

Horror: Enraged Lover Sends

It could only have happened in horror movies, considering the fact that they were husband and wife. Unfortunately, it is a true-life story and never one of such, since Edwin's corpse is still lying in the morgue of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Idi-Araba, Lagos.

Eugene Agha writes on the plot by a housewife that organised acid bath for her husband

Edwin Ifoghale Eroveno, aged 39 and father of one, never knew that danger lurked around the corner on Sunday, August 19, as he entered his Ijegan-Egba, a shanty community in Lagos residence from work. He had earlier planned to handover the day's earnings to his wife, Uyoyo, before asking for his dinner.

This was borne out of the fact that, before he left home that fateful day in his weather-beaten Volkswagen bus, there was nothing at home. Worried by the fact that the next day, being Monday, there might be nothing which members of his family would survive on, he had planned to do just that.

But as they say, 'man proposes and God disposes' as he was unable to achieve his plan. His cousin, Maxwell Enakeno, an undergraduate of the University of Benin, (UNIBEN), Edo State, who had been a long time lover of Edwin's wife emptied a five litre can of acid on him.

Though, the police at the State Criminal Investigations Department (SCID), Panti Street, Yaba, are still battling to unravel the circumstances surrounding the crime, the assailant is presently at large. The deceased's wife, Uyoyo, is presently telling the police all she knew about her husband's death.

Meanwhile, the deceased was rushed, first to the Nigerian Navy Hospital, Ojo, few minutes after some neighbours discovered him. He later died the following day, Monday, August 20, at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Idi-Araba, as a result of the second degree burns, which he sustained following the acid that was poured on him by his uncle's son.

Even though, his wife of five years is presently being detained at the State Criminal Investigations Department, Panti Street, Yaba, crack detectives are still looking for Maxwell, who bolted away as soon as he accomplished his mission.

However, both family and friends are still unable to come to terms with the gruesome murder, but the only clue that was left for the police team to work with to be able to unravel the crime, was that both Maxwell and Uyoyo had been long time lovers, even before Edwin got married to her.

Sources said that, while Uyoyo remained married to Edwin, she was still in love with Maxwell, an action which, a close family member said created strained relationship between the two brothers. Maxwell's father told THISDAY, that on several occasions he had tried to make his son see reason why he should desist from what he was doing, but that all pleas fell on deaf ears.

An uncle to Edwin who simply identified himself as Jeff told THISDAY that Maxwell was alleged to have visited his lover at home on different occasions when the husband was away at work. And that each time he visited, he visited under the guise of going to see his cousin. "Neighbors paid no more attention to this unholy visit since they believed that Maxwell was in the house based on the invitation of his brother. So when he came visiting on that fateful

day, nobody had any premonition that the visit was to end the life of his brother", Jeff added.

Narrating how his nephew was cruelly murdered, Jeff stated that on that fateful day, as Edwin approached his one room apartment located at No 10, Erole Street, Ijegan Egba, Maxwell, whom he claimed did not give Edwin any chance to defend himself poured acid on his brother before he finally took to his heels.

According to Jeff, it was the shrill noise which Edwin made as a result of the agony and pains from the acid injury that attracted Mrs. Veronica Oneke, a mother of four, to the scene.

"Veronica, who is also from Iyede, in Delta State, fell into the pool of acid as she attempted to lift the deceased from where he laid, wriggling in pains. She initially thought that the dark stains on Edwin's body were mud. She also sustained minor acid burns following the fact that some women who were around at the time of the incidence struggled to remove all the clothes which Vero, as she is fondly call, had on", he said.

Jeff further said that, though, family members and some friends have all tried in the past to make the deceased see reasons why he should abandon his wife based on her atrocious behaviours, the deceased had severally kicked against such ideas. The reasons he adduced were that it was unholy to divorce a wife simply because she has been misbehaving.

He explained that on so many occasions, Edwin had been able to convince members of his family that they should give his wife some time for her to change. "He would not also want to divorce his wife for the love which he has for his two-year old son whom he claimed, was too young to be separated from the mother.

"Edwin stayed with me when he came to Lagos and while he was staying with me he was filled with a lot of ideas of what his future would be. He wanted a humble home where he would return to at the end of the day's work. He once told me that he would want to be a caring husband and father to his children. But all that now he can no longer accomplish as his life has been cut short by a brother who so much wanted to take over his property", he added.

He said that he visited the deceased in the hospital that fateful Sunday when the news of the incidence got to him and that by the time he got to LUTH, the deceased had gone blind as a result of the acid burns he sustained in his eyes.

"I was moved to tears when I first sighted Edwin on his hospital bed, that Sunday night. Infact he was fast losing his memory as at the time I spoke with him last and all he could say was that he was killed by Maxwell", he stated.

Jeff, who told THISDAY that he was still figuring out what went wrong and why would a brother go as far as killing his brother, stated that he once heard rumours that Uyoyo has been meeting with Maxwell in Benin, Edo State and that on one occasion when she claimed to have traveled to Delta State, she was actually with Maxwell for about four months before she eventually went to the village to avoid anybody suspecting her movement.



•Edwin and his wife on their wedding day

According to him, the information got to the deceased before she came back from the unholy trip and when she was confronted, she eventually went to stay with one of her uncles, who lives in Ikotun area of Lagos.

Thinking that her leaving the house would end the relationship, he said that Edwin went behind members of his family to reconcile with his wife, an action which members of his family kicked against.

While neighbours battled to save the life of Edwin, Jeff said all that escaped from Edwin's mouth was that 'Maxwell, so you eventually succeeded in killing me, after threatening to do so.'

Some neighbours who spoke to THISDAY under the condition of anonymity alleged that they recovered from the spot an empty coastward can and a pair of hand gloves which they said Maxwell wore before embarking on his deadly mission.

For some neighbours, Maxwell's action could be regarded as a man who is possessed by a demon. They could not comprehend the fact that a man could pour a container filled with acid on his brother simply because he wanted to take over his wife at all costs. They said, even though he conceived the idea or he had been nursing the thought of taking over his brothers wife, such an action, could no longer be achieved since the police has taken over the matter.

Some neighbours who described Edwin as gentle and easy-going wondered what could have happened. According to them, they were happy when Edwin introduced Uyoyo as his wife some five years ago.

"We were at home preparing to go to bed when we heard the cry. Some of us tried to ascertain where the noise was coming from before we go out, you know how Lagos is. But by the time we went out, it was Edwin who was wriggling in pains" some of the neighbours narrated.

They said that they never expected that any-

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Cousin to Grave with Acid



•Vero, who went to rescue Edwin and eventually got herself burnt on her sick bed

body would want to harm Edwin that fateful day since he earlier went to church with members of his family and that some of them were still at home when he went out in his bus to look for money.

"We could not comprehend the sight, because there, lying by his side as at the time we arrived the scene was a woman who had gone to rescue him, but was also wriggling in pains. We eventually overcame our fears when it finally dawned on us that he might die right before our eyes before any help could come" they added.

The neighbours recounted how they were turned back at the Nigerian Navy Hospital, Ojo and how they eventually ended up at LUTH.

"It was not pleasant", one of the neighbours said. "When we arrived LUTH we were referred to the emergency unit of the hospital from where he was later sent to one of the wards. You know how government thing works, the bureaucracy of getting hospital card and being turned from one place to the other almost frustrated some of us, but we were kept going because right before us, Edwin was dying slowly", they added.

But for Maxwell's father, Mr. Patrick Ugwe, a security guard at the National Theatre, the thought that his son killed his uncle's son was a terrible one.

Ugwe who spoke with THISDAY on phone described the action of his son as devilish. He explained that somebody who is possessed by a demon could only embark on such an act.

"Since I heard of the death of my brother's son and that the police had gone in search of him, my life has never remained the same. I will never live with the thought that my son killed my brother's son because he wanted to take over his brother's wife", he told THISDAY amidst sobs.

Pa Ugwe said the Police at the SCID, believe that there was a strong connivance between Edwin's wife and Maxwell, and that was the reason she is being detained.

According to the police, the scenario could be pointed from some of the facts which they have been able to collect. First, it is a statement of fact that Maxwell and Uyoyo were lovers ever before she got married to the deceased. And that it was established that both lovers have been holding secret meetings in Benin and Lagos.

Secondly, that Maxwell and the deceased had series of quarrels over Uyoyo and that she was alleged to have gone to stay in Benin for a period of four months and was also alleged to have gone to stay with an uncle of hers after she came back from Benin.

'She came back to stay with his husband after both of them were reconciled' a police source at SCID said.

A police officer at the homicide section of SCID where the matter is being treated said it was a clear case of murder. Though, the wife of the deceased may be treated as an accomplice in the whole matter but may likely face the offence of murder if the killer is not found.

But how soon would the matter be dispensed with by the police is a matter of time as the officer claimed that the father of the assailant have been invited by the police and that he had

made statement as regard all he knew about his son's relationship with the deceased and his wife.

Even though, the father of the assailant has no case to answer with the police, the officer said the man will also help the police team in their quest to get to the root of the crime

An uncle to the deceased alleged that Edwin was blind following the injuries sustained after the acid bath. He was said to have lost consciousness even before he was confirmed dead by doctors at about 11.30pm, Monday, August 20th, 2007.

"The baffling aspect of the whole thing is that the wife of the deceased never informed her in-laws when the incident occurred but was seen at Satellite Police Station two days after the incident, where she had gone to make entry", the deceased uncle alleged.

He told THISDAY that sometime ago, the deceased was alleged to have stumbled into a note purportedly written by his wife to Maxwell confessing her undying love for Maxwell. In the letter, she was alleged to have asked Maxwell the reason why he left her in the hands of a stranger.

At LUTH, the post-mortem conducted on the deceased showed that he died as a result of acid burnt.

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