



Crowd at the scene

Three arrested for lynching suspected robbers in Lagos

Kunle Falayi

The Lagos State Police Command has arrested three suspects for allegedly taking part in the lynching of five suspected armed robbers in Mushin Area of the state on Saturday.

Police Public Relations Officer of the command, Ngozi Braide, said on Tuesday that the suspects were arrested as part of the ongoing investigation into the incident.

She said, "A full investigation has commenced into the incident, I cannot give details about the involvement of the arrested suspects for now."

"We have also invited the community leaders of the area where the incident took place. The police will surely get to the root of the matter."

Braide, however, declined to give the names of the arrested men.

The lynching of the armed robbery suspects came weeks after a similar lynching of four students of the University of Port Harcourt in controversial circumstances.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the five suspected robbers were caught on Saturday evening and beaten by a mob that consisted of residents and area boys in Mushin.

The suspected robbers were set ablaze and burnt beyond recognition.

When our correspondent visited the area on Tuesday, some residents were reluctant to speak on the incident for fear of being arrested by the police.

But a trader on Vono Street, where the incident took place, told our correspondent that some armed robbers had been terrorising residents of the area in recent time.

The trader, who pleaded anonymity, said, "The people of this area just took their anger on the (suspected) robbers. I don't really know

how they were caught. I think they were said to have broken into a shop."

"I heard somebody raised the alarm and residents quickly reinforced and rounded up the suspects. Nobody really knows the true story because people are afraid of talking about the incident."

It was learnt that while the suspects were being beaten, residents cheered and took photographs while policemen were not in sight to stop the lynching even though there were some police stations in the area.

Police were said to have arrived the scene after the suspects had been burnt and the crowd had dispersed.

What exactly happened to Dr. Olawunmi Thorpe, an Ogun State indigene, who died a homeless man, may never be known.

To passersby and residents, who saw Thorpe everyday in the rubbish dump beside the rail line at Fagba Bus Stop in Ifako-Ijaiye Local Government Area of Lagos State, he was a deranged man.

But what many people did not know was that Thorpe had a Bachelor and Master's degrees in Mass Communication and a PhD in English Language.

All these information came to light when PUNCH Metro got information that the "mad man" who spoke impeccable English had died about 5pm Wednesday last week.

It took two 'good Samaritans', Mr. Larry Happiday and Mr. Dele Olawale, who had interest in Thorpe's case before he died, to ensure that his body did not rot on the same rubbish dump he used as home.

When our correspondent spoke to the two men on how they knew Thorpe and their efforts at helping him before he died, Happiday said he first met the deceased about a year ago.

He said, "I began noticing him around Fagba about a year ago because I live around Fagba. One day in March, he approached me and I thought he was going

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to ask for money. But he did not.

"He told me it was his 58th birthday and begged me to buy him a Bible and a book, 'The Power of Positive Thinking'."

"The first thing that struck me about him was that he wasn't the average destitute. He spoke good English with good diction."

Happiday said he became interested in Thorpe's case and would stop once in a while to check up on him at the spot, adding that he later bought him the book and the Bible.

According to Happiday, he became a sort of friend to Thorpe, stopping by once in a while to give him food and ask about his background.

"He told me he was from a rich family in Abeokuta and that his father was a former Ambassador to Ethiopia. He also said he had his first and second degrees in Mass Communication and PhD in English language. But he did not say which year he got them or from which institution. However, when I stopped by one day, I met Pastor Olawale with him," Happiday said.

Olawale explained that he

How 'PhD died



Thorpe, a few days before he died

first met Thorpe about four years ago. According to him too, the homeless man always asked him for a Bible.

The pastor explained that he got interested in

Thorpe's case when the man approached him one day while passing through the rail line at Fagba. He said he always asked Thorpe about his family and who could be

Traffic Law: Policeman shoots okada

Temitayo Famutimi

A policeman identified simply as Yemi on Tuesday in the Ilupeju area of Lagos State allegedly shot an okada rider, Adigun Atilola, while trying to enforce the state traffic law.

It was learnt that Atilola, who was riding with a passenger, was shot when he attempted to evade arrest at Teju Junction on Ilupeju bypass.

Eyewitnesses said Yemi was in company with five other policemen when he shot the okada rider at a close range.

It was gathered that Atilola's passenger and some youths in the area who were angered by the incident went on the rampage in the area.

The protesters set up bonfires at the scene on Teju Junction and Coker Road Junction and prevented free flow of

traffic for hours.

When our correspondent visited the scene, the protesters were seen attacking and beating up people suspected to be policemen who were in mufti.

However, attempts by the protesters to mobilise and burn down the Ilupeju Police Station was thwarted as a combined team of policemen from the Rapid Response Squad,

OPS Attack, Mosafejo and Alausa Division who came in seven vans fired tear gas into the air and dispersed them.

An eyewitness, Hammed Adelaja, said Atilola was shot at the right part of the lower abdomen, adding that the bullet pierced through him to the other side.

He said, "The incident happened at about 10:30am and I was right there in my office



The scene of the shooting. Photos: Temitayo Famutimi

