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#### Couple held for killing house help

By CHRISTOPHER OJI

Friday, August 20, 2010

A couple in Lagos, yesterday, buried their faces in shame as their house helps painted a gory picture on how they allegedly killed another house help in a dehumanizing manner.

The couple, who were paraded yesterday at the Police Public Relations Office (PPRO), Ikeja, escaped being lynched by the mob who were moved by the narration of Chukwuebuka and Emmanuel.

Givng a graphic account on how the 14-year-old Sunny Oriaku was chained to death in the toilet for over four days, Chukwuebuka said: "Oriaku died without food. As he was dying, he begged for food but our madam said he should die. She said if he dies, she would only compensate the family with a token of N200,000.

"We were three house helps. We all were suffering the same fate but Oriaku was unlucky. The madam used to starve us for days. She would then chain us in the toilet for days." He revealed that the madam and her husband (names withheld) beat them up to pulp. He said on the fateful day, the madam accused Emmanuel of stealing fish from her pot of soup, but she later found out that it was Oriaku that stole the fish.

He alleged that the madam and her husband tied Oriaku hands and legs in chains. "Oriaku was begging that he was stooling but they would not have mercy on him. It was at the point of death that they bought herbal medicine prepared locally but Oriaku could not make it as he died four days later." The other house help, Emmanuel whose body was full of marks said: "As I am sitting before you, I may soon die. I had been in chains for five days in company with Oriaku."

He said they were denied food and water for days forcing them to drink their urine. According to him, the couple who he described as wicked had subjected them to serious torture and that he was forced to report to the Okota Police Station. "The police asked them to sign an undertaking that they would not torture us again, but few days they started torturing us."

He accused them of defiling his two-year-old baby. "I warned them about it. My wife used to beat them and deny them food but I did not subscribe to that, so I used to prepare food for them."

He denied killing Oriaku saying the boy died of stooling.

His wife, who claimed she was six months pregnant said she did not kill Oriaku. "I won't say I don't beat my house helps. I used to do so, but I did not kill Oriaku." Lagos State police spokesman, Mr. Frank Mba exhibited the dangerous weapons such as pestle, hammer, iron belt, plank and chain that the couple were using to torture their house helps. He warned guardians to desist from torturing their wards or house helps.

He said the police would prosecute the couple to serve as deterrent to other couples who believe in torturing their house helps. Mba, who described the couple's house as a torture camp said the house helps had been subjected to dehumanizing treatment. "They went through mental and physical torture. What the surviving two need now is rehabilitation," he said.



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