

Two Policemen, robber die in gun duel

By Chidi Nkwopara

OWERRI—ABOUT two policemen accompanying a commercial bank's bullion van and a suspected armed robber, were Thursday morning felled at Ulakwo Junction in a crossfire between the police and a gang of dare devil robbers who laid siege along the ever-busy Owerri-Aba federal highway.

According to *Vanguard* investigations, the bullion van and its police escort were travelling to Owerri from Aba, the commercial nerve centre of Abia State, when they ran into the hoodlum's ambush at about 10am. It was further gathered that when the gangsters laid siege on the bad portion of the federal highway, they sent an early warning to the commercial

motorcyclists operating in the vicinity that robbers were operating in the area. One of the motorcyclists, who spoke to Vanguard on strict grounds of anonymity, disclosed that his colleagues and himself, took the early warning with a pinch of salt as they wondered how robbers could be said to be operating without the usual gun shot associated with their nefarious act.

"We were warned by some strange persons that armed robbers were operating in the vicinity. We did not take the information serious because we didn't see any such action going on at the material time", the man said.

Asked to explain how the robbers managed to trap the bullion van and its escorts, the commercial motorcyclist

said that "they were carrying a Merck truck with registration number ENUGU XE 399 ENU, suspected to be carrying some quantity of petroleum product from Aba and was heading towards Owerri and on getting to the bad spot, all the vehicles slowed down".

Continuing, he said that on sighting the bullion van, the robbers opened fire and instantly killed at least two policemen, while some others in the convoy may have been badly hit by the hot lead. A badly shaken woman who simply identified herself as Adaku, lamented that the dare devil robbers operated uninterrupted for about two hours and carted away huge sums of money from the wrecked bullion van before making good their escape.