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Two robbers die in gun duel with police after snatching Winners pastor's vehicle

By Ademola Oni

Saturday, 18 Dec 2010

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Two members of a four-man armed robbery gang met their Waterloo on Monday morning in Ota, Ogun State, while engaging men of the State Anti-Robbery Squad of the State Police Command in a gun battle.

Crime Digest learnt that the suspected robbers had snatched a Toyota Avensis from one Anslem Adekune at an unspecified location in Lagos, which was accompanied by another Mercedes 190, which the police described as the operational vehicle of the bandits.

The hoodlums, however, ran into trouble around 6.16 am on Ilo Awela Road, Ota, when policemen suspected the movement of the two cars and decided to observe the occupants.

Crime Digest gathered that when the car snatchers felt uncomfortable with the SARS trailing them, they opened fire on the patrol vehicle.

A source, who spoke with Crime Digest on the condition of anonymity, said the police patrol team responded to the anticipated shootout and opened fire on the fleeing suspected robbers.

"Some of them continued to drive the two vehicles, while some of them fled into the neighbourhood. The police combed the area when the battle had subsided and discovered that two of the robbers had died in the bush," the source said.

The State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Olumuyiwa Adejobi, who confirmed the story to Crime Digest, said though the police were unable to recover the Toyota Avensis and the operation vehicle, the anti-robbery squad recovered an AK 47 rifle and 20 rounds of live ammunition, where the bodies of the two robbers were discovered.

Adejobi, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, said, "The men of the Ota anti-robbery squad felt they should search the bush where the fleeing robbers ran to during the gun battle. They discovered that two of them died in the bush, while they found an AK 47 rifle and 20 rounds of life ammunition.

"The other robbers escaped with the two vehicles, but we are of the belief that they couldn't go far with the vehicles; they couldn't have even gone to the border or cross it with the Avensis because the cars had been badly hit and the occupants had been seriously injured.

"What we are doing now is to try and comb areas that are not far from Ota because we are sure that the vehicles would have been abandoned by the bandits."

Meanwhile, men of the Ota Division of the state police command have recovered a Toyota Camry belonging to one Pastor Ekwerem Unung of the Winners Chapel, which was snatched by suspected

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robbers in Ota on Sunday night.

Crime Digest learnt that the pastor was violently dispossessed of his car while he was on his way home by the rampaging robbers, who had taken advantage of the blackout in the area to perpetrate their act.

A police source told our correspondent that Unung was able to alert some policemen, who had got information that some bandits were on the rampage and decided to give the robbers a chase.

"The robbers fled when they noticed that policemen were on their way to the scene, but the patrol men saw them as they fled; so, they continued to pursue them. Also, the pastor linked up with the security company that installed the tracking device on the car to inform them of the robbery," said the police source, who craved anonymity.

"So, the security company succeeded in demobilising the car when the robbers got to Abeokuta. The robbers abandoned the vehicle and fled as the police closed in on them."

Adejobi, who confirmed the story to Crime Digest, explained that the police decided not to open fire on the suspected robbers and they fled to the bush and the neighbourhood.

"We arrested one of them, Adebisi Ode aka Jeje, because we wanted to ensure that others are tracked down. That one is in our custody and is helping us with information that will lead to the arrest of the other members of the gang," the PPRO said.

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