

Police kill bus driver over N50 bribe

By Simon Ebegbulem

BENIN—TRAGEDY struck yesterday at Ugbowo area of Benin City when a driver was shot dead while three passengers and a driver of another commercial bus sustained gunshot injuries after some Mobile Policemen attached to the Highway police patrol opened fire on the vehicle because of the alleged refusal of the driver to give bribe of N50.

There was pandemonium in the area as commercial drivers in the ancient city embarked on a protest for over three hours which disrupted commercial activities in the city, as they demanded for the prosecution of the policemen involved in the dastard act.

Meanwhile, the state Police Commissioner, Mr. Muktar Abass who described the incident as "unbelievable", hinted that six of the police patrol men involved in the matter have been arrested and detained at the state police command.

It was learnt that the incident which occurred at about 8am yesterday morning opposite the University of Benin (UNIBEN) gate, happened when the policemen ordered the driver to stop and demanded for some money before he could be allowed to pass.

An eyewitness told *Vanguard* that the driver however, explained that he had paid N50 some minutes ago when he passed the route and pleaded that he should be allowed to go. One of the patrol men was said to have refused and ordered him to drop the money or park his vehicle and discharge his passengers until he is able to get the money.

According to an eyewitness "we were watching the argument from a distance. The driver was still inside the bus, he stretched out his hand and one of the policemen moved and collected the money not knowing that it was N20 instead of N50. When he opened his hand and saw that it was N20.00, he moved closer to the driver and slapped him. At this point, other drivers intervened and told the policemen to leave their colleague alone since he did not commit any offence. The policemen refused and insisted that the driver insulted them by giving them less than the required amount. They said he was not truthful and would be made to waste a whole day at the checkpoint after which they will take him to the nearest police station.

"It was in the midst of this confrontation that one of the highway police opened fire and shot the driver. He died on the spot."