

Villagers desert town as assassins kill Ewu Prince

By Femi Adisa

A ten-year-old struggle to succeed the late Onogie of Ewu, Iselell, turned bizarre in the sleepy town of Ewu, Esan Central Local Government Area of Edo State when, last Thursday, April 26, Prince Niniwani Ojeifo was assassinated, even as his eldest sister, Princess Asimahu Ajise, nee Ojeifo who died on April 5, was slated for burial Friday April, 27.

The assassination, which occurred at about 8pm Thursday night, has caused panic in the town as Police detectives from the State Criminal Investigations Department have swooped on Ewu with a view to unraveling the identities of those behind the dastardly act.

The town has been deserted as most youths and elderly men have fled into the bush while the grandson to the Late Onogie, Prince Rasak Ojeifo, a claimant to the throne, was immediately arrested last week Friday night as a suspect.

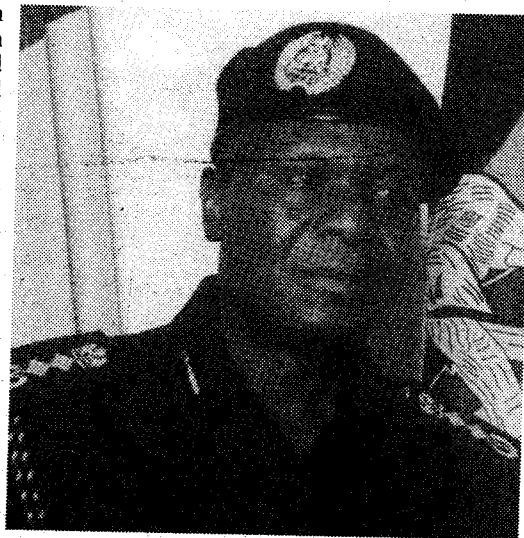
"... that Niniwani was their target because of the visible marks which every Prince in Ewu carries, they shot him at the back of the head."

Eyewitness account said the assassins struck at about 8pm on Thursday night and used a brown pickup van to intercept the black Mercedes Benz 230 Saloon car in which Niniwani Ojeifo and his in-law were traveling with.

The assailants immediately ordered them to lie face down and after establishing that Niniwani was their target because of the visible marks which every Prince in Ewu carries, they shot him at the back of the head. The young Prince, who worked at Bendel Feed Mill Factory at Ewu, died almost immediately and was pronounced dead by medical officers at Irrua Specialist Hospital where he was rushed to at about 9pm. The killers, thereafter, drove the Mercedes V-Booth towards Irrua on the Auchi-Benin Road and set it ablaze.

Narrating the sequence of events that lead to the assassination to *CityScope*, some elders, who sought for anonymity because of fear of their lives, alleged that certain

persons in Ewu town had decided that Princess Asimahu Ajise, the late Onogie's daughter, would not be buried at Ewu but instead should be taken to Uzogolo, a neighboring village where Prince Ja'afaru Ojeifo,



Mr. Sunday Ehindero, Police IGP

who was pronounced the rightful successor to the throne by two separate High Court judgements, is taking temporary refuge.

His Royal Highness, Prince Ja'afaru Ojeifo, is the eldest surviving son of the late Onogie, Isselele 11. His rival and contenders for the throne, Prince Rasak Ojeifo, whose father was the heir apparent and successor to the throne, died eight months before the Onogie himself died. For ten years now, Ewu has been under siege with Prince Ja'afaru and his brother taking refuge in neighboring villages following several attempts on their lives.

Prince Rasak has in two separate court judgements been restrained from parading himself or allowing himself to be paraded as the Onogie of Ewu. He was further ordered to vacate the palace. The grandson has allegedly not respected none of the court orders. A police source said Prince Rasak may be granted bail early this week as soon as detectives conclude their investigations. "This is a clean case of murder and the Police have a duty to keep people involved in murder cases and I assure you that justice will be done no matter whose ox was gored, the Police source stated.