

Los Angeles manhunt ends in shoot-out, inferno

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The manhunt for Christopher Dorner, former Navy lieutenant and LAPD officer, ended late Tuesday afternoon as fire engulfed the cabin in which he was hiding in the Big Bear Mountains of Southern California. Multiple media outlets reported that a charred body identified as that of Dorner was removed from the scene Tuesday night. As of this writing, many details remain unclear.

The outbreak of the fire coincided with a massive tear gas assault on the cabin. San Bernardino County police forces surrounded the cabin while it burned, with weapons drawn, and repeatedly ordered the Fire Department units present at the scene not to respond, even after the roof of the cabin collapsed.

The stand-off occurred around a cabin on Highway 38, which travels down the south-side of Big Bear Mountain and through the dense evergreen San Bernardino Forest. Thick snow has covered the mountain for the duration of the manhunt. Earlier on Tuesday, Fish and Wildlife officers claimed to have spotted Dorner driving a white pick-up truck. The *Los Angeles Times* reports that a vehicle-to-vehicle shootout ensued, and that after Dorner's vehicle crashed he took refuge in a nearby cabin, apparently an unoccupied vacation home.

Police surrounded the cabin and a second shootout took place, lasting nearly 30 minutes and involving hundreds of rounds of ammunition. Two police officers were reported as shot during the exchange of fire and were transported to Loma Linda University Hospital by helicopter. Later in the day, it was reported that one of two had died of gunshot wounds in the hospital, while the other was recovering.

The police set up checkpoints and closed down all three highways leading into and out of Big Bear, a ski resort community which receives a huge amount of

traffic in the winter months. Big Bear area public schools were placed under lock-down and parents were instructed not to come and get their children.

At 3 p.m., the Los Angeles Police Department called a press conference in which they stated that they did not yet know if the occupant of the cabin was in fact Dorner. They stated that they desired to capture Dorner alive.

At approximately 4:15 the police began firing tear gas canisters into the cabin. CBS reported that they could see thick green gas rising. This was shortly followed by white smoke. The police communications over the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department police scanner stated at 4:17: "7 burners deployed and we have a fire." This was followed at 4:19 by "Cabin fully engulfed."

For over 30 minutes, the fire department was given repeated orders by the police to not respond to the blaze.

At shortly after 5 p.m., reports began circulating in the media that Dorner had shot himself as the house was burning down around him.

The manhunt for Christopher Dorner began when the LAPD reported that he had identified himself as the perpetrator of a double murder of a couple in Irvine, California on February 3. On February 4, Dorner posted what is being termed his "manifesto" onto Facebook. Versions of the statement online vary, ranging from 11,000 to 6,000 words. It is a confused and rambling document, but Dorner specifically denounces 40 members of the LAPD for corruption, racism, and violence.

On February 7, two Riverside police officers were shot, one of whom died. Dorner was blamed for the event.

The response of law enforcement in California has

been a massive mobilization, indiscriminate shootings, high-tech surveillance and crack-downs. On the same day as the Riverside shooting, on two separate occasions, police officers fired repeated rounds into trucks that they claimed resembled Dorner's vehicle. Two women delivering newspapers were injured, and another driver was fortunate enough not to be hit by the bullets that riddled his vehicle.

No effort was made to stop these vehicles or to apprehend their passengers. It was clear that the desire was to execute Dorner.

The police raided apartments from Central California to Tijuana, Mexico in response to tips. A Lowes home-improvement store in Northridge was subject to a massive police response. The large store was shut down, SWAT teams deployed, and air support called in, in response to what was later declared to be a routine domestic dispute.

LAPD police chief Charlie Beck declared that Dorner was "a domestic terrorist."

On Thursday, Dorner's truck was found on the road to Big Bear with a broken axle. Tracks led away from the truck in the snow. Within hours several SWAT teams and 145 law enforcement officers were patrolling the area. Police helicopters with thermal imaging technology were deployed to locate the fugitive. Some news outlets reported that the thermal imaging technology was deployed on drones.

Over the weekend the California police, and the LAPD in particular, stepped up the manhunt. They declared that there would be a record \$1 million reward, paid for by police organizations, a number of corporate backers, including the LA Dodgers, and wealthy individuals, such as the president of the University of Southern California.

Anthony Burke, supervisory inspector for the US Marshals regional fugitive taskforce stated, "Now it's like the game show 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire.'...Instead of one contestant, we've got 100,000, and there's only one question you have to answer. All they have to answer is where he's at, and we can take it from there."



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