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By Simon Ebgbulem, Benin-City

If 35-year-old Amaosa Otabor, alias Biggy, had known he was walking into his untimely death, he would have stayed at home last Sunday morning. Otabor was allegedly shot dead by a childhood friend in Upper Uwa, on the out skirts of Benin City.

The incident caused pandemonium in the area after residents heard a gunshot in the compound of the suspect and it became glaring that somebody may have been shot. It was learnt that the deceased, who worked with his father in their cattle farm, woke up that fateful day at about 7am and decided to visit a nearby street.

Sunday Vanguard was told that the deceased went to the compound to visit one Matthew, the suspect's younger brother who lost his father in-law. But when he got there, he met his friend and two other colleagues. Vanguard learnt that as they were chatting, there was a quarrel between the suspect and one of the other friends identified as Ugbesia. While the quarrel intensified, the suspect rushed to his car and emerged with a gun to the surprise of his friends.

But the deceased, who thought it was a mere threat, blocked the suspect from pointing the gun directly at Ugbesia and appealed to him to drop the gun. But rather than dropping the gun, the suspect shot Otabor in the chest. The father of two fell. The friends took to their heels without making any effort to rush him to hospital.

It took a while before the relations of the victim heard about the

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incident and rushed to the scene. But by the time they rushed him to hospital, he was dead. Angry youths from Upper Uwa, where the deceased resided, stormed the residence of the suspect and razed the house.



Ameze ...seeks justice

It was a pitiable sight when Sunday Vanguard visited the family of the deceased as it was revealed that he wedded his wife according to customs and traditions of the Binis only nine days before the murder to enable him participate properly as a genuine in-law in the burial of his father in-law scheduled for June.

Besides, Ameze, the wife of the victim, apart from their two children, is carrying a pregnancy. She lamented: "My father is in the mortuary. I have no mother. Now my husband who is all I had was killed by his friend". She narrated her ordeal: "He woke up in



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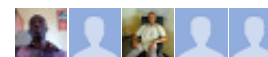
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the morning and said he was going to see his friend but his friend ended up killing him.

Now I have no mother, no father, no husband. If he had known that his friend will kill him, he would not have gone there that morning. They were childhood friends and he (suspect) even knows that I lost my father and his corpse is in the mortuary yet he went to kill my husband”.

The wife went on: “Now, I am all alone with three children and pregnant. I know the killer-friend as a 419 person because he uses different cars and he will say he has dollars in the booth of his car. And when my husband noticed that he is into 419, he started staying away from him.

As a result, my husband became close to his junior brother called Matthew. Matthew’s father-in-law died and it was actually Matthew my husband went to greet when this incident happened. We just did our wedding last week, the 11th May, so that my husband will participate properly in the burial of my father.

And the burial is coming up next month. I wish the police will arrest this bad friend and kill him too so that his children and wife will pass through what I am passing through now. That is all I am begging the police to do because I don’t have any where to go now. Who will train my children?”

The father of the deceased, 75-year-old Pa Otabor, said the last he heard from his son was when he gave him some money in the

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morning of the day of murder. His words: "Last Sunday, the 19th of May, I met my son at about 7a.m. who gave me some money in respect of a meeting and he left home. I came back home at about 7pm, undressed and prepared to go to bed. But I started hearing people shouting outside that he was dead, that one Lucky, his friend, shot him.

I asked if it was my son they were talking about or someone else. I came downstairs and I asked his brother to go to the suspect's house to check.

When my boy got there, they said they had taken his body to hospital. He ran to the hospital and saw him on a stretcher; the hospital said they could not treat him until they called the police. He died and they took the corpse to the morgue. I went to the police and they said they were looking for the suspect.

"The police told me they got information where he could be and the DPO stationed his men there since morning and asked them not to leave the house. The door of the house was locked, so they went for a search warrant because they said without that they could not force the door open".

Asked what he heard about the murder, the father explained: "The suspect was his friend. I heard they were about four of them in house and an argument ensued between Ugbesia, one of them, and the suspect. The suspect went to bring out a gun, so my son said 'please don't shoot him, Ugbesia is your friend; what are you doing? Please drop the gun'.



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Then he told my son to leave the road or he will shoot him instead and, before they could say Jack Robinson, he shot my son in the chest and he fell. Everybody in the house ran away.

I learnt it took some persons around time to come and take my son to hospital but it was already too late. My son worked with me at the cattle market and now, look at his wife and children (weeping). My appeal is that government should fish out the suspect. People have been trying to phone him, he replied one of them that he heard they had gone to burn down his house, that he will fight back and find those who burnt his house. But I ask him to come out.”

The Police Public Relations Officer in Edo State, DSP Moses Eguavoen, described the incident as unacceptable, saying the command was investigating the matter and on the trail of the suspect. According to him, “though we have not made any arrest, we are on the trail of the key suspect. The matter is being investigated seriously and no matter how the suspect tries to run, we will get him”.

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