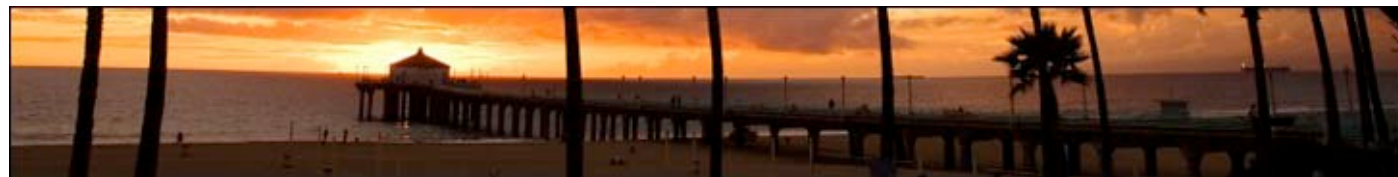


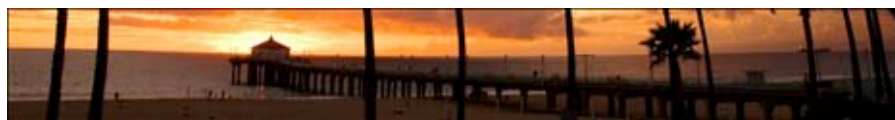
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THIS DAY

**Nigeria: Policeman Runs Amok, Kills Colleague**

Emmanuel Ugwu

20 July 2011

Recommander

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It was a string of bizarre occurrences on Monday: a policeman went amok in Abia State killing his colleague and a Lagos politician drowned in the lagoon in what looked like suicide.

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In Umuahia, the Abia State capital, a police corporal, Clement Amachi, from Ohanku in Ukwa East Local Government Area of the state, was shot dead at close range by another corporal, Umaru Mohammed.

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And in Lagos, life came to a screeching halt for Mr. Al-Mustaim Alade Abaniwonda, 56, who only last April was the Lagos East senatorial candidate for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), when he allegedly jumped into the Lagoon at Leventis Bus Stop, Marina and got drowned for yet-to-be-ascertained causes.

His name was among the 10 submitted to the Presidency by the state PDP after the April

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polls for ministerial consideration. But he was not appointed.

The Lagos State Police Command has said that it has commenced investigation into the death of Abaniwonda purported to have committed suicide by drowning.

At the site of the incident Tuesday, the marine police and some private divers who were engaged to recover his corpse were still combing the seabed in search for the body.

As at press time, THISDAY gathered that after several hours of fruitless search, his family went back home to await the recovery of the corpse from the divers.

Simply identified as Wasiu, the deceased's driver had disclosed that they were coming from a bank on Lagos Island when the deceased said he needed to use the toilet.

He claimed that all the entreaties he made for his boss to exercise patience till they get to the office located on Broad Street were ignored.

He said that was all he knew until he heard people shouting over the plunge his boss took.

Faulting claims that his boss committed suicide, the driver said when he got to the lagoon, the deceased was still struggling but later got sucked into the water.

The driver has since been arrested by the police officers attached to the Marine Police Division.

However, one of the mobile toilet operators said they were on ground when the deceased walked up to them demanding the use of one of the mobile toilets.

While they went to get the key and water for him, they claimed he left and walked towards the lagoon.

According to the report from a senior police officer, who claimed anonymity, the deceased took off his jacket, wristwatch and wallet before making for the lagoon.

He added that when he dived into the water, the mobile toilet operators threw a floater and tyre at him but the deceased declined to use them.

Rather, he was said to have moved deeper into the lagoon, obviously declining their help.

Also efforts to bring him out when a flying boat came around were aborted as he was said to have hidden from view on sighting the rescue team.

THISDAY gathered that the deceased's son, who came to the scene of the incident with his

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siblings, disclosed that nothing in his father's mood suggested that he was about to commit suicide.

He added that their mother even celebrated her birthday the previous day and he was cheerful.

Confirming the incident, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Jinadu Samuel, a deputy superintendent of police, told THISDAY that efforts were still being made to recover the body.

Meanwhile, in the shooting incident in the Abia Government House, Mohammed and Amachi were attached to the security team of Governor Theodore Orji and had always ridden together in the pilot security van that leads the governor's convoy.

THISDAY learnt that the shooting occurred shortly after midnight when Mohammed, who ought to have left for Police College, Oji River on Monday for promotional training course went to the house of the deceased at Okpara Avenue, GRA, knocked on his door and shot him dead immediately the door was opened for him.

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But it did not end there. Eyewitnesses said that after the killing, the trigger happy officer embarked on a shooting spree firing at every direction and shouting "if you are a soldier come out, everybody come out" thereby sending his fellow security officers scampering for safety.

From Okpara Avenue end of the Government House, Mohammed, who was dressed in a flowing gown and turban, shot his way into the main gate of Government House targeting soldiers and policemen stationed there.

"It appeared his (Mohammed's) aim was to kill as many officers as he could," said a police officer who witnessed the incident, adding that "everybody avoided being hit by the flying bullets".

While the shooting lasted, residents of Government Reservation Area (GRA) were forced to end their sleep as sounds of gunfire tore through the still air of the night. There was panic in the Government House and all the surrounding areas.

What could have been carnage was averted when Mohammed was eventually overpowered by a courageous constable, but instead of heeding his call for assistance to subdue Mohammed, other policemen and soldiers were firing.

Afraid of being killed, the officer wrestling with Mohammed abandoned him and ran for his own life. Having got a respite, Mohammed was said to have sprang up and grabbed his AK

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47 and started another round of shootings but he was finally incapacitated when bullets hit him on the chest and back.

Head of Accident and Emergency Department of the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Umuahia, Dr. Uche Aguocha, told newsmen that Mohammed was brought to the hospital unconscious.

Aguocha said the deceased, whose body was brought in and deposited at the FMC mortuary was brought in dead, having been shot in the head, adding that the dead officer was shot at a very close range with the intention to kill him instantly.

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"From the type of injury on the one who was shot in the head, there was no chance of survival," he said.

The state PPRO, Geoffrey Ogbonna, an assistant superintendent of police, confirmed the incident, saying that the police had launched investigations into the matter.

At a press briefing at the Government House, a media aide to the governor, Mr. Ugochukwu Emezue, said that what happened was a "personal matter" between the officers concerned, adding that Governor Orji was already addressing the issue.

He said that Mohammed's killing was a condemnable act and that government had commiserated with the family of the deceased.

According to him, the governor was holding a security meeting with the relevant security agencies to address the situation.

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