

*The  
Anger  
of a  
Child*

BIAFRA

*by*

Peter Ofoegbu



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## *Preface*

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“The anger of a child” is a bird’s eye view of a boy that went through one of the most delusional, degrading, and disgraceful genocide crisis in recent times, even today the perpetrators express no remorse, and offer no reconciliation or reparation.

Painfully, millions of children around the world today are still in the same predicament. Humanity appears to be half-hearted on the right course of action and unable or unwilling to unite to seek solution.

The so called organizations that are supposed to be the uniting forces; have been relegated to social clubs, where the powerful come to display their superiorities, while the weak are meant to watch with echoes of yes Sir, yes Sir.

It is time for the people of the world to come together and put an end to the chaotic situation that has bedevilled our world today, for the good of humanity.

I am aware there are some people who had dedicated their lives to fight injustice round the world, but their efforts need to be adequately complimented by those in political leadership positions in the free world.

It must be noted, that the focus of this book is not mainly on the genocide aspect of the crisis, but also on the difficulties, Rock experienced in his ancestral village, as a result of the civil war.

*Peter UchechukwuOfoegbu.*



## Chapter One

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When the clouds go gloomy,  
Cranky goes grumpy,  
Why the anxiety on the faces of the crowd?  
Why the mindless killings?  
They said, “It’s when greed is put into overdrive.”  
Some said, “These are the ramifications of gutter politics.”  
What happened to the spirit of brotherhood?  
Whatever names it was called, it must be inhumanity  
The cities are deserted  
Her wounds are torturous  
This is home?

### **The Vanishing World**

Rock was a victim of over exaggerated ego and extreme impudence badly managed. Unequivocally, he was somewhat a privileged child; everything seemed ok. For him, it was a wonderful world; life was good; everyone seemed to be happy with each other.

His father *Idiukwu* by name was in the building construction industry (contractor), in the city of Kano.

*Idiukwu* not only spoke the Hausa language but participated in the development of the city as a builder.

Rock as a boy growing up in the magnificent city of his birth was not aware of any impending danger, but suddenly his world collapsed, from sounds and songs of joy, all he could hear all over the streets was the sounds of drums, men and women chanting round the city. He could not comprehend what was going on.

The atmosphere was filled with dread; everything that represented dignity vanished overnight. People metamorphosed from the loveliest of humanity, into the worst of humanity. His little mind was overwhelmed with anxiety, at the extremely egregious cruelties of man. He kept wondering what could give mindless men the audacity to trample upon his freedom with absolute impunity.

Suddenly, he realized that his world had permanently changed when he was told there was an uprising in the city and many had been killed.

Children were restricted from moving outside their compounds. The stench of rotten corpses filled the air. Agonized mothers with sad faces overflowing with tears, ended conversations abruptly, pretended to wipe their faces when a child noticed their tears.

It was quite a horrendous and difficult time to be a mother, he thought. He could still hear the laughter of children periodically, yet he could not make his effervescent mum smile.

Ibos responded with, “*Nzogbu, nzogbu, enye mba enye,*” literally meaning, trample, trample upon them, elephant of the people. Corpses, of animals, men, women, boys, and girls were, littered all over the streets.

They were joined by bodies of pregnant Ibo women with their bellies sliced open, the foetuses ripped from

their bellies and decapitated. All you could hear were their screams until their weak voices faded into thin air, with nobody to help, because everybody was running for their own lives. The mindless waste of human lives was beyond what his little soul could bear.

When he thought about some of the common sayings that united the Ibo tribe, catchphrases like. “*OnurubeNwanneagbalaoso.*” (When an Ibo man cries, all Ibos cry), it is supposed to mean that you never turn your back on a brother in need. It seems it is not applicable when your own life is in danger. Somehow, you can’t blame anybody; when all you see is blood; blood all over the place, mindless men charging in your direction; with guns and machetes; you have no choice but to run for your life.

“*Onyeaghalanwanneya,*” were totally neglected. (Never abandon your own). The general implication of that means, that when one Ibo man is in trouble, all Ibos are in trouble, and all hands must be on deck to combat whatever problem it is; more reinforcement of the above lexicon.

Ibos say, “*Umunnabuike.*” It appears they all failed. It talks about group dynamics or power belonging to the people. Nevertheless, Ibos are a strong people and uniquely yoked together for their common good.

While they were still thinking about all the difficulties around them, children and women were bundled into trains; lorries and any form of available transportation by the male members of their families, to their ancestral homes; all in the name of safety.

You could see some of the corpses that fell from their various forms of so-called transportation and plunged to their deaths, not because they wanted to die, rather because they were victims of antiquated and overcrowded

means of transports, on roads that were inconceivably difficult to drive through. They died of suffocation, dehydration, hunger, and diseases.

Lots of the so called means of transportation never made it to their destinations, because of old age, and bad roads. They formed parts of the memorabilia of man's inhumanity to man.

The way home; was dangerous, some were victims of sabotage, some ambushed, creating death and misery everywhere. Many spent days and weeks walking home (ancestral home), others were drowned, some became victims of wild animals, and the less fortunate gave up to nature.

When they got to their long awaited destination, little did Rock and his siblings envisaged the culture shock they encountered in the village.

He had been a city boy all his life, but not this time around. He started reminiscing about the good old days, wondering what happened to his friends and family. Would he ever meet them again?

He wished things were just the way it used to be before the crisis, when he remembers Malam Sule and the shilling coin he normally gave to him whenever he visited their home. He was quite a munificent and iconic figure, those great gifts made life very meaningful. The thought of losing that was intolerable.

He wondered if he will ever meet Malam Sule again. He was a very old and kind hearted gentleman. Whenever he visited, all the children would go into frenzy, clapping, dancing and saying; "Malam Sule, Malam Sule." With his gorgeous smile, snuff coated teeth and broken English mixed with vernacular, he would greet, and shake hands with all the children and find out how everybody was

doing. He would make sure everybody was on their best behaviour, and then would come the most important part, the dishing out of the Sule magic, as he grinded his teeth.

As Rock counted his loses, the anger in his heart intensified; what could degrade the human mind to a level that it could be devoid of conscience? The level of savagery and barbarism that was unleashed was inherently detrimental to the psyche of a child.

He could not understand why the people whose nastiness led to him been forced out of his childhood home could not be summoned before him to answer for their unconscionable acts. He was unable to understand why those who committed crimes against humanity were allowed to get away with mind boggling cruelty.

For him, the most painful part was that it was always the weak that paid the price for the catastrophic destruction unleashed by men with unmanageable egos.

In those days, children didn't ask questions; any unnecessary question could lead you to unbelievable corporal punishment. That was a risk no child wanted to take.

Brute force was the order of the day, but he kept asking the same question during the uprising and on their way back to Ibo land, "What is going on?" only to be told over and over again, "There is an uprising." A section of society rose up against some people they considered to be strangers and there was a deliberate plot to exterminate them on the pretext that they dominated every facet of society, while in reality, they were just venturesome or enterprising. The uprising was the result of petty jealousy.

So, Ibos had little or no choice but to fight for their survival. Whenever your back is against the wall, the

only option is to fight. You cannot deny a drowning man the right to fight back.

So-called neighbours, in revenge attacks, perpetrated gruesome mutilations of people they once considered to be friends. Unfortunately, killings like that were highly celebrated.

Yet he could not grasp why his own life had to be altered. He was of the opinion that trivial pursuits of petty men were not enough to fragment a land.

He kept saying to himself, “I thought we were one? In our schools we were taught one love, one destiny, one nation, the love for one another, the love for humanity; we sang the national anthem; though tribe and tongue may differ, in brotherhood we stand. Where then was the spirit of brotherhood?”

“We sang songs of unity; the need for peace and harmony to prevail in order to build a strong and veritable nation.”

For him, no man had the right to take another man’s life. You cannot take what you cannot give! No other answer could satisfy him. He wanted to do something, but was incapacitated by the limitations of childhood.

Rock at the age of nine out of vexation, he went to his mum to know the answers to some of the questions that bothered him. He was eight years when the crisis started.

“Why could we not just stay in our house and mind our business, after all nobody was killed in our house?” He asked.

“That is a risk no mother will take, moreover, they went to peoples’ houses, both day and night to kill them. Did you not hear about members of the same family that were massacred while they were asleep? My children are the only hope I have to take care of me in

my old age. Nobody in their right minds will gamble with the most precious of God's creation."

This was not enough for him, "I understand what you are saying, and nevertheless, life is full of risk. Many still died on the way, what you said was just an excuse. Wouldn't we have been better off staying than the present mess?"

"Well my son, I respect your opinion, but I am a mother; mothers think differently from sons. Nobody has the monopoly on wisdom. Sometimes children are right, and sometimes they are wrong."

The boy asked, "Are you trying to imply I am wrong?"

"I never said that. Rather what I want you to know is that your dad and I made what we felt were the best decisions for our family."

"That decision was made without our consultation; don't you think we should have made some input since it had to do with our lives?"

His mum replied, "Well, I think you are somewhat right, but bear in mind that none of you were in the position to make a mature contribution in such a dangerous situation."

"Do you mean you have to be an adult to contribute to decisions that affect your life?"

"You are getting it mixed up my son. What I am saying is that you were all children and couldn't always make better decisions than us in crisis situation."

"Can you not see that your decisions have made life very difficult for us? Now we have to struggle to eat? We don't fit into village life and they find it difficult to relate to us?"

"Whatever difficulties we experience now are just momentary; soon normal life shall be restored."

“I keep hearing that normal life will soon be restored; how soon is this soon?” The boy angrily said, almost in tears.

“That is only in the hands of the almighty God. For now, we have to do the best we can to make life meaningful. You don’t need to be unnecessarily emotional about this. Difficult situations don’t last forever.”

He interpreted his Mum’s use of the words “unnecessarily emotional” as a mild rebuke. Fearing that his father would learn of their conversation opted to end the discussion after pleading with his mum not to tell his dad about it.

His dad Idiukwu was the last to come back. He had been quite a pathetic sight since he returned. He was always on his own and could barely speak audible words. He was highly irritable, as if every little thing made him angry. Women and children were sent home first, before the men who were alive came back.

It seemed as though a substantial part of his body chemistry was shut down. He was somehow relegated to being semi dumb. As a result of the gruesome experiences he had. He saw both people he knew and some he did not know dismembered in utterly despicable ways. Nobody could ascertain if he had been involved in such a contemptible act.

He kept whatever experiences he had to himself. It was so horrible; he even refused to tell his wife. On the rare occasions when he did share, it was only to those his own age. His voice shuddered whenever he spoke few words, yet this was one of the most eloquent voices he ever knew.

It was rumoured in the village that Idiukwu fought gallantly and killed many of the enemy forces with his

double barrel and revolver, which he probably never owned. They talked about how he jumped down from his upstairs house and shot charging combatants with his automatic gun.

In reality, he probably never had a weapon in the house. They were mere stories or propaganda to make people believe that the adversaries had been dealt with brutally; misinformation like that was quite uplifting, and was never in short supply. That was part of what kept the crisis going for longer than expected. Nobody was telling the truth.

In such a situation, people preferred to hear only that which would titillate regardless of the truth.

Idiukwu was always disappearing into the forest. Men were rarely seen in the open. Once, after immerging from the forest, his dad appeared with his face looking like a lion, sneaking in the night while the children were asleep.

Children were sometimes a threat to his safety. There was always a risk they might divulge useful information to marauding solders that were searching for men to conscript, as a result, they were completely starved of any useful information.

The soldiers once caught his dad, so he kept coughing and sneezing endlessly, acting like an elderly and highly disoriented man. He acted as though he could barely walk and after several attempts, they decided he was a sick dying old man, that it was a waste of time trying to wake a dead fly, so they abandoned him on the road, only for him to transform back into the lion that he was and ran back home.

His lion-like bearded face made him look a spine-tingling mini monster. He could inexplicably transform from a handsome man to one with a monster-like face.

He would change from the dad he longed to see to a father whose presence made him shiver. He was only trying to be alive for his wife and children; those were his crimes.

Some of the men acted like mentally deranged people all through the crisis, but immediately after the war, they were perfectly sane. It was just a survival strategy. They may have been ridiculed after the crisis but they lived to tell their stories.

Such gruesome experiences combined to turn his wonderful world to a bastion of unimaginable terror. His little soul longed to be set free from the disaster into which he had been sucked. Rock never gave up hope, because he was a child of providence.