

CrimeAlert

Nsukka trader strangles banker wife to death

BY CHINEMYEH
OZOR, Nsukka

The University town of Nsukka, Enugu state, was recently, thrown into confusion over the alleged murder of a female banker by her husband, after a row over refusal to make her husband the next-of-kin.

Crime Alert gathered that the female banker identified as Mrs Faith Uchenna Okonkwo (30), was a staff of Access Bank Plc, University of Nigeria, Nsukka branch, and got married to Mr. Obinna Okonkwo (45), a businessman at Nsukka main market, barely six months ago. The husband allegedly strangled her to death on a fateful Sunday after she returned from service.

Agitation over next-of-kin documentation

Investigations revealed that the husband who hails from Uzo-Uwani area of Nsukka, has been agitating that his wife should change her next-of-kin to his name, a request his wife never turned down but only appealed to him to exercise patience because of the processes involved in the bank in effecting such a change, coupled with the fact that they just got married. However, Mr Okonkwo could not abide his late wife's submissions, believing that she did not want to carry out his directive.

How she was strangled to death

On the penultimate day, the unsuspecting female banker went for early morning service at the Anglican Church along Enugu road, Nsukka. Soon after the service, she made straight to the market to buy foodstuffs for the Sunday meal, only to return home to the waiting hands of her beloved husband. The large compound of a three-storey building was almost deserted as majority of the occupants had gone to Sunday service with only her husband, Obinna, sitting tightly in his living room waiting for the wife to return to perfect his evil act. She got home at about 9.45am,

greeted her husband who was alone in the flat as her niece staying with her had also gone to Sunday service. She went straight to change and enter the kitchen to prepare lunch for her husband. In the course of changing her dresses, her husband entered the room and hit her at the back of her head with a heavy flower vase. She fell down unconscious and speechless, unable to shout while her husband allegedly rushed and grabbed her neck and strangled her to death without a word from her.

Suicide angle

After making sure that the banker was dead, her husband hurriedly went to another room in their flat, brought a rope with which to tie her to a ceiling fan for people to believe that she hanged herself. After that, he knotted the rope around her neck, improvised a wooden ladder, took the other side of the rope to the ceiling fan and began to pull her but, the weight of the lifeless Uchenna was too

much for him to handle. When it dawned on him that he could not hang her, he made her lie on her knees with the rope tight round her neck. In his desperation to

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• The suspect – Obinna Okonkwo

disappear from the scene, he dressed up quickly, locked up the house and left, announcing while moving that he was going to Sunday service with a Bible in his right hand. His aim was to hang out of the compound till people returned before he finds himself back.

Back to base

After few hours outside, he felt that both his wife's niece who lived with them and other people living in the compound must have returned and discovered her dead body. He quickly returned to the house, exchanged peasantries with other neighbours around at their balconies, went into his apartment and started shouting on top of his voice, calling people to come and see what he saw. When people gathered and saw the dead body of the banker, the assailant was busy telling the bewildered crowd that her body should be taken to the mortuary without delay.

Father-in-law's reaction

Reports said immediately his father-in-law was contacted and informed that his daughter had committed suicide in her bedroom and about to be taken to the mortuary, he instructed them to leave the lifeless body as it was till he arrives. He immediately contacted the family doctor to go and find out what exactly happened to his daughter after expressing doubts over the suicide story.

He insisted that whatever happened to his daughter must be unveiled before anything could be done.

Doctor's findings

Crime Alert learnt that after examination of the body, the doctor (name withheld) noticed that the female banker had some bruises on her face, from which she bled. Furthermore, he reportedly observed that the banker was at different positions when the injury was inflicted on her, which showed that she was gagged because, rather than blood flowing down her face, it flowed backwards to her hair. Equally, the doctor stated that in a case of actual suicide, the victim ought to be dangling on the rope and must have excreted with the thong pulled out to confirm suicide.

Police intervention and arrest of suspect

It was gathered that the doctor's observations raised suspicions over the circumstances that surrounded the death of the female banker, prompting members of her family to quickly contact the police who swung into action. Subsequently, they arrested her husband as the first suspect. *Crime Alert* learnt that on interrogation by the police at Nsukka urban division, the husband admitted that he strangled his wife because she refused to change her next of kin to his name. He has since been transferred to Police headquarters in Enugu where he is helping police in their investigations. Meanwhile, the female banker has since been buried.



• The slain banker Uchenna Okonkwo