

# The Lifeline

## \* Enugu: How killer policeman shifted shooting to 'unknown gunmen'

• 'When is daddy coming back?' victim's children ask mum

From **Jude Chinedu**, Enugu

**AS** families all over the world celebrated this year's Father's Day, last Sunday, June 20, the family of Nwabueze Orji was plunged into mourning, following the shooting to death of their breadwinner by a trigger-happy police inspector, who later tried to drop his sin on the heads of the nebulous 'unknown gunmen' terrorising the South-East.

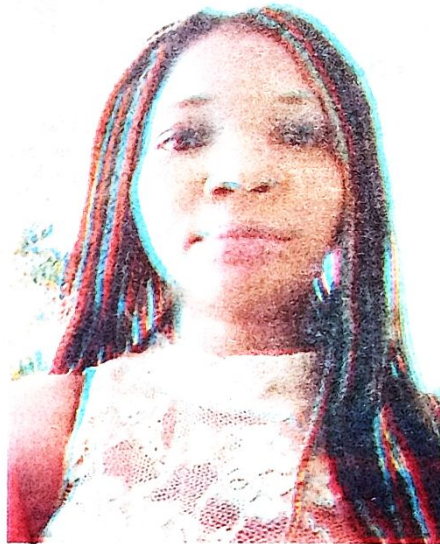
The policeman on special protection duty at the home of the Lebanese manager of a popular lottery outfit, Lotto Nigeria, at the Golf Estate, Enugu, embarked on a shooting spree, which claimed five lives, while four others suffered severe gunshot wounds.

When *Daily Sun* visited the Orjis in an uncompleted building where they reside, the last two of the four children intermittently asked their mother, Mrs. Oluchi Orji, the whereabouts of their father.

"Mummy they shoot Daddy; Daddy don die," one of Orji's children told her mother. But Oluchi kept reassuring them that their father travelled and would soon be back.

"Very soon your father will be back," she said repeatedly. Though the older ones did not believe their mother, her words of reassurance were enough to give them hope.

She told *Daily Sun*: "My kids are still very



• **Victims: Susan**

young. Some are in primary school while some are in nursery school. I need help. They should help my children. My children are too small. I am not doing anything. Let the police people that killed my husband come and help me. Let government help me. That is all I want," she pleaded as tears flowed down her cheeks.



**Orji**

Oluchi had travelled with the last of her four children for the funeral of one of her friends. The eldest daughter had gone to church that morning, leaving her two siblings and father, who decided to wash his clothes.

The woman, whom fate has catapulted to widowhood, received the shock of her life that fateful Sunday, when a neighbour called to tell

her that her husband had been shot. She rushed back to the sad reality of her husband's death, a horrible reality she would live with throughout her life.

"My husband was washing clothes. So, when the shooting stopped, he opened our gate and saw the Mobile policeman. He wanted to find out what was going on from him since he was working for the white man. My husband did not know that it was him that was shooting everybody. That was how he used his gun and scattered my husband's stomach. All his intestines were on the ground," Oluchi said amid tears.

According to Oluchi, her husband ran to the main road adjacent their compound and begged for assistance from passersby. But, confronted with the gory sight, the people he had sought help from ran away.

"I don't want to die. I have four children and they are still too young for me to leave them," Orji reportedly wailed but no one came to his rescue.

Later, someone volunteered his bus to take him to hospital. Unfortunately, he was rejected by three hospitals as they demanded police report before he could be attended to. Orji finally gave up the ghost inside the bus at the ESUT Teaching Hospital, Parklane, while waiting to be admitted





•Another victim



•House where the shooting took place



•Mrs Orji (left) with sympathisers

into the emergency ward.

"My husband told them to help him that he had four children. He told them that he didn't want to die because he had four children but nobody helped my husband. That was how my husband died. He is in the mortuary now," Oluchi sobbed uncontrollably.

Witnesses said the policeman first shot the domestic cook. Thinking that the cook was dead, he proceeded to shoot other domestic staff who had run into a room for safety. According to them, the cop, after raining bullets on his victims from the window, called each of them by their name to confirm if they were dead or still alive.

When he did not get a response from them, he ran to the gate where he shot two private security guards in the compound to complete the carnage.

It was at this point that Orji, who was in the next compound, stepped out to buy detergent from a nearby shop. On sighting the policeman fondly called Oyibo Mopol, Orji approached

him to know what was happening in his compound. Without hesitation, Oyibo Mopol replied by reportedly shooting him five times. And the man died before he could be attended to at the hospital.

The whole area was deserted while the gate of the building where the shooting occurred was locked and blocked with a wooden table when our correspondent visited.

Our reporter could not gain access to the wards to see some of the injured victims at the Parklane Hospital, following restrictions by the hospital management on the directives of the Enugu State Government.

Regardless, one of the relatives of the victims who simply identified herself as Esther said two of her sisters were involved in the incident.

Esther said she had worked as a domestic staff at the Lebanese manager's compound but resigned in November last year. She said her elder sister was shot dead while her younger sister was shot in the leg.

"Our elder sister died with one other person who was employed about two weeks ago. My two sisters were involved in the incident. My elder sister died while my other sister was shot in the leg. Five persons died.

"I will not be able to talk to you now because I'm about cleaning her up. I can give you my number so that we can talk later," she said.

Unfortunately, the number was not

reachable as our reporter called it repeatedly without luck.

While his victims were either struggling to live or already dead, the killer-policeman had perfected plans to cover his tracks. He was said to have immediately called the office of the disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) located close to the scene of the incident and told them that his compound was under attack by unknown gunmen.

Officers who were swiftly dispatched to the building were alarmed when the cook who was the first to be shot crept out from where he was hiding and exposed the police inspector as the actual culprit.

Motive for the action was still unknown even as those in hospital confirmed that they had lived with him for six months and there were no issues with him within the period.

A statement issued by the spokesman of the police in Enugu, Daniel Ndukwe, said the state commissioner of police, Mohammed Aliyu, said that the police officer had been arrested and taken into custody pending the conclusion of investigations. His identity was, however, not disclosed by the police authorities.

But the commissioner of police had ordered his deputy in charge of the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department to carry out thorough investigation to unravel the circumstances surrounding the shooting.

They revealed that the killer cop was an inspector attached to the Special Protection Unit (SPU) Base 9, Umuahia, Abia State, and said to be on duty at the Lotto lottery company, located within the Golf Estate.

Meanwhile, Enugu State governor, Chief Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, when he visited the victims at the hospital later that day, expressed shock over the killings. He sympathized with those injured and wished them quick recovery, while condoling with the families of the deceased.

Former Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, also expressed sadness over the incident and called for a thorough and credible probe to unravel the circumstances surrounding the shooting. He stated that such action would ensure justice for the victims and their families.

"I expect from the police a thorough and credible probe into this sad development to ensure justice is not only ultimately done, but is also seen by Nigerians to have been done," he said.

Ekweremadu condoled with families who lost loved ones and prayed that God would grant them the fortitude to bear the loss, just as he equally prayed for quick recovery of the injured.

It was gathered that the presence of the killer cop was unknown to the Enugu State Command until he struck.