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**THE GUARDIAN**

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Thursday, October 30, 2008

## Eight robbers drown in foiled Rivers bullion van robbery

- Police arrest female robbery suspect in Auchi  
*From Alemma Ozioruva Aliu (Benin City) and RoseAnn Chikereuba (Port Harcourt)*

**T**HE Rivers State Police Command yesterday foiled an attempt by armed bandits to rob a bullion van along Trans-Amadi Industrial Layout in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

Also, a female robbery suspect was yesterday apprehended by security operatives attached to the Federal Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State after her alleged male gang members had successfully robbed the institution's cash office.

Meanwhile, tragedy struck yesterday at the Elioju Junction of Port Harcourt as a tanker crushed a mobile policeman to death.

The Guardian gathered that about 15 armed men on motorcycle had trailed the bullion van conveying money for a new generation bank to Elekaiha area in Trans-Amadi, Port Harcourt.

The robbers reportedly shot at the bullet-proof van to stop it but the driver sped away from them amid the usual morning traffic congestion in Trans-Amadi.

The bandits, however, turned on motorists caught in the traffic, robbing them of valuables.

But men of the state police command arrived the scene and engaged the armed men in a shootout during which eight robbers jumped into the Nwaja River in a bid to escape through the creeks. However, all of them drowned in the river. Their remains were later recovered from the river, according to the Rivers State Commissioner, Bala Hassan.

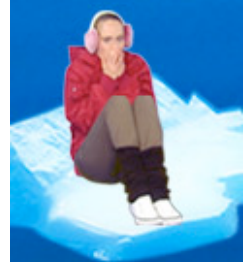
Spokesman of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) in Rivers State, Sagir Musa, who confirmed the incident to The Guardian on phone, added that two of the bandits were arrested.

Musa said: "Some armed boys wanted to rob a bank (name withheld) at Trans-Amadi this morning but the police and men of the JTF prevailed in the situation. Two of them were caught while the others escaped."

According to some eyewitnesses who preferred anonymity, said the late mobile policeman was standing with a commercial motorcyclist whom he had stopped for flaunting the order not to carry two passengers when the incident occurred.

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But other eyewitnesses claimed that the policeman was seen collecting N20 bribe from the motorcyclist when the tanker driver lost control due to bad spots on the road and crushed him to death.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Rita Abbey confirmed the incident.

The Auchu robbery incident, according to witnesses, occurred about 2.30 p.m. shortly after an entrance examination by the pre-Higher National Diploma students.

The applicants, who numbered about 5,000 paid N1,000 each as registration for the examination.

Confirming the incident, the school's Public Relations Officer (PRO), Mr. Mustafa Oshiobugie, told The Guardian that he could not ascertain the exact amount carted away by the robbers.

His words: "Preliminary report showed that it happened when suspected robbers broke into the cash office of the school and successfully got to the safe. As they were leaving, a suspected female accomplice was caught by a combined team of school security and staff of the school. She is neither a member of staff or student of the school. She was handed over to the police and she is assisting them in their investigation of the robbery."

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Peter Ogboi, could not be reached for comments on the matter, as repeated calls to his mobile phone were not answered.

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