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## Why we kidnapped council security boss in Enugu — Suspects

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- N2m ransom collected, victim's whereabouts unknown two months after
- Tension grips community

**By Emeka Mamah, Regional Editor and Denis Agbo**

Nimbo, a serene community in Uzo-Uwani L.G.A, Enugu state is in the news again, barely two years after it captured headlines nationally and internationally following a bloody massacre by Fulani herdsman. This time around, the story is still gory as two suspected kidnappers are now singing like parrots, narrating to the police how they participated in the kidnap of the Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Local Government Area on Security Matters, Mr Ejiofor Enechi, at about 9am on December 13, 2016.

Although Enechi's whereabouts still remains unknown since he was abducted at Ukwuiyi Ekoru along Opanda / Adani road on his way to Nimbo, two suspects; Asogwa Thankgod and Akakwu Chizoba Collins told the police that they played major roles in the kidnap saga. Police sources however, hinted that Ejiofor must have been killed even after the kidnappers had collected N2 million ransom out of the 10 million earlier demanded.



Ejiofor Enechi

### Confession of suspects

One of the suspects, Akakwu Chizoba Collins admitted that his telephone was used to negotiate the ransom with the Enechi's family members while the second suspect Asogwa Thankgod, who claimed to be a native of Umuokpala, Ehalumona in Nsukka Local Government

Area of the state told the police that he monitored the victim's movements and reported to the other members of his gang adding that he also collected the N2million ransom from where the money was dropped by the victim's relations. Other members of the gang simply identified as Ratty, Miri, Chelsea and Earthquake are still on the run.

In his confession, Akakwu Chizoba Collins told Crime Alert: "I got involved in this mess because of bad company. I never knew that I would become part of this ugly story. My friend, Thankgod Asogwa came to me and lured me to a nearby

bush with a story that he had timber for sale. When we got there, I saw myself being surrounded by heavily armed vigilante men from Odah Nimbo in their large numbers and there and then, I was asked to lie down while their officer in charge of torture was directed to deal with me with my friend ThankGod who also assisted the group.

“I was later tied to a tree at a shrine with some members of the group monitoring me having collected my Nokia Torch light phone containing my sim card. The group then commenced discussions on how Enechi Ejiofor should be abducted. But before then, the group had told ThankGod what we should bring for my initiation which includes tubers of yam, five kola nuts and a gallon of palm wine but they insisted that I would have to be with them until after Ejiofor Enechi must have been kidnapped.

“Shortly after, ThankGod and some other members of the group left to monitor Enechi Ejiofor’s movement with a view to getting him while I was still being tied. They later came back to report to the other members who were with me at the shrine that they had successfully kidnapped him. I was later asked to go in the night of that fateful day but they collected my sim card and gave me back my phone, with a directive that ThankGod must bring me subsequently for initiation and oath taking and that I should not reveal anything which I witnessed. They also promised that ThankGod would give me my own share of the proceeds from Ejiofor’s ransom.

“When I got to Opanda where I live, I packed my load and ran to my village at Igbo-Etiti, although I did not report to the police or tell anyone. I am warning everybody to be mindful of the kind of friends he/she keeps because it was my friend who landed me into this trouble.”

On his part, the second suspect, Asogwa Thankgod maintained that before now he used to be a movie star and actor based at Opanda in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu state. He said, “it is true that we were forced to swear

to blood oath before the operation with threats to kill me and my father, a well known headmaster in the area, if I failed to keep it secret. I was given the task of monitoring the victim since I knew him and visited his drinking joint at Opanda.

“I knew Ejiofo Enechi very well, I had been to his bush bar at Opanda several times to relax. He was a member of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, NURTW, and Special Assistant on security matters to the Transition Committee Chairman of Uzouwani Local Government Area.

“On that fateful day, I went out with one boy called Chelsea (I don’t know his real name) with others for the kidnap. Chelsea had in his possession a Pump Action Automatic Gun. We actually kidnapped Ejiofor and I was the one who collected the N2 million ransom paid by his relations. The ransom was kept in a bush near a shrine and I was directed by Ratty, Miri and Earthquake, strong leaders of the group whose real names are not known to me, to go and collect the money and bring to them which I did.

## **Regrets**

“I am regretting my action because I did not report to the police or my father as I was scared of death due to the blood oath we took. Miri, Ratty and Earthquake told me that they kidnapped Ejiofor to teach him a lesson because he was revealing their plots to herdsmen and went as far as giving their names to the herdsmen as those who usually attacked them in the bush as well as stole their money and cattle at Odah Nimbo. Odah Nimbo is a neighbouring village to Ukpabi, Nimbo. I cannot say for sure where Ejiofor Enechi is now, only Ratty, Miri and Earthquake can tell. I am now regretting everything I did as I should have focused more on my movie and film making job.”

## **Tension in the community**

Following this development, palpable tension has gripped members of the community and beyond as the hope of the victim's family dimmed further following the arrest of two of the suspected kidnappers, who in their confessional statements, said they left the victim, Ejiofor, in the custody of their fleeing gang members two months ago. Family members of the victim expressed sadness and grief and pleaded with the kidnappers to free their brother unhurt.

According to the family, "We don't want to believe that Ejiofor is dead; he has been missing for the past two months; he was kidnapped on his way home and the kidnappers collected N2m ransom. As we speak to you, he is nowhere to be found; this has convinced us that it was not ordinary kidnap.

"We got more shockers when the two suspects arrested by the police said they carried out the dastardly act in connivance with some members of the Nimbo vigilante group. We learnt that the kidnap was planned and executed by members of this very community because they felt Ejiofor was frustrating some of their criminal acts.

"We are begging them to please release him; even if they have killed him, let them make his corpse available so that we can give him a decent burial. Let the police do their work too because the kidnappers are not strangers. An attempt was made for once to arrest them but they fled since then. We cannot sleep for two months now as a result of this uncertainty".

Also speaking when contacted, the traditional ruler of the community, Igwe John Akor, stated that the community was in grief over the incident. "I feel so sad and disappointed; we are not happy at all; he is our son and we don't like what happened to him at all", he said

### **Police assures of action**

Meanwhile, the spokesman of the Enugu State Police Command, SP Ebere Amaraizu, who confirmed the arrest of two suspects declared that, “Police operatives in Enugu state command stood tall in this regard and arrested two suspects who played major role in the dastardly act, while investigations and manhunt are still being intensified on the fleeing suspects.”

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So this is the genesis of the Fulani attacks at Nimbo! These natives have been rustling the fulanis cattle, incidentally nobody mentioned this aspect of the story in all the news we have been reading on attacks by Fulanis on that community.

So, much of these news are just blackmail after all, just an effort by the Igbo community to paint Mr President in bad colour.

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So rustling mere cattle is enough excuse to butcher scores of people?  
You well at all?

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That is stealing another man's inheritance! Mark you, that is not Nigeria's money, these are wealth passed down through several generations.  
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