

STORY THAT TOUCHES THE HEART

By Gabriel Enoghase

They broke in, axed me in the head, and shot my wife of 17 years to death

● *Tearful Deacon Ighalo alleges assassins, not robbers killed his wife*

Deacon Ighalo recalled that in October 2003, a mysterious fire razed down his house and destroyed his properties. He added that with the encouragement of his neighbours, he was able to re-build the house.

When asked if he had been robbed before, he claimed that before recent incident, some hoodlums had broken into the house while they were attending a church service and took away only GSM handsets.

Asked on what he thought about the recent robbery incident, he said that the hoodlums that came to kill his wife did not remove anything apart from GSM handsets and his licensed double barrel gun.

"In my opinion, they are assassins because they did not ask for money or any valuables. My wife had some problems with some landlords in the area over something that has to do with the environment. But for now, I reserve my comments.

On whether he suspected anybody, person or group of persons for the murder of his wife, he simply said: "As at now, I leave everything to God. I know that God's eyes oversee everything that happens on planet earth.

On his wife he said: "She was everything to me. I believed half of me has gone. She has been my inspiration and encourages me in everything that I put my hand into. She loved to see me making progress. She loved me as much as her children. She was a mother indeed, a mother that can manage when there is no money without grumbling. We had been married for seventeen years with five children, a boy and four girls."

What will life be after this? Deacon Ighalo, shakes his head said, as at the moment, I am aggrieved and I am trusting in God to give me a new sense of direction to follow. I enjoin all Christians all over the world to pray for me and pray that whoever are the perpetrators of this evil should be exposed.

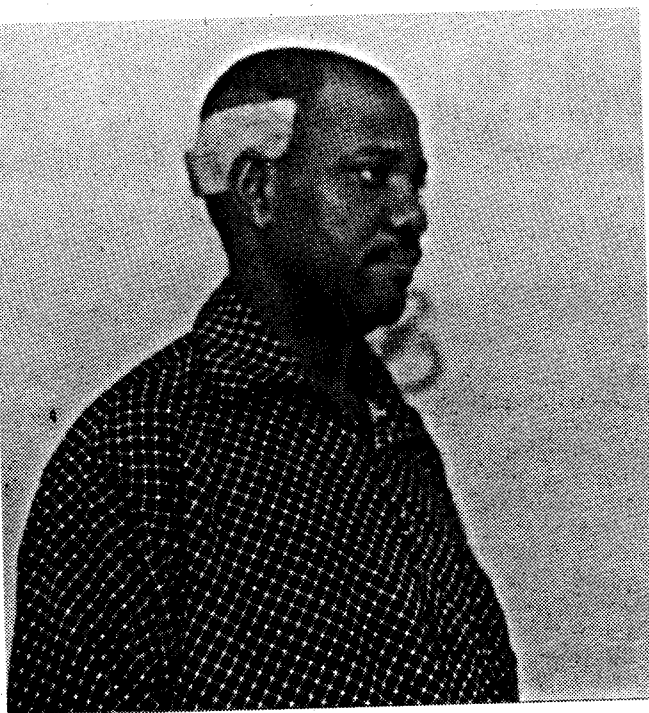
WHEN Deacon Minister Ighalo and his wife Doris, said good night to each other on that fateful day, Wednesday, the 17 July 2006, they had no premonition that death lurked within their household. About 3.a.m. death came calling on Doris, Deacon Ighalo's wife through the hot bullets fired from the guns of an armed robbery gang that attacked the Ighalo household in the wee hours of the day at their residence located at Oluku, on the outskirts of Benin-City.

With tears flowing freely from his eyes, Deacon Ighalo who is of the New Covenant Gospel Church, told *Saturday Vanguard* that in the night that fateful day, his late wife came to wake him up to alert him that some unknown people were cutting the burglary proof in the windows of their sitting room.

"So I immediately got up as I got that information and rushed towards the sitting room to ascertain if what my wife had said was true. As soon as I got to the sitting room, I opened the curtains and I did not know that they had already gained entrance into the sitting room. About three young men wearing black attire were already there, waiting for my next move. My wife was behind me.

"Sensing that we have known that they were already in the house, they became tense and remained still. But as soon as we made to step backwards into the corridor leading to our bed rooms, their gang leader ordered: fire, attack them, attack and destroy them. What followed next was a sudden burst of gunfire and we quickly made for the door leading to the bedrooms. But unknown to me they had already cut the burglary protector in the main door and broken the key, so this gave them the room to beckon on their colleagues to join them."

He said that while he was



● Deacon Ighalo



● Late Mrs Doris Ighalo

struggling with the hoodlums, another gunshot rang out through the door, and hit his wife of seventeen years in the chest. She left for her room immediately without informing him. Meanwhile, Deacon Ighalo lamented that he was dragged here and there by the robbers who used a battle axe to break his head to forcibly remove from his hand the double barrel gun he was holding.

"So while we were dragging here and there, they struck my head with a battle axe and I fell down. I was battered all over my body and eventually they succeeded in taking the gun

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from my hand and ran out of the house. It was when they left that I found my voice and started shouting, thief, thief, thief to alert neighbours who came in to rescue us.

"What I never knew was that when my wife was shot,

she ran into my bedroom and bolted the door so that the armed hoodlums would not reach her. So, when my neighbours found the door locked, they removed it by force and saw my wife lying lifeless on the floor. I then came in to behold her lifeless body sprawling on the floor.

"I felt we could still do something and we took her to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) in my vehicle where she was confirmed dead by the doctor. I was also admitted in the hospital and even as I speak with you now, I am still on drugs."