

CITY ROUND

I helped E-money kidnap rich people but he left me poor – Suspect arrested by IRT

Published May 9, 2020



Ifeanyi Asiegbuelam

Jesusegun Alagbe

A suspect, Ifeanyi Asiegbuelam, has narrated how he helped the late billionaire kidnapper, Collins Ezenwa, popularly known as E-money, to kidnap many rich people from the South-East, especially in Imo and Abia states.

However, Asiegbuelam, 32, lamented that despite aiding Ezenwa to perpetrate the crimes, he did not make him rich.

Ezenwa, a dismissed police corporal, was killed in January 2018 during a gun duel with policemen attached to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad of the Imo State Police Command when he attempted to kidnap a South-African-based Nigerian businessman in Owerri.

More than 13 buildings including a hotel, belonging to the late kidnapper were reportedly traced by operatives of the Inspector-General of Police Intelligence Response Team to Abia, Imo and Enugu states, while seven cars, two SUVs, one Hilux truck, a commercial bus, two tipper-lorries and a trailer belonging to him were also recovered from several locations within the South-East.

Asiegbuelam, who was arrested recently by policemen in Cross Rivers State and handed over to IRT operatives, claimed that he met E-money, who was killed alongside two other gang members, five years before he joined the Nigeria Police Force.

He said they were both motorcycle operators in Owerri before E-money joined the police.

Speaking to *City Round* during the week, Asiegbuelam, a primary school dropout from Atah town, Ikeduru Local Government Area of Imo State, said he lost his father while he was young and later had to live with his uncle in the North.

After some years, the suspect said he returned to Owerri to become a commercial motorcyclist.

He said, “Few years into the trade, I met E-money in Owerri and he was also an okada rider at the time. E-money and I became very close friends.

“We did the job for five years before he joined the police. He asked me to join him but I told him I had no school certificate. He went ahead to join the police and started driving police vehicles around Owerri.”

Asiegbuelam said after a while, he stopped seeing E-money in town and that later in 2017, he heard that E-money had travelled out of the country.

He said, “But a few weeks later in the same year, he showed up in my house in a dark-tinted Toyota Prado SUV, and there he invited me to join his kidnapping enterprise. On the first operation I went with him, we drove to Okigwe, where we kidnapped a man in his car.

READ ALSO: My sister was coming to see me when she was killed –Ilami, sibling of murdered UNIPORT student

“We accosted the vehicle and dragged the man out of the vehicle and took him into our own vehicle; then we zoomed off. E-money then asked me to blindfold the victim and when we got close to my town, E-money asked to come down from his SUV and he gave me N50,000. I didn’t question him and he drove the man away. I didn’t know where he took the man to, number of days the man spent with him, how he negotiated and collected his ransom.”

The suspect said he escaped to a bush on the day E-money was killed by the police, adding that he stayed in Owerri for two months after the incident.

He said, “Then I got a call from Ugo, who kept one of E-money’s rifles and we formed a new gang. But on our first operation, we had trouble. Some policemen accosted us and a shootout ensued. Ugo’s friend was killed. Ugo escaped but Chimobi and I were arrested. Chimobi sustained a bullet wound in the process and we were kept in an open-cell in handcuffs. I wouldn’t know how Chimobi got the keys to our handcuffs and we escaped again from police custody.

“I ran to Port Harcourt and stayed there for more than one year; then I moved to Calabar when I felt the police were closing in on me in Port Harcourt. I lived in Calabar for seven months with a friend who I met in Port Harcourt and we worked on a farm. I was arrested in my friend’s house and taken to Owerri before I was brought back to Lagos and handed over to the IRT. It was after my last arrest that I realised that E-money made so much money from our business and left me a poor man begging for money.”