

Just Human

We live in a strange world

Lightening kills 20-yr-old under-graduate in a rice farm

By Peter Duru

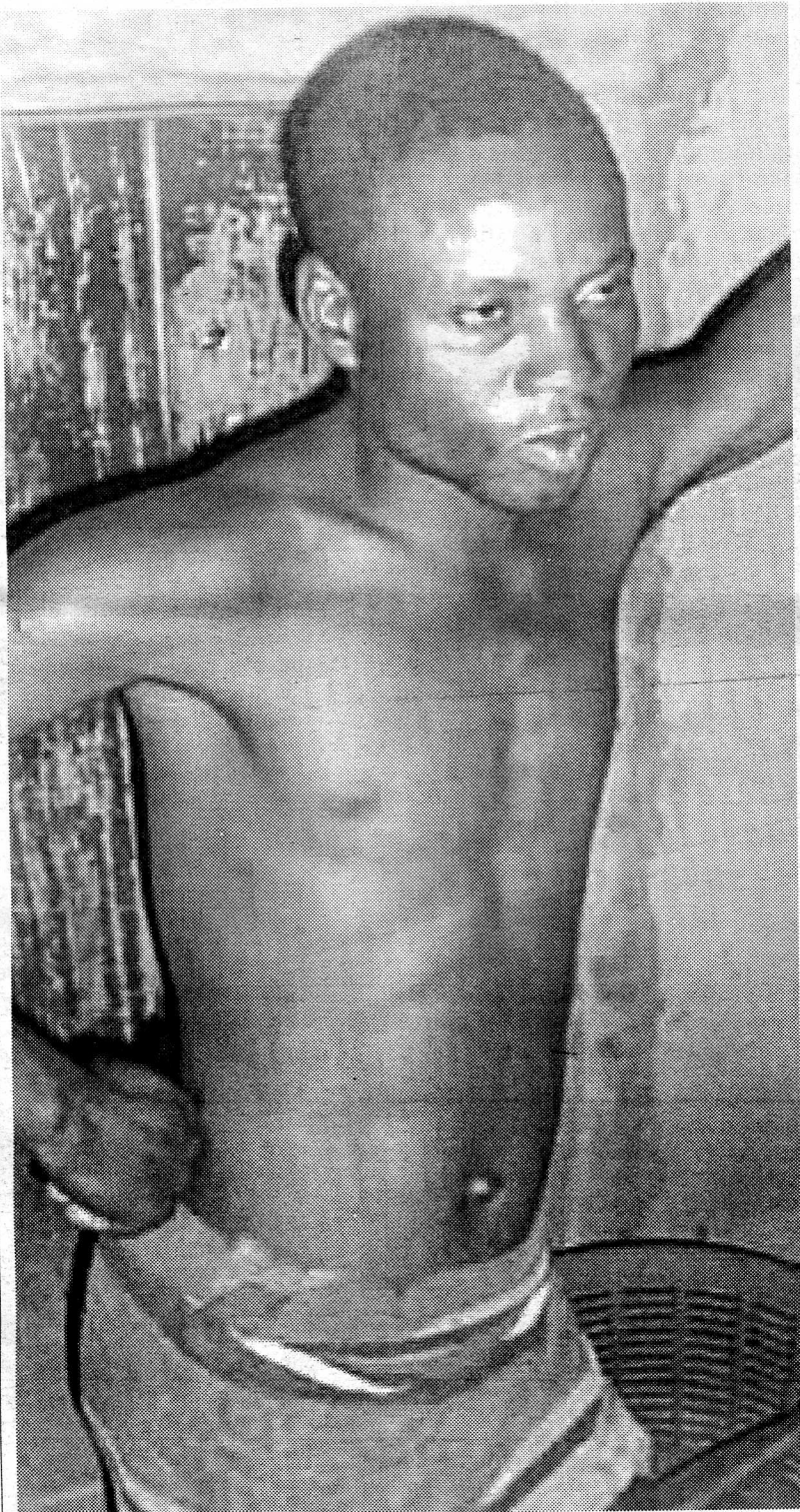
THAT the cold arm of death snuffed live out of a young man could not the least be astonishing, but what has left a good number of the residents of Asase village, a swampy settlement in the outskirts of Makurdi town in stifling shock is the rather bizarre violent manner the young undergraduate met his untimely death in the middle of a rice farm.

Shachia Iorember, a twenty year old Political Science student of the College of Education Oju, was struck dead by thunder preceding a heavy down pour, in a rice farm where he had accompanied his elder sister to mount scare crows to ward off birds from infesting the family's rice farm.

He was one of the people struck by the lightening in Makurdi that particular day our investigations revealed, but the middle aged woman who was also a victim was said to have escaped death by the whiskers and today she is alive to tell her stories, but late Shachia was not so lucky as he was confirmed dead when help got his way.

When *Saturday Vanguard* visited the community that is yet to recover from what they described as the most mysterious death ever to be recorded in the shanty settlement that could hardly boast of any form of social amenity despite being a stone throw from the centre of the Benue State capital, the elder sister of the deceased Mrs. Victoria Akuma who is still in a pensive mood managed to recount the horror.

According to her, her sibling had visited her home that faithful morning and she felt it was an opportunity for her to exploit the extra hand to work on her rice farm



Shachia Iorember: Killed by thunder

which is not quite a distance from her residence.

She stressed that in recent times herds of birds had consistently ravaged the large expanse of rice farm from where she earns her living and the presence of her younger brother who was also knowledgeable in pest control offered her a much more greater opportunity to arrest the infestation, but the expedition turned out a nightmarish experience that has left an indelible scare on her psyche. It turned out to be a fatal expedition.

As Mrs. Akuma sobbed uncontrollably, she still managed to narrate the heart breaking story "we were working on the farmer

when it started drizzling and we decided to take cover in a building at the farm waiting for the rains to subside".

"But as if my brother had a premonition of an impending tragedy, he suggested that we should leave the farm and return home immediately and I complied. But as we stepped out from our cover, thunder accompanied by lightening struck pulling down trees destroying all electrical appliances within the vicinity. The thunder was so forceful that it lifted my brother off the ground and fell hard on the hard surface, she offered in tears.

The bereaved woman stressed that in the midst of the confusion,



*Tree uprooted by thunder



Victoria Akuma: Sister of the deceased

she tried to scamper to safety with her brother, but only realized that her sibling could not move from the spot where he fell and on getting close to yank him away, she discovered that he couldn't move. She tried to shake him to life all to no avail. She said that the reality hit her when she discovered that his limbs were stiff which showed that the enterprising young man that was full of life a minute ago had given up the ghost.

But still convinced that it was true, she raised an alarm for help in order to take the young man to a nearby hospital were according to her, he was eventually confirmed dead. "I still believe it is all but a dream, how can a young man so full of life and prospect just die so mysteriously and you want me to assume this is not a dream", she asked

Corroborating the regrettable tale an eye witness and member of the community who resides at the farm house, Mr. Terhamba Origbo told *Saturday Vanguard* that he lost his electrical appliances to the rumble that also tore parts of the building.

Terhamba stressed that he was taking his bath when the thunder blast accompanied by lightening came crushing anything in sight in the vicinity including plants and human, but he escaped by the whiskers as the lightening flashed through him and headed for the building, it passed through it and

in a twinkling pulled through the small house and headed for the late Shachia where he had taken cover in order not to be soaked by the rain.

According to the eye witness, the late political science student was struck brutally on the ground by the force that accompanied the blast and he lay cold dead almost instantly.

He stressed that when the incident occurred, the deceased was immediately rushed to a hospital located behind the Benue State Civil Service Commission, where the medical doctor on duty confirmed him dead.

Meanwhile the remains of the deceased has been deposited at the Federal Medical Centre morgue by his in-law, a Police Sergeant, who said the mystery of the cause of death of his brother-in-law has completely undermined his wife's psyche.

"An my pain is the fact that my in-law paid me a visit only to be hacked down so mysteriously by the cold arms of death in a somewhat bizarre manner, that is the pain I must now live with all my life", the Police officer offered in grief. He said he has already concluded arrangements for his burial that will take place at Anshwa village in Mbalom, Yonov area of Gwer Local Government Area of the state.

Prying further, *Saturday Vanguard* was told that incidents of this kind sometimes go beyond the physical and the comprehension of ordinary mind.

According Tordue Shie such unpleasant incidents could be attributed to witchcraft and voodoo given the part of Benue State the young man hailed from.

"The rate at which young budding men die mysteriously has left everyone living in fear because it is no more a secret that the level of witchcraft practice in our communities is giving every sane man cause to worry and one cannot for sure rule out that possibility in the death of this young man; it only an assumption but I think it is high time our families got closer to God because no one can tell", Tordue said.

But when confronted with the insinuation, Late Shachia's in-law could only mutter "the young man had no problems with anyone and I do not know why anyone will want to do that to him but God knows best", he said as he fought back tears.

It is no more a secret that the level of witchcraft practice in our communities is giving every sane man cause to worry and one cannot for sure rule out that possibility in the death of this young man