

# Insight

## Hotels as

By Job Osazuwa

ON January 13, 2022, a 41-year-old businessman father of two, Mr. Azubuike Nwokolo, was found dead in a hotel room in Amichi, Nnewi North of Anambra State.

One of the deceased's friends, Nnaemeka Ikerionwu, who demanded justice for him on social media, said the businessman, popularly known as Zubby More, went to a party in the area before lodging in the hotel on January 13.

On January 1, a 300-level student of the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Jos, Plateau State, Jennifer Anthony, was allegedly murdered by her boyfriend, Moses Oche, in Jos. The incident happened at Domus Pacis Guesthouse, along Zaria Road, Jos. The lady was said to have travelled from Abuja to Jos on December 31, 2021, to meet a friend. Jennifer, it was later learnt, was allegedly drugged by the suspected ritualist, who killed her and removed her eyes and other vital organs.

Many deaths have been recorded in hotels across Nigeria of these days. Although the ugly trend did not just start in the recent past, the increasing number of casualties is making many Nigerians to develop goose pimples.

A 20-year-old boy from Cross River State, who gave his name simply as Abel, told the reporter that the busy hotel where he worked in Ikeja, Lagos, was frequented by lodgers of questionable character.

"There are particular young men with laptops and many mobile phones who always come to lodge in the hotel. Some of them could be there for weeks. There are other categories of people who will lodge, then after a few hours, they would rush out and never return. Some of them come with big bags that nobody can guess what they contain."

"My one-year experience as a housekeeper has made me to understand that so many ugly things happen in hotels that can never be uncovered," he said.

On November 15, 2021, Timothy Adegoke, an MBA student at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Osun State, who was declared missing since November 7, was found dead. He was based in Abuja but travelled to Ile-Ife on November 5 to sit for an examination at the school's Distance Learning Centre in the Moro area of the state.

Since the corpse was discovered, there have been many posers surrounding the death of the father of three. The operators of the hotel where he lodged were shredded on the social media as Nigerians across the divides mounted pressure on the police to unravel the killers.

On September 12, 2021, a 23-year-old graduate of law from Buckingham University, United Kingdom, Mr. Toritseju Emmanuel Jackson, was murdered in Abuja.

He was said to have been stabbed to death on the premises of a hotel in Wuse Zone 4. According to a family source, the victim was at home when he received a call from one of his friends late in the night of September 11 for a meeting at the hotel.

Toritseju was said to have returned to Nigeria on January 23 after graduating



Suspects in connection with murder of hotel guest

with a law degree from Buckingham University to undertake the mandatory one-year post-graduate programme at the Nigerian Law School.

Also in September 2021, an Ikeja Special Offences Court sentenced a 23-year-old chef, Joshua Usulor, to 28 years imprisonment for killing a 34-year-old lawyer, Mrs. Feyisayo Obot.

The chef killed the lawyer on January 26, 2019, at the Citiheights Hotel, Opebi, Lagos State, where both of them lodged in different rooms.

Usulor murdered Obot, an Abuja-based mother of two, by slitting her throat while robbing her in her hotel room. Obot, an employee of an Abuja-based non-governmental organisation - Save the Children - was in Lagos to write a project management examination. She was killed on the day she was due to leave the hotel.

On September 21, 2021, gunmen, at night, attacked Hilltop International Premium Hotel, Tunga-Maje, Gwagwalada, Abuja, leaving behind death, tears and sorrow. They were said to have engaged policemen in a gun battle that led to the death of a policeman. Three persons who lodged in the hotel were injured, and one of them was hit by a stray bullet.

At the same hotel in June, gunmen reportedly abducted a former member of the Kogi State House of Assembly, Friday Makama, and eight others.

In June 2021, the traditional and social media spaces were abuzz following the arrest of a 21-year-old undergraduate of the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Chidinma Ojukwu, for allegedly killing the chief executive officer of Super TV, Usifo Ataga, in Lagos.

The 300-level student of the university was accused of murdering Ataga by stabbing him with a kitchen knife after a



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struggle in a short service apartment.

Her trial has continued with a lot of revelations and intrigues.

In November 2020, a 31-year-old man, Rexlawson Johnson, was arrested by men of the Ogun State Police Command for the murder of his girlfriend, Patricia John, 26.

The suspect was apprehended on October 30, 2020, at a motel, where the body of the girlfriend was discovered. On interrogation, he admitted checking into the hotel with the deceased and claimed they had a misunderstanding, which led to physical assault between them. In the process, he said the woman collapsed and gave up the ghost. He subsequently left the corpse in the room and sneaked out of the hotel.

In February 2020, a 40-year-old man,

Paul Okwudili, died early morning in a hotel in Onitsha, Anambra State, after allegedly using sex-enhancing drugs to have intercourse with his female lover. It was gathered that the lady who went to the hotel with the deceased called on the hotel's management to render help when the man's breathing became abnormal.

According to the police, there was no mark of violence on the deceased's body and some drugs were discovered in the hotel room reasonably suspected to be aphrodisiacs.

Many Nigerians cannot easily forget how in December 2019, a popular Abuja-based businessman and owner of Firan generating sets, Chief Hyginus Odunukwe, was murdered in a Lagos hotel.

Confessing after he was arrested by the



"Murder may pass unpunished for a time, But tardy justice will overtake the crime" — **John Dryden**

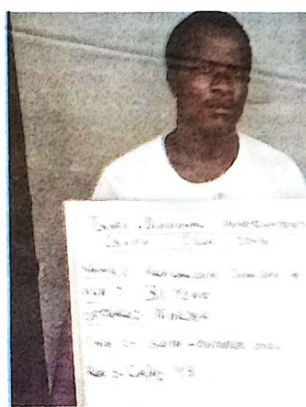
# slaughterhouses



**Odunukwe**



**IGP Alkali Baba**



**Another suspect**



**Cynthia**



**Adegoke**



**Chidinma**



**Ataga**

police, Daniel Bob Ibeaji, aged 42, who was said to be the prime suspect in the murder of the businessman, on January 21, gave startling revelations, how he conspired with three others to snuff life out of Odunukwe at the Atican Beach Resort in Ajah, Lagos, on December 1, 2019.

Three accomplices, Arinze Igwe, 26, Solomon Cletus, 30, and Israel Obig-aremu, 35, who were arrested alongside Ibeaji, also stated their roles in the act.

The businessman's remains, cut into pieces, were recovered by operatives of the Zonal Intervention Squad (ZIS) of the Zone 2 Command from a canal in Ogombo forest, along Ajah road, while his SUV was tracked to Atican Beach Resort.

On July 22, 2012, Cynthia Osokogu, daughter of General Frank Osokogu (rtd), was allegedly killed at Cosmilla Hotel in Lakeview Estate, Festac Town, Lagos.

The 24-year-old lady, who was a post-graduate student of Nasarawa State University, was murdered by her Facebook friends, having been lured from Abuja to

Lagos.

However, killings and other related crimes being perpetrated in hotels have been happening for decades. For instance, September 19, 1996, will remain evergreen in the minds of many Imo people, and other Nigerians, as the day residents massively revolted against criminals operating in the state.

That was the day of the Otokoto Riot in Owerri, to protest the murder of an 11-year-old groundnut hawker in a hotel in the city. In the eye of the storm was Owerri-based businessman, bearded Chief Vincent Duru. He was known by his not-too-elegant nickname, Otokoto. He was also the owner of Otokoto Hotel, along Orlu Road, Owerri.

He rapidly grew famous, even as some would say, notorious. He was even accused of not only belonging to a secret cult but also being a kingpin of the cultists. He and his colleagues in crime were later executed by firing squad for kidnapping and murder.

Apart from killings and robbery, there are also speculations that used condoms,

used tissue paper, leftover soaps and other personal belongings in hotels were highly sought after by some persons for ritual purposes.

Reacting to a series of deaths and other evils perpetrated in hotels, the owner of Otunba Global Luxury and Resort in Atan, Ado Odo/Ota Local Government Area (LGA) of Ogun State, Alhaji Mojeed Adekunle, told the reporter that most hotel owners he knew were doing everything possible to prevent dangerous moves by the lodgers.

"For instance, there are CCTVs installed within and around my hotel. This enables us to have a full view of lodgers and everyone that enters and leaves the hotel. We ensure that we take the personal data of lodgers for record purposes. We also have guards who are on ground 24 hours to forestall any breakdown of law and order.

"We as hotel owners in the area also hold routine meetings as an association to review our activities. Topmost in our agenda at every meeting is the security of our lodgers. Let's not also forget that

there is a limit to what we can do in terms of certain security situations. But the basics that are expected of us are always adhered to," Adekunle said.

A manager at Ighoma & Son's Suites in Aduwawa, Benin, the capital of Edo State, Mr. Johnbull Ugochukwu, told the reporter on the telephone that crimes were not only committed in hotels but anywhere the perpetrator believes it is safe for him or her to carry out the ungodly act.

His words: "I can't deny the fact that bad things, including deaths, are happening in hotels. But dragging the name of hotels into what they don't have absolute power to tame should be discouraged. No matter what we do to prevent it, lodgers with evil intentions will always be smart to beat our checks. Moreover, we are not psychologists to read the intentions of a lodger."

"It is quite a complex issue but most people won't understand. Most clients that lodge in hotels are always two people (male and female). Mind you, there are limits to how we can monitor lodgers because of the law of privacy."

Reacting to this, a pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Province 21, Lagos, Akintola Samuel, told the reporter that rituals and killings were mere superstitions. He added that the charms by the fetish-minded could only affect anyone that believed in the potency of such diabolical manipulation.

"We are children of God. Where there is light, darkness vanishes. The covenant we have with God is secured with the blood of Jesus Christ, which he shed on the cross of Calvary for us. Let them take the leftover soap of a true child of God, they will only be wasting their time."

"My message for people with evil minds is for them to repent and avert the wrath of God, which is eternal condemnation," he said.