



NO PHOTO AVAILABLE

WILLIAM J. DAVIS

January 5, 1928

On January 4, 1928, Inspectors William J. Davis and Jules Sterniskey went to 1712 60th Avenue in response to a call from neighbors who said that the residents kept "peculiar" hours and that there was a possibility that two of them were wanted in Los Angeles. Answering their knock on the door, a woman told the inspectors that she and her baby were alone in the house. She denied knowing the two men mentioned by the neighbors. Inspector Davis looked under the curtains of a window and saw two men inside the house. Telling Sterniskey what he saw, he went around to the back of the house.

Followed by Sterniskey, the woman retreated into the house and he lost sight of her. Apparently, she was grabbed by one of the men and pulled into a rear bedroom. Inspector Davis reached the rear door and began to pound on it. The door opened slightly and one of the men inside began shooting. Three rounds passed through the door and struck Davis. He exchanged shots with the occupants of the house.

Though wounded, Inspector Davis picked up a heavy wooden leaf from a table and used it as a shield as he attempted to force the door open. As the firefight continued, more officers arrived to help the inspectors. They could hear a man and a woman pleading with another man to drop his gun and give himself up. The man refused, and continued to fire at the officers.

Finally, he called out that he would surrender, and the two officers plunged into the house to arrest him. He met them and fired point-blank at them. They shot back and the man gave up. All three suspects were taken into custody. Inspector Davis' assailants were charged with his murder and that of an Oakland grocer they had robbed and killed on New Years Day.

During the shootout, Inspector Davis was carried out of the house by fellow officers despite his pleas to "finish the fight." He was struck once in the abdomen and twice in the hand, losing one finger.

As he was loaded into the ambulance, it was struck several times by bullets coming from inside the house. Inspector Davis spent several hours in surgery and was given a fair chance at survival, even though he had lost a great deal of blood and was in shock. Unfortunately, he suffered a blood clot near his heart as a result of his wounds.

Inspector Davis died in the late evening hours of January 5, 1928.