

Christopher Dorner

 web.archive.org/web/20230917033230/https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Christopher_Dorner

Christopher Dorner (June 4, 1979 - February 12, 2013) was a former LAPD police officer who was fired after filing a report of excessive force against a superior in 2007. After exhausting all legal avenues of appeal, Dorner, who insisted his story was true, decided in February 2013 that the only rational thing left to do was to declare "unconventional and asymmetric warfare" on the LAPD and proceeded to murder two people, neither of whom were even police officers. This led the LAPD to declare one of the largest civilian manhunts in US history, during which Dorner killed an additional two police officers (neither of whom worked for the LAPD), culminating in a live-televised siege of a cabin where he was holed up. The siege ended after several hours when the police fired incendiary tear gas grenades into the cabin, setting it on fire;^[1] Dorner subsequently shot himself.

The incident was arguably the biggest catalyst for the American anti-police movement since the Rodney King beating. Dorner issued a manifesto in which he claimed he was fired then targeted because he exposed the racism and systemic police brutality that was being covered up.^[2] Regardless of whether or not Dorner's claims were true, the manner in which he decided to deal with the problem—killing anyone affiliated with the Los Angeles Police Department—was clearly unacceptable, unethical, and illegal. Dorner's behavior is considered domestic terrorism.^[3] However, some more radical far-left and libertarian anti-cop groups hail Dorner as a hero and various conspiracy theorists alleged that Dorner was intentionally murdered to cover up what he knew.

The morality of the manhunt was further complicated by the fact that on three occasions, the LAPD opened fire on vehicles they thought were Dorner's but actually contained innocent people; in one incident, two women were wounded.^{[4][5]} The aggressive behavior of the police led to widespread criticism.^[6]

Background

Dorner grew up in Southern California and was well-liked, without any incidents of violence.^[7] He was employed by the Los Angeles Police Department from 2005 to 2008 and served in the United States Navy Reserve. His superior officers described him as rebellious and problematic, and in July 2007, he was given a poor performance review by a superior, Teresa Evans. Dorner subsequently accused Evans of having kicked a mentally disabled suspect in the face during an incident two weeks earlier.^[8] An investigation found that although the suspect did report being kicked in the face, he could not accurately identify the officer involved, and all witnesses present testified that no brutality occurred.^[9] Dorner's claims were

found to be without merit and he was fired for making a false accusation. Dorner appealed the case to the California Superior Court and, when they upheld the ruling, he further appealed, and was again found to have been rightfully terminated.^[10]

Shootings and manhunt

On February 1, 2013, Anderson Cooper of CNN received a package from Dorner containing what he claimed was evidence of LAPD corruption. Two days later, Dorner shot and killed Monica Quan and her fiancé, Keith Lawrence. Quan was the daughter of Randal Quan, who served as Dorner's legal counsel during the dismissal controversy. In his online manifesto, Dorner threatened Quan and his family.^[11] Four days later, on February 7, Dorner was spotted by two LAPD police officers on their way to guard a possible target. Dorner exited his vehicle and opened fire on them. This marked the only time during his rampage in which Dorner actually attacked anyone affiliated with the LAPD. Twenty minutes later, Dorner ambushed and shot two Riverside police department officers, killing one. On February 9, the LAPD announced it was re-opening Dorner's firing case.^[12]

Friendly fire incidents

In three separate incidents on February 7, police fired on civilian vehicles that they mistakenly thought belonged to Dorner.^[4] In one incident, two women delivering papers were fired on by seven officers; both women were wounded. They later received a \$4.2 million settlement.^[13] In another incident, a man driving to the beach had his truck slammed by a police cruiser and subsequently fired on. The man was not struck by any bullets but did suffer injuries from the collision. The city of Torrance initially tried to lowball him with a \$500K settlement offer but he rejected this and later settled for \$1.8 million over a year later.^[14]

Cabin standoff

On February 12, two San Bernardino County police officers encountered Dorner at Big Bear Lake, east of Los Angeles. Dorner fired on them, killing one officer. He then barricaded himself inside a cabin. A media circus unfolded outside, with live footage being broadcast of the shootout between Dorner and the police. As the event occurred, various pro-Dorner hashtags began trending nationally on Twitter.^[15] After several hours, the police began firing incendiary tear gas canisters into the cabin; shortly afterward the cabin was engulfed in flames.^[1] At which point Dorner killed himself. The cabin fire subsequently cooked off his ammunition and charred his remains.

Supporters and conspiracy theories

Dorner's seemingly peaceful behavior and steadfast insistence that he had been wrongfully persecuted lit a flame under the anti-police movement within the US. Protests were held outside the LAPD headquarters.^[6] Naturally, conspiracy theorists went rabid over Dorner.

Almost immediately there were claims that he was either set up or never existed, that he was intentionally murdered because of what he knew, or even that he survived the stand-off. Websites like Reddit and 4chan served as major hubs for conspiratorial claims about Dorner. [16] Internet memes like "Can't corner the Dorner" became hallmarks of Dorner's supporters among the more anti-cop parts of the internet. [17]

References

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