

Hit and run driver kills policeman at Ikeja

By Kingsley Adegboye

PERHAPS there is no good Samaritan in Lagos again. This was the general feeling, yesterday, at Ikeja, Lagos when a light complexioned man believed to be a police officer was allegedly knocked down by a "hit and run" driver and allowed to die as there was no body willing to take him to the hospital.

The man who was in plain clothes was said to be returning home after night duty on Monday. He reportedly walked from "Ikeja Inside" to the expressway by railway crossing to board a vehicle home. He was, however, knocked down by the 'hit and run' driver while crossing to the opposite side of the busy expressway toward Oshodi. The incident happened around 6a.m. on Tuesday.

Eye witnesses, who spoke to *News Extra* on condition of anonymity, said the man who was searched and found with police identity card, did not die immediately. According to them, "When the incident happened around 6a.m. this morning, the man did not die instantly. He was still breathing, but he later died when nobody volunteered to rush him to the hospital.

"In fact, we even heard that after identifying the man to be a policeman, somebody went to the police station behind the railway crossing near Ikeja Local Government Council to report that one of their colleagues was knocked down by a hit and run driver, but the station did not send anybody or officer to rush the man to the hospital, and that was how the man died," they explained.

At about 12 noon when our correspondent visited the scene, the fresh lifeless body of the light complexion man was still lying in the pool of his own blood. The man whose names could not be ascertained had his left canvass shoe out of his foot and a black bag lying by his body at the middle of the expressway near the pedestrian bridge. The body had become a spectacle to passers-by around the bus stop, as they looked and shook their heads while passing hurriedly.

Directly under the pedestrian bridge towards Oshodi is the duty post of officers of the Lagos State Transport Management Authority (LASTMA).

But the officers in charge of traffic control at the bus stop were rather too hostile to our man when asked a question about the corpse lying directly in front of them. *News Extra* wanted to know the plans they had to remove the corpse as agents of Lagos State Government, since everybody felt unconcerned about it?

They reacted by saying that their duty on the road is primarily to control traffic and not to evacuate dead bodies, adding that *News Extra* should direct questions at the police.

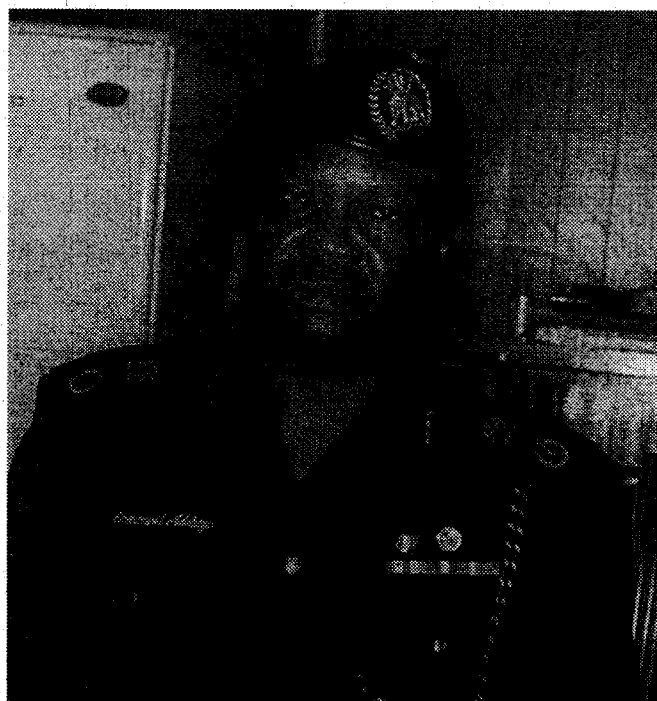
The lack of regard for life has become a lifestyle in Lagos. A situation where people derive pleasure in watching their fellow human beings die helplessly when they are knocked down by 'hit and run' drivers is indeed worrisome.

Some cases of commuters being knocked down can be traced to the recklessness of drivers, particularly the commercial ones. At other times, the blame should be laid on the commuters who cross the express roads without caring about their well-being.

The more worrisome aspect of the situation is that whenever somebody is knocked down, passers-by or people waiting for vehicles along the road will just gather around the victim and watch him or her die in pains rather than help to rush the victim to the nearest hospital in order to save his or her life. One will normally hear them passing all sorts of comments while watching the helpless victim dying, and the moment he or she passes on, what you will hear is: "Oh, he is dead" simultaneously and everybody will go his or her way.

News Extra made attempts to get Mr. Bode Ojajuni, the Lagos State Police Public

Relations Officer (PPRO) on phone to confirm the incident but the efforts proved abortive, as he couldn't be reached.



Lagos State Police Commissioner, Mr. Emmanuel Adebayo.

Daughter of late ex-Biafran police officer delivers baby boy while waiting for father's pension

By George Onah

PORT HARCOURT—A NEXT-OF-KIN of a dead ex-Biafran police officer, who had waited for five days for her father's gratuity and pension arrears, while sleeping in the cold, gave birth to a baby boy in an open field, at Delta Park, University of Port Harcourt, last weekend.

Pensioners at the place have christened the child, "Pencom", (Pension Commission).

News Extra gathered that, the woman suddenly screamed and slipped gently from the plastic chair she was sitting, falling into labour immediately. Her condition prompted other women to hurry, forming a ring around her. Most of the women wearing two wrappers, untied one and screened her from on-look-

ers.

Shortly afterwards, she was delivered of a boy, who gave a shrilled cry, causing the Pencom officials and other pensioners to sing praises to God. Both mother and child were then taken in a car, provided by another NOK, to the nearby Teaching Hospital of the institution, situated in Uni-Park.

But later in the evening, one of the policemen, who allegedly retired from the force in 2002, collapsed and was presumed dead while being carried to the hospital. He had equally arrived Port Harcourt five days earlier.

Simply identified as Sgt. Otuekong, from Akwa Ibom State, the man was said to have complained of hunger and cold the previous evening, while camping under

the tree at the venue of the exercise. His fellow retirees were said to have offered assistance by way of buying him food and some pain relievers to cushion his troubled soul. He, however, relapsed into the illness and could not survive the problem. A medical staff at the casualty ward of the hospital, who did not want his name mentioned told *News Extra* that "The man was brought in dead 'bid' and there was little we could do to help him."

While some of the senior citizens praised the government for the payment, others rained abuses and curses at those behind the delay in affording them their entitlements. There were those who said they "retired about five years ago, 2002, only for us to collect our money now"...

Grand daughter seeks pardon for UK's last convicted witch

THE grand-daughter of a psychic "medium" convicted of being a witch in Britain during World War II has begun a second campaign to gain a posthumous pardon for Helen Duncan.

"I will carry on fighting to clear her name," said Mary Martin, who still vividly remembers being teased on the playground in 1944 as "witch spawn." Duncan was a psychic who held seances across Britain during the height of the war. She was arrested, tried and convicted of witchcraft and being a threat to the nation after she disclosed — allegedly through contacts in

the spirit world — the sinking of two British warships long before the news was made public. Duncan also told the parents of a missing sailor his ship, HMS Barham, had sunk.

Also true, but to keep morale high, the sinking was not announced.

Officials said they feared she would reveal secrets of the D-Day landing in France. Duncan was jailed for nine months. "The memories are still fresh. It was so unfair. She was totally innocent. It was ludicrous she was ever taken to court," the 72-year-old Martin said. Martin said wartime leader Winston Churchill

called the conviction "tom-foolery".

Churchill repealed the 1735 witchcraft act when re-elected in 1951, but Duncan's conviction was never quashed. She died in 1956.

Martin petitioned Britain's Home Secretary (Interior Minister) in 1999, but to no avail.

Now she is determined to try again with support from Gordon Prestoungrange, holder of a medieval Scottish barony.

In 2004 he used his position as the local baron in the coastal town of Prestonpans to pardon 81 women and men executed for witchcraft in the 16th and 17th centuries.