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📅 13.Apr.2014 | DISQUS_COMMENTS | 👤 Oluwatoyin Malik

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One of the members of a robbery gang which specialised in using motorcycles to rob at petrol stations got instant justice recently when a mob, in anger, ripped open his stomach with a knife at Alakia area of Ibadan, Oyo State, when it caught up with him after a robbery operation.

His gang member and the okada man he used were not spared either, as they were beaten black and blue before they were rescued by policemen from Monatan Division. Two locally-made pistols and

two live cartridges were found on the unidentified deceased gang member.

The gang was said to have invaded Bambo petrol station at Alakia area of Ibadan on Thursday, March 20 armed with the two guns. The unidentified gang leader reportedly shot into the air which attracted the manager of the petrol station. Leaving his office to see what was happening, the man was confronted by the sight of two of his attendants held hostage.

The armed robbers also walked towards him and collected his money and handsets, leaving after an operation that did not last more than 10 minutes.

Piqued by the effrontery of the young men, the manager reportedly summoned courage, picked a motorcycle and went after the armed robbers. On seeing that he was being pursued, the unnamed gang member reportedly shot into the air but this did not deter the people as they got closer to the bike that conveyed the armed robbers.

He was pulled off the bike and held down while others continued with the chase of others until they caught up with them. The leader of the gang was immediately death with as someone among the crowd was reported to have drawn a knife and slit his stomach, as the mob hailed when his intestines poured out. He was said to have writhed in pain while he held his intestines in his own hands, unable to talk, until he gave up the ghost.

The other suspect, who gave his name as Seye Azeez (22), confessed to have worked with the deceased armed robber but claimed he didn't know his name till he was mobbed.

Seye told Crime Reports that "it was my friend who took me to a petrol station to rob. I knew him at a drink joint at Atipe area of Ibadan but didn't know his name. He asked me for the type of job I do and I told him I was selling leather slippers. He asked again if I could be following him to work. I demanded to know the type of work but he replied that I would know when we get there. He said I should call him the following morning so that I could come and meet him wherever he was.

"I called him as he said and he asked me to come to Onipepeye Sawmill area. He also said I should pick an okada man and come to him. I stopped an okada rider at Agodi Bus Stop area and told him to take me to Alakia. Along the way, we picked my friend. He told the okada man to proceed to Alakia area. When we got to a petrol station, he told the okada man to go in. He drew a gun and pointed it at the okada man when he wanted to protest.

"The okada man had no choice than to go in. Immediately we got there, he switched off the ignition of the motorcycle and collected the key from the rider. He led us to the petrol attendants and when the manager of the petrol station came out, he also held him hostage. He asked me to collect the money on the manager as well as his phones. He ordered me to put everything in his pocket which I did.

"When he was through, he asked us to leave but we were pursued by the manager and others who joined him. When they got close to us, they dragged him from the back of the bike and he fell down. I told the okada man to move since the person holding the gun had been apprehended.

"Unfortunately, they caught up with us shortly after but the gun was not found on me. We were all stripped naked and the mob started beating us while the leader's stomach was slit open with a knife. His entrails poured out and he held them with his hands. We were all taken to the police station at Monatan, from where we were brought to SARS office."

Speaking on previous operations carried out by his gang, Seye said his own role was to stay outside to be on the lookout so that he could alert others in case of any danger. "The okada rider he was using before was also one of the gang members. During the first operation I went with them, we went to an area that I could not identify because it was dark. They asked me to stay with the okada while they attacked a motorist and collected his money. I was given N12,500.

"A misunderstanding arose between the gang leader and the former okada man over sharing formula and the okada man decided he was not following him again. That was why he said I should stop any okada man I see along the road and come to him at Onipepeye."

The arrested okada rider, Ibrahim Ojerinde (29), who wept through out the interview period with Crime Reports, pleaded his innocence, saying he never knew the passengers he picked on the fateful day were armed robbers. He said he was forced to take them to the petrol station at gunpoint.

According to Ibrahim, "I am a mechanic and also ride okada to augment my income. On March 20, I picked the man I later knew to be Seye and he told me to take him to Alakia. He did not allow me to pick any passenger on the way and when we got Sawmill area, the deceased armed robber stopped me and Seye said I should pick him.

"On getting to Bambo filling station, he asked me to turn into the station. I told him I didn't need fuel. He replied me harshly and rained expletives on me. I turned in surprise because I did not know what warranted the curses. But what I saw shocked me: he pointed a gun at me and ordered me to proceed to the filling station ground. I apologised profusely and did his bidding, shivering with fear.

"As I parked, the deceased collected my key, held me and pushed me towards the fuel pump. He ordered his partner to collect money and phones, after which he told me to kick the okada. As we got to expressway along Brewery area, he was pulled off the bike.

"In fear, I moved on to avoid being mistaken for one of the robbers. I eventually stopped where I was caught up with, and the mob descended on me with different kinds of cudgels. If not for the timely intervention of policemen from Monatan Division, I would have been lynched to death over an incident I knew nothing about except being a victim of circumstance."

The state's police spokesperson, Olabis; Okuwobi-Ilobanafor, confirmed the incident, saying that the suspects had been transferred to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) for further investigations. She added that investigations would prove the innocence or otherwise of the okada rider.

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