

# POLICE UNDER ATTACK



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## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO THE ATTACKS BY CHRISTOPHER DORNER

PREPARED BY THE POLICE FOUNDATION





The Police Foundation is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting innovation and improvement in policing through its research, evaluation, professional services, and communication programs.

Established in 1970, the Foundation is known for groundbreaking research in police behavior, policy, and procedure. It has also been praised for its ability to transfer to local agencies the best practices for dealing effectively with a range of important police operational and administrative concerns.

Through the Foundation, many researchers have entered into a lasting, constructive relationship with law enforcement. We have worked for over 40 years to build the spirit of collaboration and trust with law enforcement agencies and leaders that continue to facilitate our work.

The Police Foundation has worked with police agencies of all sizes, in every region of the United States, and throughout the world. Our work is grounded in the practical world of policing and in developing the science of policing and new ideas, strategies, and technologies to improve the quality of police service

Cover Photo: San Bernardino County Sheriff's Deputies continued a search for Christopher Dorner in a raging snowstorm. AP Photo/Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO AN “ATTACK ON OUR OWN”</b> .....	<b>9</b>
LESSONS LEARNED IN THE WAKE OF THE CHRISTOPHER DORNER SHOOTINGS .....	9
<b>NARRATIVE OF THE POLICE RESPONSE TO ASSAULTS AND MURDERS BY CHRISTOPHER DORNER</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>CRISIS FORCES DISPARATE AGENCIES TO WORK TOGETHER</b> .....	<b>41</b>
THE EMOTIONAL AND DECISION-MAKING SETTING .....	41
THE MULTIAGENCY SETTING .....	44
<b>COMMAND AND CONTROL</b> .....	<b>47</b>
INCIDENT COMMAND AND COMMAND CENTERS .....	47
MULTIAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER.....	50
SELF-DEPLOYMENT .....	53
<b>PERVASIVE COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES</b> .....	<b>58</b>
TECHNICAL LIMITATIONS .....	59
<i>Interoperability</i> .....	59
<i>Dead Zones</i> .....	61
UNINTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION FAILURES.....	62
<i>Interagency Communications Gaps</i> .....	62
<i>Mistaken Assumptions</i> .....	63
INTENTIONAL WITHHOLDING OF INFORMATION.....	65
<i>Protecting the Investigation</i> .....	65
MANAGING THE FEAR AND SENSE OF VULNERABILITY .....	66
<b>COMPETING INTERESTS</b> .....	<b>68</b>
INTERESTS.....	68
<i>Criminal Investigations</i> .....	68
<i>Threat Assessment and Management</i> .....	69
<i>Manhunt</i> .....	69
COMPETITION .....	70
CASE HIERARCHY .....	70
COMPETING PRIORITIES AND DECISION-MAKING CONTROL.....	71
<b>POLICE AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CHRISTOPHER DORNER CASE</b> .....	<b>76</b>
<b>OVERVIEW OF LESSONS LEARNED</b> .....	<b>82</b>

<b>SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED</b> .....	<b>83</b>
<i>Overarching Themes</i> .....	83
<i>Command and Control</i> .....	84
<i>Communication</i> .....	85
<i>Competing Interests</i> .....	86
<i>Social Media</i> .....	87
<b>INVOLVED AGENCIES</b> .....	<b>87</b>
<i>Corona Police Department</i> .....	87
<i>Irvine Police Department</i> .....	88
<i>Los Angeles Police Department</i> .....	89
<i>Riverside Police Department</i> .....	91
<i>Torrance Police Department</i> .....	92
<i>San Bernardino County Sheriff</i> .....	93
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>95</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>96</b>
<b>POLICE FOUNDATION TEAM</b> .....	<b>98</b>
<b>COPYRIGHT</b> .....	<b>101</b>

## FOREWORD

For nine days in early February 2013 I, like millions of Americans, was glued to news reports of a former police and naval officer who was targeting police officers and their families. It was one of the most bizarre and violent acts of vengeance against law enforcement officers this country has experienced. By the time he was finally stopped, Christopher Dorner had murdered four people and wounded several others. His threats and actions put Southern California policing agencies in an unprecedented collective state of alert – one in which both excellent and heroic police work was done and some regrettable decisions were made.

This incident represents a sentinel event in American policing – one that serves as a warning of needed changes in parts of our public safety system. For the first time, a trained former police officer was hunting cops and their families, exploiting jurisdictional boundaries and using legally-acquired sophisticated, high-powered weaponry. And he did this in a highly public way that provided a template for others who may seek to terrorize this great country and target the people charged with protecting its citizens.

The challenges confronting the principal law enforcement agencies in this incident were immense. It took place over a wide expanse of Southern California where more than 20 million people live, work and play. It encompassed urban, suburban and mountainous geography. It was worked in balmy weather and a freezing blizzard. It required the coordination of thousands of hard-charging police officers, sheriff's deputies, highway patrol officers and state and federal special agents. And they engaged the incident with different policies and practices, from differing organizational cultures and utilizing frequently incompatible communications systems.

Bringing new advances to policing is the core of the Police Foundation's mission. Central to our research and work with police agencies is the idea that new learning – and therefore advancements – can be acquired through examining policing-involved critical incidents. This is certainly true of this incident.

Reviews of incidents like this are intended to transform “lessons learned” to “lessons applied” in the hopes of enhancing the safety of officers and the public. In emphasizing this, we affix no blame to those who tried desperately to apprehend Dorner and save lives. To do so dishonors their sacrifices and diverts attention from increasing our understanding about protecting society and keeping cops safe.

Covering every aspect of this very complicated incident would result in a book-length document. To keep the project manageable, we focused on the most important “lessons

learned” that can be generalized to a wide range of circumstances and jurisdictions. Accordingly, **we have tried to accomplish three broad goals:**

- 1) Present the facts and our recommendations in an objective manner that respects the professionalism, dedication and heroism of the law enforcement officers involved in this incident, and honors the sacrifice of those whose lives were lost by helping prevent the injury and death of other officers or civilians in the future;
- 2) Highlight this as a sentinel event in which we identify underlying weaknesses in the regional public safety system, preventable errors and recommendations for avoiding similar tragic outcomes;
- 3) Use multi-media to provide an immersive experience to a wide breadth of readers that gives them a better understanding of the complicated nature of such events and how dangerous they are to the peace officers trying to stop highly motivated criminals.

Our examination of this incident begins with the murders of Monica Quan and Keith Lawrence in Irvine, CA and concludes with the murder of Deputy Jeremiah MacKay, the wounding of Deputy Alex Collins and Dorner’s suicide in the mountains of San Bernardino County. In our quest to tease out lessons which we can generalize across the nation, we did not examine every aspect of the incident. Our observations and recommendations are based on our understanding of both the many successes and the relatively few errors that occurred throughout the course of it. They are not intended for the sole use of the involved agencies, as they have each conducted their own internal reviews. Rather, they are aimed at improving American policing’s response to similar critical incidents through changes in policy, practice, organizational culture and an increased understanding of the nature of preventable error.

**Several aspects of this incident distinguish it from other critical incidents:**

- While threats to police officers are a daily occurrence and an unfortunate reality of the job, never before have American law enforcement officers and their families been hunted like they were in this incident;
- The scope and scale of the LAPD protective detail was unlike any American law enforcement has ever experienced. When the threats to their officers became known, the leadership of the LAPD was faced with rapidly standing up more than 70 separate, 24-hour/7-day a week protective details in an area encompassing more than 2,000 square miles. This necessitated the use of hundreds of its employees in

many places outside its jurisdiction. In spite of this monumental task, once it became aware of the threat, the LAPD was able to effectively protect the people Dorner intended to harm;

- The speed at which the incident unfolded, and the diverse and expansive geography in which it occurred, presented serious and unparalleled coordination and communications challenges to the multitude of agencies involved;
- The search for Dorner carried out by the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department (SBSD) was unique and extremely challenging. The final phase of this incident took place in the San Bernardino National Forest – America's most heavily populated national forest. It has thousands of homes and vacation cabins, many of which are frequently unoccupied and located on narrow, twisting roads. It has several ski resorts and other winter recreational venues that attract tens of thousands of visitors to the mountain daily. During the initial part of the search for Dorner a raging blizzard significantly complicated operations. In spite of these challenges, San Bernardino deputies were ultimately able to box the suspect into an area where his escape was futile and his violent rampage was stopped. And they did so while managing what were tantamount to three separate, simultaneous events – the search itself, the huge influx into the mountains of law enforcement personnel and the arrival of a virtual army of assertive media representatives.

As much as we seek the security of believing that policing activities are always smoothly carried out, the reality is that due to exigent and uncontrollable circumstances they are frequently spontaneous and confusing. When unparalleled critical incidents like this one occur, law enforcement personnel are required to act quickly to protect civilians and their fellow officers. And things usually end well. But events can unfold very, very fast and sometimes errors are made. This is akin to the much-documented "fog of war" where "things happen" and unintended consequences occur.

More than 30 years as a police officer and police chief gives me a personal frame of reference for the magnitude of what the involved departments confronted. And I am in awe of what they accomplished. The law enforcement professionals involved in this incident overwhelmingly performed in an effective and heroic manner. Two of them, Officer Michael Crain and Deputy Jeremiah MacKay, made the ultimate sacrifice and will be remembered forever as the heroes they were.

I am grateful to San Bernardino County Sheriff John McMahon, Los Angeles Chief of Police Charlie Beck, Riverside Chief of Police Sergio Diaz, Irvine Police Chief Dave Maggard, Corona Chief of Police Michael Abel and recently retired Torrance Chief of

Police John Neu. None of these leaders were compelled to cooperate with us on this review. They did so willingly to help advance American policing and help keep cops and civilians safe. They truly represent some of the best in American policing leadership.

It is extremely important to acknowledge the dedicated professionalism of the many law enforcement personnel involved in this incident. In addition to the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department and the LAPD, great work was done by members of the Irvine, Corona, Riverside and National City Police Departments as well as their numerous local, state and federal partners. This incident is replete with examples too numerous to cite of cops, civilian employees and volunteers accomplishing great things in very difficult circumstances. Few people have had to overcome the kind of challenges they confronted. I am truly amazed by what they accomplished. And I am equally saddened by their losses.

Additionally, I am extremely grateful to the dozens of commanders, supervisors, detectives, officers and deputies who generously gave us their time. They answered all of our questions candidly, even though many of them were painful. I will be forever thankful for their willingness to relive their stress and heartbreaks through the re-telling of their experiences. It was only through their eyes that we were able to gain a true understanding of this complex incident.

Another important contributor to this project was ESRI, the world's leader in geographic systems software. Their employees gave invaluable assistance to us in constructing the review's story map – a first in critical incident reviews.

I would like to express my gratitude for the hard work of our review team: Chief Rick Braziel (ret.), Chief Barney Melekian (ret.), Sheriff Sue Rahr (ret.), Professor Jeff Rojek, Jim Specht and Dr. Travis Taniguchi worked tirelessly to present this review in a compelling and useful manner. I am also grateful to retired San Bernardino County Sheriff Rod Hoops for his invaluable assistance in conceptualizing the project.

Finally, this review is dedicated to the memory of Monica Quan, Keith Lawrence, Michael Crain and Jeremiah MacKay. May we remember them not for how they died, but for the way they lived. And may we honor them by diligently applying the lessons we have learned.

Chief Jim Bueermann (Ret.)

President

Police Foundation

# THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO AN “ATTACK ON OUR OWN”

## LESSONS LEARNED IN THE WAKE OF THE CHRISTOPHER DORNER SHOOTINGS

When a young couple sitting in their car was shot to death in the quiet upscale suburb of Irvine, CA in early February 2013, local police were jolted by a nearly unprecedented murder. It had all the earmarks of a gangland “hit” – and there was little evidence to determine who was behind the killing or what the motive might be.

Over the next ten days, the shocking whodunit facing Irvine police grew into a terrifying experience for all Southern California law enforcement personnel and their families, as online threats by a rogue former LAPD officer were followed by lightning bolt attacks that killed one officer and wounded three others in different cities within an hour. By the time Christopher Dorner was cornered and ultimately took his own life, he had shot another officer to death and had seriously wounded one more.

The police response and manhunt for Dorner became a two-week national event that involved thousands of officers across Southern California. It included many scenes of intense bravery and selflessness by the officers involved. Moreover, it was solved in a surprisingly short time by the combined professionalism and police expertise of departments ranging from San Bernardino County on the east to National City in San Diego County in the south.

Following the narrative of the incident from beginning to end reveals how quickly events moved. It was barely 12 hours from the discovery of the Facebook posting that convinced police Dorner was a prime suspect until the fatal attack on the Riverside Police Department officers. In that short time, the LAPD managed the herculean task of locating, assigning, and dispatching hundreds of officers to protect dozens of families throughout Southern California. Nothing similar had ever been done before, and the LAPD was universally praised for accomplishing it with minimal disruption to the department’s day-to-day responsibilities.

However, the review also revealed the problems still faced by policing a region of 10 counties and dozens of cities and towns, which are growing increasingly into one homogenous population of 22 million people. In some ways, Dorner was an anomaly – a well-armed attacker who knew police tactics. But police chiefs and county sheriffs involved in the incident agree that a small force of knowledgeable terrorists bent on creating havoc could easily replicate such attacks.

Everyone who lived through the attacks knows such things can happen again. Each department has meticulously analyzed its own response. The chiefs and sheriffs involved believed it would be useful to have a unified report on the successes and challenges created by the interaction of so many law enforcement agencies.

With the strong support of San Bernardino County Sheriff John McMahon, the Police Foundation assembled a team of law enforcement leaders to review the response from a regional perspective. The team spent hundreds of hours interviewing personnel, reviewing evidence, and visiting crime scenes to prepare a report that lays out the challenges faced and provides a foundation for the region’s police leaders to resolve them for future incidents.

This report attempts, for the first time, to give a regional view of the police response from their perspective, and outlines particular challenges that were revealed.

Among the **key findings**:

- The LAPD, the nation’s third-largest police force, had to mobilize within a few hours on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to protect dozens of threatened officers and their families – nearly all of whom lived outside the city limits. The challenges presented by this effort revealed that the Los Angeles Police Department has become a regional agency that has influence far beyond its jurisdictional boundaries.
- Regional communication problems among police departments throughout Southern California – long a source of concern in both natural disaster and potential terrorist scenarios – posed a potential danger to both the public and officers in the ten days surrounding the manhunt for Dorner.
- The need for a rapid and effective communication system within the Southern California Region was underscored when its absence left two officers following

an extremely dangerous suspect with only cell phones to call in their location or status to local police.

- Command and control problems led to hundreds of officers converging on the scene of an active shooting, most with no understanding of what their role would be or how to interact with the command structure at the scene. Other problems resulted from officers within the same department self-deploying in conflicting and potentially dangerous ways.
- Many officers received their information from television and the Internet, leaving departments unable to keep up with the instantaneous availability of information.
- Efforts to create a regional command center helped organize a nationwide manhunt and sort through thousands of tips. But varying levels of participation by agencies hindered the construction of a unified response.
- The inevitable tension between investigators preparing evidence for a possible trial, and teams involved in an active manhunt, was amplified by the lack of early collaboration between departments. While top managers worked quickly to resolve these issues, gatekeepers at a variety of supervisory levels hampered the flow of information, concerns, and command decisions.
- Dealing with the impact of external sources of “social media,” especially Facebook and online discussions, involved many hours of effort that was a distraction and in many cases caused delays or misrepresentations that hindered how police viewed the case and how it could be resolved.

Overwhelmingly, the Police Foundation team found that the officers and deputies involved in the response to the Dorner incident felt that they were under attack. They were even more concerned about threats against their families – to the extent that many who were not even directly involved took pains to “clear” their own residences before they allowed their family members inside. They were frustrated and angered by some media reports and Internet campaigns that portray Dorner as a victim and a vigilante trying to right a wrong. Police point out that Dorner killed two unknowing victims with chilling ruthlessness, and killed two police officers in ambushes.

While the attacks were portrayed as only being directed toward police, the disruption they caused put an entire region at risk. Many have pointed out similarities in these events to those of the Beltway Sniper incidents around Washington, D.C., in which mystery shooters killed 10 people over three weeks in 2002, leaving the entire region in turmoil.

Law enforcement leaders know that it is vital to prepare for the possible repeat of these kinds of regional attacks by a terrorist group whose goal may be to distract law enforcement from its real objectives.

It is hoped that the findings in this report will provide a starting point for those discussions and planning efforts.

# **NARRATIVE OF THE POLICE RESPONSE TO ASSAULTS AND MURDERS BY CHRISTOPHER DORNER**

It was the kind of killing almost never seen in one of the safest cities in America – a young couple shot at close range while they sat in their still-running car in a parking garage in the midst of hundreds of condominiums. The only evidence consisted of 9-mm shell casings and a small beanie cap. Not a single neighbor had heard or seen a thing.

Irvine, California is a quiet city of 235,000 residents, an upscale Orange County suburb that many consider the epitome of a planned community. The police department may see two or three murders a year, nearly always the result of a domestic dispute that is quickly resolved.

The big news on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, was expected to be that the Baltimore Ravens had defeated the San Francisco 49ers in the Super Bowl. However, that was soon to change for the Irvine Police Department.

The call came in about 9 p.m.: Two people were found shot to death in their vehicle on the top floor of a gated condominium-parking garage near the University of California, Irvine campus. When police arrived, it was obvious that this was not a simple crime of passion said Sergeant Bill Bingham of the Irvine Detective Bureau.

The car's engine was still running with headlights on, and a man and woman were slumped in their seats. Fourteen shell casings were found around the car, and it was clear that the shooting was not a murder-suicide or a robbery. The woman's engagement ring was still on her hand. It looked more like a hit job – the kind of cold-blooded killing that never happens in Irvine.

Looking for clues to the victim's identity, detectives noticed the car had a University of Southern California parking sticker. They called in the sticker number to USC, and were told it belonged to one of the University's Public Safety Officers – Keith Lawrence. The description they received appeared to fit the murdered driver.

Irvine Police Chief David Maggard called in his entire investigative team. The first 48 hours were the most critical in solving these violent crimes, and he put the resources of the whole department on the case.

Few details were released to the media, but the crime was so unusual that it made the evening news throughout Southern California. Among those watching the broadcasts was Randal Quan, a retired captain from the Los Angeles Police Department. The location of the murders and the description of the victims filled him with dread: He knew his daughter Monica and her fiancée Keith Lawrence had driven home to Irvine after spending the day with Lawrence's family. Monica always called him when she was home safe – and he had been unable to reach her all evening.

Quan called Irvine Police with his fears and a description of the clothes Monica and Keith had been wearing. They were identified as the murdered couple. Knowing who they were just deepened the mystery of how this could have happened, Maggard said.

Monica Quan, 28, and Keith Lawrence, 27, had become sweethearts at Concordia University in Irvine. They starred on the school's men's and women's basketball teams, and remained devoted to their sport. Quan had recently become an assistant women's basketball coach at California State University, Fullerton. Lawrence had trained at the Ventura County Sheriff's Academy and had worked for the Oxnard, CA, Police Department before joining the USC Department of Public Safety. Their memorial service at Concordia drew crowds and included four hours of tributes from family and friends.

How such a highly regarded young couple could be murdered in a gang-style hit was one of many mysteries surrounding the case confronting the Irvine investigators. Maggard said he was frustrated that none of the nearby neighbors seemed to have heard the 14 shots from a high-powered pistol in the echoing parking garage. Only later would they learn that Dorner used a suppressor on his murder weapon. The only clue, other than the shells, appeared to be a dark green beanie-style cap found near the car.

It was a "real whodunit," Maggard said, causing Irvine detectives to go "24-7" in an effort to find some clues to the mystery. Detective Vicky Hurtado said investigators were still looking at nearly everyone as a possible suspect when the department received a bolt out of the blue thanks to the diligence of a police officer nearly 100 miles south in National City, near the Mexican border.

Early Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, National City Police Officer Paul Hernandez was handed his own mystery. Workers at an auto repair shop across the street from police headquarters discovered a wealth of odd items in trash dumpsters behind the store: a bulletproof helmet, body armor, a military-style belt strap, bullets and parts of a police uniform that Hernandez identified as LAPD from its buttons. The uniform still had a nameplate inscribed “Dorner.”

Hernandez wondered if the items might have been stolen from an officer – “I’d sure want to get them back if they were mine.” Hernandez also found a small notebook with the name and serial number of LAPD Officer Teresa Evans in the shirt’s pocket. The LAPD was called and they said there was no officer at the department named Dorner. However, they did have a Sergeant Evans, and would leave her a message.

Before Hernandez finished booking the property, Evans called him - she knew the name Dorner all too well. In 2007, she had been partnered with Officer Christopher Dorner as his training officer. The partnership had ended in a prolonged dispute when Dorner accused her of kicking a suspect during an altercation. A disciplinary review hearing had cleared Evans and convinced LAPD officials that Dorner had lied because he was about to receive a negative review. A Board of Rights hearing had found Dorner guilty of lying, and he was fired by the LAPD in 2009. He appealed to the Superior Court and the State Court of Appeals over the next two years, but the firing was upheld in both courts.

The discovery of Dorner’s abandoned uniform and other items nagged at Evans – she had always been fearful that he might try to seek revenge. When she went to work for her night shift, that concern became a chilling fear when she learned about the murders of retired Capt. Randy Quan’s daughter and future son-in-law. She knew that Quan was a lawyer and had served as a defense representative for a number of LAPD officers facing Board of Rights hearings. He had represented Dorner in those hearings several years before. The connection between Dorner and Quan led her to call the Irvine Police Department watch commander the night of February 5<sup>th</sup>.

Irvine detective Sergeant Bill Bingham had gone home to get a little sleep after working on the double-homicide for 30 hours but when he got the call from the watch commander about Evans’ tip, he called back right away. Evans told him about the connection between Dorner and Quan and the Board of Rights hearing.

Irvine PD investigators drove down to National City early on Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, and spoke with National City Police Department investigators about the items recovered from the dumpster. Upon their arrival in National City, Dorner was merely a person of interest to Irvine Police. Within hours that would change. The National City Police, in response, would reach out to their contacts in Mexico and the United States Navy in attempts to locate Dorner.

The investigators found that the auto repair shop had a surveillance camera and checked the tape. It revealed a large African-American man methodically dumping the police equipment into the dumpsters from his dark-colored Nissan Titan pickup truck. He matched Evan's description of Dorner. Some of the ammunition in the dumpster was similar to the shells found at the Irvine crime scene.

Lead Irvine investigator Vicky Hurtado, and most of the Irvine police personnel, had been up 24 hours or more, running down possible leads about criminals who might have known Lawrence during his police training and those who had dated Lawrence and Quan. Officers had handed out cards asking for information to drivers along Scholarship Drive where the garage was located.

Now there was a new lead. Like many departments, Irvine has detectives whose job includes tracking down information on suspects on social media like Facebook and other areas of the Internet. By 1:59 p.m. February 6<sup>th</sup>, an Internet search had turned up a document on Dorner's Facebook page labeled "From: Christopher Dorner; To: America; Subj: Last Resort."

The document, which became known as Dorner's manifesto, claimed that the investigation into the kicking incident and the Board of Rights hearing had been unjust and stacked against him. He made unequivocal threats toward Quan, Evans and all of the other officers involved with his firing. It laid out grievances against some Black, Hispanic, and Asian commanders and called them "high value targets." Dorner promised to use intelligence tactics to discover the schools of the LAPD officers' children and the workplaces of their spouses. "I never had the opportunity to have a family of my own, I'm terminating yours... Look your wives/husbands and surviving children directly in the face and tell them the truth as to why your children are dead."

To Irvine investigators, the document appeared to be a written confession that Dorner had killed Monica Quan and Keith Lawrence. It was also clearly a continuing threat to the other LAPD officers who were named. Maggard had his officers call Teresa Evans and Randal Quan right away, and alerted LAPD. Here was a suspect who had previously been one of their own – he knew their tactics and presented a dangerous challenge. Dorner showed that he knew how to avoid detection and may have laid a false trail in San Diego.

The double homicide in quiet Irvine quickly became a regional Southern California incident, and soon would become national news. The Irvine Police Department headquarters was transformed over the next two hours into an Emergency Operations Center hosting LAPD officers, U.S. Marshal's Office investigators, and the FBI. The LAPD offered whatever support it could, and Maggard was glad to have the backup. The whodunit had turned into an urgent manhunt.

As the EOC began humming with activity, the first official announcement of the search for Dorner was distributed regionally in the form of a law enforcement wanted bulletin. Aided by the sophisticated fugitive tracking capabilities of the U.S. Marshal's Service, Irvine investigators found and interviewed Dorner's mother and sister, as well as others who had known him.

Investigators found that Dorner had a house in Las Vegas, and had spent a lot of time at shooting ranges in the area. He had bought and sold dozens of weapons, and he had 70 currently registered in his name. Among them were a number of .223 caliber semi-automatic rifles like the AR-15 and numerous 9 mm Glock handguns – the type Irvine investigators determined was used in the murder of Monica Quan and Keith Lawrence.

In his online rant, Dorner claimed to have a .50 caliber Barrett sniper rifle and that he had purchased noise suppressors for his weapons using a National Firearms Act Trust in Nevada, where they are legal. Maggard determined that the "manifesto" was a dangerous document and important to the investigation, so he assigned an officer to convince Facebook to pull it from public view. Irvine Deputy Chief Mike Hamel and Public Information Officer Lieutenant Julia Engen had just returned from a conference on social media, and they found an immediate use for the contacts they had developed there. "We spent an hour trying to take it down – we wanted to avoid the kind of hysteria that played out when the 'manifesto' became public," Maggard said. "They were cooperative and worked with us on it – but it turned out to be too late."

At 7:45 p.m. Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> – just 8 hours after investigators had seen Christopher Dorner on the National City video feed – the Irvine Police Department called a press conference to declare Dorner a suspect in the murders of Monica Quan and Keith Lawrence. One of the first reporters to approach Chief Maggard for an interview already had Dorner’s online rant on an electronic tablet. The story was out: A former LAPD officer had declared war on the department, and was accused of murdering the daughter of a former LAPD captain and her fiancé, a Peace Officer with the University of Southern California.

The Los Angeles Police Department has more than 10,000 sworn officers and patrols 473 square miles. Its detectives deal with 300 homicides each year, and have developed some of the most sophisticated crime-solving methods in the nation. The LAPD is considered one of the most progressive forces in the nation.

So top officials in the department were mystified that a probationary officer who had been fired nearly four years earlier had suddenly begun lethal attacks on the families of LAPD officers. Very little had been heard from Dorner since his February 2009 firing and subsequent efforts to overturn the firing in court. However, the evidence seemed clear from the Irvine slayings and the posting of the “manifesto” – Dorner was an extremely serious threat to LAPD officers and their families.

Captain William Hayes, who heads the LAPD’s Robbery and Homicide Division, was given the assignment to quickly assess exactly who in the department was at risk, and what level of risk each person faced. No crime had been committed in the LAPD jurisdiction, so the department’s response bore similarities to preparing for a terrorist threat.

Investigators combed through Dorner’s online document and developed a list of who might be at risk. Hayes said the department called in a team of experts to assess the level of threat – including behavioral scientists, FBI analysts, and department psychologists. The resulting list eventually grew to 77 protected locations, which were scattered across the entire Southern California region.

Some of Dorner’s targets were obvious and got immediate protection. The Long Beach Police Department agreed to watch over Sergeant Teresa Evans’ home. They sent a SWAT team and eventually relocated her and her family. Members of the Board of

Review who were named in the Dorner rant were scattered from Irvine in Orange County, to Torrance in the southwest portion of Los Angeles County, to Corona in western Riverside County. Local departments sent officers to watch the homes and families, waiting for what the LAPD would decide to do next.

Hayes said the department felt that it could not impose on smaller police agencies to protect its officers and their families around the clock. Within hours, the Office of Operations reassigned officers from throughout the force, eventually putting together a protective detail of hundreds of officers – the operation became so large it required activation of the department’s operations center with around-the-clock dedicated staff. The officers were warned about Dorner’s arsenal and his threats to shoot police on sight, and began to deploy late on Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> to schools and homes throughout Southern California. They began their protection duty at about the time Irvine police were holding their press conference. The urgency of the assignment meant there was little time for training, and arrangements for communications were rushed.

Television viewers around Southern California became aware of Dorner at 8 p.m. when Chief Maggard’s press conference was broadcast live and local stations focused on the “manifesto” and his threats to the LAPD. He was called a decorated naval veteran and a skilled marksman. Reporters speculated that Dorner could be anywhere from Ventura County to San Diego County, where the discarded items and video had been found.

Investigators learned late that evening that Dorner was indeed still in San Diego. At about 10 p.m., he had tied up an 81-year-old man at the Southwestern Yacht Club in San Diego Bay and tried to hijack his boat to Mexico. He got one of the lines caught in the propeller and stalled the engine. Once he had left, the boat owner was able to attract attention by yelling.

A crew of investigators, including Detective Hurtado and three FBI Agents, drove down from the Irvine EOC to investigate the incident, and San Diego County police agencies staked out hotels and other promising locations. They converged on one hotel lobby with sirens blaring, but it was a false alarm. Dorner had stayed two nights at the Navy Inn at Naval Station Point Loma, near the San Diego International Airport but did not return. Law enforcement officials had no real idea of Dorner’s whereabouts. That would soon change dramatically.

Tow-truck driver R. Lee McDaniel was out on his job that night and had stopped about 1 a.m. at a minimarket and gas station at the Weirick Road exit off Interstate 15 near Corona. The interstate is an interior artery north from San Diego County, and eventually becomes the route Southern Californians drive to Las Vegas. McDaniel had seen some of the reports about Dorner and was startled to see a dark gray Nissan pickup drive into the station and a man matching Dorner's description get out. McDaniel had access to state motor vehicle records and checked the license plate, which came up negative. But he remained convinced that it was the right man as Dorner pulled out of the station and headed away from the freeway onramp.

Moments later, LAPD officers Cesar Chavez and Mario Vega pulled into the gas station. They planned to pick up coffee and snacks to tide them over during a shift protecting one of Dorner's targets who lived in Corona. McDaniel ran to the patrol car and told them he was convinced Dorner had just left. As they were talking, the gray Nissan pickup drove past again, pulling onto the freeway this time.

Chavez and Vega pulled out, and the pickup sped away. Because they were out of radio range, one officer grabbed his cell phone to report in, but the phone fell and became unworkable. About five miles up the freeway, the Nissan pulled off the interstate at the Magnolia Avenue exit. As the patrol car sped down the long off-ramp, the windshield exploded and shots began slamming into the car. Investigators later determined that Dorner had pulled off the road and began shooting at the patrol car as soon as it came around a bend. Shells found at the scene and witness statements showed he shot an AR-15 at the officers 29 times – using a noise suppressor to keep them from hearing the shots before they were hit. One bullet grazed an officer's head, but fortunately, neither officer was seriously injured.

The shooter jumped into his truck and drove away as the officers were left with a now disabled patrol car. Still without radio contact, they flagged down a civilian and used another cell phone to call 911 at 1:23 a.m. and report the incident to the California Highway Patrol. By 1:27 a.m., Corona Police Department officers arrived and an ambulance had been called for the wounded LAPD officer. Taking a report, officers at the scene determined that Dorner had changed the plates on his truck to avoid detection.

At 1:31 a.m., a “be on the lookout” (BOLO) advisory was sent to law enforcement agencies, warning that Dorner had been seen in the area and had attacked two LAPD officers without warning.

The Riverside Police Department, just north of the Corona shooting scene, had been on alert since the Irvine Police Department wanted bulletin had gone out at 3:40 p.m. on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Detective Jim Lopez had a long career at the LAPD before coming to Riverside. Chief Sergio Diaz had been an LAPD Deputy Chief. Deputy Chief Jeffrey Greer had also had an extensive LAPD career before coming to Riverside.

Lopez started to look into Dorner after he received the Irvine Police arrest bulletin to see if Chief Diaz or Deputy Chief Greer would need special protection. He had read the “manifesto” and became alarmed enough to send out special alerts to area police departments, warning that Dorner could be especially dangerous to officers based on his writings and because of his weapons.

But the Riverside Police Department was under attack before officers even knew Dorner was there. As the dispatcher began broadcasting the urgent alert from the Corona incident, she was interrupted by a frantic call of “officer down.” Soon, Lopez, Diaz and the Riverside Police Department command staff would be facing a tragedy in their own ranks.

At 1:33 a.m. February 7<sup>th</sup>, Officers Michael Crain and Andrew Tachias pulled up to a red light at the intersection of Magnolia Avenue and Arlington Avenue, following their regular patrol route.

The major intersection was still somewhat busy even at that late hour. A car was stopped in the next lane, and two vehicles were waiting across Arlington for the light to change.

As the patrol car came to a stop, a dark pickup with a rack pulled through the light and headed across the intersection. Before the officers could react, the pickup came even, and shots began hitting the patrol car with no warning or indication of where they originated. Both officers were hit numerous times by semi-automatic weapon fire. Thirteen shots were fired, 11 hitting the patrol car.

Crain slumped forward, and Tachias found himself unable to control the car, which began creeping across the intersection even as the BOLO on Dorner was being broadcast. In some of the most striking acts of heroism that traumatic night, witness Jack Chilson followed the gray pickup to try to help officers locate it. He followed it a few miles to Central Avenue, and then lost it on the dark streets.

The driver across the intersection was cabbie Karam Kaoud, who jumped out of his car and helped stop the creeping patrol car. Unable to lift his arms, Tachias asked Kaoud to hold the radio microphone for him and key the broadcast button. His voice was soon heard calling out “officer down,” interrupting the BOLO that was being given out for Dorner’s truck.

Violence and tragedy had struck with such speed and seeming randomness, Riverside officers were left with a crime that appeared like a lightning bolt. The ferocity of the attack left the Riverside force and others from Corona, Irvine, and LAPD who soon joined them, on high alert. Rumors swirled that Dorner may be on his way back to shoot those who were responding to the shooting. Officers and deputies from throughout the area converged to set up a defensive perimeter.

Crain died at the scene from his gunshot wounds. Tachias still faces a long recovery. The Riverside Police Department was in mourning and on edge. When the investigators from Irvine arrived, Diaz said they were welcomed with relief. A new command center was established in Riverside and police were put on high alert throughout Southern California.

The sudden and intense violence suffered by the LAPD officers in Corona and the Riverside officers pushed the manhunt to the top of the news. It seemed that Dorner could strike anywhere, and gave officers no warning when he attacked. This was no longer just an Irvine double homicide and threats to LAPD officials. It was now clear that any police officer could be at risk simply driving on patrol.

From southern Orange County to far northern Los Angeles County, police departments began reassessing how they should handle the dozens of locations where LAPD officers were stationed to protect those who had been threatened in Dorner’s online rant. What earlier had seemed an LAPD problem now appeared much more ominous in the wake of the sudden and indiscriminate attack on Crain and Tachias.

Reports to police were creating a rumor mill of sightings of the gray pickup at locations hundreds of miles apart – but still accessible from the Riverside attack via the network of Los Angeles freeways.

In the beach suburb of Torrance, just south of the Los Angeles International Airport, officers on the graveyard shift were aware of the potential for violence. They had been notified that one of the Board of Rights panel members who had determined that Dorner had lied lived near downtown. Torrance Chief John Neu dispatched his own officers to protect the home as soon as he was notified. But the LAPD had sent officers to relieve them and provide a protection detail; Torrance officers returned to their regular patrols during the day.

Following the Riverside attack, possible Dorner sightings had ratcheted up the tension for both the LAPD detail and the Torrance patrol officers. A motorist called in to report that she had seen a gray truck with a similar license plate driving south from the airport on Sepulveda Boulevard – the main artery through downtown Torrance.

After watching news reports about the Riverside attack at the beginning of their shift, Torrance officers on the graveyard shift decided to assist with surveillance around the LAPD protection detail on Redbeam Avenue. They quietly parked at the end of the next street to the north of the home, and set up a checkpoint.

A little later, Torrance officers driving another patrol car had a similar idea. They set up surveillance in a parking lot along Beryl Avenue, one of the entry points into the neighborhood where they could see vehicles approaching the area from Sepulveda Boulevard.

Neither patrol pair checked with the LAPD officers and neither called in to report their impromptu surveillance detail. In fact, neither communicated with the other and both were unaware of the other's presence.

Meanwhile, the LAPD officers on the protection detail were hearing the same reports. They maintained a high level of alert, intensely aware that two sets of police officers had been attacked without warning that night.

At about 4:30 a.m. that morning, it appeared that their fears might be realized. Down the block from the home they were protecting, the LAPD officers saw a dark pickup truck turn the corner with its lights off. The pickup moved slowly from one side of the street to the other, as if seeking a particular address.

As the pickup neared, an officer believed they were under attack by Dorner, and the officers opened fire on the pickup. As many as 100 shots were fired, riddling the vehicle. Officers soon discovered that they had made what LAPD Chief Charlie Beck would later call a tragic mistake: The pickup was driven by two women who were delivering Los Angeles Times newspapers along a route they followed every day.

Miraculously, although the windows and doors of the pickup had numerous bullet holes, the two women survived the shooting onslaught. Seventy-one-year-old Emma Hernandez received bullet wounds to her back, but did not suffer life-threatening injury. Her 42-year-old daughter, Margie Carranza was cut by flying glass in her face, but also avoided serious injury.<sup>1</sup>

Even as the LAPD officers were discovering that they had mistaken two female newspaper carriers for Dorner, the nearby Torrance officers were dealing with their own involvement in the morning's events.

Not long before the newspaper carriers' truck turned onto the street where the LAPD protective detail waited, the first Torrance officers who had set up their supporting surveillance had their own encounter with a dark pickup. They recognized it was a Honda rather than a Nissan, and waved the driver over. David Purdue was on an early-morning mission to pick up a friend and go surfing. The officers told him he could not enter the neighborhood and sent him back the other way. As Purdue was driving away, a fusillade of shots was heard from the street where the LAPD protective detail was stationed. The officers ran to their car and opened the trunk to access their rifles. They jumped on the radio and called out "shots fired, shots fired!"

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<sup>1</sup> The eight LAPD officers involved in the Torrance shooting were placed on desk duty, and the two women received an apology and a new pickup from the LAPD. Eventually, the LA City Attorney's Office settled with the women for \$4.2 million, ending the fallout from the attack. After a yearlong review, the LA Police Commission and Chief Charlie Beck determined that the officers involved [had violated the department's policy](#) on deadly force. They will be assigned to retraining, Beck said.

Stationed just a block away but still not in contact with their fellow Torrance officers, the second Torrance patrol unit roared onto the street to provide backup. As they turned the corner, they saw Purdue driving away and the other patrol unit with doors open and no officers in sight. The officer driving reacted instantly – ramming the pickup truck with enough force to break its rear axle free. Unable to get out of his own car and still hearing shots, one of the officers fired into the cab of Purdue’s pickup, smashing the windshield.

Horrified to discover that the pickup driver was not Dorner, the officers pulled Purdue from the truck and moved him to a position of safety, Neu said. He was offered a ride to the emergency room in an ambulance, but refused, Neu said. Purdue’s recollection differs- in a federal civil rights suit filed over the summer, he said he had been forced to lay on the ground as a suspect for more than an hour, and is suffering physically and emotionally from the incident.<sup>2</sup>

The two shootings of innocent drivers by police threatened to jump to the top of the news, creating confusion and suspicion in the minds of many people watching the early morning news reports that Thursday. The critics quickly took to the Internet in the wake of the Torrance incidents, accusing the LAPD of unjustly firing Dorner and of being more concerned with protecting their own than with keeping the public safe.

The media furor threatened to overshadow the fact that a Riverside police officer had been killed and his partner seriously wounded while sitting unaware at a traffic light. Police from Riverside to Torrance to Irvine were frustrated and saddened that anyone would take up the cause of a ruthless killer willing to shoot any officer on sight.

Torrance Chief Neu believed the shootings were a crisis that needed to be resolved immediately. He went door-to-door in the neighborhood to explain to homeowners how the mistake had occurred and to assure them that all damage would be repaired. Adjusters from the LAPD followed in his wake to take care of claims.

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<sup>2</sup> The Los Angeles District Attorney’s Office conducted a lengthy review of the incident involving the Torrance Police Department officers, and eventually determined that the officers [were justified in their actions](#) based on the circumstances.

As the media focused on the mistaken identity shootings in Torrance and began looking into Dorner's background, the focus of the manhunt was about to move 100 miles away and nearly 7,000 feet higher in the towering San Bernardino Mountains.

Like all other Southern California law enforcement, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department had been on high alert since the reports came in about the shooting of Riverside officers Michael Crain and Andrew Tachias. The department had sent deputies to Riverside to help support the police in controlling the situation and provided a protective detail as reports swirled about the possibility of Dorner returning to the scene for more shooting.

Many of the freeways and surface streets leading away from the Riverside shooting scene ran directly into San Bernardino County, which is just to the north. The main route from Riverside to Las Vegas (where officers had already been searching Dorner's home) ran for hundreds of miles through San Bernardino County. The department knew there was a good chance that Dorner had passed through the county after the shooting, Sheriff John McMahon said.

As the search around Southern California intensified, a report came in about 8:30 a.m. February 7<sup>th</sup> to the sheriff's substation at Big Bear Lake, high in the San Bernardino Mountains: A maintenance crew had discovered a burning vehicle along one of the unpaved roads that ran behind the area's ski resorts. The vehicle appeared to be a pickup.

Captain Tom Bradford, the commanding officer at the Big Bear substation, drove to the scene immediately and found evidence that made him call in the department's SWAT teams. Scattered near the pickup, which was still smoldering, were numerous shells for a high-powered weapon. Bradford said he was immediately convinced this was Dorner's truck.

The location of the smoldering truck was a problem. It was high on a ridge that allowed quick access to the ski resorts, where operations were in full swing. Although it had not snowed recently, the resorts make their own snow all winter and had a special event planned for that Thursday: police and firefighter appreciation day. Thousands of officers from throughout Southern California were already headed to the slopes for the day.

On the other side of the ridge, the slope led away from the Big Bear area down to lower cabins along State Route 38, a popular area that was miles away from the ski resorts

by road, but a straight hike down from the ridge. Even before the truck was positively identified as Dorner's, Bradford had search teams out in both directions.

The SWAT team members were taking no chances. They felt the location was too exposed, and had the truck towed to a safer site before digging into it for evidence. What they found made it clear – the “hidden VIN” showed the vehicle was definitely Dorner's. By mid-morning on February 7<sup>th</sup>, the manhunt had moved to a new location, and both the media and the agencies trying to stop him were headed from sunny beach communities to winter weather as cold and unforgiving as North Dakota's.

Knowing that Dorner could be anywhere, Bradford said the most pressing need was to bring the “police and firefighter appreciation day” at the ski resort to an early close. The skiers' vehicles were checked – along with every other one leaving the mountains that day – to ensure that Dorner was not making an escape. The three main routes out of the resort were even closed for a time, but the roadblocks were deemed impractical with tens of thousands of people coming and going to the resorts.

Just two hours from the beach, the San Bernardino Mountains are topped with hundreds of square miles of national forest land. The San Bernardino National Forest is the most populated in the nation, home to thousands of dwellings, from small-unheated cabins to luxury resort condominiums. The buildings crowd into the forest, some as dense as a good-sized town, others scattered miles into the trees.

McMahon, Bradford and the sheriff's department knew the only way to ensure that Dorner was not hiding in one of those cabins was to check them all. As the day progressed, they mounted a search operation that involved hundreds of county personnel, including probation officers and others as support. The searchers, sent out in teams, faced a daunting task. Most of the cabins were unoccupied in winter, and many were in areas that had no radio or cell phone reception. Before they checked the doors and windows of each dwelling, deputies had to find a spot nearby with reception, and sometimes used a team of searchers to pass along the word if the cabin was safe or not. “We had to have someone in a spot where they could get the word out in a hurry,” said one sheriff's detective. “We knew that it was likely if we opened the door and he was there, we might not survive it.”

Every cabin and condominium was checked, Bradford said. If the doors were locked and there was no sign of forced entry, the search teams moved on. “We weren’t going to break down every door.” As the teams fanned out across the mountains, the media descended on the resort. In an effort to maintain some control, McMahon used the Bear Mountain Golf Course clubhouse adjacent to the ski resort. A command post was established, and McMahon and other police officials held a series of press conferences in the parking lot.

The search continued into the night of February 7<sup>th</sup> and the next morning, when the weather changed dramatically. A winter storm dropped several feet of snow along the mountain communities on February 8<sup>th</sup>, and the temperatures plummeted. Searchers were convinced that if Dorner had not found shelter, he would soon die of exposure. His body might not be found until the spring thaw.

Nevertheless, searchers carried on. Snow-cats were used to take searchers to remote cabins that had not been reached. Crews dressed in full winter gear moved through drifts to ensure there was no sign of habitation. Cabins and condominiums near the resorts were checked a second time.

Through the two days, there was only one reported sighting of Dorner. A resident said she was heading to the grocery store early Thursday morning, when she turned and saw a man matching Dorner’s description walking down her street. He noticed her, and turned and walked back into the forest. The resident was so frightened that she returned to her home and locked herself in. She did not report the sighting to deputies until they knocked on her door during the search hours later. By then, snow had covered whatever tracks might have shown where the man had gone into the forest.

Just three days after the discovery of Dorner’s online rant, and two days after his brutal attacks on officers in Corona and Riverside, the trail had gone cold in the snow-covered mountain communities. McMahon decided to relocate the command post to the Big Bear Lake Substation and gear down the operation, hoping that if the fugitive was still in the Big Bear area, he would try to make his escape and be caught.

What had begun as a double homicide in a quiet suburb had become a national manhunt. Reports came in of Dorner sightings from Mexico, Las Vegas, Arizona, and Utah. Police officers throughout Southern California were on high alert.

With multiple locations now involved in the search, it became clear that the command center in Irvine might not meet the needs of an ever-expanding incident. Investigators from a half-dozen police agencies needed a place to coordinate their efforts and deal with the growing deluge of clues and sightings coming in. Irvine, Corona, and Riverside had crimes to investigate, and the LAPD was under a state of siege. San Bernardino County appeared to be the last known whereabouts of the killer, but there was no clear evidence he was still there.

Assistant LAPD Chief Michel Moore had been closely involved with the case since it became clear that Dorner's attacks were focused on the people he blamed for his firing. Moore had spent a considerable amount of time at the Irvine command center, and he had talked directly with Riverside Chief Diaz and San Bernardino County Sheriff McMahan. Although the LAPD was not investigating a homicide, it had the most at stake in terms of an ongoing potential death threats against at least 77 identified likely targets and their families. The department was faced with what could only be called a terrorist threat.

Moore convinced Irvine Chief Maggard to move to a larger, more centralized location. Moore proposed using the Joint Regional Intelligence Center (JRIC) in Norwalk – southeast of Los Angeles. The other agencies agreed to the move, and the JRIC became a unique hybrid operations center with joint operations that were unprecedented.

The JRIC had been created in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, when it became clear that no single law enforcement agency could keep track of the potential threats throughout Southern California. Most agencies throughout the region maintained some level of involvement with the center, and it had brought some measure of coordination to intelligence gathering among hundreds of agencies that had a history of not communicating across county lines.

However, the JRIC had never been intended as a command center. To gear it up for the Dorner effort, the LAPD tasked Det. Dan Jenks with making it work. Jenks created a multi-tiered operation that essentially operated on three levels. The largest was a clearinghouse for collecting evidence and "clues," which was staffed by LAPD officers who were familiar with large investigations. By the end of the manhunt, the JRIC crew had taken in and investigated 900 such clues. None led to Dorner.

Working alongside the clue clearinghouse were investigators from all of the agencies involved in the various crimes attributed to Dorner, as well as representatives from state and federal agencies that had been called in to assist. Investigators from all of the police agencies involved with the case said this interaction was invaluable. Faced with a rumor or sighting – or need to run down evidence of Dorner’s background – the various crews could walk across the room and discuss it with others who were intimately involved with the case. The overall effect was to dramatically reduce rumo mill problems, investigators said.

The final element of the center was a joint command staff tasked with determining how the agencies would work together to move the case forward. Official reports show this unprecedented joint staffing created some frustration among investigators, who reportedly felt they were spending an unnecessary amount of time briefing higher-ups. They also felt that the need to clear operations through the joint staff slowed response in some situations.

The JRIC brought efficiencies from many agencies together, Jenks said. One part of the team was the High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Task Force, which had invaluable experience with wiretaps and surveillance efforts. At one point, the HIDTA team brought a judge to the JRIC to help quickly clear warrants to allow the establishment of numerous search efforts, he said. Federal and State officials also brought unique support to the effort. The Fish and Wildlife Service has tagged many of the large carnivores in the San Bernardino Mountains, and agreed to monitor tracking devices to see if the animals were congregating in one spot where a potential body might be discovered. The Department of Homeland Security agreed to allow the use of a C-123 aerial surveillance plane, which could focus infrared sensors on the snow-covered mountains to discover hikers by the heat signature.

However, by Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, all of this unprecedented effort had produced only frustration. Los Angeles officials announced a \$1 million reward for anyone providing information leading to Dorner’s capture. The reward caused calls to the JRIC to spike, but did not lead to any new information on his location.

The command staff at the JRIC felt it was important to do another sweep of the Big Bear area, and began to put together a multiagency team to begin another search of cabins and condominiums. San Bernardino officials believed the previous searches had

been as extensive as possible – but agreed to help guide the multiagency teams through the various neighborhoods and cabin clusters.

Although the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department had formally moved the mountain command center, Bradford and many other San Bernardino County deputies were convinced that Dorner was still somewhere in the Big Bear area. They had maintained vehicle inspections on the roads leading out of the resort and were confident he had not been able to slip through. The SWAT team had been stationed at the Big Bear substation, ready to respond, if a sighting occurred.

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James and Karen Reynolds had a unique vantage point to watch the beehive of activity at the command post in Moonridge. They owned and operated a 12-unit condominium project at 1250 Club View Drive, which was immediately across the street from the golf resort offices where the command post was located and where press conferences were held that attracted hundreds of police and media.

The Reynolds were getting ready for a busy weekend on February 6<sup>th</sup>. It was the middle of the ski season and a snowstorm was predicted, so all of their units would be filled except one. They were renovating Unit 203, which had been occupied for a lengthy stay by a relative. James, Karen, and their daughter Amy were in and out of the unit, along with contractors repainting and replacing carpet, so they generally left the unit unlocked for easy access.

They had planned to get one more day of work in the sidelined unit on February 7<sup>th</sup> before all of their guests began checking in for the weekend, but they were distracted by the television coverage of the shootings in Riverside, Corona, and Torrance. When the news broke that the burning truck had been found above the ski resorts near their condominiums, the couple decided to stay inside to be safe. The condominiums were only about a mile downhill through the forest from where the truck was found, and their neighborhood was the closest developed area.

As their guests were getting settled in on Friday, James remembered the door to #203 had been left unlocked and went to check it. He found it already locked and assumed one of the contractors or his daughter had locked it the day before. He shoveled snow

along the stairs after the storm later that day, and checked to make sure the door was still locked.

Although they saw deputies around the neighborhood, they were never contacted during the days after the discovery of the truck, the Reynolds said. They assumed it was because their complex was so close to the command post. They and their guests could watch the press gatherings and police maneuvers from their balconies. Sheriff John McMahan said later that deputies had knocked on the locked condominium doors, but received no answer and saw no signs of forced entry.

On Tuesday morning, February 12th, after a busy weekend and cleanup, the Reynolds went to #203 to pick up a mattress cover. Because of the condominium's layout, the entry level included two bedrooms, with the living area, kitchen, and another bedroom upstairs. As they neared the upstairs bedroom, they were confronted by Dorner, who told them to "stay calm, and I won't kill you." Karen bolted back downstairs, but was caught by Dorner and returned to the upper level. James, meanwhile, had managed to take his cell phone out of its case and hide it under the couch cushions. Dorner tied the couple's hands with plastic ties, and then had them lie on the bed. The linens caused them trouble breathing, so he had them lie on the floor and secured their ankles. He placed hand towels in their mouths, and then tied pillowcases loosely over their heads.

"He kept telling us he wouldn't hurt us, that he only wanted to clear his name," Karen said. "But when he put those pillowcases over us, it felt too much like a terrorist getting ready to shoot someone. I just wanted to tell him to stop talking and be done with it." Dorner took the keys to the couple's maroon Nissan Rogue – a small SUV – and left. He returned immediately to ask how to start the car, and they mumbled that it was keyless and started with a push button. He left again.

Karen said they were fearful of his return, but also extremely worried that he might confront her daughter and their housekeeper, who were working in another part of the complex. The couple struggled, and James was able to remove the pillowcase over Karen's head. She removed his as well, and then was able to use the bed to help her stand. She hopped to the kitchen area and found a knife, but dropped it when they heard a noise and were frightened it was Dorner returning. Hopping into the living area, Karen tried to grab the house phone and dropped it. She saw that Dorner had left her cell phone on the coffee table, and sat down to try to call 911 behind her back. After a few seconds

feeling around for the numbers, she successfully called 911 and got the phone on speaker. She got through to the dispatcher about 12:20 p.m. February 12<sup>th</sup>, and said Dorner may have been gone for a half hour.

Although it was difficult to hear the Reynolds clearly, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's dispatchers quickly sent deputies to look into the call. They also alerted units to be on the lookout for the maroon Nissan Rogue. After a week of frustrating inaction, the call soon had law enforcement responding in a wave from around Southern California.

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Deputy Alex Collins had rushed back to work from paternity leave with his wife and newborn child after the truck was discovered on February 7<sup>th</sup>. He joined fellow deputy Jeremy King, who cancelled a vacation, to drive up to the Big Bear Sheriff's Station where they were assigned to begin nearly round-the-clock shifts looking for the fugitive. Collins, who has been assigned to Big Bear for five years, said it is common for criminals from other parts of Southern California to try to hide out in the mountain wilderness, so they were not surprised Dorner had headed to the snowy peaks after his night of ambushing police officers.

Collins and King were first assigned to place trail cameras in trees downslope from where the truck was discovered – a cold and scary duty that had one sweeping the silent forest with weapon drawn while the other worked to secure the cameras. The visuals showed little aside from the huge police presence in the area over the next few days. Collins is the youngest of three brothers in the sheriff's department, and all were intensely involved with the manhunt. Brother Ryan Collins ran the command post operations in Big Bear, and brother Matt is a SWAT team member who was stationed in Big Bear, ready to roll if the fugitive was found.

The four days since the truck was found had been spent running down false reports and rechecking old leads. On the morning of February 12<sup>th</sup>, Collins and King had put on tactical vests and cold weather gear and hiked into the forest near where a resident had reported seeing Dorner the morning of February 6<sup>th</sup>. They found a large vacant cabin and checked it carefully. "It was another of those times we should have probably called in more guys first, but that was the way it was that week – you went with what you had," Collins said.

Returning to the station, they were about to head to lunch when the call came in: Dorner had reportedly tied up some condominium owners and taken their car – a maroon Nissan Rogue SUV. Collins and King jumped into King’s car and headed out. After driving around local streets near the scene, they guessed that there was only one way Dorner would have gone to escape – down State Highway 38. King “flooded it,” and they headed down the twisting road known as the “back way” to Big Bear that travelled through small forest communities like Barton Flats and Angelus Oaks and emptied into Mentone and Redlands.

The week of frustration and intense anxiety about catching the cop-killer had police from throughout the region quickly headed to the mountains. Redlands Police Department Sergeant Steve Crane, who was assigned to a task force working with San Bernardino Sheriff’s deputies on narcotics cases, said the word went out that all units on the detail should join the pursuit, despite the fact that most were lightly armed and had little cold-weather or tactical gear. Riverside Police Department detectives Jimmy Simmons and Mike Medici were in the mountains following up on the murder of Michael Crain. When the call came in, they jumped into Simmons’ 4x4 pickup and raced down Highway 38 to see if they could find the Nissan Rogue.

San Bernardino Deputy Paul Franklin was already working down in the Barton Flats area checking on cabins when the call went out about the carjacking of the Nissan Rogue. A “resident deputy” who lives in the mountains, Franklin immediately assumed that Highway 38 was a likely escape route. Working with Deputy Shane Hollands and two California Fish and Wildlife agents, Franklin parked along the highway at a wide turn where it was easy to spot oncoming traffic. He got out of his car to get a “spike strip” from his trunk, and saw a small, purple SUV-type vehicle traveling close behind a school bus. He jumped back in his unit and radioed in that he had seen a vehicle matching the suspect’s description. He caught and passed the school bus and raced down as far as Angelus Oaks without finding the suspect vehicle.

Franklin felt he had seen “cinder dust” kicked up at the turnoff for Glass Road, a few miles back. As he drove back that way, he received a cell phone call from the camp manager at Tahquitz Boy Scout Camp, who said he had just been carjacked on Glass Road and had heard gunshots from the direction the carjacker had fled. Franklin guessed

the carjacker was Dorner and headed that way, radioing in that he was now looking for a white Dodge pickup truck.

The evidence that Dorner had driven down Glass Road grew stronger quickly when the deputies learned that a Fish and Wildlife unit had come under fire from a white pickup truck along the road. The agents were not injured and returned fire. Franklin waited for another unit for backup, and then drove slowly down the twisting Glass Road. They found the Nissan Rogue crashed into a snow bank and spotted a sniper rifle in the car. They stopped again to ensure that the Fish and Wildlife Officers were not injured. The road had been plowed for some distance, and snow was banked along both sides.

Other units now began to join Franklin and Hollands on Glass Road, including Detective Jeremiah McKay in an unmarked car, and Detective Jeremy King and Deputy Alex Collins. As they followed Franklin down the winding road, Collins said both of his brothers called on his cell phone urging him to use extreme caution. As they came to the intersection of Glass Road and Seven Oaks Road, the units were passed by a van carrying Deputy Daniel Rosa and Detectives Larry Lopez and Chad Johnson of the sheriff's SWAT team, known as the Specialized Enforcement Division. The SED deputies continued along the road to see if Dorner was trying to circle back to another highway.

The other deputies drove down Seven Oaks Road, looking for any sign of the carjacked white Dodge pickup. As they drove past a series of three cabins just off the road to the north, Franklin realized that there were tire tracks leading away from the road but he did not see the white truck. He was sure they were fresh, because he and Hollands had been in the area earlier and had not seen them.

Franklin, Hollands, King, Collins, Corporal Michael Siegfried and Detective Jeremiah MacKay pulled their vehicles to a stop about 20 yards down the road from the cabins, allowing them to be hidden behind large bushes. They climbed out and began putting on their protective vests. As they were preparing, Redlands Sergeant Steve Crane and his partner, Deputy Jeffrey McDaniel, rolled to a stop in McDaniel's Dodge Durango, parking behind the other cars and directly in front of the main cabin.

With Collins leading the way, the deputies headed back to follow the tire tracks away from the road. Just as Collins walked past Crane, the officers heard what sounded like a cap gun or a hammer striking metal, and bullets began slamming into McDaniel's

Durango. Collins was hit and went down, and Crane said he felt bullets pinging off the vehicle as he and the others dove for cover. Franklin knew that there was no reception for the hand-held radios in the narrow mountain canyon, and quickly ran back to his vehicle to broadcast “shots fired” and then “officer down.”

The officers began returning fire, although they were still uncertain from where the incoming rounds were being fired. The rounds kept smacking into the Durango – shattering the windows and puncturing the tires. Collins managed to drag himself behind the vehicle and sat with his back to the tire. He knew he had been hit, and decided he had to call his wife to tell her he loved her. He reached inside his vest for his cell phone – and found it had been shattered.

“I got mad and threw the thing away, and decided I just wasn’t going to die up there,” Collins said. He later found that the phone had blocked a bullet that had struck him square in the chest and penetrated his vest – probably saving his life from the worst of the four rounds that hit him.

The officers who were pinned down behind the Durango tried to find ways to return fire, and MacKay raised up slightly over the hood of the vehicle to get a shot. Another burst of rounds hit the vehicle, and MacKay fell back with a wound to the neck. The bullets ricocheted off the pavement under the vehicle, and Crane said he and the others feared for their lives. The call went out that a second officer was down. Seeing that Collins needed medical attention, deputies tried to drive the Durango away from the front of the cabin, while another dragged Collins behind it. But the vehicle moved too quickly, and Collins and MacKay were left completely exposed.

When they heard the “officer down” calls, SED team members Rosa, Lopez and Johnson rushed back up the road and parked near Franklin’s vehicle. Others also began to arrive; SED Sergeant John Charbonneau, Deputy Justin Musella, and Detective Kelly Craig pulled up on the opposite side of the cabin and were soon joined by Riverside Police officers Simmons and Medici. The SWAT team members began firing steadily into the cabin in an effort to drive the shooter back from the windows.

At Charbonneau’s request, Musella threw two smoke canisters in front of the cabin to provide cover so officers could rescue Collins and MacKay, who were still lying exposed in front of the cabin. Rosa threw another canister from the opposite side, and officers from

both sides began firing constantly into the cabin. Fearing for his life and thinking of his wife and kids, Lopez ran in front of the cabin and began dragging MacKay toward safety. Deputy Hollands ran to help him, and they pulled MacKay out of the line of fire.

Rosa then ran in front of the cabin, firing his rifle as he went. He threw his weapon back to cover, and then dragged Collins to safety. The injured deputies were loaded into the back seat of Rosa's truck, and Crane and McDaniel drove them down the hill. A rescue helicopter had already landed on the opposite side of the firefight at the cabin, so they had to wait while a new landing area was found. The deputies were airlifted to Loma Linda University Medical Center about 1:48 p.m. Collins said he began to despair of surviving his injuries during the wait and the flight to Loma Linda, about 15 minutes away. The physician on board, who began medical treatment, urged him to hang on and buoyed his spirits. MacKay was pronounced dead during the helicopter ride. The 14-year veteran left a wife and two young children.

San Bernardino Sheriff's Department SED Captain Greg Herbert arrived at the cabin scene just before the rescue operation, and he and his incident commander, Lieutenant John Ginter began to look for ways to pull out the deputies who were still pinned down behind vehicles. Although the department's armored "Bearcat" vehicle was still in the shop for repairs after heavy use in the mountains, the San Bernardino Police Department armored vehicle was available and the request went out for the S.B.P.D. SWAT team. The two teams work well together and Herbert welcomed its availability and used it to move all of the initial deputies out of the line of fire. His team members covered the maneuver with hundreds of rounds fired toward the cabin. The Bearcat crew then returned and fired 16 "Ferret" gas rounds into the cabin.

The San Bernardino Police Department was the only agency requested by the Sheriff's Department to assist, yet hundreds of units from numerous agencies started streaming up Highway 38 toward the shooting scene. San Bernardino Police Chief Robert Handy, who was at the scene and offered to help organize the response, said he believed cars were lined up along Highway 38 for more than a mile. Many of the officers were out of their cars with rifles pointed downhill toward the action on Glass Road, even though it was more than a mile away.

Worried that his own officers would speed en masse to join the chase from nearly 100 miles away, Irvine Chief Maggard broadcast an alert to all cars ordering them to stand

down. Irvine leadership ordered the Irvine detectives on the mountain to stay behind and interview the condominium owner/hostages.

The traffic jam of police vehicles on Glass Road itself was so bad that the sheriff's fortified "tactical tractor" needed to be unloaded from its flatbed carrier and driven slowly down the hill on its own power, Herbert said. At one point during the confrontation, a Los Angeles Fire Department rescue helicopter flew into the canyon – bringing one of the LAPD's SWAT teams to back up the action. Fearing that any more personnel could be caught in the crossfire, Herbert ordered the LAPD officers high up on the canyon wall to stay there and to not get involved.

Once the sheriff's tactical tractor arrived, it was used to "port" openings into the cabin. Windows were torn out by the frames, and it was discovered that mattresses had been placed against the walls for cover. There had been no recent weapons fire coming from the cabin, but as the windows were torn out, Dorner set off green tactical smoke canisters inside the cabin.

From the safety of the tactical tractor, Ginter broadcast a message to the cabin, calling Dorner by name and urging him to come out. The cabin was surrounded, Ginter said over the loudspeaker, and if Dorner did not surrender, the SED would fire "hot" pyrotechnic gas into the cabin.

The SED decided to deploy the pyrotechnic canisters because none of the other gas had had any effect, Herbert said. It was clear from the ambush of officers earlier in the day that any attempt by the SWAT team to enter the cabin would be met by automatic gunfire, he said. The winter sun was waning in the deep canyon, and the danger to deputies would increase substantially after dark in the remote area. They had to force Dorner out. No shots were fired by the deputies or from the cabin after the announcement. The SED team waited 20 more minutes, and then began deploying the pyrotechnic canisters about 4:10 p.m.

Three different types of pyrotechnic canisters were deployed at the cabin. All three are recommended by the manufacturer for outdoor use only because of their "fire-producing capability." Six canisters were lobbed into the cabin and activated without causing any fires. However, one canister fell outside the cabin and caught fire, which began to burn up the wall of the wooden structure. The only response from inside the cabin

was the release of another green gas canister. The fire continued to spread along the walls of the cabin, but the roof and the main exit wall did not begin to burn for some time.

About 10 minutes after the fire started, officers heard a single loud gunshot from the cabin. Many remarked that it was the first shot they had heard that did not seem to involve a sound suppressor. Not long after, the cabin became engulfed, and soon large amounts of ammunition could be heard exploding inside. Herbert said the ammunition explosions made it far too dangerous to allow fire department personnel near enough to begin putting out the fire.

Hours later, the fire was extinguished and investigators began sifting through the remains. A body was found in the small basement area – too burned to make a positive identification. However, investigators found identification that had been protected from the fire because it was under the body – a driver’s license and other ID for Christopher Dorner.

Irvine Homicide Detective Vicky Hurtado brought the San Bernardino County Coroner the means to make the positive identification some days later. Her investigators had gone to Dorner’s mother’s home and during service of a search warrant found his dental retainers. The retainers fit the mouth of the body found in the cabin, and Dorner was officially pronounced dead on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Because of a bullet hole found in Dorner’s skull – and very little smoke in his lungs – the coroner determined that death came from a self-inflicted gunshot wound from a handgun.

Most of the fired shell casings in the cabin were .223 caliber rifle casings. Investigators found an AR-15 rifle barrel in the burned cabin, and determined that it was the weapon used to kill Deputy MacKay and wound Deputy Collins. Further investigation showed that the bullets that killed Riverside Officer Crain were from the same semi-automatic weapon – as well as those in the attack on the LAPD officers in Corona. Portions of a 9 mm Glock handgun were found near the body in the cabin, and a suppressor for the gun was found in another area. The coroner determined that this was likely the weapon used for the self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Irvine Police provided shell casings from their homicide to the San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department to determine if they were from the same weapon recovered from the cabin where Dorner perished. Careful cleaning of shell casings and the portions of the

Glock that were found at the cabin provided the final evidence needed to close the Irvine double-homicide: The same gun that Dorner used to take his own life was the one that was used to murder Keith Lawrence and Monica Quan.

# CRISIS FORCES DISPARATE AGENCIES TO WORK TOGETHER

Police agencies and officers responding to the threats and attacks made by Christopher Dorner knew they were facing a nearly incomprehensible challenge – an attacker who knew police methods and protocol and who had declared war not only on officers but also on their families. This challenge amplified the fundamental problems caused by departments representing wide-ranging force sizes and civil environments handling a case that had many elements in direct conflict with each other.

The prior section sets the scene of the Dorner event, providing a narrative that follows his course of action and the efforts of those who were responding. However, in addition to being a gripping event with heroics and considerable personal loss, it provides important lessons for agencies that may experience similar incidents in the future. Before transitioning to the lessons learned that are discussed in the next chapters, it is important to understand the broad conceptual issues underlying this review.

## THE EMOTIONAL AND DECISION-MAKING SETTING

The death of Monica Quan and Officer Keith Lawrence was a tremendous loss to their family and friends. It also affected the Irvine community, where homicides of this nature are rare. Recognizing the impact and potential concern among community residents, the Irvine Police Department took an “all hands on deck approach” in responding to the crime. The effort of the police department members as they initially entered the case was to identify the suspect and build a prosecutable case that would lead to apprehending the offender and restore a sense of safety to the community.

Unfortunately, these lightning-strike attacks would form a pattern in the Dorner case. In the days that would follow, Dorner would ambush two LAPD officers with overwhelming semi-automatic weapons fire in Corona, and in the minutes that followed, he killed Riverside Police Officer Michael Crain and seriously wounded Officer Andrew Tachias before they even knew he was nearby. The possibility of injury or death is an element of the job acknowledged by police officers. But unexpected ambush attacks make this reality

hit home, particularly when it is an officer within your own department. Officers have to wrestle with the grief that comes from losing a colleague and friend. Police are trained to be ready to take control of situations, and these shootings created an environment where officers could be seriously wounded or killed before they even knew they were under attack. These considerations temporarily redefined the police role from one where they are responding to assist victims in the community, to one where they are the victims.

The Dorner case, however, took these issues and related emotions to a new level. The discovery of the Facebook letter created a heightened level of vulnerability rarely experienced by law enforcement officers. Their families were coming under direct threat of violence and death – their jobs to protect the community were now a source of danger to their spouses and children. Moreover, this potential was not just an idle rant. When Dorner shot Keith Lawrence and Monica Quan execution-style, the threat was brought home with devastating force. As the investigation was unfolding, it was discovered that Dorner had been tracking Monica. In light of this very real threat, LAPD leaders felt duty-bound to mobilize a massive protection detail that was well beyond anything they had ever done. Many officers moved their families out of town, or curtailed everyday activities. Daily routines like going to the grocery store or a kid’s soccer practice and school events were now a source of potential danger.

Providing this protection and finding Dorner was taken very personally by the LAPD leadership, as one department official noted, “They’re our people, our issue, and ours to protect.” The leadership wanted to take very strong steps to let all department officers know that they were concerned about their well-being. This new state of operations and life for the LAPD and their targeted officers was not lost on neighboring agencies. A police official noted in relation to the LAPD effort and state of mind, “When LAPD is scared; you better stop and take notice.”

The concern for LAPD officers became a fear for every Southern California law enforcement agency after the ambush shooting of the Riverside officers. When Dorner sprayed the Riverside unit that was simply sitting at a stoplight with semi-automatic fire, it was clear he was indiscriminately targeting any law enforcement officer he encountered. This became the mindset of officers on the various protection details and throughout the agencies in the area, including those LAPD and Torrance officers at or near the protection location in Torrance. When Dorner’s truck was found in the Big Bear area, the fear for his motives put San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department officials into immediate crisis mode. Was

he there to target officers at the ski resort for police and fire day, or was this coincidence? Would he take area residents hostage? Deputies assigned to check area cabins said they knew they were potentially taking on a suicide mission against a well-armed fugitive who would shoot on sight.

The take-away from this discussion is that the Dorner event carried an element of safety concern that goes beyond those typically acknowledged by officers on a daily basis. The targeting of family adds a dimension seldom encountered by law enforcement officers. Officers are trained to identify the dangers they face and develop skills to counter them, but the targeting of family is a vulnerability that is not accounted for in this training. Even considering the narrow scope of officer safety, facing a well-armed suspect that appears to be on a search and destroy mission for law enforcement officers is well beyond the scope of everyday policing. As one law enforcement official noted, the “officers sensed this is not just another guy with a gun, [it] far surpassed this.” Both of these concerns were further influenced by the image of Dorner that was emerging as the event unfolded. Hindsight has shown that Dorner’s background and training was not extraordinary. However, the immediate portrayal of Dorner through the media was of an individual that was highly trained by the military in combat and intelligence, knowledgeable of police tactics, and in possession of a cache of firearms and ammunition. Unfortunately, the background check on Dorner being conducted by law enforcement investigators was not moving fast enough nor did it have effective communication channels to counter the image emerging in the press.

Collectively, these considerations give context to the decision-making of law enforcement leaders and officers in the field during the Dorner case. Events were unfolding in a rapid and dynamic fashion with a high degree of uncertainty about his motives, intent, and capacity, and their vulnerability. This element of a decision-making environment imbued with rapid, dynamic, and uncertain conditions, particularly with the presence of vulnerabilities to officers and their families, makes the case study of the Dorner event valuable to the law enforcement community in the United States and other countries. Agencies may face events similar to Dorner, or analogous events such as terrorist attacks or large-scale natural disasters.

## THE MULTIAGENCY SETTING

It is also important to recognize the complexity of the multiagency nature of the Dorner case response. This was not an investigation and response to a major event within a single jurisdiction where all personnel involved are working with the same set of policies, working norms, and a single authority structure. The research team interviewed personnel from nine different law enforcement agencies who played instrumental roles in the Dorner event: California Highway Patrol, Corona Police Department, Irvine Police Department, Los Angeles Police Department, National City Police Department, Riverside Police Department, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, San Bernardino Police Department, and Torrance Police Department. The Southern California region includes 10 counties with more than 22 million people. There were also federal agencies assisting through the Joint Regional Intelligence Center (JRIC) or through individual agency contacts, as well as countless other agencies helping in search efforts in the San Bernardino Mountains and tracking down investigative leads across the country. Each of these agencies entered with different background characteristics, the most notable being size and operating environment.

With the exception of National City PD, all of the primary agencies that were interviewed by the research team have more than 100 sworn personnel, which places each of them in the top five percent of law enforcement agencies in United States with regard to size.<sup>3</sup> However, within this group there are large differences in agency size. The LAPD is the third largest law enforcement agency in the United States with nearly 10,000 officers. While not as large as LAPD, the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department still ranks as one of the largest agencies in the country with approximately 1,700 deputies. The remaining agencies interviewed by the research team, with the exception of the California Highway Patrol, range in size from 400 to 80 sworn personnel. These size differences translate into capacity differences in what can be brought to a major event like Dorner with regard to manpower, specialized units, equipment, technology, and other resources. In some cases, this ability to bring resources, particularly the large agencies, was seen as valuable in addressing resource strains. For example, an official from the Corona Police Department commented on the capacity of the LAPD to bring personnel to aid in securing

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<sup>3</sup> Sworn personnel figures drawn from the 2012 Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) produced by the Federal Bureau of Investigations. National City Police Department has 80 sworn personnel according to the 2012 UCR.

their crime scene, which facilitated their ability to focus on the investigation and maintain patrol service to the rest of the city.

However, size and capacity differences also affect how response efforts proceed. As one official noted in reference to working with the LAPD on how to manage the event, “[you are] trying to keep up with one of the (nation’s) most influential agencies.” This dynamic created friction on occasion. Some officials said they felt the LAPD and some of their personnel could be “a bull in a china shop” at times. But even the LAPD faced resource concerns. The department stretched its operations to their limits to pursue their protection and investigative efforts. As the event wore on, department officials noted that this commitment was starting to impact normal department operations and concern was emerging regarding how they would handle this if the event continued for a few more days or weeks. As one LAPD official noted, the incident “taxed all we could handle.”

Each of the primary agencies responding to the Dorner case operates in different environments. The vast urban jurisdiction of the LAPD – which handles an average of 300 murder cases each year - contrasted with the quiet suburban setting of Irvine, with an average of two murders most years. National City is close to the Mexico border and major military installations, and its officers are versed in the interaction with international and military authorities. The San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department Big Bear station represented the most unique setting, with challenges posed by elevation, vast uninhabited areas, changing weather conditions, and communication difficulties. Operating in these different environments requires different skill sets, knowledge bases, and outside connections among personnel in these organizations. This can be a benefit when multiple agencies work together. At the same time, however, such conditions and resulting aptitudes produce different working norms among organizational personnel in how they carry out their business on a day-to-day basis. These differing norms provide a potential source of friction and conflict as officers and leaders from different agencies come together in a multiagency setting.

Agencies also differ in their policies and procedures. For example, Corona Police Department policy dictates that they handle the criminal portion of all officer-involved-shooting investigations that occur in their jurisdiction regardless of which agency is involved, whereas Torrance Police Department allows the home agency of the officer involved in the shooting to handle such investigations. The LAPD wanted to handle the investigation of the shootings involving their officers in both of these jurisdictions, but had

to negotiate these different policies. In the Corona shooting there were also differences in how each agency processes shootings. Because of its sophistication – and because it is operating under a consent decree – the LAPD brings several independent investigative and oversight teams to process an officer-involved shooting. Because they are tasked to operate independently, each team requested information separately from the Corona investigators. Frustrated by the need to be repetitious, Corona officials finally informed the various individuals that they would only deal with one LAPD representative. These represent just two of the numerous examples provided on differences in policies and procedures surrounding how to handle, who handles, and the techniques for handling different circumstances that had to be negotiated as the case unfolded.

The issues with integrating the efforts of multiple agencies that differ in capacity, experience, norms, and formal policies are further complicated by the lack of "who's in charge" of the overall response effort. These challenges are not insurmountable. As the Dorner case unfolded, agencies were able to work through these differences. A Multiagency Coordination Center was established within a few days to help this effort, though the level of participation varied between agencies. Nonetheless, due to the nature of the event and the coming together of multiple agencies, disagreements, miscommunication, and the potential for additional problems were to be expected.

## COMMAND AND CONTROL

Command and Control are critical to a coordinated and collaborative response and resolution of complicated multijurisdictional incidents. The police response to the attacks by Christopher Dorner provides an illuminating examination of the use of Command and Control in accomplishing several different missions across multiple jurisdictions and agencies. This review examined the challenges associated with command and control when agencies fail to fully implement or follow pre-established guidelines, policies, and directives such as the [National Incident Management System \(NIMS\)](#), [California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid System](#), and department policies.

The findings in this report merely scratch the surface of more significant issues of collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries. A critical influence was a real and ongoing threat to the lives of law enforcement personnel and their families. This created a unique environment within the command decision-making environment. In this case, the use of [NIMS](#) was influenced by an environment where confidentiality and trust played critical roles in not only managing criminal investigations but also protecting potential targets. In reviewing command and control issues, the team identified two overarching categories: incident command, including the use of command centers, and self-deployment.

### INCIDENT COMMAND AND COMMAND CENTERS

As events unfolded within different jurisdictions, each agency tended to maintain its own incident command. The structures and protocols mirrored everyday events familiar to the individual jurisdictions. Field command posts and command structures were established as prescribed by agency policies. However, when events required multiagency collaboration, the use of formal command and control systems, such as [NIMS](#), was limited. The use of unified command and control became less coordinated as events expanded to involve more agencies.

The [National Incident Management System](#) is a national framework for management of large-scale or multijurisdictional incidents such as the investigation and search for Dorner. Emergency responders use it to conduct operations so that responders at all levels can work more effectively and efficiently. While most incidents in this case involved a single law enforcement agency, the response was unavoidably regional as soon as the manifesto was discovered.

The first couple of days following the murders in Irvine serve as a benchmark to illustrate how command and control changed over the duration of events. The Irvine Police Department established an operations center to manage the events surrounding the murders of Monica Quan and Officer Keith Lawrence. The command structure and facility logistics focused on the mission to identify, arrest, and prosecute those responsible for the murders.

With discovery of Dorner's online manifesto, the command and control dynamics changed. The LAPD activated their own department operations center, and sent LAPD command staff, and later investigators, to the Irvine Police Department operations center in a liaison role. The result was coordination at both the executive and investigative levels. While the capture of the suspect was a shared outcome, the primary goal for LAPD was the protection of potential victims.

Early on, the agencies realized that a unified command was not necessary. The Irvine Police Department was in the middle of a complicated and dynamic murder investigation with all the required technical resources secured in their facility. The LAPD needed access to their own internal systems and scrambled to identify and protect potential targets as quickly as possible. The missions were distinctly different and a unified command would not have added significant value.

The complications in maintaining command and control started to occur following the shootings in Corona and Riverside, and the discovery of the burned truck in Big Bear Lake. The department operations centers located at the Irvine Police Department and LAPD remained functional, while the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department opened an incident command post at Big Bear, in addition to a department operations center at the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department headquarters in San Bernardino. The Riverside Police Department created a command center with support from LAPD. Later, a [Multiagency Coordination Center](#) (MAC) was established at the [Joint Regional Intelligence Center](#) in the City of Norwalk, allowing Riverside and Irvine to close their centers. The facility was selected for political neutrality and not necessarily for capacity, functionality, or location.

It is important to note that a Multiagency Coordination Center is designed to provide information analysis and critical resources to the incident commander/unified command.

Coordination does not mean assuming command of the incident scene. The agencies involved in the search for Dorner maintained command and control of their resources from within their respective department operations centers. The assumption by many that the MAC also served as a unified command center for the active tactical search created confusion for some. The most dramatic example of the complications created by the lack of a comprehensive and unified investigative effort was a dispute over control of the burned truck and items found near the vehicle. The San Bernardino Sheriff's Department understood the need to accommodate the agencies investigating the murders in Irvine, attempted murders in Corona, and murder and attempted murder in Riverside. Because there was no unified investigative effort at that time, the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department served as a mediator between agencies who were each asserting their priority to seize and process evidence. Irvine Police expressed that they had acquired a search warrant before the tragic shootings in Corona and Riverside. The warrant would help serve as a legal basis for obtaining and processing evidence in Orange County. Riverside investigators explained that the shootings in Corona and Riverside presented a direct nexus between the truck and the murder of a police officer and the attempted murder of three others. They further asserted that obtaining a warrant in Riverside County would not be difficult and the truck should remain in San Bernardino. While agency command staff were quick to work out the differences, the broader issue of unified investigative effort was not addressed. It would be several days before a unified investigative approach was understood and implemented within the agencies. In this example, the competing interests between investigators overshadowed the reality that a unified investigative effort would better serve all agencies and the public.

Throughout the events, agency assumptions about each other tended toward the negative. Examples include: an assumption that only certain tactical teams possessed the high degree of skills necessary to capture Dorner; that Irvine police, because of the comparable lack of violent crime, did not have the experience to investigate the murders; or that smaller jurisdictions lacked the staffing to protect potential targets. All these assumptions proved to be false, and led to some less than optimal decisions.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- ❖ Agencies should review NIMS guidelines and training beyond tactical events to include major ongoing multijurisdictional investigations. In critical incidents,

particularly events involving multiple jurisdictions, the understanding and use of NIMS is critical to the successful sharing of information, coordination of resources, and tactics. The competing interest between the investigation and search for Dorner created silos of information across jurisdictions that could have been reduced with earlier collaboration.

- ❖ Agencies must develop relationships in advance with other agencies to understand abilities and limitations. FEMA identifies advance relationships as critical to emergency coordination and response. When prior relationships exist, false assumptions are greatly reduced or eliminated.

- ❖ Establish a regional cadre of executive experts, who at the request of an agency, would serve as a real-time advisory team. The advisory team would assist decision makers with executive level strategies related to political influences, media, NIMS, critical incident response and investigations.

## MULTIAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER

In an attempt to coordinate the search for Dorner, a [Multiagency Coordination Center \(MAC\)](#) was established at the [Joint Regional Intelligence Center \(JRIC\)](#)<sup>4</sup>, in Norwalk, Los Angeles County. The JRIC is managed by the Los Angeles County Sheriffs' Department and is considered a regional asset and therefore a good neutral site to locate a MAC. The JRIC also maintains staff and resources capable of quickly receiving and analyzing information.

The primary function of the [MAC](#) was to coordinate search activities and to prioritize demands for critical or competing resources. This was designed to assist field operations by coordinating personnel, procedures, protocols, business practices and communications. Before the MAC was established, information exchange was inconsistent and not timely, resulting in a less than ideal level of coordination between the ever-increasing numbers of agencies.

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<sup>4</sup> The Joint Regional Intelligence Center (JRIC) is a fusion center collaboration between federal, state, and local law enforcement and public safety agencies to integrate criminal and terrorism threat intelligence and provide intake, analysis, fusion, synthesis, and dissemination of that information.

After numerous interviews, it was determined that some MAC systems worked well and others did not. In concept, a MAC is well-suited for a multiagency/multijurisdictional event such as this. And in this situation, the MAC did significantly improve the level of collaboration and the speed and accuracy of information sharing. However, not all of the involved agencies were equally invested, which left it unclear whether the MAC would simply coordinate information and resources for some agencies or all agencies. Numerous line level participants were unaware of the MAC's role, assumed that the MAC was an incident command center, and were confused as to why there was not one incident commander. Others were not sure why they were present other than to report back to their department.

Those familiar with the criminal investigation noted that they found that much of the information put together by the staff assigned to the MAC was inaccurate. Detectives also reported limited evidentiary value of information developed in the MAC. However, they did value the ability to communicate with detectives from other agencies. Investigators assigned to the MAC also reported that too many people from uninvolved agencies were co-located in the MAC. The JRIC reported 100-130 people representing 28 agencies in the MAC daily.

Travel distance to the MAC became an issue for agencies in the Riverside and San Bernardino areas. The one-way travel from San Bernardino to Norwalk is approx. 60 miles. With an active search in Big Bear Lake - over 100 miles from the MAC - the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department initially assigned a first line supervisor and line staff to participate in the MAC. The assigned San Bernardino staff members, because of rank, were not treated as peers to those at the executive level. The disparity in rank, compared to executives of other participating agencies, created a perception that the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department was not equally invested in the MAC. Other agency officials felt that all agencies involved - including San Bernardino - should have had executive line staff at the MAC to expedite cooperative action.

When the MAC became operational, the burned truck had been discovered on the mountain in Big Bear Lake. Three scenarios were developed regarding Dorner's whereabouts; he was either in the forest and struggling with exposure from the extreme elements, hidden in a structure in Big Bear Lake, or off the mountain and on the loose. Since there was no evidence that he had made it off the mountain, the San Bernardino

Sheriff's Department worked the scenario that he was still there. The department has an expertise in searching for missing-persons and suspects in the National Forest area. Any coordination with their efforts was done at the incident command post and/or within the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department operations center.

As San Bernardino continued the search in Big Bear Lake, executives in the MAC determined that the regional effort needed better coordination in investigative strategies, personnel support, and media releases. They established objectives to improve their strategic investigative effort, data management, resource coordination, and media strategy.

It is important to understand the unique interests of LAPD and its relationship with the MAC. Unlike coordination centers established for natural disasters or terrorist events, this MAC had the responsibility of sifting through clues and providing intelligence information so that LAPD could better determine threats to their employees and families.

The success of command and control does not require a unified command or even unified intent. However, without equal investment, the establishment of roles, responsibilities, intent, rules, and constraints becomes cloudy. While issues of resource deployment into jurisdictions not fully integrated into the MAC were eventually resolved, a significant event occurred that had the potential to put officers' lives at risk.

On Tuesday February 12<sup>th</sup> Dorner was located and contained in a cabin on Seven Oaks Road. The San Bernardino Sheriff's Department was the lead agency and possessed the skills, training, personnel, and equipment necessary to manage the barricaded gunman. The LAPD sent a tactical team to provide possible aid in the response. LAPD officials said the team was directed to fly to "the mountain," meaning the Big Bear airport. However, without the knowledge of the San Bernardino on-scene incident commander, the team landed on a slope above the cabin, which required the sheriff's officials to divert attention and deploy resources to direct the unrequested tactical team to stand down and not interfere with the operation.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- ❖ All levels of law enforcement personnel must become thoroughly aware of all aspects of NIMS, including on-scene multiagency coordination and off-site

EOC's/Multiagency Coordination. It was clear in the interviews that executive leadership is familiar with the purpose and application of NIMS. Less clear was the ability to implement and adapt NIMS to an ever-changing situation that crossed so many jurisdictions.

- ❖ It is not enough to know and understand NIMS. Agency heads must fully commit to coordinated efforts and to the use of NIMS and its three key constructs: Incident Command System, Multiagency Coordination System, and Public Information. The lack of full commitment to each of these three areas led to problems between agencies.

- ❖ A culture of self-reliance exists within larger departments. Despite the ability to handle events without the assistance of others, large agency leadership across the country must view multijurisdictional events as opportunities to collaborate and be inclusive.

- ❖ Fusion Centers<sup>5</sup>, such as the JRIC, are strategically placed throughout the United States and should be equipped and serve as pre-identified unified command centers. While the MAC exceeded the physical capabilities of the JRIC, the concept of bringing multiple agencies together to collaborate in a secured environment requires consideration.

- ❖ To increase coordination and capacity at established command locations, technology must be utilized to create a virtual environment that allows live, real-time access to dispersed personnel.

## SELF-DEPLOYMENT

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<sup>5</sup> Located in states and major urban areas throughout the country, fusion centers are uniquely situated to empower law enforcement, public safety, fire service, emergency response, public health, critical infrastructure protection, and private sector security personnel to understand local implications of national intelligence, thus enabling local officials to better protect their communities. Fusion centers provide interdisciplinary expertise and situational awareness to inform decision-making at all levels of government.

Basic law enforcement training teaches officers to handle situations on their own. They are trained to seek out opportunities to perform the task assigned to them and self-initiate in the interest of public safety. Agencies measure and evaluate officers based on self-initiated activity. This report distinguishes self-initiated from self-deployment. Self-initiated is the response to a situation witnessed by an officer or in response to a scene where the officer may take immediate action to assist in an evolving on-going incident. Self-deployment is the independent action of an individual or individuals to an incident without the ability to immediately intervene in an on-going situation or without a request from the jurisdiction in command.

When the pickup truck was discovered burning in the mountains on February 7<sup>th</sup>, law enforcement officers from throughout Southern California rushed to Big Bear Lake. Officers came by car and by helicopter. They included patrol officers, detectives, and even chiefs of police. There was no operational need for additional officers, and no request from the on-scene incident commander for [mutual aid](#). With tension over the death of an officer and the safety of their families, it was understandable that officers wanted to be there at the end of the crisis, but commanders need to take steps to avoid this undisciplined response.

All law enforcement agencies in California are placed in one of seven mutual aid regions. The hierarchy for requesting assistance within the mutual aid system is local county first, mutual aid region second, and lastly outside region assistance through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. The agencies involved in this case span five counties and two mutual aid regions. Irvine, Los Angeles, and Torrance are located within Region I. San Bernardino, Riverside, Corona, San Diego, and National City are within Region VI.

The self-deployment of officers and command staff not only from outside the county but also outside the mutual aid region created significant problems related to command and control. Witnesses said hundreds of law enforcement officers responded to the scene, some from over 100 miles away. Valuable time was wasted managing the vast number of ill-prepared police officers who left the much warmer coastal and inland climates of Southern California for the extreme cold of a mountain ski resort at 7,000ft altitude. As one Chief of Police would later declare, "I had no business going up there."

Once on the mountain there were numerous examples of individuals and small teams of officers conducting searches and activities without direction from the incident commander. There were incidents of officers deliberately working outside the scope of their mission so they could be the ones who captured Dornier. While these officers acknowledged they were working independently and outside of established mission guidelines and policies, the desire to capture the suspect appeared to outweigh training, policies, and common sense. What these officers failed to realize is they needlessly put themselves and others in harm's way and that made the event more complicated.

It has been said, "If it's predictable, it's preventable." The sighting of Dornier in Big Bear Lake on February 12<sup>th</sup> caused a rush of officers up the mountain creating an environment of unnecessary chaos. What had occurred to a lesser extent five days earlier was occurring once again. Hundreds of officers from all over Southern California responded to Big Bear Lake. The San Bernardino Sheriff's Department had not requested assistance beyond their immediate partners. The officers, supervisors, and executive level staff who rushed to assist, instead provided a potentially dangerous distraction for San Bernardino officials from their mission.

Although the intensive search activity had been scaled back by February 12<sup>th</sup>, the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department had strategically maintained a SWAT presence in the area and the team was available and responding to Dornier's attempted escape. With only three main roads off the mountain and snow covering unplowed back roads, the ability to close the mountain with the coordination of county law enforcement agencies, his escape was unlikely. There was ample evidence, however, that he would react with violence toward law enforcement personnel. The rush to capture the suspect and the lack of supervisor-level intervention led to command and control failures at many levels.

Why would so many law enforcement personnel self-deploy without the training, equipment, and expertise of searching for an armed suspect in steep snow covered mountain terrain? The answer may be in why three agencies restricted their officers from deploying.

The Irvine Police Department had a small team of detectives in Big Bear Lake doing follow-up related to the murders in their city. When Dornier was reported fleeing the area, the supervisor in charge of the team cancelled his detective's response. He understood that the suspect had a significant head start away from their location, San Bernardino had all

the tactical resources it needed, and the Irvine detectives did not have the expertise or equipment to operate in that environment. He made a decision and ordered his team back to the Big Bear Lake Patrol Station where they eventually interviewed the kidnap victims.

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) had resources on the mountain as well. Law enforcement in remote areas such as Big Bear Lake build strong working relationships among the limited numbers of law enforcement personnel. The relationship between the CHP and the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department is typical. They work side-by-side daily and understand the skills, equipment, and expertise of the other.

The CHP assigned officers to shut down the mountain to limit Dorner's escape. Knowing that he had been contained in a cabin on Seven Oaks Road, CHP supervisors directed officers to assignments that would assist SBSB at locations away from the cabin, thus freeing SBSB to focus on the tactical operation.

The Corona Police Department had taken a preventive step. On the afternoon of February 7<sup>th</sup>, Chief Mike Abel sent a list of instructions to all of his staff related to their safety. Like many of the agencies in Southern California, the Corona Police Department doubled the number of officers in patrol vehicles, eliminated motorcycle patrols, increased security measures around police facilities, and reminded everyone of the need for uniformed personnel to wear body armor. He also gave a "no self-deployment" order that was reinforced daily by managers and supervisors throughout the course of events.

The CHP, Irvine Police Department, and Corona Police Department showed situational awareness, strong leadership, and maintained command and control. They did not allow for self-created chaos but managed a tense situation in a calm rational way. The supervisors from Irvine Police Department, Corona Police Department, and CHP did not allow the emotions of chasing an armed murderer of police officers and police family members to cloud their judgment. They acted responsibly and assisted in managing the events as they unfolded.

In conversations with San Bernardino command staff and deputies about the events surrounding the Angelus Oaks cabin, one thing is certain: the self-deployment of non-essential, unrequested law enforcement personnel delayed their actions, diverted their attention, and put officers and deputies at risk. The narrow snow-lined mountain roads leading to the cabin were so congested with responding police vehicles, that SBSB SWAT

equipment was delayed reaching the scene. There were reports of officers pointing rifles down the mountain without knowing the cabin's location, and inadvertently pointing rifles at fellow law enforcement personnel.

In addition, San Bernardino Sheriff's Department commanders had to order detectives from an uninvolved agency out of the crime scene on Seven Oaks Road. Outside agency command staff without a request or approval of San Bernardino had sent the detectives there. In an effort to limit police response, one of the three roads up the mountain toward Seven Oaks Road was closed to all traffic, including police vehicles. Police officers - including command staff from agencies miles away drove around the checkpoint, inferring the order did not apply to them. Estimates had police vehicles lining the roads over 1 ½ miles back to and along Highway 38.

The rules of self-deployment also apply to command staff. Absent a request from the jurisdiction in command, agency commanders should not self-deploy to an incident. A number of high-level law enforcement leaders at the scene said they felt unable to establish control because many of those gathered would not recognize the authority of another agency.

While this report identified significant potential harms from self-deployment, there were examples of agencies with unique resources responding to Big Bear Lake. They include an agency with an ability to track predator animals in the wild to identify pack behavior associated with feeding, which may have occurred if Dorner had perished in the freezing wilderness. Another agency with high altitude aerial infrared capabilities searched the back country for signs of life. Both offers were accepted and the services utilized by San Bernardino. The noted difference was that agency personnel contacted the incident commander and offered the services. They did not insert themselves into an operation without prior approval.

### **Lessons Learned:**

❖ Mutual aid protocols and responses were not always followed in this incident. This requires refresher training at all levels of law enforcement, particularly at the supervisor level. The San Bernardino Sheriff's Department did not request mutual aid. If they had requested assistance, the State of California maintains a [Mutual Aid System](#) designed to provide an effective and organized response to emergencies.

❖ The primary responsibility to control unnecessary self-deployment rests with first line supervisors. Law enforcement supervisor and management training must include controlling self-deployment.

❖ Police Chiefs and Sheriffs Associations across the country must work to develop policies, training, and review of incidents for unnecessary self-deployment. The problems discovered in this review are not unique. Unnecessary self-deployment has resulted in significant problems across the country including accidental deaths, injuries, lost evidence, and failed prosecutions.

❖ An inventory of unique assets should be maintained at a state level to assist incident commanders in identifying potential resources that may assist them in their efforts. While current inventories exist, this event identified that non-traditional resources are available that can greatly assist in critical incidents.

## **PERVASIVE COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES**

Breakdowns of communication are nearly always listed in the “after action reports” of major multiagency events. Because of its fast-moving nature and regional scope, the response to the Dorner attacks particularly underscores the need for pre-planning in anticipation of predictable communication problems. **There were some unique facets to this event that magnified the normal communication challenges, including:**

- Agencies working with agencies they had never worked with before;
- Great geographic distances between jurisdictions;
- Wide variations in culture, size and resource capacities;
- Officers as prey of a rogue officer,
- Officers’ families as targets;

- Many conflicting mission priorities, especially “manhunt” v. “investigation”.

The nature of the communication breakdowns fell into three broad categories: technical limitations, intentional withholding of information, and unintentional failures to share information.

## **TECHNICAL LIMITATIONS**

### **Interoperability**

Because this was a multiagency event, interoperability was predictably the first major technological problem to emerge. Most of the agencies involved in the investigation and eventual apprehension of Dorner did not share common radio frequencies. Several did not even have the capacity to be “patched” to a tactical channel in the jurisdiction where they were working. This lack of real-time communication capacity during high-risk operations put officers and citizens at extreme risk and diminished opportunities to apprehend him. In addition to the safety risks, even rudimentary coordination was hampered by the inability to broadcast information to the field simultaneously and consistently.

One of the first significant examples of the lack of interoperability involved the two LAPD officers on the protection detail that encountered Dorner in Corona. They had no radio communication with Riverside Sheriff’s Department, Corona Police Department, or LAPD. When the tow truck driver told them he had just seen their suspect at 1:05 a.m., they were not able to immediately get that information out to other police units in the area. When the officers themselves spotted him at 1:10 a.m. and began to follow him, they were not able to call for back up and alert other units that Dorner was in the area. Their communications plan was to use a cell phone to contact local agencies if they required help. In an unfortunate event, the cell phone they planned to use was dropped and inoperable.

At 1:19 a.m., they were attacked with massive gunfire, and were pinned down and their car disabled. At 1:23 a.m., the officers were able to call 911 using a borrowed cell phone, and at 1:27 a.m. Corona officers arrived. Other agencies may have been able to provide support sooner if the LAPD officers had been able to alert the Corona Police Department, the California Highway Patrol, Riverside Sheriff's Department, or other departments when they began following the suspect pickup.

The most significant and pervasive lack of radio interoperability occurred in the mountains above Big Bear during the hours before Dorner was finally cornered and stopped. Though an actual number will probably never be known, it has been estimated that hundreds of self-deployed law enforcement personnel converged on the remote mountain area during those final hours. Many of those personnel had no radio contact with San Bernardino Sheriff's Department and sheriff's officials had no way to communicate with them or coordinate their actions. Because the sheriff's department could not communicate with these hundreds of personnel, not only was their presence not helpful, the sheer volume of police cars on the narrow, two lane roads, actually hampered the mission of the San Bernardino SWAT team that was managing operations at the cabin on Seven Oaks Road. Some senior police officials who were at the scene felt it was a miracle that more officers were not injured in the resulting chaos of hundreds of independently operating personnel.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- ❖ Leaders must give clear, unequivocal orders to their personnel not to respond to a multiagency event unless they: (a) get permission from their chain of command, (b) have interoperable communications with those involved in the operation, and (c) notify or check in with a command post, or incident command liaison for the operation before coming into the area. Failing to take these three steps makes them an uncontrollable liability to others involved in the mission.

- ❖ When assigning officers to a high-risk assignment inside another jurisdiction, it should be non-negotiable that they have interoperable communications to call for help or warn officers in the area of a dangerous situation. To do otherwise has significant potential for creating an unreasonable risk. Creating "ad hoc" interoperability can be accomplished in a number of different ways, including:

borrowing a portable radio from the other jurisdiction; adding members of the local jurisdiction to the special assignment team of the outside agency; having a temporary “patch” in place on a common tactical channel. It is understood that rapid response to critical incidents may cause a delay in establishing these protocols absent a preexisting solution.

- ❖ A liaison from the local jurisdiction should be identified and work closely with the local protection detail, ensuring the transfer of local knowledge and coordination of common tactics.

- ❖ The concerns related to first responder interoperable communications system are decades old, yet technological advances within regions are disparate. Local elected leaders must prioritize the implementation of interoperable communication across regional first responder agencies. The Foundation Team identified success in interoperable communication systems in Orange County and failures in Riverside County. While local jurisdictions are attempting to resolve the issues, it is inexcusable that law enforcement agencies in a county or region cannot immediately communicate with each other.

## **Dead Zones**

Radio capability related to both interoperability and capacity significantly hindered the search for the suspect in the Big Bear Mountains. While many agencies were not able to communicate with each other in the mountains, the problem with “dead zones” created the most significant safety hazards for those involved in the search. Teams of officers searching residences in dead zones had to post an officer with a cell phone in an area where he had service and was able to call for help if needed. As the search intensified, and the suspect was eventually cornered, many of the efforts to coordinate the response were hampered by this lack of transmission capacity.

### **Lesson Learned:**

- ❖ While it may not be financially feasible to add radio towers to remote areas, full radio coverage should be a goal of future system enhancements. Temporary or portable repeaters may be a possible short-term solution for future search and rescue or search and apprehension.

## UNINTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION FAILURES

### Interagency Communications Gaps

Organizing, assigning, and deploying hundreds of officers to protect vulnerable targets in a matter of hours was a difficult task that was handled with efficiency and expediency by the LAPD. The teams were expected to contact local jurisdictions when they arrived, according to LAPD officials. However, not all the agencies were notified as instructed. The Corona Police Department was unaware of protection details assigned within their city until the shooting of LAPD officers. The high-profile problems faced by some of the teams revealed the need for more aggressive steps in the future to ensure the best possible communications are established.

In retrospect, it is clear that setting up communications was one of the most critical priorities for the protection teams. Once the manifesto was discovered, several important risk factors became apparent:

- The suspect demonstrated through the murders of Monica Quan and Keith Lawrence that his threats were not idle and that he would carry them out in a cold-blooded, and unpredictable manner;
- He generalized his threats to include any law enforcement officer who he believed was assisting LAPD;
- His strategy of avoiding detection demonstrated his knowledge and ability to circumvent conventional suspect tracking methods;
- By targeting family members of a law enforcement officer, he “crossed the line” into behavior intended to terrorize the law enforcement community.

These factors demonstrated that the protection details of LAPD personnel and family were extremely high risk, far beyond routine protection details for celebrities and other high profile targets. This called for extraordinary measures to be taken, not only to protect the “targets” but also the members of the protection teams and local officers that would be drawn into a potential attack.

## Lessons Learned:

- ❖ Officers assigned to other jurisdictions should have clear and specific directions to:
  - Contact the on-duty supervisor, watch commander, or district patrol officer in the jurisdiction of the protection target to advise them of the operation and coordinate their efforts.
  - Establish interoperable radio communications either by borrowing a portable radio from the local jurisdiction, establishing an electronic “patch” to a tactical radio channel monitored by the local jurisdiction, or including a member from the local jurisdiction on the protection team.
  - Check in with the dispatch center of the local jurisdiction to brief them about the protection detail’s mission.
  - Additionally, establishing communication adds extra time and effort on the front end of the mission. However, the risks of this particular operation justify the extra time.

## Mistaken Assumptions

During the dozens of interviews for this event, we heard some personnel share their belief that other agencies or individuals had “deliberately” withheld important information for a variety of intentional, unprofessional reasons, such as inter-agency jealousy, distrust, lack of respect, and competition to be the one who makes the “big arrest” and gets the credit. We followed up on these comments to determine if information was deliberately withheld. In almost every case, it was an unintentional oversight that was the natural result of extremely fast-moving events and personnel who were sleep-deprived, overwhelmed, and juggling more responsibilities than they could possibly handle. This “Fog of War” was

pervasive in most agencies during this event and contributed to unnecessarily negative misperceptions. The Police Foundation team found no evidence of any agency intentionally withholding information.

In a few cases, information was not shared because individuals made assumptions about sharing information that were well-intentioned, but in error. For example, LAPD leaders did not request active assistance from some local agencies for their protection details. They felt it was their responsibility to take care of their own personnel and they did not want to burden the local agencies. However, many of the personnel from the local jurisdictions told the Police Foundation team that they felt they were not asked to assist because LAPD did not respect their skills and did not think they were capable of the task. These beliefs led to unnecessary friction that hindered interagency cooperation.

Other attribution errors that came up occurred inside organizations when there was an absence of information flowing between command staff and line personnel. The line personnel made assumptions that the leaders did not care about their safety as much as they should have. What we learned during the interviews was that in many cases leaders assumed critical information was being passed to line personnel. In other cases, leaders did not provide frequent, predictable updates unless they had new information.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- ❖ Attribution errors are a part of human nature that should be anticipated and planned for, especially in events where officers have been injured or killed. Highly charged, emotional events contribute to attribution errors. Agency leaders are in the best position to anticipate which actions are likely to be misinterpreted, and they should take affirmative steps to counteract potential misunderstandings.

- ❖ In events that involve the injury or death of an officer, especially those where the threat is still present and the suspect is still at large, agency leadership must take significant, affirmative steps to communicate frequently with their line personnel about the current status of the situation, what is being done to protect their safety, and to offer an avenue to dispel rumors. Hourly information briefings, even if done over email or Twitter, are better than leaving an information vacuum that will predictably be filled with negative, speculative information. In this event, officers reacted to media speculation that proved to be inaccurate. If the officers

cannot get the information they seek from their leaders, they will seek out other sources that are likely to be incorrect. Even if hourly information briefings do not offer new information, they provide a reassurance that the situation has not deteriorated. Leaders cannot communicate too much with their officers during a crisis. What may seem burdensome at the moment is critically important and will pay significant dividends in reducing inappropriate reactions to inaccurate rumors and speculation.

## INTENTIONAL WITHHOLDING OF INFORMATION

### Protecting the Investigation

The Irvine Police Department investigation into the Quan/Lawrence homicide followed conventional communication protocols: Keep tight control of information to maintain the integrity of the investigation. This strategy was appropriate until the moment the “manifesto” was discovered. The manifesto was discovered at 1:59 p.m. on Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, and the existence of the manifesto was thought to be limited to investigative agencies. That changed when a local TV station broke the story at the 8:00 p.m. news conference held at the Irvine Police Department. The *wanted person* bulletin that Irvine police had sent out to law enforcement agencies hours earlier, identifying Dorner as an extremely dangerous murder suspect, had made its way to the media. As some would later comment, the Genie was out of the bottle, and now Irvine had concerns. Would the release of the manifesto negatively affect LAPD’s ability to quickly identify personnel requiring protection and to deploy these protection details, and would the release hinder Irvine’s criminal investigation and search for Dorner?

Many of the officers interviewed in other departments were adamant that once the media publically released the manifesto it should have been distributed to all law enforcement agencies. They believed the extreme risk to all Southern California law enforcement officers necessitated the distribution of all facts about the complete nature of the threat, including the existence of the manifesto. They felt the bulletin identifying Dorner with a clear warning about how dangerous he was to law enforcement was not enough.

On February 6<sup>th</sup> when Irvine Police Department detectives went to National City to pick up the police equipment that had been found, Dorner was merely a person of interest. National City personnel told interviewers that if they had received the information prior to the Irvine investigators' arrival, they would have been better prepared to assist and would have requested information about Dorner from their contacts at nearby Navy facilities, Border Patrol, and Mexican law enforcement.

### **Lesson Learned:**

❖ Making the decision to share sensitive information about an ongoing investigation is always difficult. There have been many cases, and even more rumors, about investigations being compromised by unauthorized law enforcement personnel leaking information, or by an outside agency personnel “jumping the gun” on the apprehension of a suspect. Those concerns notwithstanding, when investigators are looking for an extremely dangerous suspect in an unfamiliar jurisdiction, they should err on the side of sharing information with local officers too early in the investigation. Local officers are likely to have valuable contacts in the community and are also more likely to have insight into local habits and potential hiding places. The potential benefits of the local contacts and insights, especially with such a dangerous suspect, far outweigh the risks. Because the case investigators are so deeply invested in the outcome of their investigation, supervisors and leaders need to be aware and prepared to step in to ensure the cooperative sharing of information.

## **MANAGING THE FEAR AND SENSE OF VULNERABILITY**

One of the unique attributes of this event was the deliberate terror created by the killing of family members of a law enforcement leader. When the suspect later shot at the LAPD officers, then committed the seemingly random ambush of Riverside Officer Michael Crain and severe injury of Officer Andrew Tachias, the sense of vulnerability of officers in the region increased exponentially. While few law enforcement professionals would admit that they are fearful, many agreed in retrospect that the entire law enforcement community was on edge. As quickly as possible, leaders should address the fear and sense of

vulnerability head-on – acknowledge it, validate it, and take steps to manage it. Failing to do so allows unacknowledged fear to inappropriately influence perceptions, reactions, and decision-making.

Countless police leaders have described this event as “beyond their worst nightmare.” Leaders had the gut-wrenching responsibility of maintaining public safety services with the knowledge that every one of their troops could have been the next random target. Leaders must recognize that officers are going to take action whether they have been given direction or not. It is imperative to give guidance and direction in order to channel the need to act, rather than to leave it to chance. Leaders can influence the actions of officers by requiring them to communicate and coordinate their efforts with other personnel involved in the incident. For example, even if the two teams of Torrance officers had both decided to observe the same entrance to the neighborhood, they may have avoided the disastrous encounter with Mr. Perdue if they had been communicating and knew what the each other was doing. On a greater scale, leaders absolutely must give clear orders not to self-deploy. If they are tasked with responding to a scene, they should establish communication and coordination with the jurisdiction managing the event.

Leaders must err on the side of over-communicating with their personnel, sharing as much information as humanly possible about actions that are being taken to locate the suspect, to protect those who are targets, to protect officers on the street, and to help the families of those who have been victimized. Information vacuums will lead to increased rumors and fear, which drives ill-conceived and unsafe actions. In conversation with some leaders, they believed they were providing timely and relevant information throughout the organization. The employees felt differently.

# COMPETING INTERESTS

The law enforcement response to the Dorner case represents a complicated event that brings together the varying interests and objectives of the agencies involved. In an ideal context, agencies can negotiate these interests and objectives before commencing operations, but this case required agencies to negotiate them as events unfolded. This circumstance created issues, at times disagreements, on how to proceed, which can inform agencies that face similar events in the future. The following discussion examines the different interests and objectives of the primary agencies involved in the case, along with the related issues that emerged.

## INTERESTS

Many of the law enforcement personnel interviewed for this study noted that there was a clear distinction between investigation and manhunt interests, which resulted in tensions between the personnel with these different responsibilities. The interviews also revealed that there was a third objective, which can be defined as threat assessment and management and which also contributed to the mix of competing interests throughout the event.

### Criminal Investigations

The case started with the execution-style double homicide in Irvine. The Irvine Police Department started an aggressive investigation effort, collecting evidence, identifying leads, and forming interpretations on potential motivations, and seeking an explanation for what occurred. A break in the case led Irvine investigators to LAPD Sergeant Teresa Evans, to the identification of Dorner as a suspect, and to the discovery of the online “manifesto,” which shed light on the larger issues in play. The officer-involved shooting with LAPD officers in Corona occurred within 12 hours of the discovery of his “manifesto,” with the separate murder of Officer Michael Crain and shooting of Officer Andrew Tachias happening 14 minutes later in Riverside. The Corona and Riverside incidents and resulting investigative efforts were much more focused because there was solid evidence, immediately or soon after these events, that Dorner was responsible. The focus in these second and third crimes was more on processing the crime scene and

collecting physical evidence and statements, and included the more difficult task in Riverside of dealing with the loss of a fellow officer. What was consistent across each of these efforts, however, was the attention paid to following proper investigative and evidentiary procedures in order to create a case that would lead to a successful prosecution.

## Threat Assessment and Management

The discovery of Dorner's letter posted online - coupled with the homicide of Monica Quan and Officer Keith Lawrence - created a dynamic rarely confronted by law enforcement. Threats had not only been made against officers, but these threats had actually been carried out against the family members of a former LAPD captain. The LAPD leadership believed it was their primary responsibility to protect their officers and their family members.

It is important to note that the LAPD was not the only agency that felt it necessary to protect officers and family from the threats. At least two of the agencies interviewed during this study took steps to reduce potential threats to their employees. There were also media reports that security was heightened across Southern California after the Corona and Riverside incidents. After those ambushes of officers, agencies viewed the threat as extending to all law enforcement. Many agencies doubled up officers in patrol units, took civilians out of the field, grounded all motorcycle officers, and placed armed officers in the lobbies of police stations. Like the LAPD efforts, these represented a preventative orientation to mitigate the threat of harm.

## Manhunt

Everyone involved in the Dorner case urgently wanted to apprehend him. However, the discovery of the burning truck at 7,000 feet in the National Forest above Big Bear Lake made the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department the *tip of the spear* in finding him. The Big Bear area was a complicated environment – part forested wilderness and part highly populated ski resort. The San Bernardino Sheriff's Department understood that one of its priorities was the safety of area residents and visitors, largely skiers, while a dangerous suspect was on the loose. However, the primary focus of these deputies and officers, which partially addresses this safety concern, was to search for Dorner with the belief that he was still somewhere in this mountainous area. Sheriff's officials created search grids to

coordinate teams of deputies and officers looking for him, which included searching the exterior of all structures, the interior of unlocked structures, and the vast open land outside of the town. This latter effort included the use of infrared cameras to search for heat signatures, and other tracking techniques. The primary orientation was to take him into custody with the least harm to deputies/officers and community members.

## **COMPETITION**

Although all agencies wanted to apprehend Dorner in order to prevent further harm to officers, their families, and the public, Irvine and Riverside also wanted to pursue a procedurally sound investigative effort to successfully prosecute him if he was captured alive. However, each agency had different approaches as to which element had priority. As a result, competition between agencies emerged at times regarding priorities and case control as each agency pursued their responsibilities. The foundation for establishing standing within this competition was a case hierarchy logic that was offered by individuals interviewed across the various agencies that were involved, often as a justification for their agency's actions.

## **CASE HIERARCHY**

The Dorner case contains extremely serious acts of violence, regardless of whether perpetrated against the public or officers. Irvine had an execution-style homicide of an off-duty officer from another agency and the daughter of a former law enforcement officer in a community that experiences few homicides in general, particularly of this nature. Corona had on their hands an attempted murder of two on-duty LAPD officers, which always demands a high-profile response. Riverside had an ambush murder of an on-duty officer and attempted murder of another officer, which generated emotional turmoil and anger within the department. The intensity of these events led some agencies involved to fervently believe they had precedence in deciding how to proceed, and this led to occasional disagreements over who had decision-making priority on specific issues.

However, the role of case hierarchy was most evident in relation to the LAPD's involvement and decision-making influence. It was asserted by many individuals who were interviewed that "LAPD didn't have a crime," which contained the underlying assertion that LAPD should not take the lead on the response. Alternatively, some LAPD members offered that the threats made by Dorner could unquestionably be considered terrorist

threats. It was also one of their former employees that was responsible for these events and department leadership felt a responsibility to resolve it. But the LAPD's main priority was to protect their personnel who had been specifically threatened. That brought about a huge commitment of resources that quickly became a drag on even the nation's third-largest force. The protection details alone involved teams positioned on a 24-hour basis at 77 locations by the end of the case, which produced over 4,000 additional officer shifts beyond routine duties.

Once the burning truck was discovered in the Big Bear area, the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department had a position in the case hierarchy. The suspect was now in their jurisdiction, and more importantly in the unique terrain of Big Bear where they were most experienced. The argument for San Bernardino shaping how the management of the case unfolded was simple. The suspect was on the mountain, the sheriff's department has the most knowledge about the area and expertise for working in it, and the whole scenario would be over once they were able to work the area and locate and apprehend him. The consideration of the crimes that occurred in the Big Bear area (kidnap, homicide of deputy, and attempted homicide of a deputy) did not become known or in-play until the end of the ordeal, and thus were not assertions for hierarchy position as events unfolded.

## **COMPETING PRIORITIES AND DECISION-MAKING CONTROL**

The assertions for case hierarchy positioning that were made to the research team do not suggest that the various agencies involved were acting in a completely autonomous fashion, nor that they were not accommodating of each other. Nearly all of the officers involved were complimentary of the support and hospitality they received from other agencies. However, each agency had its own case orientation, and its own view of what should take precedence, which sometimes caused conflict.

Investigators in some of the agencies were concerned about the competing interests of investigations, fugitive tracking, and managing threats against officer safety. The Irvine investigation started as a whodunit and then quickly became focused on Dorner. This investigative focus became even more intense after the Corona and Riverside shootings. As the case unfolded, investigators were reaching out to find out about him and about possible locations where he had been. But even between law enforcement agencies,

there were complaints that early in the process investigators were not forthcoming as to why they were making inquiries. From the traditional investigative approach, there is logic for doing this. Early in the investigative process, investigators do not want leaks in the case, particularly when there is the potential for large-scale media attention, which may tip off a suspect and cause him to flee or destroy evidence. In addition, even if they are willing to exchange information, detectives have been trained to independently vet every piece of evidence to avoid potential complications down the road from misinformation. While officers in other jurisdictions may understand the underlying protocol, many felt it should be outweighed by the potential threat to officer safety. In essence, they were arguing that detectives were placing the investigative interest over the potential threat and their ability to manage it.

Another example of disagreement and invoking a relative status position in the case hierarchy occurred within the investigative orientation. As noted above, three very serious crimes occurred in Irvine, Corona, and Riverside, with independent investigations in each agency. All three agencies agreed that, as events unfolded, they were increasingly successful at establishing communication and sharing information. However, serious competing claims regarding relative case status began to emerge with the discovery of the burning pickup. Each agency felt it should have the lead status to perform a forensic analysis of the truck, and that they should have physical control to accomplish that. There were also larger political and prosecutorial interests outside the agencies regarding who would be the first to file charges. Months after Dorner's death "closed the case," investigators from competing agencies still vigorously maintained that they should have had priority with regards to control of the truck.

The issue of competition between case management, manhunt operations, and threat management arose again toward the end of the ordeal. By February 12<sup>th</sup>, the trail had gone cold. The command post in the Big Bear area had been moved and a number of resources had been sent back to their home divisions in San Bernardino or home agencies. However, many in the sheriff's department believed that Dorner remained in the mountains, and some members of the tactical unit and others stayed in the area in removed positions waiting for him to emerge. Frustrated with the lack of progress, agency members who were represented in the regional Multiagency Coordination Center at the JRIC decided to send members back to Big Bear to re-canvass the community on February 12<sup>th</sup>. They wanted to conduct what they felt would be a more detailed house

search. It was argued from the investigative orientation that when the trail goes cold, you return to the last known location to search for leads. In addition, there was an interest in moving the process forward to apprehend Dorner from the threat management perspective. The LAPD had a tremendous amount of resources on protection details, and this was starting to strain the capacity to handle their daily policing responsibilities. The concern about whom he was going to target next if he was no longer on the mountain was ever-present.

San Bernardino Sheriff's officials opposed this plan, believing that if Dorner was still on the mountain, re-canvassing the area would possibly disrupt the plan of lying in wait for him to emerge if he thought the manhunt was over. San Bernardino officials ultimately agreed to help coordinate the new search, but remained reluctant to allow outside agencies to dictate tactics in their jurisdiction. When a property owner flushed him out of hiding on February 12<sup>th</sup>, the disagreement became moot.

It is important to note that these competing interests and priorities did not result in outright conflict. Instead, the purpose of this discussion is to highlight the likely potential of these issues when multiple agencies come together to handle large-scale events, particularly when they involve different responsibilities and goals such as investigations, threat management, and a manhunt. In the present case, the leadership of these various organizations eventually handled these impasses in a professional manner. Chiefs and other top officials at the agencies involved have met numerous times after the event to debrief and work to smooth over these competing interests in the future. At the same time, a number of individuals that the research team met with at the lower levels of these agencies continued to harbor distrust, believing that members of other agencies were being intentionally secretive, were motivated by hidden agendas, and were disrespectful in not recognizing their skills and knowledge. This last consideration highlights the importance of a comprehensive top-to-bottom review in each agency, to ensure the maximum amount of information sharing among officers at all levels.

### **Lessons Learned:**

The sensitivity of competing interests, and the emotions involved when an officer is seriously injured or killed, makes it very challenging for police leaders to successfully negotiate agreement about setting priorities, establishing "who is the lead agency?" during

the heat of the event. It is critical that these issues are discussed *before* this type of event occurs, during multiagency training and tabletop exercises. Specific lessons learned include:

❖ **Recognize the need for forming joint operations early**

Events like this case involve discrete incidents in individual jurisdictions that are part of a larger event. As agencies work their individual incidents they will inevitably start to interact with other agencies that have a role in the larger event, setting the stage for competing interests and conflict. Developing a joint operational strategy as soon as a multi-jurisdictional nature is discovered, and quickly incorporating each new jurisdiction that the larger event touches, creates the opportunity to integrate competing interests early in order to create greater coordination in response efforts. The involvement of agencies will require true rather than symbolic commitment, such as placing senior personnel as opposed to lower-level personnel in joint operations centers, or else independent operations are likely to continue to occur resulting in the furtherance of competing interests and conflict.

❖ **Build trust before major events**

An important component for reducing competing interests is mutual respect between personnel within and across agencies along with trust among these personnel that each seeks to accomplish the same overarching goal. Building such respect and trust is difficult to address amidst a crisis event. As many of the individuals interviewed for this cases study noted, trust has to be built before these events. Pre-event opportunities can be accomplished through joint training exercises, such as a multiagency law enforcement disaster response exercise. These exercises create the opportunity for the development of familiarity and interpersonal links across organizational levels. Many agencies currently do this within their county given existing mutual aid agreements. However, the Dorner case illustrated that multiagency events may stretch beyond pre-existing relationships within county-based mutual aid links; suggesting training exercises that are a foundation for developing agency links may need to be more inclusive in a larger regional context.

❖ **The importance of post-event communication**

In light of competing interests and hard feelings that can occur within these multi-agency events, post-event communication is an important strategy for agency leaders to improve or repair working relationships between agencies in the interest of future efforts. This includes the communication between top agency officials, as well as these officials communicating with their personnel and those of other agencies, covering their interests, goals, decisions, and lessons learned from the event in question. This strategy was incorporated by some of the agency leaders involved in the Dorner case, which they described as an important lesson they learned.

# POLICE AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CHRISTOPHER DORNER CASE

A high media profile has been a fact of life for the Los Angeles Police Department for at least the past two decades. The attacks by Christopher Dorner and his use of social media to make his case brought a new phase to the international attention given to police practices in Southern California.

The Dorner attacks were given nearly round-the-clock coverage by cable news and local network affiliates in Southern California. But this televised attention was augmented, and in some ways superseded by a wave of instantaneous reporting, rumormongering, and a raging philosophical debate that occurred on Twitter, and to a lesser but more prominent degree, on Facebook.

Many of the interviews conducted by the Police Foundation team found that the wave of unofficial information had, in some cases, overwhelmed the official channels that various departments struggled to maintain during the fast-moving events. In addition, nearly all of the officers and leaders interviewed remain frustrated and angered by the online support for Dorner that continues months after the case was resolved.

Dorner's use of Facebook to post the rambling defense for his actions presented a unique problem both for investigators and public affairs divisions. Moreover, the overwhelming presence of media at the final standoff at the burning cabin in Angelus Oaks created potential hazards for officers and a nightmare for law enforcement trying to control the scene.

In both cases, officials attempted to reduce the problems by limiting the dissemination of information by the media. Neither effort was successful, and fueled the raging online conspiracy theory campaign that police were trying to cover something up. Typically, the LAPD was blamed for all of these efforts to control the media, even though it was not the agency involved.

Media coverage of the initial murders of Officer Keith Lawrence and Monica Quan was localized and slow to develop. The Irvine Police Department, like most departments, used social media options available to raise awareness of the crime and ask for help.

All of the departments interviewed are also using the Internet to an increasing degree to forward investigations. Detectives at all of the departments said that someone on their investigative team began doing Internet searches soon after a be-on-the-lookout (BOLO) bulletin appeared warning of Dorner's threats to law enforcement.

The connection of Dorner to the Quan-Lawrence murders was in fact made by Irvine detectives through an Internet search and discovery of the "manifesto" posted on his Facebook page. Although they had found tantalizing clues in searches in the San Diego area, Irvine investigators were cautious in tying Dorner to the crime. But the Facebook post included a virtual confession and a rambling threat to all of law enforcement, with specific venom directed at LAPD officers.

Irvine investigators immediately informed the LAPD, and soon put out the BOLO on Dorner being armed and dangerous. But they saw the Facebook post as a vital piece of evidence in their investigation, and believed they should try to limit its dissemination to provide LAPD with time to identify personnel needing protection and to deploy the protection details, and to protect the case integrity.

The team spent an hour working with Facebook to remove the post only to learn later that their efforts were in vain, because someone had shared the law enforcement sensitive BOLO with the media. In retrospect, this effort could have been better directed towards other developing tasks, Chief Dave Maggard told interviewers.

As Maggard prepared to speak to the press at a 7:45 p.m. news conference on February 6<sup>th</sup>, television reporters who had already downloaded Dorner's post approached him. Soon the "manifesto" was all over the Internet, and the debate was heating up over whether Dorner had legitimate grievances against the LAPD.

LAPD officials, meanwhile, had been carefully dissecting the Facebook post in a desperate effort to determine which of their officers and leaders needed protective details. They had already drawn up 30 names, and would ultimately send details to 77 locations around Southern California.

As the news spread about the “manifesto,” the LAPD also faced a public relations crisis. The LAPD leaders interviewed by the team said they immediately felt that this was the department’s problem, and Chief Charlie Beck was determined to confront it in as open a fashion as possible.

Beck and LAPD’s top leadership knew Dorner had presented his case in a fashion most likely to gain sympathy, based on the department’s high-profile media history over the past 20 years. The chief addressed this directly in interviews he gave over the next few days, and he promised to conduct another review into Dorner’s allegations of mishandling during his short LAPD career. Beck made himself readily available for interviews, and made it clear that the LAPD would do everything to end the violence and make it clear to the public that there had been no mistreatment of the suspect.

With regard to the personnel issues, the Police Foundation team believes it is not qualified to shed new light on the history of disciplinary actions that led to Dorner’s dismissal. The case was reviewed at length before a Superior Court judge and an Appellate Court panel, and it has been the subject of two intensive internal reviews at the LAPD. All have upheld the decision and pronounced the process as fair. All of these proceedings were reviewed in detail by the Police Foundation team and are available online for anyone wishing to investigate further.

From a law enforcement perspective, the Facebook posting created a difficult dilemma. As the primary piece of evidence in a potential murder case against Dorner, the posting had to be treated as a piece of evidence. Any effort by officers to counter or debate the assertions made could be seen as an attempt to unduly influence the case. In addition, investigators felt they needed to be circumspect in even calling Dorner a suspect, until the Manifesto was discovered.

Media analysts and some law enforcement officials said Dorner was skillful in his online presentation, not only with the posting but also with his social media persona. Photos of the suspect in police uniforms or in fatigues, armed with sophisticated weapons in many cases, had actually been posted on the page just days or week before the Irvine murders, investigators said. The overall effect led many in the public – and even some academic commentators – to compare him to popular “wronged vigilante” types that have been a Hollywood staple for 50 years.

Facebook support pages sprang up almost overnight, with titles like “Support Christopher Dorner,” and soon received thousands of “likes” from admirers. Twitter quickly had some of its top “trending” subjects connected to Dorner. The online disruption group “Anonymous” announced a campaign to back him.

This online support continued throughout the entire Dorner episode and some sites are still in operation, drawing conspiracy theorists from around the globe. However, their public appeal was almost immediately offset by Dorner’s ambushes on the LAPD and Riverside officers on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Although media continued to debate Dorner’s support – in one controversial televised segment, analysts said many people saw him as a “Django” figure – coverage began to focus more intensely on the manhunt for a killer.

Rumors generated during the next few days of the manhunt revealed the value and challenge that social media presents law enforcement. Investigators at all departments said they were able to use Internet search tools as a way to discover much more about Dorner’s background, and to locate those who might know him.

But the rumors also caused intense frustration. Emails and Twitter chatter fueled a rumor that Dorner had escaped Big Bear and was driving his sister’s vehicle. Officers staking out the family home said they continued to receive reports from other law enforcement agencies that the car had been spotted – even though they could see it parked in the family driveway.

Federal and local officials also spent considerable time debunking a rumor that a drone was being used to track Dorner in the mountains. Ironically, the Department of Homeland Security had provided a piloted aircraft that helped search the forest with infrared scanners capable of locating a body in the snowy terrain.

One continuing concern was the lack of knowledge about Dorner’s access to the Internet and television, and whether he was gaining insights into police tactics through the continuing online furor. Police could find no evidence that Dorner had used his cell phone after the night of February 6<sup>th</sup>, but they worried he may have found a cabin with a computer or television. San Bernardino County Sheriff’s investigators checked utility records to see if any unoccupied cabins had seen a mysterious surge in electrical use.

When Dorner went on the run again on February 12<sup>th</sup>, the chase was quickly picked up by media and others following police scanners. Members of the media quickly converged on the mountains, with many sending blog posts and tweets about the rumors they were hearing. The problems caused by such instantaneous journalism were revealed when CNN posted comments by a local official that the suspect was cornered, then retracted the comment because it was not clear the official had spoken, and then retracted the retraction once the interview was confirmed.

Even as the sheriff's officials were desperately trying to rescue their wounded deputies from the line of fire, news helicopters and one vehicle-based reporter were streaming video of the scene. Twitter was quickly filled with commentary by both reporters and viewers on what was happening and how police were dealing with the cornered suspect. Still fearing that Dorner might have the ability to monitor this traffic, the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office sent its own "Tweet," requesting that news crews limit their commenting on police location and tactics. Although some outlets agreed to the request, it set off a furor among those following the events who accused the police (again, erroneously blaming the LAPD) of trying to cover up their activities.

Aside from the Tweet from the San Bernardino DA's office, none of the agencies involved contributed updates to social media during the standoff at the cabin. The entire media operation quickly intensified as the sheriff's public affairs officers had to provide updates on both the operations at the cabin and the status of the two injured deputies where they had been airlifted. In order to maintain consistency in the information being provided, the public affairs division limited comment to written updates provided through an electronic distribution system. The San Bernardino Sheriff's Department does not use Twitter.

This accomplished the goal of ensuring all news outlets received verified information from the sheriff's department, but it contributed to the confusion and rumormongering that dominated social media. This reached a crescendo when the fire began burning at the cabin and was easily seen by viewers across the country through aerial news cameras.

The final glaring example of information getting away from law enforcement control involved whether and when investigators would search the cabin and confirm that Dorner had been inside. Although there could be no doubt to anyone at the scene that the killer was in the cabin (and had shot two deputies in ambush), it took hours to wait out the

exploding ammunition and then put out the fire. Many more hours later, the search teams found the charred remains, but the final positive identification had to await a forensics examination that took days to complete.

Even before the fire was out, news outlets began posting confirmation from the LAPD that Dorner had been in the cabin. San Bernardino Sheriff's public affairs officers adamantly denied that any body had yet been found. In the only official Tweet that went out during the standoff on February 12<sup>th</sup> LAPD emphatically denied the report:



**LAPD HQ** @LAPDHQ12 Feb

**#LAPD HAS NOT CONFIRMED OR MADE ANY STATEMENTS REGARDING A BODY BEING LOCATED, REMOVED OR IDENTIFIED FROM THE LOCATION IN SAN BERNARDINO**

The growth and rapid evolution of the Internet and social media make it difficult for law enforcement to develop policies that can be flexible enough that they will not be out of date by the time they are in place. The Police Foundation team review of the response to the Dorner attacks revealed a number of policy questions that most law enforcement agencies will increasingly face in coming years.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- ❖ Agencies should establish procedures for dealing with online communications by suspects in the context of crime investigations. Although many detectives are becoming increasingly adept in using the Internet to track down suspects and develop evidence, more attention needs to be paid to the problems caused by direct online appeals like Dorner's to the wider public.
- ❖ Public Affairs (Public Information) divisions must embrace the phenomenon of social media and establish an easily accessible Facebook page and Twitter account. The Dorner response made it clear that the news media and the public are turning increasingly to these sites for clear information, and will provide their own interpretations in the absence of official notices. Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis used Twitter to very effectively manage the

rampant inaccurate speculation by media and other information sources during the Boston Marathon bombing event. By the end of the event, the number of people following the information coming directly from the Commissioner's Twitter account completely eclipsed the number following all other media outlets combined - including CNN.

- ❖ All law enforcement personnel should receive increased education and training in the potential problems that can be caused with unregulated use of social media. Agencies should reach out to local elected officials to provide this training, and develop protocols for the use of social media during a crisis.

## OVERVIEW OF LESSONS LEARNED

The events of February 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 2013 were nearly unprecedented within the law enforcement community in Southern California. A brutal double-murder with almost no clues in a quiet suburb, a threat against dozens of top law enforcement leaders and their families, ambush attacks that left two officers dead and three more wounded, and a manhunt that threatened danger of overwhelming firepower against any police officer anywhere.

The regional nature and lethal mobility of the attacks by Christopher Dorner against police and their families, and the direct involvement of social media throughout the incident, brought home the fact that police departments must be able to adapt quickly and be flexible when working with other agencies.

The Police Foundation team found that the departments responding to these attacks for the most part dealt well with the need to integrate many conflicting priorities and agency cultures. Even during the fast-moving events of February 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, agencies worked to cooperate with others that had different goals and needs. The leaders of most of those agencies involved have met on a number of occasions since the events to work on plans to avoid glitches they found.

As we put together this review, the goal of the Police Foundation team was to compile as much accurate, first-person information as possible about every facet of this incident from the key participants. The breadth and depth of this body of information,

coupled with the tremendous advantage of hindsight and professional distance from the personal tragedies involved, gave us a perspective that no law enforcement leader could have had during the incident. It is with the advantage of this greatly enhanced perspective that we offer some lessons learned.

It is also important to reiterate that the Police Foundation team found overwhelming evidence that the agencies involved in this incident responded with an admirable degree of cooperation and professionalism. With that in mind, we want to make it clear that the Lessons Learned are based on observations of what agencies did well and areas where improvement can be made with the hope that these examples will assist law enforcement agencies across the country.

## **SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED**

### **Overarching Themes**

As the previous sections have described, there were a number of challenges that were pervasive in most of the agencies involved in the response to the attacks.

Most disconcerting, and perhaps the most potentially dangerous, were the instances of self-deployment that occurred throughout the event. Although most agencies operate under a paramilitary chain of command, when there is a manhunt for a suspect who has seriously injured or killed an officer, there seems to be a nearly universal acceptance in police culture for region-wide self-deployment in pursuit of the suspect. This phenomenon has been observed and lamented by police leaders all over the country - it is not unique to California. In this case, hundreds of law enforcement officers headed up the mountain and became a traffic-control problem for officials handling the incident.

Law enforcement leaders must address this problem head-on and give clear and unequivocal direction prohibiting self-deployment before events of this nature happen. Ideally, this should be a written policy. Failing to give this direct order at the time of the incident implies tacit approval of self-deployment and the continuation of this dangerous practice. However, simply ordering officers not to respond is only half of the solution. Police officers are men and women of action. Therefore, it is equally important that direction be given about what they can do in support of their fellow officers. This requires

leaders to work cooperatively with their counterparts involved in the incident to find meaningful and constructive ways to support the lead agency.

**Beyond this pervasive issue, many of the challenges that faced agencies involved in the response to the attacks are the result of the increasingly regional aspects of law enforcement:**

- ❖ It is critical that agencies throughout the United States move aggressively to reduce communication barriers between jurisdictions, both through technology improvements and through more vigorous and far-reaching agreements worked out between all agencies. Policy-makers from Congress to City Councils need to understand the urgent need to resolve this problem and take action. A national effort begun in 2012 must be pursued with even greater vigor.
- ❖ Regional command and control strategies and plans, which have been instigated for potential terrorism or disaster situations, should become part of the everyday policing environment. As this situation showed, a crime in one jurisdiction can spill over into many with frightening speed. If no strategies are in place in advance, they are extremely difficult to put in place while the events are occurring.

### ***Command and Control***

**Review NIMS** - guidelines and training beyond tactical events to include major ongoing multi-jurisdictional investigations. All levels in law enforcement must become thoroughly aware of all aspects including, on-scene multiagency coordination and off scene EOC's/multiagency coordination. Agency heads must fully commit to coordinated efforts and the use of NIMS and the three key constructs: Incident Command System, Multiagency Coordination System, and Public Information.

**Develop relationships** - in advance with other agencies to understand abilities and limitations. FEMA identifies advance relationships as critical to emergency coordination and response. When prior relationships exist, false assumptions are greatly reduced or eliminated.

**Establish a regional cadre of executive experts** -who at the request of an agency would serve as a real-time advisory team. The advisory team would assist decision makers with executive level strategies related to political influences, media, NIMS, critical incident response and investigations.

**Emphasize collaboration** - to avoid the culture of self-reliance that persists within larger departments. Despite the ability to handle events without the assistance of others, leadership across the country must view multijurisdictional events as opportunities to collaborate and be inclusive.

**Reinvigorate Fusion Centers** - which are strategically placed throughout the United States and should be equipped and serve as pre-identified unified command centers.

**Develop Virtual Command Centers** - which can be used to increase coordination, capacity and allow real time access to dispersed personnel.

**Require supervisor training** - on mutual aid protocols and programs designed to prevent officer self-deployment.

**Encourage Police Chief and Sheriff action** - at state and national associations across the country to develop policies, training, and review of incidents for unnecessary self-deployment.

**Inventory unique assets** - and maintain lists at a state level to assist incident commanders in identifying potential resources that may assist them in their efforts.

## ***Communication***

**Ensure rules on self-deployment** - include clear orders by leaders to not to respond to a multiagency event unless they (a) get permission from their chain of command, (b) have interoperable communications with those involved in the operation, and (c) notify or check in with a command post, or incident command liaison for the operation before coming into the area.

**Provide inter-operable communications** – as a mandatory element of high-risk assignments in other jurisdictions.

**Require outreach for liaisons** - to the local jurisdiction and work closely with outside agency personnel, ensuring the transfer of local knowledge and coordination of common tactics.

**Re-emphasize the urgent need for regional communication technology** - and ensure that elected leaders and policymakers understand the danger to public safety caused by a lack of inter-operability.

**Anticipate misunderstandings** - in cross-jurisdictional communications during highly-charged, emotional events. Agency leaders are in the best position to anticipate which actions are likely to be misinterpreted and they should take affirmative steps to counteract potential misunderstandings.

**Maintain constant communication with staff** - during high-stress events involving attacks on officers. Agency leadership must take significant, affirmative steps to communicate frequently with their line personnel about the current status of the situation, what is being done to protect their safety, and to offer an avenue to dispel rumors.

### ***Competing Interests***

**Recognize the need for forming joint operations early** -developing a joint operational strategy as soon as a multijurisdictional nature is discovered, and quickly incorporating each new jurisdiction that the larger event touches. This will create the opportunity to integrate competing interests early on in order to create greater coordination in response efforts. The involvement of agencies will require true rather than symbolic commitment, such as placing senior personnel as opposed to lower-level personal in joint operations centers.

**Build trust before major events** – to develop mutual respect between personnel within and across agencies, reducing possible competition and promoting trust that each agency seeks to accomplish the same overarching goal. Pre-event opportunities include joint training exercises, such as a multiagency disaster response exercise.

**Ensure a high level of post-event communication** – as an important strategy to improve or repair working relationships between agencies in the interest of future efforts.

This includes the communication between top agency officials, as well as these officials communicating with their personnel and those of other agencies, covering their interests, goals, decisions, and lessons learned from the event in question.

## ***Social Media***

**Develop strategies to counter suspect online communications** – to expand beyond the expertise detectives are developing in using the Internet to track down suspects and develop evidence. More attention needs to be paid to the problems caused by direct online appeals, like Dorner’s, to the wider public.

**Increase departmental social media presence** - to ensure that the correct and official information is reaching a press and public increasingly dependent on social media for breaking news and commentary.

**Ensure personnel understand departmental social media policy** - and receive increased education and training in the potential problems that can be caused with unregulated use of social media. Agencies should reach out to local elected officials to provide this training, and develop protocols for the use of social media during a crisis.

## **INVOLVED AGENCIES**

The Foundation team’s primary focus was on the region-wide response to the attacks. However, some observations about the principal individual agencies involved are useful to any law enforcement agency for review and forward planning for similar incidents. Indeed, the agencies involved are already well aware of these needs and have made changes to policy prior to and in response to this review.

### ***Corona Police Department***

This city of 153,000 residents is served by the 200-employee Corona Police Department. The 39-square-mile city is located along some of the major transportation routes from the urban areas to the inner regions of Southern California. It is a quiet suburban community, averaging fewer than four homicides a year.

The call that came in to the Corona Police Department on February 7<sup>th</sup> was highly unusual – two LAPD officers in a marked patrol car had apparently been attacked with a high-caliber semi-automatic weapon by a suspect who had fled the scene. It was a violent crime scene that fortunately did not see a death or serious injury, but the fact that it was an officer-involved shooting from another agency required careful investigation and handling of protocol.

The Foundation team found that Corona officers handled this delicate crime scene situation well, dealing carefully but firmly with the understandable major response from LAPD. The team also noted that Corona officers maintained discipline during later incidents in the case, and did not rush to the final standoff at the mountain cabin as many other agencies did.

The most significant concern identified by Corona department leaders was that the first officer on the scene did not have the equipment to send out a regional communication regarding the attack by a dangerous suspect. This lack of regional technology has since been rectified by the department through a federal grant for the purchase of hand-held radios that allow for regional communication on-scene.

### ***Irvine Police Department***

Serving a city of 235,000 residents with a staff of 361, the Irvine Police Department rarely has to deal with typically urban crime problems, but prides itself on professionalism and dedication to modern policing.

Facing a brutal double-homicide, the department went all-hands-on-deck, 24-7 and explored every possible lead and theory. Officers and detectives were intimately involved with the case even after it moved into San Diego County and then to Riverside and San Bernardino County.

The Irvine investigators were active and cooperative participants in the regional effort, inviting the LAPD, FBI, and U.S. Marshals Service in to work on the case as soon as the “manifesto” was discovered, and providing support to both the regional information center at the JRIC and to San Bernardino detectives.

Of special note was the professionalism of the Irvine officers in resisting the temptation of joining the mass self-deployment. When it was clear that every law enforcement officer for miles was rushing to chase Dorner on the final day, Irvine investigators stayed behind to conduct a thorough interview of the owners of the condominium where he had been hiding.

Although Irvine was widely praised by other organizations for its general cooperation, one exception was a criticism that the investigators were too protective of developing their murder case. Officers from many other jurisdictions expressed frustration that they did not receive enough information in a timely manner to deal with a manhunt for a dangerous fugitive. In addition, many said that other agencies could have given much greater support to Irvine in developing their case if they had provided more details sooner.

This desire to protect the case also led to the frustrating effort to “take down” Dorner’s Facebook posting before it was discovered by the public at large and the media. In reality, once something is posted on Facebook, it is futile to try to put that genie back in the bottle. The integrity of the information is no longer protected and there is no way of knowing how far it has been disseminated.

These concerns reflect the need for all law enforcement agencies to more quickly recognize and better address the predictable conflicting interests between case development, the manhunt, providing the public with safety information, and dealing with threats against police.

## ***Los Angeles Police Department***

With more than 10,000 employees serving 3.8 million people, the LAPD is the third largest police force in the nation. Although it has faced nearly every possible law enforcement situation, LAPD officials admitted that responding to the attacks by Dorner was one of the most difficult efforts ever undertaken.

Unlike Irvine, which sees an average of two homicides a year, the LAPD deals with hundreds. Its detectives and forensic teams are among the most sophisticated in the

world. However, as many pointed out, the LAPD did not have a homicide to investigate in this case.

What the LAPD did face was the need to immediately provide protective details to management staff, officers and their families based on the threats in Dorner's online posting. The department's efforts clearly kept this as the top priority, which in some cases frustrated those in other agencies who were investigating cases or overseeing a manhunt search.

The successful establishment of around-the-clock protective details throughout Southern California was well intentioned and handled with a high degree of efficiency and professionalism. However, even LAPD lacked the resources to provide personnel specifically trained in dignitary protection. Additionally, the number of targets to be protected grew significantly and the passage of time drained capacity. The agency worked daily to improve protocols for a mission of this type. Nevertheless, the department allowed no diminishing of the day-to-day protection of the Los Angeles community despite using hundreds of officers on the details.

LAPD officials said the details were instructed to reach out to the jurisdictions where they were deployed. However, many of the jurisdictions where the protection details were located said they received little notice. The lack of consistent communication and liaison with local agencies was critical. Most said they would have preferred direct involvement in the planning and execution of the protection measures.

There were varied levels of communication between the protection details and local agencies. However, the incident in Corona – where LAPD officers needed to borrow a cell phone to make a 911 call when they were under attack – make it clear that law enforcement agencies need to be more aggressive in devising communications plans for officers who are out of their jurisdiction.

In general terms, the LAPD received praise for offering and providing unlimited support to the other agencies involved in the case. Irvine, Corona, and Riverside all said they were grateful for LAPD backup for investigative and scene control needs.

LAPD officials were also complimented for making an effort to strike a balance between pushing the agency's needs to the forefront and avoiding overwhelming the other agencies.

The LAPD also faced a dilemma that while it did "not have a crime" in the case, the media from the beginning focused on the agency because Dorner was "one of ours," as Chief Charlie Beck noted. Media outlets questioned if the entire affair was caused by the agency's handling of Dorner's discipline and firing.

Police Foundation team members conducted a thorough review of the interaction between Dorner and the LAPD. Multiple internal and independent reviews have upheld the agency's decision to fire Dorner. A Superior Court judge and a State Appeals Court panel also upheld the decision. The Foundation team was satisfied with that record.

However, the review did identify a number of potential improvements in the hiring process for a police officer. Currently, the Los Angeles City Personnel Department conducts the background process including, the preliminary background application, initial background, field investigation, and background appeal process. The LAPD should be given more direct involvement and control in the background investigation portion of the hiring process. Additional changes should be made to provide for a more robust role for the LAPD to improve the recruitment and hiring process to ensure that the best-qualified candidates are given an opportunity to compete and be selected as police officers.

Foundation team members also noted that LAPD officials have reviewed and revised policy to address concerns related to the retention and reintegration of probationary and non-probationary employees.

### ***Riverside Police Department***

Serving a population of 304,000 with a staff of 597, the Riverside Police Department handles a wide range of criminal investigations. Many of them are spillovers from the more urbanized Los Angeles County to the west, but there was little reason for the Riverside department to expect involvement in the Dorner investigation as it was an LA and Orange County case.

That changed in sudden and brutal fashion when Officer Michael Crain was killed and Officer Andrew Tachias was seriously injured during an ambush while they were sitting at a traffic light. The department was immediately thrust into the limelight of the case in the most horrifying way.

To a large degree, the death of Officer Crain was the over-arching element of the case for Riverside. The attacker was there and gone in minutes. There were two witnesses to the attack, which was also caught on the in-car camera. Within hours, the burning truck was found in the mountains above Big Bear, and the crime scene shifted. Investigators were left to develop evidence for a case that was shocking and short.

The Riverside command staff worked to help officers deal with the shock and grief of the attack, and planned for a major funeral for Officer Crain. However, personnel received much of the on-going information on the case from outside sources. Much of the communication void was the result of gatekeepers in the chain of command either filtering information or failing to communicate information they had.

In an example of the lack of coordination, Riverside and Irvine investigators were in dispute over who would have control of the burned truck for forensic purposes.

Ultimately, investigators from Riverside and Irvine agreed to work together on building the case against Dorner. However, Foundation team members believe that this aspect of the case is another example of the need for more collaboration by line officers at the onset of a complex and emotional incident.

### ***Torrance Police Department***

Another suburban community with a low crime rate, Torrance Police Department protects 146,500 residents with a force of 345. Although its involvement in the response to the attacks was peripheral, the public relations ramifications were major.

When Torrance learned of the need for protective details, they dispatched officers to watch over the home of an LAPD manager. They offered to stay and integrate when the LAPD detail arrived, but were told that the situation was under control.

Although officers for the night watch were informed of the detail, there were no formal contingency plans for how Torrance might become involved if an attack occurred. Officers in Torrance and the surrounding communities went on high alert after police were attacked in Corona and Riverside. Following the heightened alert status, there was no increased level of coordination of information or activity between officers.

The Foundation team praised the response of Torrance Chief John Neu to the events surrounding Mr. Purdue and neighborhood concerns in the wake of the shootings. The chief went door-to-door to explain what had happened and why. He was joined by LAPD officials who offered compensation for a number of homes that had suffered damage in the incident.

### ***San Bernardino County Sheriff***

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department has the unique mission of providing protection to a suburban population of 2 million concentrated in a tiny fraction of its 20,000 square mile jurisdiction. The rest of the county is made up of vast deserts and some of the most rugged mountains in the West, and many of the 3,200 employees are highly skilled at mountain and wilderness search and rescue operations.

The department's first involvement with the case was the discovery of the burning truck along a mountain road above two of Southern California's busiest ski resorts. Deputies knew quickly that this was probably Dorner's truck, and took special precautions. They towed the truck to a location that could be protected from ambush, and quietly cleared the nearby ski resort of hundreds of officers who attended "law enforcement day."

Based on their expertise in mountain-area searches, deputies and investigators covered both forested areas and neighborhoods of cabins and resort homes fairly quickly, even in the face of a raging snowstorm. Sheriff John McMahon handled both the media and the crowd of law enforcement personnel who showed up at the initial command center.

Foundation team members believe that the department could have benefitted from more urban-type search techniques. The fact that Dorner ultimately was discovered in an empty condominium underscores this fact. The department does not have canine search teams for armed suspects but utilizes canines trained in search and rescue. The blending of

mountain search and rescue with urban search and apprehend techniques would have provided much improved officer safety. San Bernardino officials have said they are looking into the use of canine teams in the future.

When Dorner finally was discovered, deputies were successful in containing him from escaping out of the mountains. The final confrontation at the cabin was chaotic – and led to the tragic death of Deputy Jeremiah MacKay and serious injury to Deputy Alex Collins. However, the situation was swiftly brought under control by the department’s Specialized Enforcement (SWAT) Division.

The Foundation team strongly felt that some authority needed to be established to avoid the undisciplined cadre of law enforcement personnel who dashed up the mountain during the final standoff. The sheriff’s department had maintained checkpoints at all of the mountain access roads since Dorner’s truck had been discovered. The checkpoint along Highway 38 was reinforced with California Highway Patrol units during the standoff, but no instruction was given to limit law enforcement personnel not needed at the scene.

This problem of rampant (and potentially dangerous) self-deployment could have been reduced if all agencies involved had followed established mutual aid protocols and made advance plans for it. The San Bernardino department has acknowledged that they did not anticipate the wave of self-deployment that took place when Dorner was located. The Foundation team believes that it is unfortunate but necessary for law enforcement leaders who are managing an incident to anticipate and plan for self-deployment which can not only interfere with on-going tactical planning but also can place officers and the community at risk.

The use of pyrotechnic chemical agent gas grenades at the end of the siege by the San Bernardino SED team is still a matter of Internet debate. The need for strong measures to end the standoff is well supported; Dorner had not responded to calls for surrender even after all shooting had ceased. A perimeter surrounding the cabin provided Dorner with potential targets should one inadvertently present itself. Based on the ambushes of three different sets of officers, there was little evidence to believe that Dorner would give up peacefully and the likelihood was strong that he would once again open fire if given the opportunity.

Sheriff McMahon has said that the department did not intend to start a fire, although the device manufacturers have a strong warning that indoor use could bring such a result. The department has mounted a detailed review of its procedures and protocol on the use of such devices. The San Bernardino County District Attorney has declared that the department's actions were legal and justified.

## CONCLUSION

The Police Foundation team would like to reiterate that all of the agencies involved in these attacks responded in a highly professional way and went beyond established policies to work together and support each other to the greatest extent possible. It is important to remember that it was less than 12 hours from the discovery of Dorner's online threats to the tragic shooting in Riverside. Managing a response during such a compressed time frame is difficult in one jurisdiction. As the crimes flowed from San Diego County to Riverside, the potential for chaos was clear.

As this report has described, most of the problems and their solutions involve advanced planning and coordination among the law enforcement leaders in the region. The Foundation team is well aware that such efforts are difficult once the crisis has passed. However, the agencies involved in this response – and law enforcement agencies in Southern California and across the nation – must begin planning now, recognizing and accepting that more and more will face these kinds of mobile, regional events.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Police Foundation and the team that put together this report are extremely grateful for the time and cooperation received from dozens of law enforcement leaders and officers. Their willingness to discuss the events that occurred February 3rd-12th, 2013 made this report possible, and have provided invaluable insight for police agencies and officers throughout the nation.

Among those leaders and officers closely involved in the incidents, we would like to acknowledge the aid and support of the following:

Chief Mike Abel, Corona Police Department  
Chief Dave Maggard, Irvine Police Department  
Chief Charlie Beck, Los Angeles Police Department  
Chief Manuel Rodriguez, National City Police Department  
Chief Sergio Diaz, Riverside Police Department  
Sheriff John McMahon, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department  
Chief John Neu, (Ret.), Torrance Police Department

Deputy Chief Mike Hamel, Irvine Police Department  
Lieutenant Jon Condon, Irvine Police Department  
Sergeant Bill Bingham, Irvine Police Department  
Detective Victoria Hurtado, Irvine Police Department

Assistant Chief Michel Moore, LAPD  
Assistant Chief Sandy Jo MacArthur, LAPD  
Deputy Chief Kirk Albanese, Detective Bureau, LAPD  
Captain William Hayes, Robbery-Homicide Division, LAPD  
Detective Dan Jenks, LAPD

Sergeant Alex Hernandez, National City Police Department  
Officer Paul Hernandez, National City Police Department

Assistant Chief Christopher Vicino, Riverside Police Department  
Deputy Chief Jeffrey Greer, Riverside Police Department  
Detective Jim Lopez, Riverside Police Department  
Detective Greg Rowe, Riverside Police Department

Undersheriff Joe Cusimano, San Bernardino County Sheriff  
Deputy Chief Greg Garland, San Bernardino County Sheriff

Captain Steve Smith, San Bernardino County Sheriff  
Captain Tom Bradford, Big Bear Station, San Bernardino County Sheriff  
Captain Greg Herbert, Specialized Enforcement, San Bernardino County Sheriff  
Captain Tom Neeley, Specialized Investigations, San Bernardino County Sheriff  
Lieutenant Brad Toms, Public Affairs, San Bernardino County Sheriff  
Sergeant Travis Newport, San Bernardino County Sheriff  
Teresa McMahon, public information officer, San Bernardino County Sheriff

Commissioner Joseph A. Farrow, California Highway Patrol  
Assistant Chief Marc Shaw, California Highway Patrol

## POLICE FOUNDATION TEAM

**Rick Braziel** served as chief of the Sacramento Police Department (SPD) from 2008 until his retirement in December 2012, capping 33 years on the force. Braziel redesigned the department's crime reduction strategies, deployment, and resources, reducing Part I crime by 21% even with staffing cuts. He increased transparency and community involvement through the creation of a Police Advisory Committee, Interfaith Leaders' Council, Youth Advisory Committee, town hall meetings and online citizen surveys.

Braziel has shown leadership in community policing through his book, *Cop Talk: Essential Communication Skills for Community Policing*. He is a nationally recognized instructor, leading classes at Humboldt State University in teambuilding, communication skills, community policing, and leadership. He received his BA and MA in communication studies from California State University, Sacramento, and an MA in security studies from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School.

**Bernard Melekian** has 36 years of local law enforcement experience, including serving as the Police Chief for the city of Pasadena for 13 years. He was selected as the Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) by Attorney General Eric Holder on October 5, 2009. He served in that capacity until March, 2013. He received his Doctorate in Policy, Planning and Development for his work on police discipline systems in August 2012 from the University of Southern California.

Dr. Melekian remains committed to actively serving American law enforcement. He is the founder and President of the Paratus Group, a law enforcement consulting firm. He is currently working with the cities of Seattle, Chicago, Baltimore and Oakland in various on various projects. He was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of the Police Foundation.

**Sue Rahr** is the executive director of the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission and runs the academy that trains all law local enforcement officers in the state. She was the Sheriff of King County, WA, from 2005-2012, and retired after 31 years in the department. The first female sheriff elected in the county that includes Seattle, she was responsible for over 1,000 employees, a \$150 million budget, and provided contract services to 12 cities and transit policing for the Seattle/Puget Sound region. She was awarded "2010 Elected Official of the Year" by the Municipal League.

Rahr was the architect of the "Washington State Justice Based Policing Initiative" which transformed police officer training across the state. She graduated Cum Laude with a BA in

Criminal Justice from Washington State University and is a graduate of the National Sheriff's Institute and the FBI National Executive Institute.

**Jeff Rojek** is an associate professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina. He earned his Ph.D. in criminology and criminal justice from the University of Missouri-St. Louis in 2005. His main research interests are in the area of police officer and organizational behavior, and he has conducted research and evaluation projects covering such topics as tactical units, use of force, police practitioner-researcher partnerships, and response disasters. He is currently the principal investigator on a grant funded by the National Institute of Justice that examines incident and officer level factors that influence officer-involved vehicle collision rates. He is also a former officer with the Los Angeles Police Department.

**Jim Specht** (writer/editor) is the director of communications for the Police Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation, he served for 14 years as the Deputy Chief of Staff and Communications Director for Congressman Jerry Lewis (R-Calif.) He managed Lewis's Washington, D.C. staff and all office press and public relations, and served as the office's legislative director. Before joining Lewis's staff, he was a national correspondent for Gannett News Service from 1993-1999, covering issues ranging from immigration enforcement to Congressional gun control legislation. Before coming to Washington, he was in many positions on the San Bernardino County Sun newspaper, including Metro Editor and Political Editor. He has a dual degree in history and journalism from California State University, Northridge.

**Travis Taniguchi, Ph.D** (online presentation) is a senior research associate at the Police Foundation. He has published a number of articles on the use of technology in policing, and is working on grant projects to determine the usefulness of smartphones and GIS in law enforcement, and using social business software to enhance public-private partnerships. He has also presented research papers on crime and place, street gang dynamics, and the spatial distribution of drug markets. Tanaguchi received a B.S. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Chaminade University of Honolulu and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from Temple University.

**Mary DeStefano** (editorial support) is a research associate and manager of the office of the president for the Police Foundation. She comes to the Foundation from New York City, where she was a Community Planning Fellow with the Manhattan Borough President's

Office. She received her B.A. in Art and Psychology from Yale University, and an M.A. in Urban Planning from Hunter College.

**Jim Bueermann, Police Foundation President**, was appointed as the organization's fourth president in 2012. He was Chief of the Redlands (CA) Police Department from 1998 to 2011, culminating 33 years with the department. He also served as the city's Director of Housing, Recreation and Senior Services, and developed a national reputation for a holistic approach to community policing and problem solving. Harvard's Kennedy School recognized Redlands PD as having one of the 25 most innovative programs in America in the 2000 Innovations in American Government. Bueermann has been inducted into the Hall of Fame at the George Mason University Center for Evidence Based Crime Policy and the Hall of Fame at the School of Behavioral Science at California State University, San Bernardino.

Bueermann served as an Executive Fellow with the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice and as a Senior Fellow at George Mason University. He is on the policing advisory boards of Cambridge University and George Mason University. He is a graduate of California State University, the University of Redlands, the FBI National Academy and the California Command College.

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