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Why we killed Newswatch editor – Robbery suspects

OCTOBER 22, 2014 BY OLALEYE ALUKO 33 COMMENTS

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The suspects with recovered ammunition

| credits: Olaleye Aluko

The Lagos State Police Command on Tuesday paraded a robbery gang, which confessed to have killed a former Assistant Editor of the *Newswatch* newspapers, Mr. Toyin Obadina, in one of their operations.

PUNCH Metro had reported on Monday, February 3, that some gunmen in two Sports Utility Vehicles shot Obadina in the Ikorodu area of Lagos around 1am. It had also been reported that 50-year-old Obadina, who hailed from Ogun State, died the following day during a surgery to remove the bullets lodged in his stomach.

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According to the police, four suspects: Adeshina Festus, Sunday Samuel, Ibrahim Adeokin and Babatunde Makinde were arrested while two others-identified simply as Oke and Benjamin- were killed by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad during another operation.

Our correspondent learnt that the gang was arrested in its hideout in Ajelogo, Mile 12 on Thursday, October 17 following a tip-off.

During interrogation, the suspects confessed to the police that they were responsible for the killing of the owner of a Toyota Salon car with number plate, AKD 701 CE. The gang confessed to have snatched the vehicle at the **Lucky Fibre area, Ikorodu** on Friday, February 1, and abandoned the corpse of the owner at about 1am.

The police thereafter discovered that the victim was Obadina, the *Newswatch* Assistant Editor.

Speaking with *PUNCH Metro* on Tuesday, the suspects said Oke, their gang leader, had shot the editor because he (Obadina) 'struggled' with the gang over his laptop.

Festus, 21, said, "On that night, I drove one of the two SUVs. When the man was approaching, we blocked his vehicle at a bad portion of the Ikorodu Road. After he was forced to stop, our ring leaders in the other vehicle, Oke and Benjamin, went to meet him.

"I and the others stayed back. As this went on, we noticed that an argument ensued between them, and Oke shot him. The editor probably felt only the two robbers were at the spot, and he was trying to defend himself.

"I joined the gang for operations around January. We have gone on about three operations. We operated on Itamaga Road, Ikorodu Road and Ishaga. Our robbery was only on the highway. I was working as a commercial driver before I joined the gang. It was Oke who brought the two guns that we were using. We usually started from around 8pm till midnight. We were six in the gang."

Samuel, 22, from Udu, Delta State, added that Oke wanted Obadina to part with his laptop, and a struggle had ensued.

He said, "Oke our leader had carried the journalist's laptop, and the man dragged the property with him. In

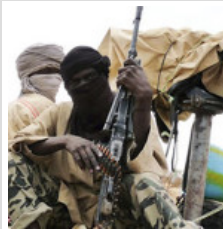
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annoyance, he shot him in the chest. I was part of the gang. I was inside the second vehicle. Oke and Benjamin were inside the Toyota Sienna that blocked the journalist's vehicle.

"After shooting the journalist, we immediately drove away. We were all furious with Oke for shooting him. But we were afraid so that he would not shoot us too because he was a violent man. He had shot Babatunde before. After two weeks, we went again to Mile 12 for another robbery, and it was in the process that the police caught us, and they killed Oke during that operation."

Our correspondent learnt that two other robbery suspects linked to the gang, identified simply as Olasheu and Omo Alhaja, were still at large.

The Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Cornelius Aderanti, said despite the fact that investigations into the murder took months, the police were able to eventually apprehend the suspects.

He said, "We were able to recover two locally-made single-barrelled guns, 12 rounds of live cartridges, one Nissan Xterra and one Toyota Yaris car from the gang. The suspects were apprehended by a team of crack detectives led by Operations Commander, SARS, Abba Kyari.


"Like in all climes, investigations can drag on for years, but eventually the suspects will be hunted down. Therefore, the police have been able to round up the people behind this unfortunate incident. They will be made to pay for their deeds."

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