

Agony of grieving father

•Brutally murdered son's body cannot be released for burial without autopsy –Police

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From **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

Life is not the same again for the family of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson Nwankwo Ulu, following the alleged brutal murder of their 21-year-old son, Nathaniel. Worse still, the body of their son has not been released to the

family yet.



•The suspect's apartment



•Mr. Ulu

According to Johnson, his lawyer said without the autopsy report, they might lose the case and there would be no justice for them. He disclosed that the challenge the family has now, is how to raise the money for autopsy, which is between N300,000.00 and N350,000.00.

The meaning is that the grieving father must cough out the money, among other expenses, in his quest for justice.

Mr. Johnson is a businessman, residing in Umuebule 2 with his family. He is from Obiene-Ututu community in Arochukwu Local Government Area of Abia State.

He said since he retired from public service as a photojournalist, he had put all efforts to keep his family members going. He said he has maintained a quiet and peaceful living with his wife and children.

But, the recent death of his third son on August 18, has left him and his family members devastated and traumatized. In a recent interview with Daily Sun, Johnson poured out his emotion since the incident occurred.

He said each day that passes reminds him and his family members of the painful death his son passed through on that fateful day. He said it was more agonizing keeping Nathaniel's body in the mortuary and waiting endlessly for police to give the family update on the case.

According to him, weeks after the incident, nothing concrete has come from the police on the matter

Johnson recalled: "It happened that on Thursday, August 18. I went to market (Oil Mill) with my son. We closed by 6pm. And we left for home.

"I had a brief meeting with some friends at Shell junction, very close to the road, Location 15, leading to my house. I told him to go home.

"About 20 minutes after he left for the house, I received a call and rushed home. As I got home, I saw blood on the ground. People around said some group of boys and a woman stabbed my son. I asked them about him. They told me that he had been rushed to the hospital.

"When I got to the hospital, he had already been confirmed dead. That was how I lost my son, who was hale and hearty."

Johnson said he made further inquiry to find out what exactly led to the boy's death.

"I was told my son came back and saw my little daughter of 11 years crying. He asked why and my little daughter said a lady flogged her with mopping stick."

According to Johnson, the woman made a call and a young man surfaced immediately.

"The young man was said to have picked the same mopping stick and flogged my son. While my son turned and held the stick, the young man broke a bottle and called another boy. They locked the gate and started stabbing him to the point of stabbing him on the neck. I believe it was the stab on his neck that cut his arteries and veins. My son bled to death. That was what my daughter of 11 years told me.

“My little daughter said when she saw what was happening, should could not withstand it. She pushed away the wheelbarrow they used in closing the gate and ran outside shouting, which attracted neighbours and passers-by.

“My son held one of the boys that stabbed him as he was attempting to escape, but slumped at the front of the gate. This same woman (suspect) whose name is Loveth, still went and drew water and poured on my son who was in the pool of his own blood.”

According to him, the body was deposited at All Weather Mortuary, Timber Express, close to Oyigbo town, in Oyigbo Local Government Area of the state. He disclosed that he and the police had gone to the morgue to carry out an investigation. And since that, police has not told him the true position of the case.

It was gathered that after the incident, Loveth reported herself to the landlord, who, then, took her to the Oyigbo Express Police Station. From there, she was taken to the Umuebule 1 Police Station, which has jurisdiction of the matter and she was detained.

The alleged accomplices were said to have fled. One of them identified as Wisdom Mike, aka Boss, is alleged to be the woman’s lover. The suspect’s father, who could not bear what his son did, on Friday, August 26, 2022, handed him (Boss) over to the police.

Johnson said: “If not by the grace of God, I don’t think that my wife (Victoria) would have survived it. What happened to us is terrible and piteous. I never expected such a thing to happen in my life.

“This is a boy that has started relieving stress and problems from us. He worked in the rig, two weeks on, two weeks off. It was that two weeks he was off, that I took him to the market so he will not be idle in the house. And he has been of a very big help to the family.

“I want justice. From the full understanding of the Bible I read, he, who kills by the gun shall die by the gun. Everything for life and blood should be for God. I want that justice which Bible talks about to be taken in this matter. Let God direct the mind and attention of government on this matter. I cannot avenge. It is only government that I am begging to take vengeance for me and let justice prevail.

“I want government and police to facilitate the trial of the killers of my son. I really want them to facilitate the trial of this matter, so that we can have the opportunity to carry the body of our son for burial.

“As the body is in the mortuary, it is accumulating expenses for us. We want to carry the body and bury to remove the burden and trauma from us.

“Once we bury the body, my family will have peace; we are so worried now that it is still the mortuary. Another thing is, the police are now saying they want to carry out an autopsy of the deceased before they can give a good report to the court. That, without autopsy, nobody could prove vividly what killed him.

“The autopsy, according to the police, would be paid by us. This is another painful aspect of it. They (police) are going to bring their doctor. But, whatever the doctor says is what we are going to pay.

“I am telling you, it is another pain and expenses we are passing through, adding to the injury he have.

“And for we to get justice, and those murders to face justice, the lawyer would have the result of the autopsy and be able to defend it in court. So, we don’t have money any longer. I have spent a lot since the incident occurred. I am now crying and appealing for help. I am, in deed, crying for help. Let this trial be accelerated.

“Wherever help will come from would be appreciated. I am crying for help from government. If government does that, fine and good for us. It would be a very big relief to us. Even, any relation or friends, who does that, God will reward the person because this matter involves money. Whichever way the relief comes, we thank God. I will be appreciative of whoever does that for us.”

Meanwhile, at the time of filing the report, Daily Sun discovered that the matter has not been charged to court. And, the police officer in-charge of case has not given any meaningful information concerning the position of the case.