

Horror of love

• From lovers to killers

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Last Wednesday, a fisherman, Ejiro Patrick, allegedly beat his wife to death in Tyomu community, Makurdi, the capital of Benue State. The suspect hails from Delta State, while the deceased was from Benue State.

The police public relations officer in the state, Catherine Anene, said: “Yes, Mr Ejiro Patrick of Km 14 Tyomu, Gboko road beat his wife to a state of coma. The victim was rushed to Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH) but was confirmed dead and her remains had been deposited at the BSUTH morgue.

“The reason for the violence that ended up at the river side was that the wife sold some items for the family and did not remit N5,000. The victim was also seen bleeding from the nostrils. The suspect is in police custody.”

Also in custody is one Solomon Peters, 23, who reportedly stabbed his girlfriend, Patience Zakaria, 25, to death on January 24, in Gwallammeji, a community largely populated by students of the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi. Peters allegedly killed her for flirting with another man.

A friend of Patience said she narrated what transpired between her and her jealous lover boy before she died. She said: “She (Patience) said she received a phone call from just an ordinary male friend and her Solomon got

angry and started harassing her verbally. As she was trying to explain to him, he pounced on her and started hitting her.

“She took a bottle, hit him on the head in self-defence because the beating was too much for her and the man picked up a knife and stabbed her in the back in retaliation.”

Confirming the incident, the spokesperson of the Bauchi State Police Command, Kamal Abubakar, said: “When the incident happened, without informing the police, her friends took her to a clinic for treatment because the boyfriend stabbed her twice.

However, the clinic also treated her without informing the police and discharged her the same day.

“When the thing became worse, they took her back to the clinic where she was put on drip and eventually gave up.”

He disclosed that Peters had been arrested while trying to escape, adding that some staff of the clinic were also cooling their heels in detention for not reporting the incident to the police.

Peters, however, said: “It was not that I tried to kill her but I did it as self-defence because she broke my head with a bottle. At the time of the incident, I did not intend to kill her rather I acted in self-defence out of anger. Our relationship is over one year and I had intention to marry her. I feel very bad over the outcome of my action; it was not intentional. I regret my action.”

Another person who is certainly regretting her action is Maryam Sanda because she is on the death row for committing mariticide. On January 27, she was convicted for murdering her husband, Bilyaminu Bello, son of Haliru Bello, a former national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), in November 2017.

At the time Sanda killed her husband, she was pregnant with their second child. She gave birth to the second child in detention, meaning that the baby will never know the father. She used a kitchen knife to stab her husband to death at their residence on 4 Pakali Close, Wuse 2, Abuja.

In his ruling, Justice Yusuf Halilu of the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja said: “It has been said that thou shall not kill. Whoever kills in cold blood shall die in cold blood.”

Upon her conviction, Sanda broke down in tears and wept uncontrollably.

The same day Sanda was convicted, Rabi Shamsudeen, 19, allegedly stabbed her 25-year-old husband, Shamsudeen Salisu, to death at Danjunaku village in Maumfashi Local Government Area of Katsina State. She was said to have killed her husband with a knife during a heated argument.

In May 2019, Enifeh Omomo, 42, allegedly committed suicide after killing his 38-year-old wife, Faith Omomo, and his six-year-old son, Glorious Omomo, at their residence in Ikorodu, Lagos. A source alleged that the man wiped out his family because his wife was not faithful to him.

Police public relations officer in the state, Bala Elkana, said: “When homicide detectives visited the scene, the body of the suspect was found hanging on a rope, tied to the ceiling fan, while the bodies of his wife and son were found on the floor.”

The same month, an Ikeja High Court sentenced 51-year-old dockworker, Lekan Shonde, to death by hanging for beating his 39-year-old wife, Ronke, a banker, to death at their residence at No. Tiemo Close, Egbeda, Lagos.

“This is the sentence of the court upon you: That you should be hanged by the neck until you are dead. May the Lord have mercy upon you,” Justice Josephine Oyefeso said.

The convict pummeled his wife when he overheard her on a phone praising the sexual prowess of a lover.

Again, on account of infidelity, Uwaila, 35, allegedly shot his wife and two sons in Ovbiogie village in Ovia East Local Government Area of Edo State in January 2019.

In April last year, 30-year-old Uwani Danjuma killed his wife at Uddu village in Rija Local Government Area of Niger State because she planned to remarry if he died in the sickness that afflicted him at the time.

Confessing to the crime, Danjuma said; “I can’t imagine my own wife telling me that if I died, she will remarry. I lost my temper and inflicted injuries on her neck with a matchete, which led to her death.

“I am not regretting killing her since she wanted me to die. I killed her so that she will not remarry. She should not have said that to my hearing. There is power in the spoken word. So, let her go. Allah will send her to hell for that unguarded comment.”

On November 12, 2019, Nnamdi Amajioyi allegedly killed his wife and shot his brother at Avutu, Obowo Local Government Area of Imo State. A family source said: “This is very strange. The man murdered his own wife. He also shot his own brother, who tried to rescue the woman from her husband. Nobody knew the cause of the dispute. Nnamdi fled thereafter.”

About two weeks after Nnamdi killed his wife in Imo State, a policeman, Edward, killed his wife and shot himself on the head because the woman filed a divorce against him. The shooting took place at their Warders Barracks residence at Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, Lagos. The woman was an Inspector with the Nigerian Correctional Service.

In November last year, Eki Ekhatior allegedly killed her husband by squeezing his manhood in a violent manner during an argument.

In 2017, 14-year-old Aisha Isah killed her husband and cousin, 40-year-old Isiaka Usman, from Lifari village in the Mashegu Local Government Area of Niger State. She said: “He had been starving me for four days and when

I confronted him, he slapped me and out of anger, I hit him on the forehead with a pestle and he collapsed and died.”

In September 2017, 50-year-old Daniyan roasted his wife, Dorcas, like sacrifice for the gods. A neighbor of the victim, Mrs Kehinde Ajayi, said: “We were asleep at night when we heard the woman calling for help. Initially, we could not come out from our apartments because we feared that the noise was from armed robbers who may have invaded the area.

“But immediately we saw fire coming out of their apartment, we rushed out to rescue Dorcas but she had already been burnt by the fire. She was later taken to the Federal Medical Centre, Owo, where she eventually died. Later, we got to know that she and her husband had been quarreling over documents relating to the sale of land.

Bose Richard, a younger sister to Dorcas, accused her brother in-law of making a barbecue of his wife.

“This would be the third time he would be pouring petrol on his wife (my sister) with the aim of killing her and now he has finally killed her,” she alleged.

Story without end

On June 24, 2011, Kolade Arowolo stabbed his wife, Titilayo, several times, and the woman died. On February 21, 2014, Justice Lateefat Okunnu of the Lagos High Court in Ikeja sentenced him to death by hanging.

On the day of the 2015 presidential election, 26-year-old pregnant Onyinyechi Akunne stabbed her husband, Abuchi Akunne, to death. She was delivered of her baby in detention and was sentenced to seven years imprisonment on May 8, 2017 by Justice Josephine Oyefeso of the Lagos High Court in Ikeja. In due season, she will explain to her daughter how her father died.

During an altercation with her husband, Lowo, on February 2, 2016, Yewande Oyediran, a lawyer, stabbed him to death with a kitchen knife at their home in Ibadan, Oyo State. In November 2017, Yewande was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to seven years imprisonment by Justice Muntar Abimbola of the Oyo State High Court in Ibadan. In May 2019, she regained freedom following her pardon by the then Governor of Oyo State but the stigma of husband killer remains.

Udeme Otike-Odibi, a lawyer, is standing trial before the Lagos High Court in Igboere for allegedly killing her husband, Symphorosa, and mutilating his body with a knife on May 3, 2018 in their home. She allegedly cut off his manhood and placed it on his palm.

Global concern

The scourge of domestic violence leading to deaths has assumed dangerous dimensions. Hardly will a day or two pass without a report of a man killing his wife or a woman killing her husband even as many of such incidents are unreported.

Indeed, domestic violence, which often ends in death or disability, is a global concern. In February 2018, a US lawmaker, Jackie Speier, volunteered that “three American women are murdered every day by their husband or boyfriend.”

Spouses are killing themselves irrespective status, colour and creed. Take this: On Sunday, January 5, A Kenyan pastor, Elijah Misiko, of the Ground for God’s Gospel Church in Mombassa, stabbed his wife, Pastor Ann Mughio, during a church service and then slit his throat as a shocked congregation watched.

Mombasa sub-county police commander, Julius Kiragu, said: “He walked up to his wife while the church was praying as if he wanted to whisper something to her. Then he took one of the knives (he concealed in an envelope) and stabbed her (wife) two times. He believed she was dead. He then stabbed himself three times in the stomach and slit his throat.

Misiko died instantly from his stab wounds and Mughoi died at a local hospital a few hours later.”

It was gathered that the couple had been at loggerheads over the ownership of the church.

Why they do it

Actress and dancer, Cossy Ojiakor, opined that law enforcement agents should share the blame. She said: “Some of the women who stab their husbands do so because the police had failed them. They had reported countless number of times but nobody cared. Someone once threatened me with a bottle. I reported him to the police who didn’t do much and he came back the next day.

“Before ladies act, they must have been pushed to the wall. Police should deal with those wife beaters severely. The law should take its course.”

Olumide Oyekunle said: “Sociologists like me have been digging deep to unravel the causes of this disturbing trend. It is a society that still defines occurrence by spiritual thoughts and, of course, Satan is always the scapegoat. Even within the metaphysical explanations, people are said to possess the ability to resist this monster or allow him or her some space to thrive deep within our minds. He doesn’t have a house, he’s a ‘to and fro’ mobile demon, we’re told.”

Putting the matter in perspective, Oyekunle explained: “When marriages are consummated by unfinished products, that is individuals who have not worked on their emotions, unable to control their excesses through perseverance and self-control, selfish and violent, at any slightest disagreement or provocation, those natural instincts they don’t deal with will later get hold of them and deal with them big time.

“We are also more conscious of mundane things like beauty, wealth, education and physique that the values of humility, self-control, love, patience etc are ignored.”

Oyekunle added that the fact that we are becoming more individualistic and abandoned the extended family system also contribute to domestic upheavals.

Run, run, run

A popular musician and activist told his daughter who was having issues with her husband to return if the marriage was not working. “Abeg, instead of your husband to kill you or you kill him, come back home,” he said.

The coordinator of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team, Titilola Vivour-Adeniyi, told a newspaper: “When there is a threat to life of a partner and it appears that he or she lives in constant fear of his or life, then there is a need for definite action.

“Some people ask whether we encourage married couples to seek divorce. No, the decision to divorce rests with the parties concerned. But when there is a threat to life, it is imperative for the parties to be separated so that they can stay alive. It is people that are alive that can work on their marriage. Hope for a change or apply for psychological support.”

Investigation revealed that many couples remain in turbulent marriages because of the stigmatization of divorcees in these climes. So, some end up being killed or maimed by their spouse.