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'We shot an ex-police chief for daring to foil our operation'

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Ebele BONIFACE

A 31- year- old suspected robber, Abiodun Frances has revealed how a member of his gang identified simply as Toheeb shot a retired Chief Superintendent of Police(CSP), Robinson Aregari during a robbery operation at Markvins supermarket in Agbara area of Lagos State.

Frances said the police chief was shot dead when he attempted to foil their operation at the supermarket.

He said: “When the police chief (Agerari) wanted to enter the supermarket he met Toheeb at the door. Toheeb told him to look at the owner of the Markvins supermarket , one Mr. Makuochukwu Hyacinth Obi and over five customers lying face down to show him that they were robbers on duty and for him to move forward and join those lying face down inside the super market. He even showed him his gun.

Instead of complying, he suddenly grabbed Toheeb by his waist, lifted him up and threw him to the ground and took to his heels that fateful day 11th January, 2020. As he was rushing out to enter his Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) Toheeb stood up and shot him at his left lap.

Abiodun said he dispossessed the ex-police officer’s wife of her personal belongings.

“When I noticed the man did not neter his car after he was shot by Toheeb, I rushed to where he parked his car and met his wife seated in the car. I told his wife to give me the money her husband kept in the vehicle and she told me that he did not keep any money in the jeep.

“Left with no other choice, I collected her phone and the two phones her husband was charging in the jeep. I did not collect his wife ATM.

“We collected ten phones from the workers and customers we met at the supermarket. We also collected a bottle of expensive wine which we drank while sharing our loot at an uncompleted building in Agbara area after the operation

“I was not the one who shot the police chief. I was carrying a long rifle while Toheeb was carrying a shot gun and he was the one who shot the police chief.”

The suspected robbery kingpin and his gang were smashed by personnel of the Inspector General of Police Intelligence Response Team (IRT) following which a full scale investigation was directed on the orders of IRT's Commander, Mr Abba Kyari, a Deputy Commissioner of Police.

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Said he, "My names are Abiodun Frances. I am a Lagos indigene. My mother is from Badagry while my father is from Ojo area of Lagos. I attended a private primary school in Morogbo, along Badagry road. My father is a fisherman while my mother is a trader.

After my primary education I trained as a welder because my parents were too poor to carry my burden of higher education. Even to have three meals a day was a problem. Upon the completion of my training in 2005, I could not afford the money to establish my own workshop.

"I started working from home but I couldn't get enough jobs from people and lacked money to take care of myself. I was getting one to two thousand naira daily and was using it to take care of my family.

"My life turned to hell when I joined the Eiye cult. I started over drinking and smoking of cigarettes and even joined the cult members in street fights. In one of the fights, I was axed by one member of the rival group and that is this scare you are seeing on my body.

"The wound affected my welding job and it was only my parents that took me to hospital and footed the hospital bill. When I was discharged I started staying at home and my wife was the one taking care of my family. My life changed again when my friend Toheeb came to my house and saw me in a sad mood.

"He asked why I was not happy. I told him it was because of lack of owo (money). He told me not to worry that he would take me to 'Paradise' where money has no value. We went to smoking joints where he bought pepper soup, drinks and marijuana. We were spending money like rich men in town.

"The following day I went out with him and had my first baptism of phone-snatching. The operation was smooth and sweet. I got enough money that I forgot my sorrow. We robbed many supermarkets and people coming back from work or market during rush hour.

"We were doing well but any time I travelled to see my parents he would go out alone to rob. There was a time I went to see my father but , when I came back I had that Toheeb had been killed at OPIC Estate where he went to rob in November 2019.

I thought the case was over until it was reported to IRT. I was relaxing at home when operatives of IRT stormed my house and arrested me. I was surprised to see the police chief Toheeb shot still alive because I thought that he died. I was not the one that shot him. The super market CCTV captured the our operation very well.

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Miscreants! Thank God the ec-police officer survived. The management of the supermarket deserves commendation for having a functional CCTV. In as much as the robberd carried carried guns to shoot and, indeed, shot people, what else do they deserve but a taste of what they did to others?

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