



By Albert Akpor

FOR the Ekojikoko family, the gruesome murder of their bread winner, Chief Happy Ekojikoko in his own guest house by yet-to-be known assassins is nothing short of sun setting at dawn. And to say that the sudden demise of the 47-year-old Eku, Ethiope East Local Government Area-born businessman and father of four has created a vacuum that may never be filled would amount to an understatement. Though he died like a warrior in a battle field, having dispossessed one of the assailants of his gun, his death is still a nightmare to both his immediate and extended families. And one person who will want the killer of Chief Ekojikoko to face the music is his immediate elder brother, Mr. Freeborn Ekojikoko. To him, "My younger brother started showing traits of self-dependence right from secondary school days when we would go out into the bush to hunt rabbit. He would hunt alone but at the end of the day, he would

Black April for Ekojikoko family! Bread winner, son-in-law murdered in cold blood

•*He saw his death coming says elder brother*
•*Police IG orders full probe*

want everybody to partake in his booty. So, when he left higher school and made it almost immediately even when most his mates were still under their parents, it did not come as a surprise to me. He is the bread winner of our family and even beyond. But one painful aspect of his death is that he saw it coming. We wanted to fly him abroad when it became clear that his life was being constantly threatened. But he said, if I leave now who will I leave all this mansions for to manage. He would call me from time to time that if he eventually dies, we should hold one CY responsible. So true to what he foresaw, the guest house which incidentally took his life was the reward of his hard labour."

Though the Inspector-General of Police IGP Mike Okiro had long ordered full probe of the death of Chief Happy, Mr. Freeborn want the police to do more than just lip service. "If they actually want to get to the root of the death of my brother, let them invite his personal lawyer whom he called moments after he was shot. His personal lawyer is the brother to the man who leased the guest house which is now at the center of the controversy leading to the death of my brother.

"Surprisingly, a day after my brother died, the lawyer who was lodging in the same guest house (AMA HOUSE 1) left the country; fueling speculation that he knew more about his client's death."

Narrating what may have led to the assassination of his brother, Mr. Freeborn said, "From the much I know, my brother built two guest houses on 156, Prince Ade Odedina street, Victoria Island, Lagos. He leased one of the

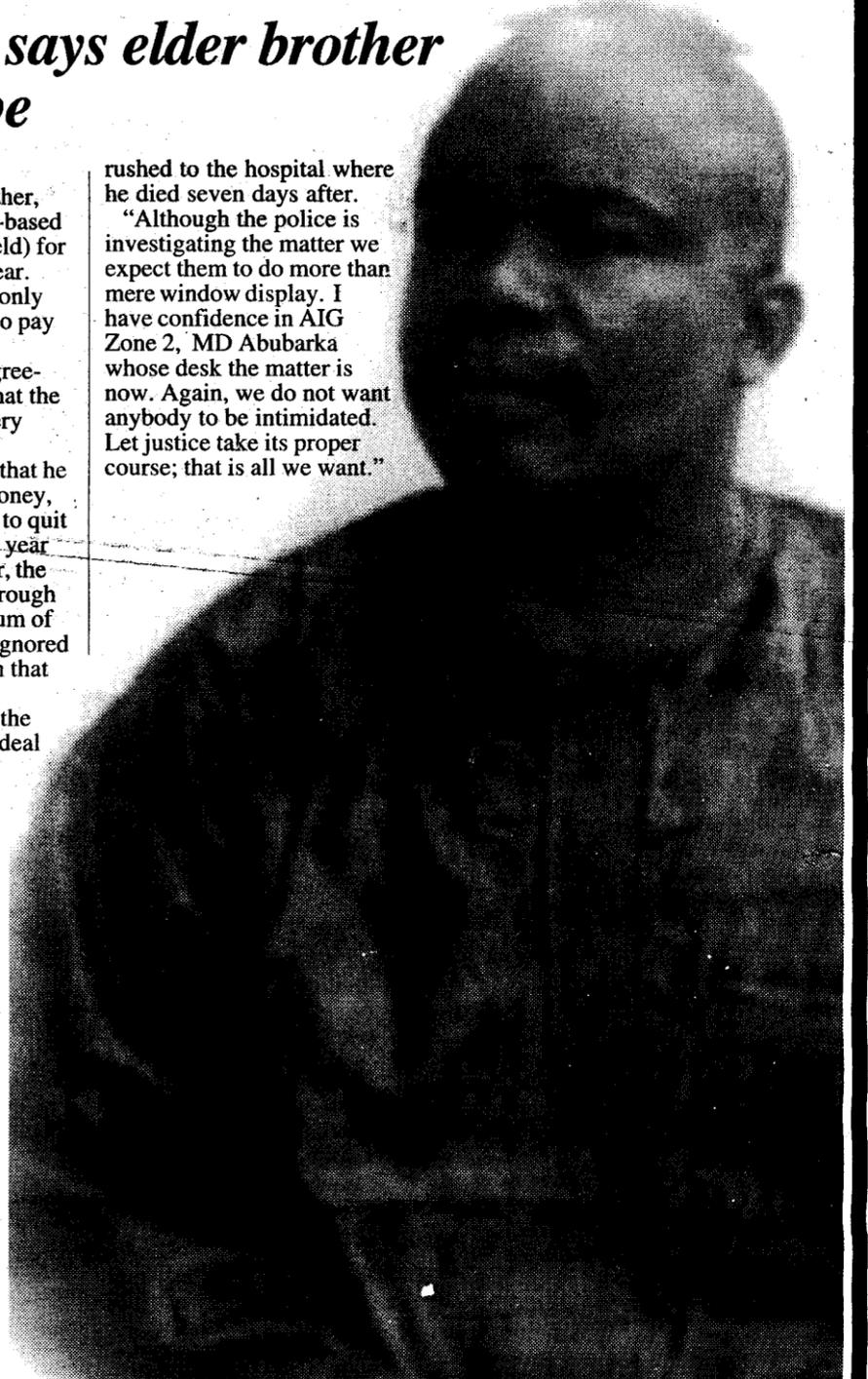
houses named after our mother, AMA HOUSE 1 to a Lagos-based businessman (names withheld) for a total sum of N16.8m per year. The said businessman was only able to pay N9m but failed to pay the balance despite several demands and against the agreement which stated clearly that the lessee shall pay N16.8m every three years.

"So when it became clear that he could not pay the agreed money, my brother gave him notice to quit the property September last year 2007. On receipt of the letter, the bizman wrote my brother through his lawyer demanding the sum of N12m refund. But this was ignored by our brother who told him that he breached the terms of agreement. It was then that the businessman threatened to deal with my brother should he make good his intension to take possession of his property. So it was on the night of April 4, 2008 that a group of about five assassins stormed the bedroom at AMA HOUSE 2 on number 8, Adepite close Victoria Island and shot him point blank."

Continuing, Mr. Freeborn said, "One interesting aspect of the whole thing is that my brother was able to disarm one of the assailants and the rifle we recovered was later discovered to be a police gun. So while he was trying to lock up the burglary proof with his in-law, others came up and released several shots into the bedroom. The brother-in-law died on the spot while my brother was

rushed to the hospital where he died seven days after.

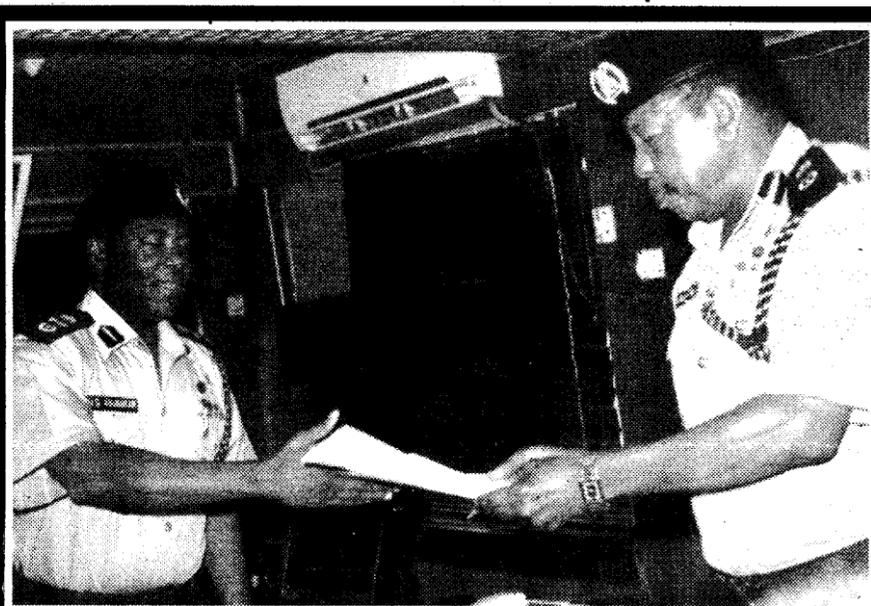
"Although the police is investigating the matter we expect them to do more than mere window display. I have confidence in AIG Zone 2, MD Abubarka whose desk the matter is now. Again, we do not want anybody to be intimidated. Let justice take its proper course; that is all we want."



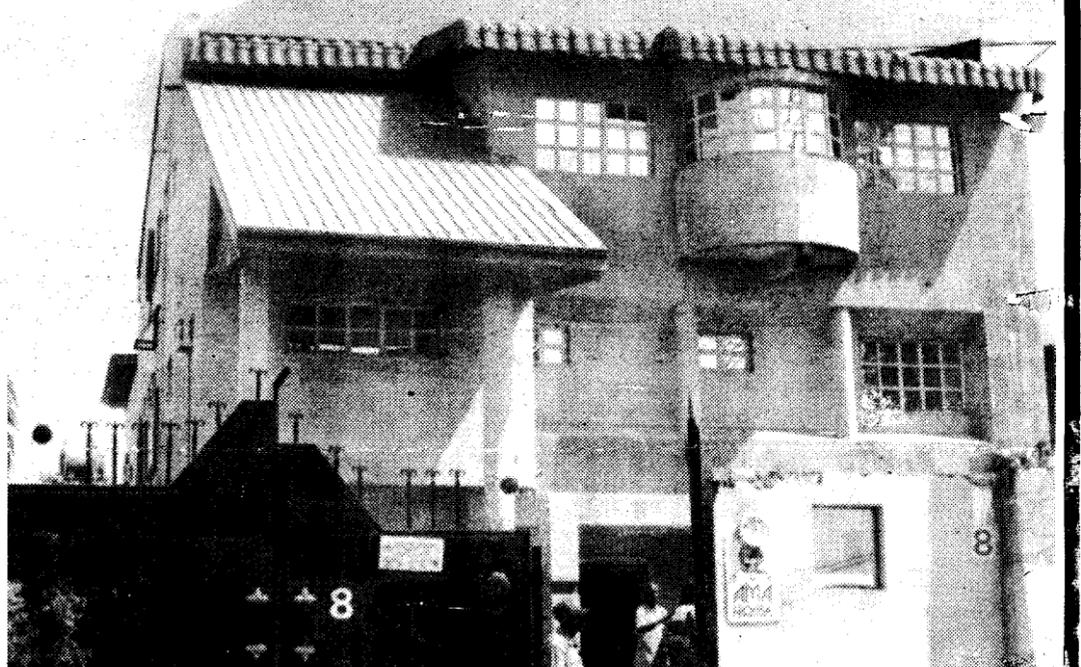
•Chief Happy Ekojikoko murdered in cold blood



•Mr. Jeremiah Joseph, brother-in-law to Ekojikoko family murdered with Chief Happy



•HANDING OVER CEREMONY...Former CP, Lagos State Mr MD Abubakar who was recently elevated to AIG Zone II handing over to the new CP, Lagos State, Mr Audu Abubakar.



•The guest house (AMA House 2) where the duo were murdered.