

# thegallery

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## Death in car boot

### ....The horrifying killing of a Dep Gov's aide

BY CHIDI NKWOPARA

Imo State is becoming increasingly unsafe. Criminals perpetrate their sordid activities at will. People hardly sleep with their two eyes closed. Hypertension is becoming a major health problem in the state because everybody is apprehensive about who will be the next victim of kidnappers or assassins.

Even those who move about with armed security personnel are not safe. The near sordid tale of the former Speaker of Imo State House of Assembly, Chief Godfrey Dikeocha, tells the story of how lax security in the state is.

Dikeocha was kidnapped by hoodlums from his Uvuru Mbaise country home and held in captivity for months before he was released by his captors. His release did not come until the royal fathers in Mbaise came together, invoked the spirits of their ancestors and pronounced curses on whosoever was keeping the former lawmaker. Some two days after, Dikeocha was freed.

Similarly, the Principal Secretary to Imo State Deputy Governor, Mr. Emenike Ihekwoaba, an architect, was kidnapped more than five months ago. He was still in captivity at press time, despite the payment of ransom by the man's family. Fears are being expressed about his safety.

The fears about Ihekwoaba are genuine because many families of kidnap victims paid ransom to supposed kidnappers only to learn later that their loved ones had been murdered before the demand for ransom.

There are equally cases of assassination in the state. Some are unresolved. The latest is the murder of the Imo State Deputy Governor's Protocol Officer, Mr. Laz Anyanwu. Reports say some hoodlums stormed his residence in the night of penultimate Friday and was declared missing Saturday, January 12.

According to the first information report, the first thing the hoodlums did on arrival was to shoot Anyanwu's



#### *\*Anyawu...riddle over murder*

two Alsatian dogs in his compound. It was gathered that Laz, as close friends loved to call him, was shocked to hear gunshots in the compound and came out to find out what it was. The hoodlums immediately pounced on him and took him away.

Another version of the story had it that on his arrival at home, he noticed some strange movements and immediately released his Alsatian dogs. But the visitors turned violent and shot the two dogs in his presence.

Apparently satisfied that their major obstacle had been taken care, they went after Laz, put him in the boot of his own car and sped off. His agony and eventual death started from this point.

Sunday Vanguard gathered that when the vehicle was recovered the next day, the inside was littered with blood and this generated fear about his safety. His mutilated body was later found at Orodo, Mbaitoli local council area of Imo State.

Reacting to this gory incident, the Deputy Governor, Sir Jude Agbaso, described Laz as "a dear friend and very close to my heart", adding

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that "besides being my Director of Protocol, he was probably the best protocol person in this state".

Continuing, Agbaso said: "His death represents an irreparable loss to me, my family, office and state. I am still in shock but I know this gentle and yet courageous soul will rest in peace with our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen".

Laz was an indigene of Obodo Amaimo, Ikeduru local council area. He attended Saint Peter Claver Seminary, Okpala, and Abia State University, Uturu.

As a protocol person, he served under former military and civilian governors before he was posted to the state House of Assembly as Chief Protocol Officer. He was later posted to Haji/Egbema local government area as Director of Administration and General Services, DAGS. He held the position until he was recalled to Government House to manage the Deputy Governor's protocol affairs.

The people of Obodo Amaimo have been lamenting his demise. His family home, a storey building situated along the Inyishi-Amaimo-Ugirike Road, could not be accessed, especially as it looked very desolate at the time Sunday Vanguard called.

He was many things to the people. Some called him "a dazzling star, a philanthropist of the first order, a socialite, a good mixer that always allowed his people to feel his impact positively".

They are saddened that the community has lost what they called "a rare gem".

Meanwhile, the state police command is yet to make any arrest in connection with the murder. Confirming this to newsmen in Owerri, the state Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Mr. Vitalis Onugu, however, said they were on top of the situation and working hard to unravel the apparent riddle.

He called on the citizenry to volunteer any useful information that would lead to the arrest of the killers of Laz Anyanwu