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Beninose gunrunner arrested in Ogun

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Ogwuzor, Etiti, Idowu, Bonu and Adebayo

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A Beninose gunrunner, John Bonu, and his assistant, Segun Adebayo, have been arrested by operatives of the Special Anti Robbery Squad, Ogun State Police Command.

The police said the suspects were arrested at the Agbara area of the state last week where they had gone to receive a stolen vehicle from a suspected armed robber, Charles Ogwuzor.

Police said the vehicle was the payment for two double barreled pistols which Bonu sold to Ogwuzor.

Four other armed robbery suspects — Ogwuzor, Chinedu Emuneke, Uche Etiti and Matthew Idowu— were also arrested on their way to rob an unnamed businessman at Abeokuta, the state capital.

Bonu told *PUNCH Metro* that he left Nigeria for the Benin Republic in 1983. He said, “I am a 54-year-old man from Cotonou. It wasn’t long that I went into the business of gunrunning. I was introduced to Ogwuzor by a mutual friend.

“A few months later, Ogwuzor told me that he needed two double-barreled pistols and ammunition.

“I asked him to pay N55,000 but he could only pay N20,000 at the time. I later told him to bring a laptop- I did not tell them to bring vehicle- for the balance. I bought the guns for 55,000 CFA which is about N17,000.”

Unaware that Ogwuzor had been arrested, Bonu had gone to Agbara to meet him after he received a call from Ogwuzor, asking him to come and pick up the vehicle. He was arrested together with Adebayo when both men showed up at the rendezvous point.

The Ogun State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Muiyiwa Adejobi, said, "Bonu has been in the business of gunrunning for years, selling arms to robbery gangs. It was Ogwuzor, who after his arrest, named Bonu as his supplier. Sometimes, armed robbers supply stolen vehicles to gunrunner in exchange for arms.

"Usually, when it is time to pick up the stolen vehicles, the gunrunner never shows up. Instead, the robber would drive the vehicle close to any border town where one of the gunrunner's boys would be waiting.

"There could be as many as three of such boys waiting at designated spots along the route. Each will pass the car to the other until it gets to the last person who will drive the car to Cotonou. We learnt that Bonu came to pick up the stolen vehicle in person because he wanted to show Adebayo the route back so he (Adebayo) could come on subsequent occasions."

Ogwuzor, an ex-convict, told *PUNCH Metro* that he began his criminal career by receiving and trading in stolen goods. After regaining his freedom from prison in 2005, Ogwuzor became a full-fledged armed robber.

He said, "I used to steal with other gangs but eventually broke away and formed my own gang.

"I was at a joint when a friend, Balogun, came to tell me off an operation at Abeokuta. He told me that the target was a businessman who had N15m in his house. It was the target's driver who gave Balogun the tip. I got my boys ready and last Friday, we travelled down to Abeokuta. We met up with our target's driver and were on our way to his house when we were intercepted by the police."

PUNCH Metro gathered that a SARS team, led by the Officer-in charge, Mr. Mohammed Tijani, intercepted the robbers close to the Lafenwa Police Division.

Adejobi said, "On sighting the police team, Ogwuzor and his group opened fire on them. The SARS operatives responded and overpowered them. One of the robbers died on the spot, while the rest were critically injured.

"On searching their vehicle, the SARS team recovered two double-barreled pistols, one pump action, 15 live cartridges and two expended cartridges."

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