

TOP STORIES

YOU HAVE A STORY FOR US?

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From Obinna Odogwu,
Abakaliki

AN act of charity done by a woman, Mrs Beatrice Okoroafor, to a cleric has turned to sorrow and mourning, following the gruesome murder of her 17-year-old daughter.

The teenage girl, Ugochi, was killed in cold blood by the 20-year-old brother of the cleric, a tenant living in the house of her uncle, rent-free in Uburu community, Ohaozara Council Area of the state.

Until her tragic death, Ugochi was an SS2 student of Standard International College, Izukwa Development Centre in Onicha Local Council Development Area. She was the last child and the only daughter of the family.

The whole family has been in grief and the 50-year-old mother of the teenage girl in agony over the sad and painful loss of their beloved daughter. Beatrice, a native of Amenu Umuoji in Uburu community, Ohaozara Local Government Area, Ebonyi State, was married to John Okoroafor, a native of Eziga community, Onicha Igboeze in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, who passed on in 2007.

Prelude to the tragedy

Some years ago the younger brother of Beatrice, who resides outside the country, appointed her to look after his building in the village, being their eldest sister and also lives closer to their ancestral home.

The property remained unoccupied as she routinely turned down requests from prospective tenants. This was situation until three years ago when five women from her village came to her and pleaded that she should allow their pastor, Osita (surname withheld) to rent the house.

Initially, she turned down the request, telling them that it was a family residence. When the pressure became much, she yielded to their request which was approved by her brother. The women, according to her, pledged to take full responsibility if things went wrong. They also guaranteed its cleanliness.

Not only that, she released the family house to the pastor, also rent-free.

Not long after the cleric moved into the residence, he brought a young man, Chidera, 20, to live with him.

Sunday Sun learnt that the pastor who runs a ministry with an unknown name claimed to be from Edo State but that his mother happened to be a native Aninri in Enugu State. The boy he brought in and passed off as his brother also hailed from Umuzeze Aninri in the same state.

It was in the course of the pastor's tenancy that Chidera

allegedly murdered the teenage girl on September 23, in the home of the uncle.

Amid tears, Beatrice narrated what happened. She said: "Last week my daughter and I went to the house to check on it. I intended to go to the market from their while my daughter would return home. So, on arrival, we saw a strange face in the building different from the man we gave the house to.

"Upon interrogation, he told us that he was the pastor's brother and that the pastor had brought him in. He said that he hails from Aninri in Enugu State. So, I told him to call the pastor so that I could speak with him but he told me that the call wasn't going through.

"I then asked him why they left the room I assigned to them and packed into my brother's room, who is the owner of the house.

While this was going on, my daughter did not utter a word. "We went inside the house to check the inside. We discovered that another room was unkempt. It had bad odour. It was at this point that my daughter told the boy that the way they were handling her uncle's house was not good at all.

"But I told her to remain calm, saying that I knew what to do. When I told her that it was time to leave but she appealed to me to stay back and rest a little before going back because the sun was too intense. So, I left for the market while she stayed back to rest. She went inside one of the rooms and slept."

Before sleeping Ugochi was said to have called her uncle at 1pm, to inform him about she and the mother observed about the way the pastor was treating the house and advised that he should contact the pastor and tell him that the way and manner he handled his house was not good. Beatrice said that her brother called his friend and told him to go to his house immediately and find out the situation.

"He told his friend that he had called the pastor severally but he refused to pick. He had also sent him a text message, which he did not didn't reply. Instead he switched off his phone. Unfortunately, the young man my brother sent was reluctant to go to the house. But he later went there. On arrival, he sensed that something was wrong. He saw blood stains in the building. He interrogated the boy but he told him that the blood stains were as a result of pile he claimed to be suffering from."

"The man asked him about Ugochi whose footwear and handbag he saw but the boy lied that she to the market to buy something. But the truth was that while my daughter was sleeping, the boy attacked her with dangerous weapons. He first hit her on the neck with a pestle before cutting her on the head with cutlass.

"When I returned from the

HOW CLERIC'S BROTHER KILLED TEENAGE GIRL IN EBONYI

Pastor alleged to do weird things, perform magic

market, I saw drops of blood everywhere and wondered how they came about. I was dumbfounded by the strange discovery. I checked from room to room except the bathroom to find out what went wrong but found nothing. So, I left.

"I never knew he put the dead body of my daughter in the bathroom to wait for the appropriate time to take her to the backyard where he dumped her later," she said.

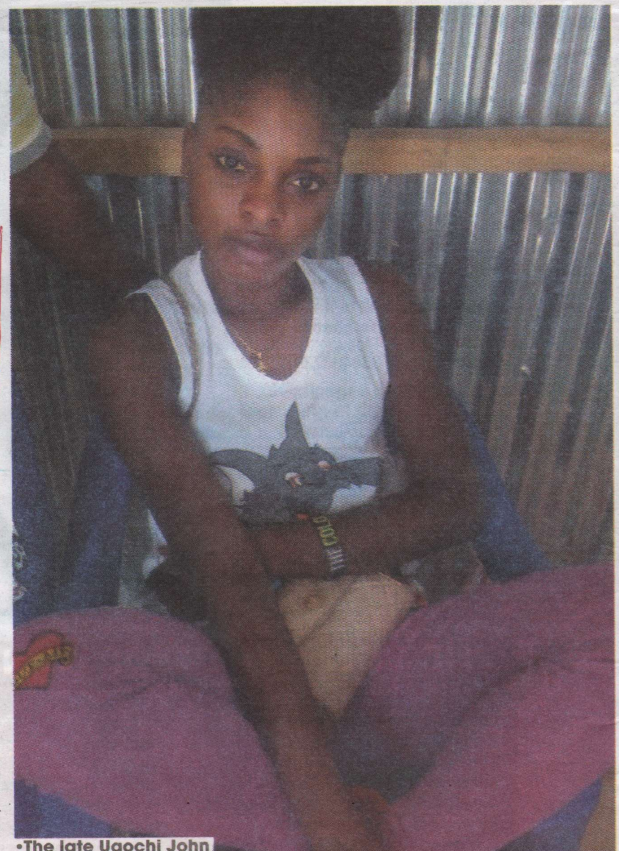
Search for Ugochi

When the day broke on Monday without a sign of her daughter, Beatrice and her son, Chinonso, who returned home from Abakaliki, the state capital became worried. She picks up the tale.

"Incidentally, my son who lives and works in Abakaliki visited home. He asked me about his sister, Ugochi. But I narrated to him how we went to my brother's house in Uburu and that she said that she would return in the morning. So, he carried me on his motorcycle and we went to my brother's house. When we got there, one lady drew the attention of my son to a dead body she saw at the back of my brother's house, where she had gone to check on her plantain.

"We were afraid to go and see the dead boy because we reasoned that the boy who claimed to be suffering from pile had died. So, we told the neighbours and everybody what we were told.

"When I returned, my spirit told me that the dead body could be that of my daughter. My spirit told me that the boy had killed my daughter and claimed that the



The late Ugochi John