

•We want to know how our son died, family insists

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**Aloysius Attah**, Onitsha

**On January 31, 2020, the airwaves were awash with the report of a middle-age man who allegedly died in the Jubilee Hotel, Onitsha, Anambra State. The police and hotel authorities alleged that the man died after a sex bout with an unidentified woman.**

A terse statement by the police spokesman in Anambra, Haruna Muhammed, had said: “On January 31, 2020, at about 7:45pm, the manager of Jubilee Hotel in Onitsha reported at Central Police Station, Onitsha, that a middle aged man allegedly took a lady whose identity is yet unknown to the hotel. After about 30 minutes, the manager heard someone shouting for help and holding his chest. The victim was immediately rushed to the hospital for medical attention but certified dead by a medical doctor on duty.

“Meanwhile, the scene was visited by police detectives attached to CPS, Onitsha, and photograph of the victim obtained. No mark of violence on the deceased’s body. Corpse deposited at Borommeo Hospital for autopsy, while investigation is ongoing to ascertain circumstances surrounding the incident.”

Even as the news went viral, some questioned why the lady that was reportedly taken to the hotel by the deceased was not in police custody.

The identity of the deceased was also unknown until Monday, February 3, when news filtered in that some traders at Ose Okwodu Market were threatening a protest over the killing of a fellow trader in a hotel.

That was when more details unfolded. The deceased, identified as Onyemaechi Idoko, was a trader at the Ose Market, a major food market in Anambra. Sources said the man was a successful trader and a goalgetter who was recently adopted unanimously to be the chairman of the melon seed dealers, Eziokwubundu Line, in the market when some contending individuals could not agree on whom to lead the group.

Countering the police report, some traders at the Ose Okwodu Market picked holes in the statement, alleging that the man was lured instead into the hotel and murdered. They insisted that the story of dying while having sex with a woman was cooked up to not only soil his name but to also cover up the heinous crime.

The younger brother of the deceased, Mr. Chidozie Idoko, who visited The Sun’s office in Onitsha, said the whole thing looked like a poorly written script to him.

Chidozie revealed that his late brother had called his wife less than 15 minutes after he left Ose Market for a debt recovery drive at Ogbo-Oye Market, Inland Town. He said he was surprised that the police would say that his brother took a woman to the hotel, yet nobody could provide the woman. He also noted that his brother, who was supposed to have died in the room naked, since he was supposedly engaging in sex, was fully clothed and was on the floor of the hotel’s frontage when he, Chidozie, arrived there a few minutes later.

Unable to stomach what he described as high-wire conspiracy and setup, he availed the reporter a copy of the petition he had caused to be addressed to the Commissioner of Police, Anambra State Command, Mr. John Abang, through his lawyer, /

Giving detailed insights into how his brother died, the petitioner said: “Onyemaechi Idoko, who deals in food items like bags of rice, beans, egwusi, etc, at Ose Okwuodu Market, left his shop at about 5pm on January 30, 2020, and told his wife, Obiageli Idoko, also a trader at the same market, that he wanted to see a customer he had supplied goods to at Ogbo Oye Market who had failed to pay him.

“About 5:12pm, his wife, Obiageli received a phone call from her husband’s Airtel line but because she was busy attending to her customers, she instructed her husband’s apprentice, Chineche, to answer the call and tell her husband that she was busy with customers. When Neche answered the call, he discovered that the caller was not his master. The caller told him to come to New Market Road by Obanye Street, adding that the owner of the phone was dead.

“Obiageli Idoko, the wife, who is heavily pregnant, called one of her husband’s boys, called Ifeanyi Omeh, from a nearby shop to accompany her to the place. On getting to the place, they did not see the caller or the husband. She then called her husband’s number and the same person picked the call and directed them to come to Jubilee Hotel in Obanye Street by Old Market Road, Onitsha.

“On getting there, they saw the lifeless body of her husband lying inside the Jubilee Hotel premises with his clothes on his body, his bunch of keys was attached to the trousers while his money was intact inside his pocket.

“Ifeanyi Omeh, who accompanied the deceased’s wife, then called his younger brother, Chidozie, immediately and informed him about the situation. Upon hearing the news, Chidozie left his shop at Onitsha Main Market and rushed to the scene and met his brother’s lifeless body in the premises of the hotel. Suffice it to state that the body of Onyemaechi Idoko was not in any room of the said Jubilee Hotel but within the premises.

“Devastated at the sight of his brother’s lifeless body, Chidozie summoned courage and approached the manager of the hotel to ascertain the cause of his brother’s death. The manager told him that his late brother came into the hotel with a woman and he lodged both of them into a room, and later, he heard a voice from the room and he rushed into the room where he saw the deceased and the lady and the deceased told the manager to take him to the hospital but that he died before he could assist him to his car.

“Following the manager’ story, Chidozie wanted to go to the police station to report the incident but the manager informed him that he had contacted the police. Soon after, the police arrived the scene with their vehicle and took the corpse to All Hallows Hospital, where the medical doctor confirmed him dead.

“It is pertinent to note that, when Chidozie requested for his late brother’s phone from the manager, he brought two damaged/ cracked screen phones of the deceased that nothing could be seen from the screen. When the manager was asked what happened to the phone, he said he found them like that. But he couldn’t give any reasonable answer to inquiries on how he managed to get the number of the deceased’s wife to inform her of the death of her husband since the phones were blank and nothing could be seen from the screen.

“The same manager could not also give any account or provide the very woman he said was lodged along with the deceased in a room, yet he said the woman told him she was a fish dealer in the same Ose Okwuodu Market.

“The way and manner the officers at Central Police Station, Onitsha, have been handling such a serious matter is discouraging and of such great worry to the family. The DPO of CPS, Onitsha, and his men were in a hurry to release the prime suspect – the hotel manager – in a case of such magnitude. They also fed the PPRO with wrong information, which was hastily released to journalists and same has been published in various newspapers and social media. Opera News published that, according to the PPRO, the deceased died on top of a widow, meaning that the identity of the woman is well known to the police.”

“Information reaching our client is that the deceased was scheduled to be sworn in as new chairman of his market line by next week before this incident happened. In the light of the foregoing, therefore, we most humbly urge you to cause a serious investigation into this heinous crime and ensure that the perpetrators of the crime are brought to book” the petitioner said.

Chidozie told Daily Sun that there were so many unanswered questions over his brother’s sudden death. He stated that the hotel in question was under renovation at the time of the incident, alleging that his brother was invited there to be murdered.

“My brother did not even enter the hotel room. When I got there and saw his corpse lying on the ground, blood was oozing from the nostrils while he even had excreta on his trousers, which meant that they suffocated him there.

“While I’m running around to ensure justice in this matter, some strange numbers have been threatening me, too. I escaped an assassination attempt a few days ago while driving out of the deceased’s home.

“I see a setup and a cover-up. I am calling on the Commissioner of Police in the state to order a full-scale investigation into this matter and ensure justice, because the police at CPS, Onitsha, are being economical with the truth over this matter,” he said.

When the reporter contacted the manager of Jubilee Hotel, Onitsha, identified as Osita, he declined comments, saying that he had volunteered a statement to the police. He added that he could not talk unless with the permission of his lawyer.

The PPRO, Muhammed, said the result of the autopsy report on the deceased was being awaited.