangement to settle the bill. We thought we were doing her a favour. We never imagined that such would end her life."

Complications after a successful evacuation of the fetus triggered an uncontrollable bleeding that culminated in Kunde's death. Conscious of the fact that none of her relations was contacted before they undertook the operation, the implication of her death loomed large before the doctor and his nurse.

"We both agreed between us to arrange a place within the area to bury her and close the story," said Atume.

### Other sides of the story

Silas Kwanta, the village head of Assakyo, refrained from commenting on the matter, preferring to hear the doctor's side of the story first. Dr Musa Chondu had assured him he would come around to thrash the matter once and for all.

For four days, the reporter frequented and waited in the residence of the village head where he was supposed to meet with the doctor. He never showed up.

While his number was not going through, he was, however, active on chat messenger and explained he was busy somewhere and would definitely turn up to explain his own side of the story, claiming he had nothing to hide. When he eventually spoke with the reporter, he claimed the patient was not buried in the hospital but in the cemetery because she had no fixed address when she came into the hospital and was registered by the nurses.

"I'm currently undergoing further studies, that is why the hospital is not operating, especially with the farmers-herdsmen crisis which has claimed several lives," he said.

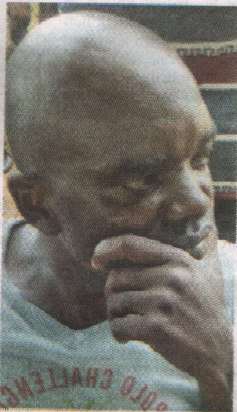
"I want the nurse to prove his allegations against me, he only wants to tarnish my image and reputation as a medical doctor, just because of certain misunderstanding," he defended.

Thereafter, he dropped the call and subsequently switched off his phone, making it difficult for the reporter to conduct further inquiries.

An effort was made to get Matthew Tange to clear his name. He



CHONDU



TANGE



THE LATE JOY KUNDE

was not immediately available for comment having travelled to the village with his family to commence his rice farm.

When the reporter got through to him, Tange flatly denied allegations of sexual impropriety. He claimed not to be aware of his late niece's pregnancy and also rejected the suggestion that he was responsible for it.

He admitted being subject of several unfounded accusations and that the issue still lingers in the village till date.

"Some said I use her for rituals. Others said I use her to make money, but where is the money, I'm still a poor man. One day, the true story about late Joy will be revealed and I will be vindicated," he said.

### Big questions

Until the authorities step and take charge of the case, the circumstance surrounding the death of Kunde will continue to remain

murky and subject to speculation.

In retrospect, it is clear that the duo of Atume and Chondu took advantage of the fact that no one else knew about the girl's decision to have an abortion or her whereabouts on that day to cover up their misdeed. As for Tange, if the facts add up, her disappearance was convenient for him.

Atume's account offered a glimpse of the ordeal the young woman passed through in the last few months before her death: "She told me her uncle started harassing her shortly before she completed her secondary school.

She succumbed to his demand after persistent pressure and threat and they started having sex. When she got pregnant, she notified him about the development, but he had lots of problems at the time and was unable to raise the required N7000 to fund the abortion in the first three months. So, out of panic, she approached the management of the

hospital for help pleading that she would pay the bill as soon as the situation improves. Her intention was to get rid of the pregnancy and later inform her uncle."

Atume's confession did not make him less culpable, anyway. He remained resolute, however—ready to prove his allegations and challenge the doctor.

"He (Dr Chondu) was the one who brought the idea of burying the patient in the night. Let him tell you the location of the cemetery he claimed she was buried," he asserted. "When the patient walked into the hospital and narrated her situation to me, I called him on phone and explained the situation to him and actually got the permission from him before accepting her.

He was the one who carried out the abortion, so what is he saying?" he hailed.

The big question is: Why did Atume tarry for four years before revealing the story?