

19-year-old boy's dreams die in swimming pool

Juliana Francis

A 19-year-old boy, Joshua Bello, has allegedly drowned in a swimming pool in a residential building on Adeniyi Jones, Ikeja, Lagos State.

But his family alleged foul play after his body was fished out of the swimming pool.

The body of Bello, whose dream was to become a pilot, was said to have been found at the depth of the swimming pool in the house where he went on Saturday to grill chicken at a birthday party.

The party was allegedly marked for a Nigerian music star.

The teenager's grieving elder brother, Michael Bello, said his parents, especially his mother, had been inconsolable.

Michael said Joshua's death couldn't have been an accident.

Stating reasons for his suspicion, Michael said that the deceased's phone and money were missing after his body was discovered.

While stressing that homicide detectives attached to MAN Centre Police Station were carrying out shoddy investigation, Michael said that the police had already concluded that Joshua died while diving into the swimming pool, without even bother-

ing to carry out autopsy.

He was also not happy that the police were urging them to go and quickly bury Joshua, so that they could move on with their lives.

Another reason for his suspicion was the alleged shielding of the celebrant of the birthday party. There were also discrepancies over the time Joshua was last sighted at the party.

Michael said: "His clothes were found besides the swimming. I know my brother, he was a strong swimmer. There was no way he could have drowned or hit his head because the pool was deep. There was no diving board. The money paid to him for the grilling job was missing and his phone. Even his sneakers were not seen on the day they found his body. It was the following day that police showed us his sneakers after we asked. We don't know where they found it. Our lawyer said we should not collect it."

Recalling the genesis of Joshua's last journey, Michael said that the deceased took to grilling as a hobby, but was still very sure of going for his university degree.

The boy had already sat for his WAEC, which he scaled through at the first sitting. It was his attempts to scale through the Nigerian Air Force

examination that stopped him. He was, however, optimistic of retaking the examinations. Michael said he had to convince him to first go for engineering course, before pursuing his pilot dream. Joshua accepted.

Joshua, who is the fifth, among six children, relocated to Iju-Ishaga to live with Michael. In preparatory for the Joint Administrations and Matriculation Board (JAMB)-conducted Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), he enrolled into remedial classes.

Michael said that when Joshua was contacted by a lady identified as Yewande, residing in Ajah, to come and handle the grilling for the birthday party, he had initiated objected. He, however, bowed to Joshua's and his wife's earnest pleadings.

Michael recounted: "Joshua

was called for a grilling job; something he leant to do as a pastime and make some money for himself towards school. He left my house on October 29, about 6a.m, so that he could get to the venue on time and set up his grilling items. After expecting his return to no avail, I tried calling his line about 7p.m. I discovered the phone was switched off. I thought he had a flat battery. Throughout that night, till the next morning, I could not sleep. Joshua was not the type that would stay out without making contract.

"I was called by the police about 8a.m. on Sunday; they told me to come over; they said Joshua had been arrested. On getting there, I was told that his body was found that Sunday morning, at the bottom of the pool, in the private residential

house around Adeniyi Jones, where the party was held. Why I suspected foul play?

"According to the owner of the house, the party ended at 7:30p.m. The caterer that engaged him said he left about 8p.m. The security at the house said they saw him still grilling between 8p.m. and 8:30p.m. They claimed he went for a dive after working that night and drowned. They didn't see him till the next morning.

"But as at when he was dragged out of the water, his body wasn't floating. It was still deep beneath the pool, which was nine feet deep.

"The most painful part at the moment is that the police inspector in-charge of the case, as at yesterday, said he had already ruled out foul play, even before autopsy result is out."



Bello