

I wish I was killed like my friend during operation

-Robbery suspect

From where he sat in the midst of other suspects, he was looking so depressed as his eyes rolled from one side to the other. Understandably, a few days earlier, he was a man many of those interrogating him would dread seeing, especially while on duty, but suffice it to say the table has turned.

Among several other suspects that were paraded by the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Fatai Owoseni, recently, Sulaimon Savage appeared so disturbed, as he says he would never go back into robbery if he could regain his freedom. After he had admittedly spearheaded

several robbery operations in the state, the 32-year-old says he wished he had been killed like his friend during the operation that brought him to the station, if that was the only way he could avoid the shame of appearing before everyone, especially the cameras.

Savage, who claims to be a carpenter, met his Waterloo on November 29, 2015 while he and three of his colleagues were carrying out a robbery operation in traffic around Omole Phase I Estate in the Ojodu area of the state.

He explains that he and his gang members had planned to go out for operation but that his colleague, Akeem, who introduced him to the business, said he needed money, thus, they had to go out for a "quick operation" that afternoon around 2pm.

The Police commissioner told journalists that policemen from the Ojodu division moved to the scene of the robbery after a tip-off. He noted that the suspects opened fire on the police team which responded in kind. In the process, one of the suspects fell. He noted that while one other was arrested, two others escaped.

Exhibits recovered from the suspects included two locally-made pistols, six live cartridges and one expended cartridge.

Savage, who appeared calm but unhappy, told *Saturday PUNCH* that he had been into armed robbery since 2013 and that many of his friends who had been caught were already serving jail terms. He explained that he joined the gang to raise money to buy his carpentry equipment and construct a tent that he could use as a shop.

One of the items our correspondents

of us went out for the operation that day and we were on two motorcycles. It was in traffic around 2pm around Omole Phase I. Initially, our plan was to go for operation in the night, but my friend, Akeem, said he needed money, so we had to go out that afternoon, to rob and raise some money. "We had robbed like three people from whom we collected phones and other valuables, but when policemen came, two of us escaped, Akeem was killed while I surrendered. I have been in this business since 2013 but I have lost count of how many operations I have done or how much money I have made. Akeem introduced me into the business and I couldn't resist the offer then because I needed money."

Police sources said the suspect had bought a Volkswagen Golf from his proceeds in previous operations, and that

the car was already in police custody.

Savage explained that they had robbed several other persons in traffic and that their mode of operation was to show their guns to their victims, who would wind down and surrender their valuables. He added that the phones he had collected that day were collected from him and returned to the owners by the policemen.

The suspect, who is married with two children, said because of the shame in parading him in public, he wished he was killed alongside his friend. "If I had been killed, I would have gone and I won't be put to shame like this (in front of cameras). If I come out of this, I will never go back into robbery," he said.

I robbed my boss to pay my mum's hospital bill - Housemaid

arrested as an accomplice in the crime.

Both of them were paraded with other suspects by the Lagos State police commissioner, Fatai Owoseni.

Before her arrest, Chukwu said she was employed as a maid by a couple who both work with reputable companies and live in Ikorodu area of the state. She explained that her mother had been sick for some time but that she and her siblings

means to raise the money," she said.

She explained that she stole their belongings comprising nine tablets and their chargers, one digital camera, four mobile phones, one international passport and two bags, all of which she said she handed over to her brother to sell and use the proceeds to pay for their mother's hospital bill, which she gave as N500,000.

She said, "I took the items from my madam's house because of my mum's sickness. I wanted my brother to sell them and use the money to pay for the hospital bill of my mum, who is in Onueke in Ebonyi State. It was when my brother came to Lagos from his school in Abia State that he told me how serious the sickness was. So, I took the



•Savage. Photo: Tunde Ajaja



•Gloria and Nnamdi Photo: Tunde Ajaja

Tunde Ajaja