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How robbers brought sorrow, grief to Ekiti

Wole Balogun, Ado Ekiti

When on Tuesday, May 16, 2018, Mr. Peter Adebayo, 32, a police officer attached to the Chairman, Ekiti South West Local Government, Olanrewaju Omolase and late Mr. David Adeyemi Otitoju, 30, an official of an old generation bank in Ilawe-Ekiti, in Ekiti West LG, set out from their respective homes for the day's work, little did they know there was tragedy lurking around for them at the offices.

They would never have thought that the end would come, through bullets that cruelly dispatched them to early grave. Armed robbers, who had come for the money delivered into the bank by a bullion van around 2pm on the fateful day, had shot at the two, during an operation that sent shock waves to residents of the town.

The robbers blew up the bank's security door to make way for their entry and eventual looting of its treasury. Hours after, when Daily Sun visited the town, palpable gloom still enveloped it as everyone on sight wore sad faces.

Photographs of both Otitoju and Adebayo with short notice announcing dates of their burials in both Ikole-Ekiti and Oye West LGAs respectively were pasted on the wall of the bank. Sympathisers gathered in front of the bank to see the faces of the deceased. While some were expressed shock, others cursed the gunmen who had sent them to early grave.

From their discussion, it was gathered that Adebayo, from Oye West LGA was not in uniform when he met his death. What probably gave him away as security personnel was his possession of his pistol:

"The Corporal had dropped off the LGA chairman and returned to the police post in front of the bank at the other side of the road. He was charging his phone in the security office of the bank when the men of the underworld struck. The pistol he had must have given him away and made the robbers to take several shots at him, thereby killing him," one of the residents said.

Mrs. Adunni Omowale, a retired teacher, who said her residence is about half a kilometre to the premises of the bank, still looked terrified as she narrated: "At about 3pm that day, we were shocked on hearing a thunderous sound of what we later knew to be a dynamite used by the robbers to blast the bank that they robbed.

"Several deafening sounds followed and everyone scampered for safety. We also heard several gun shots and the whole incident was like what you could only imagined would happen in a war movie typical of the Hollywood products."

Daniel Adigun, who has a shop about a kilometre to the bank premises said: "The robbers must have had a prior and accurate knowledge of the arrival of the bullion van that delivered some huge cash to the bank. This is because they attacked the bank barely an hour after the van had left. What is, however, most disheartening is that they operated for almost an hour without any security agents retaliating.

"Those who were shot dead, I mean the police and one of the workers in the bank, were really unfortunate as those robbers must have seen them as hindrance on their way. Another bank worker was also reportedly shot by the bandits in the arm.

"Robbery of banks seems to have returned to the state because of political development in the state. You know this Tuesday robbery happened barely a month after another old generation bank was attacked in Ifaki-Ekiti in which a police inspector was killed. "We urge the security agents to rise up to this challenge as this tragic incidents may continue till the July 14 election as these evil people know that politicians would be bringing huge money into the state and save such in the banks in the state."

The unfortunate incident had occurred a few metres to the palace of the Alawe of Ilawe-Ekiti, Oba Adebajji Alabi, who expressed shock at the development: "It was a terrible experience, my palace is very close to the bank. It was terrifying it was like a war front. They kept detonating grenades during the attack. The attack happened more than one hour after a bullion van delivered cash to the bank.

Confirming the deaths of Otitoju and Adebayo, Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of Ekiti State Command, DSP Ikechukwu Caleb, said: "Investigation is on going and is being headed a Deputy Commissioner of Police from the state command who is reporting to the Commissioner of Police daily basis.


"We are leaving no stone unturned in apprehending the criminals and we have already in place measures to fortify all banks in the state. Also, we have patrol team made up of men of SARS, PMF, and police who are on a 24-hour surveillance around the four borders of the state and other flash points.

"We are trailing the robbers and like the Offa bank robbery we are on their rail and we will get them. The public also should help the police with useful information, because security issues are matters of the public."

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