

## Brazilian Who Chopped and Fried Husband May Have Been Ordered by Voodoo Priestess

Contributed by Émerson Luiz  
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Why did Brazilian Rosanita Nery dos Santos, 47, chopped her husband in over 100 pieces, cooked and fried the body parts in boiling oil and then kept the remains under the stairway in the couple's home in the city of Salvador, capital of the northeastern state of Bahia?

Because she was forced to do this by gunmen who invaded her house, she told a seven-member jury. The jurors, however, didn't believe her story and found her guilty. She will be getting 19 years in prison for murder and hiding a corpse.

"The jury accepted all charges and evidence brought forth by the prosecution because it didn't have any doubt that she committed the crime," said Armênia Cristina Santos, with the Bahia's attorney general office and the prosecutor in charge of the case.

For the prosecutor, Rosanita, who often contradicted herself during her testimony, is unquestionably the culprit. "The Public Attorney Office is fully convinced that she is the murder," stated Santos. "The police report and testimonies by her children leave no doubt that she committed this crime."

The trial, which had already been postponed three times, lasted over 12 hours. The sentence was pronounced Friday night, March 23, by judge Cássio Miranda, head of Salvador County's 1st Jury Court. He ruled that Rosanita will have to serve her time in a women's prison.

José Raimundo Soares dos Santos, 53, the husband, was a retired police lieutenant with whom she was married for 28 years and had five kids. Thei couple's children testimony was crucial to convict the woman.

The crime occurred on June 23, 2005, in the Vale do Ogunjá neighborhood. According to court records, Rosanita gave the husband hard liquor mixed to a tranquilizer. When he fell asleep, on the couple's bed, she stabbed him in the breast, abdomen and head.

She then cut his body, separating head, arms and legs. After that she took the parts to the bathroom where she boned them. The next step was to cook and fry the body's pieces, let them cool down and put them in plastic bags. The procedure took about 13 hours.

The housewife finally hid the fried pieces under a stairway covering the area with a particle board. Only the next day she

scrubbed everything to hide any evidence of the crime.

When the couple's daughter Shisleide Nery dos Santos, 24, came for a visit the day after the murder the mother told her that her father had stabbed himself to death and she had dismembered and hidden his body's parts so that she wouldn't be charged with his death by the police.

Shisleide, however, didn't believe the mother's story and went to the police where she told police chief Nilton José about her suspicion that her mother had killed the husband. Soon after, the authorities came to the house and arrested the woman.

In the police district she first told authorities she had arrived home and found her companion stabbed to death in their bed and added: "After that I decide to cut the whole body and then fry the pieces in order to prevent that bad corpse smell."

Even though she denies it, the police suspect that she ate part of the fried body parts. The motivation for the crime was never clear to the authorities. She might be attempting to collect a US\$ 34,000 life insurance or trying to avenge a life of humiliation at the hands of the military man. The woman seems to have mental problems and the court records also talk about a black magic ritual she might be involved with.

In one of her versions in court, the housewife blamed the murder on two knife-carrying hooded men. According to this story, she was approached by them at the entrance of her home when coming back from the bakery. She told the court she was dragged by the men who threatened to kill her and then was forced to watch while they stabbed and dismembered her companion.

According to Bernadete de Souza Soares, 63, the victim's aunt and a witness in court, Rosanita and José Raimundo used to fight a lot especially over her habit of going to candomblé (an African religion) worship services. Soares told jurors that the husband once invaded the candomblé church and dragged the wife out of there.

"He went in and broke everything," said Soares. "After that, the mãe-de-santo (afro-Brazilian priestess) said that he would pay dearly for that and that he wouldn't live more than one year. The priestess also asked Rosa to deliver his heart to her and that's why she dismembered him."