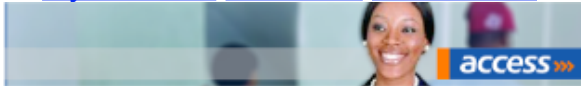


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Suspects: How We Tortured, Killed General's Daughter

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Cynthia Udoka Osokogu

Chiemelie Ezeobi

The gory details of how 24-year-old Cynthia Osokogu, the only daughter of Maj.-Gen. Frank Osokogu (rtd) and his wife, Joy, met her death in Lagos emerged Wednesday as the police paraded two suspects for her murder.

On parade were two undergraduates, Okwuoma Echezona Nwabufu and Ezekiel Odera Ilechukwu Olisa, both maternal cousins, who masterminded Cynthia's killing in a Lagos

hotel room.

The police brought them before journalists at the Lagos State Police Command, Ikeja, to give account of how they lured her from her Nasarawa State base and subsequently killed her.

Unknown to Cynthia, the offer by Nwabuofo and Olisa to supply her clothing items for her boutique, 'Dress Code,' which prompted her July 22 trip to Lagos, was a decoy for a more sinister plot.

The suspects, who met their victim on a Blackberry Messenger Group and had presented themselves to her as businessmen when they met, were alleged to have tied Cynthia up and sexually molested her, before she was finally murdered in a FESTAC Town hotel.

Their story was cold and bizarre. They told a stunned audience how they hatched the plan to lure Cynthia to Lagos and how they tortured and eventually strangled her to death.

The duo had hatched what they considered a foolproof plot and had executed it with clinical precision. Every detail of the plot was well thought out, right from booking a hotel room, to drugging her and dispossessing her of her valuables.

To facilitate their crime, they injected Rohypnol, a drug used on women which makes them dizzy and wipes out their memory after sex, into a pack of Ribena drink that they gave her.

In his confession, 33-year-old Nwabuofo, a 300-level Accounting student of the University of Lagos (UNILAG), and mastermind of the dastardly act, said Cynthia's death was a mistake as they did not plan to kill her.

According to him, "We first met on the internet and later when she said she wanted to come to Lagos to shop, I invited her and we accidentally killed her in Concilla Hotel. We thought she had plenty of money that I could collect; so, while she was struggling, I tied her with a chain and sellotaped her lips to prevent her from shouting."

From his confession, even with the sellotape on her lips, they feared she could still shout and so pressed down her throat for some time until she choked to death. He also confessed that they beat her up before she died.

While there were indications that the deceased was raped as the police found some used condoms in the room, Nwabuofo denied that she was sexually abused. Rather, he said the condom was used on a sex toy the deceased allegedly brought with her.

However, he could not explain why they would use a condom on the prototype of a male organ, as sex toys do not produce semen.

He said: "The condom that was found in the room was not used on her but was used on the sex toy she had with her. I inserted the condom on the sex toy, and used it on her and later dropped it there. I didn't sleep with her. If the police test the condom forensically, it will vindicate me."

While blaming the devil for their evil actions, he said they ran because they suddenly realised that they committed a serious sin against the deceased.

Disclosing their modus operandi, he said the drug put inside the Ribena drink was bought by Olisa and was injected into the drink, but it was not strong enough as she still had the strength to struggle.

Further implicating himself, he said: "Although this is my first time in a murder, I have used the drugs like four times before Cynthia but none of the girls died. In other cases, I slept with them and after they took the drink, they would suffer memory loss of everything that happened to them. I have used hotels like Benny, Chelsea, Opera-Mini." Narrating his involvement in the incident, Olisa, also a 300-level student of Accounting in Anambra State University, Igbariam Campus, said he was invited by Nwabufo to help him dispossess the deceased of her valuables.

"He said I should buy Ribena and Rohypnol, which I did. I injected about 10 tablets into the drink. In the process of binding the girl, she tried to struggle, and we maltreated and rough handled her and she passed out in the process. But I didn't hit her with anything.

"After we had manhandled her, Nwabufo told me that she had stopped breathing but when I touched her she was still breathing. Then I left the hotel. Later, he called me to say that he had not heard from her for a long time and had not seen her online. I was in school when they came on Sunday and arrested me," he said.

THISDAY gathered that the suspects were arrested when the police obtained the deceased's call log and successfully contacted Olisa's girlfriend who then aided in arresting him in Anambra State. Olisa in turn, implicated Nwabufo whose attempt to escape through the ceiling of his home, was aborted by the police.

The items recovered from the suspects include: seven driver's licences (three belonging to Olisa and the others bearing different names to Nwabufo); the deceased's belongings, including her shoes found in Nwabufo's house; 17 mobile phones, two Diamond Bank rubber stamps, two syringes, a pack of Ribena, 22 SIM cards, a chain as well as 12 debit and credit cards.

However, the state Commissioner of Police, Umar Manko, debunked insinuations that the police did not conduct a thorough investigation into the incident.

According to him, the only lead they had when the incident occurred was a call from an unknown person who called the receptionist of the hotel to say that they should go and remove the dead body of the 'bastard' from the room. This made the hotel management to break into the room where they found Cynthia's body. But they could not identify her as her assailants had taken away all documents or items to assist in her identification.

Manko said the police had to trace the killers through the phone number that called the receptionist, until they got her passport number from the internet. He said armed with that, they went through the Nigerian Immigration Service to establish her identity.

Manko said the police began arrest after watching the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) footage which showed two young men with the deceased.

He said the police during investigation were able to link the phone number with one of the men found on the CCTV.

He said: "The duo injected Rohypnol drug inside her drink but were disappointed when they searched her for money and did not find much. They struggled with her before she died in the process."

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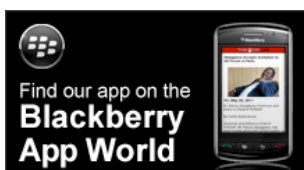
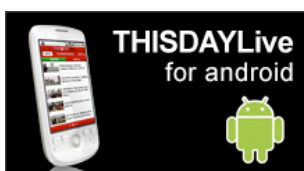
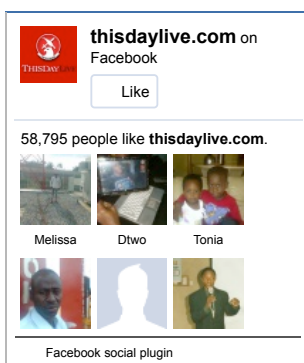
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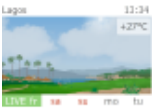
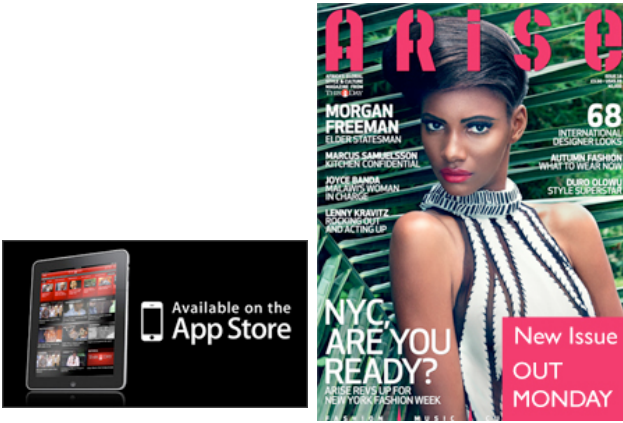
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