Los Angeles Times

To the judges:

Last February, Christopher Jordan Dorner went on a vengeful mission. Armed with handguns and assault rifles, the ex-cop began to exact a murderous revenge upon all who had slighted him.

His first victims were a young couple executed in a condominium parking lot in Irvine, an Orange County community known for its safe streets. Over the ensuing days, there would be more bloodshed. Two police officers were ambushed as they waited at a stoplight in Riverside, 40 miles away. Then, in the snowy mountains north of Los Angeles, one detective was gunned down, another grievously wounded.

When Dorner finally met his end in a fiery assault on a cabin where he had been hiding, there were questions and time to ask what had happened and why. News accounts had barely been able to keep up with the fast-moving story, but in the aftermath, no one, it seemed, wanted to talk. Relief and fear surpassed curiosity.

But for Los Angeles Times staff writer Christopher Goffard and a team of Times reporters, Dorner's nine-day killing rampage became an obsession, the result of which is "Manhunt," a masterful, spellbinding narrative depicting an unforgettable chapter in the modern annals of true crime.

It would be vanity to pretend that one reporter could collect all the material necessary to reconstruct a complex story that played out over four of the nation's largest counties. Such a comprehensive, exhaustive effort required multiple reporters. But please make no mistake: This compelling narrative series had one writer, Christopher Goffard.

As residents and law enforcement began mopping up and piecing together their broken lives, Goffard and his colleagues fanned out across Southern California and into Nevada to reconstruct the killer's trail.

Goffard immediately began making an outline, which he expanded and refined over the next seven months as he and the other reporters continued to dig. That outline grew into a chronology, often minute-by-minute, running more than 130 pages, single-spaced and drawn from more than 400 interviews and thousands of pages of court documents, police and coroner reports.

Then he started to write.

Weaving all of that into a compelling story required a writer with an instinctual sense of pacing and suspense. Goffard's five heart-racing installments, we submit, embody the highest traditions of the narrative form.

Sincerely,

Davan Maharaj
Editor