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Lagosians lynch suspected kidnapper, arrest four

MAY 7, 2014 BY ENIOLA AKINKUOTU 6 COMMENTS

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The victim and the scene of the lynching

Like a scene from a horror movie, residents of Abule Egba, a suburb of Lagos State, grabbed an elderly woman suspected of kidnapping two children and descended on her on Tuesday.

The angry mob, mostly male youths, hit the woman with sticks, stones and other weapons and tortured her for over 30 minutes.

In a video clip made available to *PUNCH Metro*, the woman pleaded with the mob and begged for her life. She was, however, stripped naked and kicked into a nearby gutter.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the mob picked

her from the gutter, laid her on the road, put a tyre round her neck, got a keg of petrol and set her ablaze.

It was learnt that when policemen from the Oke-Odo Police Division arrived at the scene, it was too late as the unidentified woman was already dead.

Our correspondent learnt that as the police attempted to put out the flames, the youths pounced on them and a free-for-all ensued.

The policemen were said to have fired teargas and bullets before the youths fled.

When our correspondent visited the scene on Ekor Road around 11am, smoke was still billowing from the tyres, while the stench of burnt flesh pervaded the area.

Residents told our correspondent that the woman had attempted to steal two children when she was accosted by the mother of the kids.

A resident, identified only as Daniel, said, "Around 8am, a woman was walking her children to school. The woman was behind while her kids walked ahead of her.

"On getting to Army Children's School junction, the kidnapper, who thought the children were walking alone, attempted to snatch one of them. The mother of the kids immediately raised the alarm.

"The kidnapper was beaten up and she confessed that she had a Jeep nearby where she was going to put the child. A car key was found in her possession.

"As she was being beaten, someone claimed that two dead children were found in a jeep nearby. This infuriated the crowd and they pounced on her."

PUNCH Metro investigations later revealed that no dead child was found in any vehicle.



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Our correspondent learnt that an hour after the woman was lynched; another man was arrested by an irate mob at Ile Iwe Bus Stop, less than a kilometre from the first incident.

The mob beat up the man and they were about to set him ablaze when policemen from the Meiran Police Division, which is about 150 metres away from the scene, rescued him.

The irate mob also attacked the policemen and chased them to the station.

They also threatened to burn down the station, but the police fired tear gas canisters to disperse them.

A policeman at the station, who spoke to our correspondent on condition of anonymity, said the residents were just being paranoid.

He said, "The man was going to be lynched for nothing. The mob said the man was looking suspicious and they thought he was a kidnapper. When his bag was searched, it was filled with *Rhapsody of Realities*, Bibles and an unidentified chemical. There were about five torchlights in the bag as well. That is not enough to lynch someone."

Our correspondent, who also visited the Oke Odo Police Division, learnt that three suspected kidnappers were arrested on Monday and Tuesday.

It was learnt that one of the suspects was arrested while allegedly trying to kidnap two children at a school. The residents attempted to lynch him, but he was rescued by the police and transferred to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad.

When our correspondent was about to leave the police station, the policemen brought in another suspected kidnapper who was about to be lynched.

The Divisional Police Officer, CSP Vera, while addressing a crowd, urged residents to stop lynching suspects as some of them could be innocent.

Residents, however, told our correspondent that a kidnappers' den had been discovered beside a canal on Ekor Road.

A youth, who led our correspondent into a tunnel, claimed kidnappers had turned the place into a hideout where they kept their victims.

The claim could, however, not be verified.

Police Public Relations Officer, Ngozi Braide, confirmed the arrest of one of the suspected kidnappers, adding that he had been transferred to SARS for investigations.

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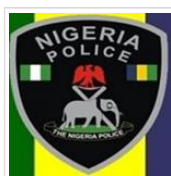
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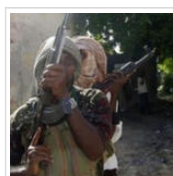
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