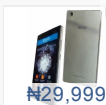


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Slain Banker Gets Justice


 Posted on Jan 24 2017 - 2:04am by **YEKEEN NURUDEEN** Reports

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The bereaved husband



The late Mrs. Okere

...As Trigger-Happy Cop Bags 12-Year Jail Term

One fateful morning in January 2011, a policeman guarding a bank shot dead a young woman who is also a banker in another bank. Six years later, the mill of justice has run its full cycle and the murderer is now to spend 12 years behind bars. YEKEEN NURUDEEN reports

Once a happy couple

When they got married on November 14, 2009, Eugene Okere and his late wife, Doris Nonye, had a lot of plans for their lives. None of them ever thought of leaving the other or

abandoning their dreams and aspirations abruptly.

In fact, if they had had a premonition of what was lurking in the corner for them, perhaps, they wouldn't have relocated to Mpape, a suburb of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). They had planned to go to their Ohekelem hometown in Ngor- Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State during the Easter celebration in April 2011 because they both had not gone home since their wedding in 2009.

They also had another plan of going home in August, but this time around to commence the construction of another building having successfully completed one in Abuja. Their joy, however, became one without a long life span: On January 31, 2011, Doris, 31, was sent to her early grave by a trigger-happy mobile policeman leaving a ninemonth- old baby behind.

The young and illustrious banker was killed exactly two weeks herself and her husband moved into their newly completed house in Mpape. Olotu Owoicho was said to have reacted angrily by firing bullets at the vehicle when the driver allegedly ignored his warning not to make a U-turn around the vicinity of the bank and the bullets from his gun instantly snuffed the life out of Doris, an incident which prompted sympathizers who besieged the bank and set it ablaze.

The late Doris was a graduate of Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa, with Higher National Diploma in Quantity Surveying. She joined the defunct Bank PHB in 2007 as part of her drive to complement her husband's efforts at sustaining the family. She was in the then Wuse Zone 1 branch of the bank.

Death by bullets

Okere, who narrated his ordeal to our reporter in an emotion laden voice, said that on that fateful day, Doris left home very early in her usual habit to beat the chaotic traffic situation around Mpape to get to her office early. But ignorant of what has befallen him, Okere, a civil servant was still at home preparing to also leave for work when his mobile phone rang. Lo and behold! It was his wife's mobile number.

Without hesitation, he picked the call but he was devastated when the caller turned out not to be his wife, rather a good Samaritan who only called to announce that his wife was dead. Confused, Okere said he rushed to the scene of the incident in front of a branch of a bank in Mpape where, according to him, he found his wife cold dead lying in her pool of blood.

He told our reporter that sympathisers around the area told him that his wife was shot dead by a Mobile policeman attached to the bank while trying to prevent the taxi driver who carried his wife from making a detour in front of the bank.

Okere said: "The murder of my wife on January 31, 2011; the story has not been different apart from what really happened that day. Immediately the thing happened as I went to the scene, I saw that it was really my wife that was killed in cold blood in a painted Abuja taxi.

In fact, when her body was taken to mortuary in the evening, I went to the Divisional Police Office to make a statement on what has happened. I proceeded to the FCT Command and also make an entry. "In fact, I was in the house when she left; she used to leave very early. She left about 7a.m. A couple of minutes after she left, her phone called.

I saw her phone ringing and I said, "Ah, did she forget anything or what has happened?" I picked the call; it was a male voice, which said: "Is this your wife, do you know the owner of the phone, the owner of the phone is dead? I said: "God forbid bad thing? Why should you crack this kind of joke?" In fact, I said it was a couple of minutes she left. I had to call back the number and the person said I have to rush down, that my wife is dead, that police has shot her." I said "what happened, any accident?" he said I should come to the bank at Mpape.

"That's how I managed to jump out. My neighbour held me and went with me to the bank. I got there. Police was shooting sporadically and every other thing.

In fact, I could not hold myself. I have to call the number that called me. Somebody came and said I should go and watch and handed the phone over to me. Up till now, I cannot even recognise the person that gave me that phone. I went there and saw my wife lying in the pool of her own blood. I held her and found out that she was dead, cold.

People now dragged me out of the scene. That's how I saw it," he narrated. "There and then, hell was let loose as angry mob invaded the bank asking for the head of the police man in question. When the man who took to his heels immediately he knew he had killed somebody, the mob touched the bank and vandalised some vehicles parked in the bank's premises."

Justice after six years

Though it appeared to the husband of the slain banker that his wife has been denied justice, his hope of getting at least punishment for the killer of his heartthrob was finally restored by

Justice Silvanus C. Oriji of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court.

The court sitting at Apo District, Abuja, last week, sentenced the Police officer, Owoicho, who was responsible for the death of Doris, to 12 years imprisonment.

The judge delivered the verdict almost six years after late Mrs. Okere was hit by a bullet released from an AK47 in the hands of Owoicho, when he was attached to the Mpape branch of the bank.

He was of the Squadron 44, and the chief security officer in charge of all security operatives in the bank, Owoicho, father of four children, was arraigned on June 28, 2011, on two-count charge of culpable homicide punishable with death and also causing grievous injury by reckless use of firm arm.

He pleaded not guilty to the charges preferred against him. Owoicho's counsel, Noah Imoni, urged the court to temper justice with mercy as he had been in prison custody since December 31, 2011 when the incident occurred.

However, the court convicted Owoicho, for the offence of culpable homicide (manslaughter) which is not punishable with death contrary to section 222 (7) of the Penal Code punishable under section 224 thereof, which prescribed life imprisonment or lesser term.

Also, the judge found the convict not guilty of culpable homicide punishable with death, as the prosecution had, during the trial, failed to establish that he intended to cause the death of the deceased. The judge,, however, sentenced Owoicho for the term of 12 years, running retrospectively from June 28, 2011.

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About the Author

