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The Anatomy of a Gunfight



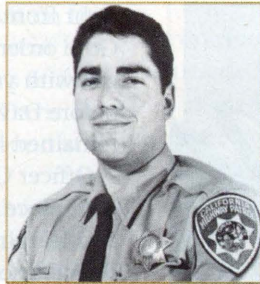
How the deadliest law enforcement shooting of the modern era changed firearms training forever.

BY MICHAEL E. WOOD

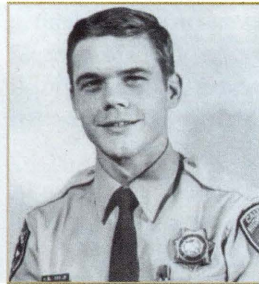




James E. Pence
Age 24



Robert D. Gore
Age 23



George M. Alleyn
Age 24



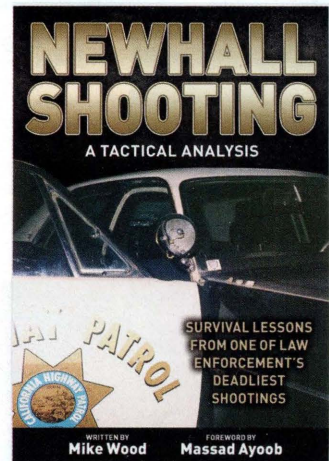
Walter C. Frago
Age 23

This is a condensed and edited excerpt from the book, "Newhall Shooting: A Tactical Analysis" by Michael E. Wood. This book is the preeminent study of the 1970 Newhall shooting in which four California Highway Patrolmen were slain. This book offers the most critical, in-depth analysis of the shooting to date, and explores the lessons learned from this event. It challenges the notion that these lessons have been fully incorporated into American law enforcement training, and examines ways in which modern law enforcement and self-defense training can be improved so that the sacrifices of these valiant officers were not in vain. It is available in ebook format and can be ordered and downloaded at www.gundigest.com or www.amazon.com.

"The slaughter of four young California Highway Patrol Officers at Newhall, in 1970, was a watershed experience in the history of American law enforcement. Newhall became the dawn of officer survival training for modern police." — Massad Ayoob

The Criminals

Bobby Augustus Davis and Jack Wright Twining were violent, career criminals who had recently been released from prison. They had befriended each other in prison, and in the wake of their release, they traveled to California, where they began to plan a series of crimes, including the



takedown and robbery of an armored car.

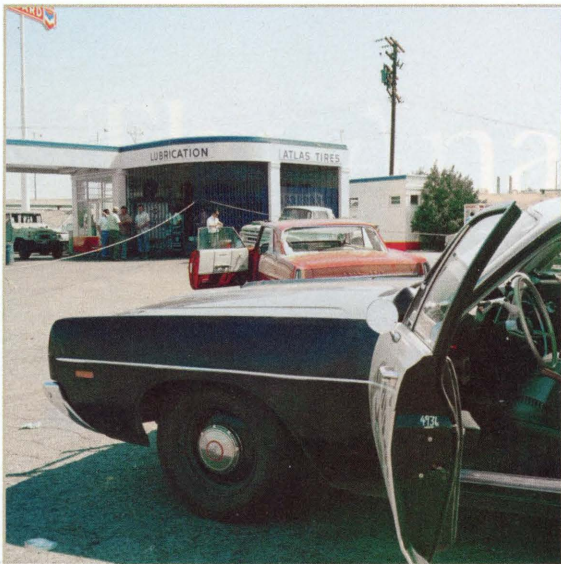
On the evening of April 5, 1970, Davis and Twining were in the coastal mountains of the Angeles National Forest,

between the towns of Gorman and Castaic, Calif. They were there for several purposes, all of which related to their planned crimes.

First Contact

When Davis brought the Pontiac to a stop, he did so in an area bathed with light from the gas station ahead and the restaurant parking lot to the right. Officers Robert Gore and Walter Frago could clearly see that the vehicle contained two occupants.

Officer Gore drew his six-inch Colt Python .357 Magnum revolver, and pointed it at the vehicle from a leaning position across the left



Officer Pence's initial fighting position as he battled Twining. In the afternoon of April 6th the Pontiac was towed back into the position where it initially stopped in the driveway of the Standard Station, to help reconstruct the scene. The narrow channel between Unit 78-12 and Unit 78-8 is where Davis advanced with the shotgun and killed Officer Alleyn with two shotgun blasts to the chest and face as he popped up at the left rear of Unit 78-8. During their escape, Davis and Twining drove the Pontiac straight ahead through the gas pump islands of the Standard Station in the background.

front fender and hood of the Dodge. Officer Frago, armed with the Remington 870 12-gauge shotgun, established a position just aft of the right front headlamp of the patrol car. Officer Gore ordered the occupants out of the car, "Get out with your hands up." He repeated it twice before Davis exited the vehicle while Twining remained in the car.

Officer Gore ordered Davis to spread his legs, place his hands on top of the Pontiac, and lean on the car. When Davis assumed the directed search position, Officer Gore advanced the short distance between them to search the suspect. Witnesses reported that Officer Gore holstered his revolver to conduct the search.

Meanwhile, Officer Frago approached the passenger side of the Gran Prix and reached for the door handle. Twining suddenly opened the door and fired twice with a four-inch Smith & Wesson Model 28 .357 Magnum revolver, striking Officer Frago in the left armpit area with both shots. The bullets from the Western-brand .357 Magnum cartridges traversed Officer

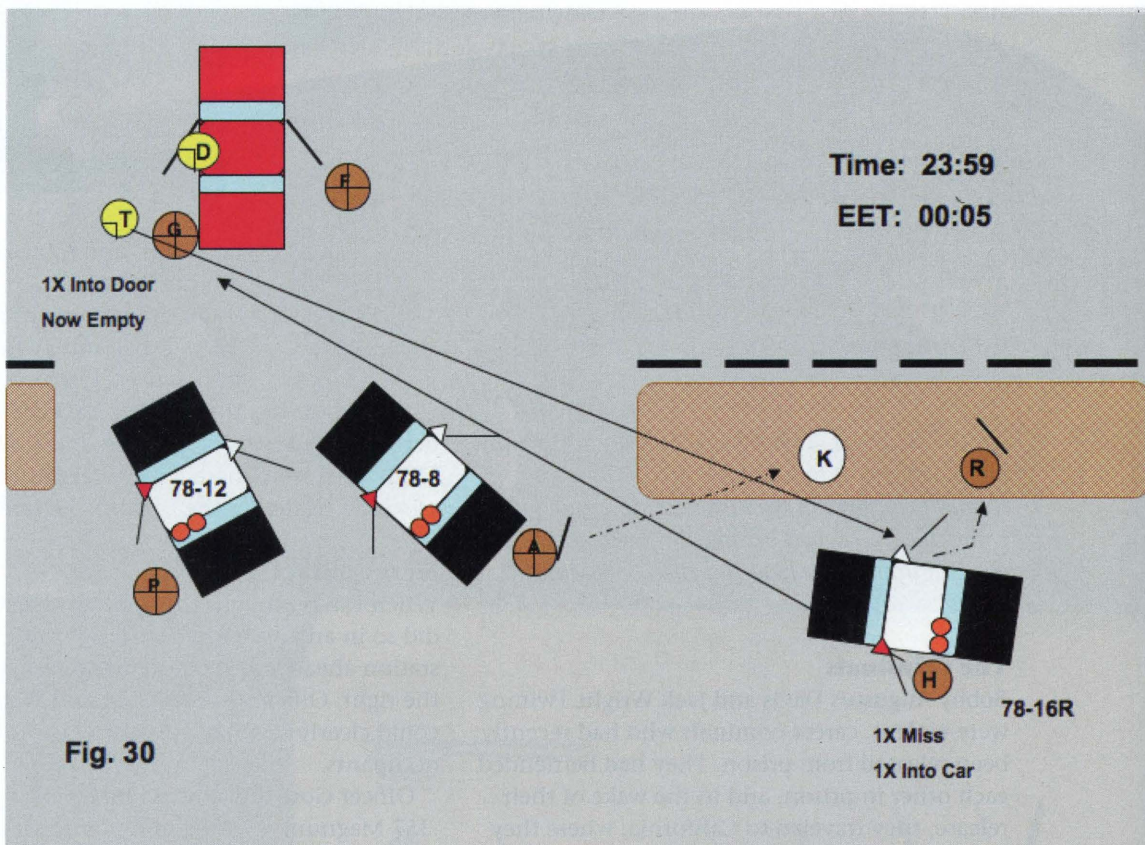


Fig. 30

The position of the shooters near the end of the gun battle. The yellow circles are Davis and Twining. The brown circles are the officers represented by the first letter of their last name. The white circle is the civilian Gary Kness and the brown rectangle is the ditch where he took cover. The long lines indicate gunfire and the broken lines show the movement of the participants.

Frago's upper chest, killing him instantly. He fell where he stood.

Twining exited the vehicle and fired two shots at Officer Gore, who was frisking Davis on the other side of the vehicle. Both shots went low, into the right rear side of the Pontiac's body and roof. Officer Gore turned away from Davis, drew his revolver, and fired a single .357 round at Twining. The shot went wide.

With Officer Gore focused on the threat across the car, Davis pushed back, spun to his right, and pulled a two-inch Smith & Wesson Model 38 Bodyguard Airweight .38 Special revolver from his waistband. Davis shot the distracted officer twice in the chest at arm's length, the bullets traveling from left front to right back.

Back-Up Arrives

As Officer Gore fell, mortally wounded, Unit 78-12 pulled into the same chokepoint as the previous vehicle. Officers James

The white spotlight of Unit 78-8 took three hits, presumably from Davis' shotgun, during the fight.

The pellets, glass and debris from the strikes probably injured Officer Alleyn as he fired from behind the door.



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The back seat of the abandoned Pontiac contained all kinds of equipment and debris, including a spotting scope and the Smith & Wesson Model 38 revolver used by Davis to kill Officer Gore. Twining's blood is evident all over the back seat, spilled from the head wound caused by Officer Alleyn's buckshot blasts, which also shattered the rear window.

Pence and George Alleyn came under immediate fire from Davis and Twining, who had moved to the front of the car for cover. Davis fired the remaining three rounds in the Model 38 revolver and Twining shot the remaining two rounds in the Model 28 revolver at the responding officers as the squad car approached.

Officer Pence grabbed the radio microphone and broadcast an urgent message to Newhall Dispatch. Davis and Twining reentered the Pontiac and armed themselves with new weapons from the back seat. Davis selected a 12-gauge pump shotgun with a sawed-off barrel and stock (loaded with six rounds of Remington-Peters 00 Buckshot), and Twining selected a Remington-Rand 1911A1 .45 ACP semi-automatic pistol loaded with a full magazine of seven, 230-grain FMJ cartridges with an eighth round in the chamber.

As Officers Pence and Alleyn exited their patrol car, Davis moved to the front of the Pontiac and fired the shotgun, raking pellets across the hood. Twining attempted to fire but the pistol failed to fire. Twining ejected a live round as another live round jammed in the pistol. He ditched it in the rear of the Pontiac.

Officer Pence exited the CHP cruiser, drew his six-inch .357 Magnum Colt Python revolver and fired as Officer Alleyn got the Remington 870 12-gauge shotgun. He rounded the back of Unit

78-8 and took up a position on the right side, behind the open passenger door.

As Officer Alleyn was moving, Twining climbed into the Pontiac and fished around in the back seat for a second Colt 1911A1 pistol. Officer Alleyn fired two rounds of Western Super-X buckshot at Twining while he was inside the Pontiac arming himself with the second 1911A1 pistol. One of the pellets from these two shells penetrated the rear window of the Pontiac and struck Twining in the forehead. The pellet did not significantly wound him, but Twining would later complain that he had a "terrible headache" from the "hunk of buckshot in my scalp."

Officer Alleyn also fired one shot from the shotgun at Davis, emptying his shotgun. Davis' shotgun was still loaded, and he fired at Officer Alleyn twice with the sawed-off shotgun, leaving a pattern of 13 pellet streaks alongside the right rear passenger door and right rear quarter panel of the CHP cruiser.

After being grazed by Officer Alleyn's shotgun pellet, Twining exited the Pontiac through the open driver's side door, firing at Officer Pence. Officer Pence fired his revolver, striking the left rear of the Pontiac.

After emptying the shotgun, Officer Alleyn retreated and ditched the empty shotgun on the ground at the rear of the patrol car. He drew his six-inch Smith & Wesson Model 19-2 .357 Magnum revolver and fired at Davis, who rounded the front of the Pontiac on the passenger's side and advanced to a position in front of and between the two CHP units with his sawed off-pump shotgun.

Officer Alleyn fired three .357 Magnum rounds at Davis from the left rear of the squad car. Witnesses indicated that he fired with a single hand, using his left hand to brace himself on the trunk. None of his bullets hit the highly mobile target that some witnesses later described as "bobbing" and "restless."

Officer Alleyn raised himself up above the trunk of Unit 78-8 and was shot in the face and chest by Davis, who had reached the front of the vehicle by this point. He attempted to prop himself up on the trunk lid of the vehicle, whereupon he was shot again in the chest by Davis. Officer Alleyn reflexively triggered a round from his revolver into the rear window and fell forward onto the trunk sliding off to his right with a total

of 10 .33-caliber 00 Buckshot pellets in his face and chest.

With his shotgun empty, Davis went to fallen Officer Frago and stripped his weapons. He placed the unfired CHP Remington 870 shotgun inside the Pontiac, along with his empty sawed-off shotgun. Armed himself with the fallen officer's six-inch Colt Officer's Model Match .38 Special revolver, he fired at the prone body of Officer Alleyn.

A Heroic Attempt

Gary Dean Kness was on his way to

work the night shift as a computer operator when he saw a pair of CHP cruisers in the parking lot and flashes of gunfire. His first thought was that a movie was being filmed on location, but as he neared the scene and saw Officer Alleyn go down, he realized it was a real gunfight.

The former Marine stopped his car, and ran about 70 yards to assist Officer Alleyn. Kness grabbed him by the gunbelt and attempted to pull him to cover, but he found he could not move him. Davis stepped around the right front of the Pontiac and

advanced on the pair.

Seeing the CHP shotgun on the ground at Officer Alleyn's feet, Mr. Kness grabbed the weapon, aimed it and pulled the trigger on an empty chamber. He racked the slide and pulled the trigger again on an empty chamber.

At the sight of the shotgun, Davis retreated to the front of the Pontiac. Once it was apparent the shotgun was empty, Davis advanced on Kness and Officer Alleyn, firing the .38-caliber revolver.

When he saw Davis retreat, Kness ditched the shotgun and tried to pull Officer Alleyn to cover. When Davis charged his position again, Kness picked up Officer Alleyn's revolver. With a two-handed grip, he fired a single round at Davis.

Kness would later report that the impact of the shot spun Davis around. Davis was later found to have two copper-jacketed fragments imbedded in the upper middle portion of his chest, so it is presumed that the bullet struck the Pontiac first and broke into pieces before it struck Davis. It was enough to cause Davis to break off the attack a second time.

Kness fired again, pulling the trigger on an empty chamber just as he heard additional shooting on his left. With two empty weapons and hearing the sound of police sirens approaching, he fled to the safety of a nearby ditch.

The Flanking Movement

As Davis exchanged gunfire with Officer Alleyn and Kness, Twining shot at Officer Pence from near the front left of the Pontiac. Twining made a wide flank to Officer Pence's left. Revolver empty, he moved to the left rear corner of the patrol car and dumped the six spent cases.

Twining advanced in the shadows as Officer Pence reloaded his empty revolver. He fired four rounds at him from the left flank, striking him twice in the legs and twice again in the lower torso. Officer Pence struggled to complete his reload and get back into the fight. Twining pressed closer and leaned over the fender of the car,

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and fired the pistol from a few feet away, hitting Officer Pence in the back of the head and killing him instantly.

Gary Kness heard Twining exclaim, "I've got you now, you dumb son of a bitch!" Twining retreated to the Pontiac while taking a revolver from Officer Gore's lifeless body. Davis had made his way around the front of the Pontiac and entered the driver's side of the vehicle to prepare for their escape.

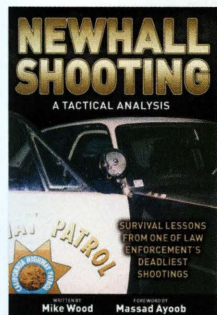
More Backup Arrives

The first unit on scene was 78-16R and as Officer Richard Robinson exited the passenger side of the patrol car with a Remington 870 shotgun, the last .45-caliber bullet from Twining's handgun hit the door of the car.

Officer Robinson hadn't seen Twining. The first man he observed was Kness, who pointed toward the fleeing felons with one hand, still clutching the empty revolver. Officer Robinson crossed the ditch and leveled his Remington 870 shotgun over the top of the fence at the escaping Pontiac, too late to fire a shot.

Officer Ed Holmes exited the driver's side and saw Twining fire at them. Holmes fired one shot at Twining with his revolver and once more through the shattered rear window of the escaping vehicle as it sped off northeast through the gas pump islands with Davis at the wheel and Twining in the rear seat.

The deadliest law enforcement shooting of the modern era was finished. It had taken four-and-a-half minutes. Learning the lessons from it would take decades. **GDTM**



This excerpt is from the new ebook, "The Newhall Shooting: A Tactical Analysis" by Michael E. Wood. It can be ordered and downloaded at www.gundigest.com or www.amazon.com.



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