

# CrimeAlert

By Kelechi Azubuike

A MARRIAGE ceremony in Abia State, recently, turned bloody after one of the policemen detailed to provide security at the venue shot his colleague dead.

The incident which shocked guests and well-wishers at the ceremony to their marrows nearly marred the ceremony as the visibly shaken bride and bridegroom and their relations were dumbfounded, wondering the fate that befell them on such an important day in their lives.

## On a common mission

The policemen who are attached to Isuikwuato Divisional Police Station in Isuikwuato, Abia State, according to sources, never exhibited any sign of love lost among each other until that fateful day.

They were said to have been sent on a common mission of ensuring that peace and security reigned at a traditional marriage at Otamkpa, a community also in Isuikwuato when the unexpected happened.

Three months after, as the entire Police Command tries to unravel the mystery behind it, the slain policeman, Oliver Ibegbunam's body is still lying in the mortuary pending final investigations while the assailant, Yusuf Yawale, is cooling off behind bars.

## Family reacts

The elder brother of the deceased policeman who simply identified himself as Okezie said all the family is asking for is justice.

He told *Crime Alert*: "I rushed to the scene and later to the police station after the sad news was broken to the family on December 26, 2014.

He was my younger brother, a constable and we are from Achi in Oji River, Enugu State. He was just 32 years old and actually lived in the same house with his assailant, Yusuf, a corporal who hails from the Northern part of the country.

## At the Police station

"When I got to the police station, I met the DPO, Bello Tambowa who also hails from the North. Despite the noticeable pain, anger and frustration in me as one that was devastated by the loss of a dear one, he was rather not forthcoming in his reply as to what actually transpired there which led to the loss of such a precious life."

# How policeman murdered colleague at marriage ceremony

- Father dies of heart attack
- Family seeks justice as investigations continue

According to him, the much the DPO could tell me was that the killing may have been done in error. "He claimed that the assailant who is currently being detained at the State Criminal Investigations Department, CID, Umuahia, maintains that bullets went off the gun and killed him when he wanted to hand it over to the deceased. But how can eleven bullets go off from a gun when it was merely being handed over to someone? It means that he also pulled the trigger as he did that?"

Okezie continued: "I wanted to see the suspect, to know what he looks like and ask him why he killed my brother who worked and lived together with him but the DPO turned down my request."

## Family to pay bills

Another discouraging treatment by the Police Division he complained about was the order and insistence that the family of the deceased should pay the bill for the autopsy which Okezie said he had no option than to comply with.

"The result showed that the bullets entered his head and shattered everything in it. His corpse is still lying in a mortuary at Umuahia and what it means is that after the

already prolonged investigations, we may also be asked to cater for the ambulance that will convey

the corpse, pay the mortuary bill since December and burial costs."

## Janet Okezie

Okezie further lamented that the brutal murder has taken a toll on his family already, including the death of their father who fell ill immediately he heard the sad news and died a few weeks later.

"We want justice and will not sleep until that is done. Let the law take its course. Government must intervene and do the right thing. Government employed him and the same government killed him. I know that the entire world is hearing our plea now. The culprit must not go unpunished," Okezie added.

## Police reaction

Efforts made by *Crime Alert*

• The slain Cpl. Oliver



to ascertain the extent of investigations by the Investigating Officer through a phone call failed as he rudely referred us to the State Police Public Relations officer. A call was also placed to the Divisional Police Officer in Isuikwuato, CSP Bello Tambowa, and apparently afraid that the matter has taken another dimension, he tried to shy away from it.

"The case is with the State Criminal Investigations Department now," he replied and cut off the call. Like the deceased policeman's brother feared, "he may not even be given a befitting burial by the authorities," he stated.

**Government must intervene and do the right thing. Government employed him and the same government killed him**