

Services

[Back Page](#)
[Advert Rates](#)
[Online Advert Rates](#)
[Subscription](#)

News

[Home](#)
[National](#)
[Business News](#)
[Abuja Reports](#)
[Sports](#)
[Politics](#)
[Sun Girl](#)

Editorial

[Editorial Issues](#)
[Letters](#)
[Opinion](#)
[Columnists](#)

Community

[Standard Guestbook](#)
[View Guestbook](#)
[Sun Chatroom](#)

Features

[Appetit](#)
[Arts](#)
[BlockBuster](#)
[CEO Magazine](#)
[Celebrity Fashion](#)
[City Sun](#)
[Crime Watch](#)
[Covert Choice](#)
[CyberSun](#)
[Education](#)
[Enterprise](#)
[Everyday Heroes](#)
[Exquisite Property](#)
[Fashion & Celebrity](#)
[Fashion & Beauty](#)
[Favourite File](#)
[Health Magazine](#)
[How I write](#)
[Literari](#)
[Life Style](#)
[Living](#)
[Mafia Series](#)
[Man in the street](#)
[Man in the pulpit](#)
[Managing a Law Firm](#)

HUT OF DEATH

...Nursing mother kills husband for failing to meet family obligations

By NWANNE OKOYE & IFESINACHI OBI

Thursday, September 10, 2009

Residents of Iyakantan, Kuje, in Amuwo-Odofin Local Government area of Lagos State were shocked beyond words when a security man, Anthony Austin, slumped and died during a fight with his wife.



The hut. In front of the hut is a coffin for the burial of the victim

Photo: Sun News Publishing

The wife, Grace, who was said to be nursing a baby, was alleged to have hit him with an object. He died on the spot

Investigations revealed that the couple often fought over feeding allowance and lack of essential items in the house.

The matter grew worse when the couple recently had a baby and Austin's meager salary, as a security man, could no longer sustain the family.

Some neighbours, who spoke with **Daily Sun** on condition of anonymity said the couple almost converted their room to war theatre, while some people said their behaviours made them nuisance to other neighbours. Though, some of them quickly attributed this to abject poverty. This was confirmed by the reporters who visited the scene of the incident. Signs of poverty were everywhere. For instance, newspapers and other thick papers were used to cover some openings in the hut, including windows, to prevent mosquitoes, other insects and rodents from intruding.

The latest fight, which resulted in his death was said to have started when Austin could not meet his financial obligations to the family. The wife allegedly challenged him. In a feat of anger, Austin, 28, allegedly took on his wife and a fight ensued. **Daily Sun** learnt that it was at that point that the embittered Grace used an object to hit him.

And when some neighbours, who heard a strange noise in the couple's room, rushed to the scene, they found his lifeless body lying on a mattress, while Grace was still in shock.

The suspect was later arrested and handed over to policemen from Satellite Division.

She was later transferred to the State Criminal Investigations Department (SCID), Panti, Yaba, Lagos.

When **Daily Sun** visited the scene of the crime on Monday, the decomposing body of the victim was still lying in the room. Hordes of houseflies were seen in and around the hut, while a plate filled with salt was placed on his chest. Some people described it as a local embalment. A coffin was also seen outside the hut, which some people believed was to be used in burying the remains of the victim. Others said

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[Videoscope](#)
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[Sunday Sun](#)

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it was meant for conveying the body to a public mortuary.

The relatives of the victim were said to have fled the area immediately after the incident, as they were complaining of lack of money for the burial expenses.

Another reason for their fleeing the area, **Daily Sun** gathered, was to avoid police arrest.

Residents and passersby were seen complaining and covering their nostrils because of the stench emanating from the room. Those who spoke with **Daily Sun** blamed the police for failing to remove the corpse to mortuary, two days after the incident, even as they claimed that the body had been removed to a public morgue for autopsy.