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Police kill female robber in Lagos, arrest others

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By **Temidayo Akinsuyi** /Lagos (with agency reports)

The Lagos State Police Command has arrested a gang of robbers who stormed a hotel at the Oyingbo area of the state on Friday night and robbed the lodgers, including dispossessing them of over 34 phones.

The incident was said to have occurred at about 4:30am.

Eyewitness account claimed that the robbers would have gotten away with the crime, but for the quick intervention of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad from the command in Ikeja.



Police anti-robbery squad in action

The confrontation between the policemen and the gang of robbers led to the death of a female suspect, identified as Funke, a lover to the leader of the gang.

The leader has also been identified as Afe.

Afe is now at large. Two among the gang members that attacked the hotel and its lodgers have been arrested and they are both singing in the police custody.

Recovered from the gang after their defeat by the police were 34 phones, 21 cartridges, a black Toyota Matrix marked FST368CF.

There are also two locally made guns, one blood stained cutlass and two laptops.

One of the robbers, driving the bandits' getaway car, has been identified as Yemi Akogun.

He told the police that killing him would not help their cause in crime fighting or curtailing robbery activities in the state.

His words: "The police should try and go after those selling guns.

"That's the only way to check robbery in this country. "The police cannot tell me that they don't know where robbers used to get their guns.

"Killing me will not solve the problem of armed robbery in Lagos or even Nigeria as a country."

It was gathered that after the robbers stormed the hotel located at Oyingbo, they ordered everyone to lie down, facing the ground. One of the victims managed to alert the Commissioner of Police, Umar Manko, who, fortunately, picked his call.

Manko alerted the officer in charge of SARS, Abba Kyarri, who drafted a team of policemen and they raced to the scene.

Before the policemen reached the hotel, the robbers had snatched a vehicle of one of the lodgers. The visibly distressed lodgers told the policemen that the bandits had just left. The SARS men took the registration number of the stolen vehicle and other descriptions and went after the fleeing robbers.

They were also told by some of the lodgers that the robbers took the route leading to Apapa-Wharf.

Minutes after the policemen followed the direction the gunmen took, they saw a tail light of a car, but were not sure if it was the robbers.

They drew near the car and flagged it down, but it refused to stop. The police suddenly drove ahead and blocked the car. Immediately the suspected car stopped, one of the occupants jumped out and fled. While some policemen ran after the fleeing man, others went after the vehicle, which was quickly reversing.

Sensing they might lose the robbers, the police opened fire.

The gunshot got and killed the female suspect. Akogun, who was driving the getaway car, told the police that the lady was a lover of the leader of their gang. The leader was the suspect who bolted from the car, leaving his partners in crime behind.

Akogun had further told the police that they had been using the lady, identified as Funke, for different robbery operations.

Funke's job was to sit in the front seat with the driver, in order to pull the wool over the eyes of policemen on the roads.

Apparently, once police noticed Funke at the front seat of any car the gang of robbers was driving, they

usually would not give the car a second glance.

Akogun also revealed that Funke used to be the person who used to frisk victims during operations to collect their valuables.

According to Akogun, it was Afe who came up with the idea of the gang using Funke for operations.

Investigators also discovered that the gang used to snatch vehicles, which they use for operations. After the operation, they would abandon the vehicle at any area.

Akogun said he was a professional bus driver before he went into robbery.

He drives the gang and has two wives and four children.

Akogun said a friend of his, a vulcaniser, initiated him into robbery after officials of the Lagos State Traffic Management Agency impounded his bus.

He had since gone for five robbery operations with the gang. The sixth operation was the one that witnessed the gang's Waterloo.

The second suspect arrested alongside Akogun is his bus conductor when he was a bus driver. When Akogun decided to go into robbery, his loyal conductor also decided to tag along with his master.

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