

The Marketing Society – UAE Awards 2024  
Category: Brand Communication  
Nominee: Dark Minds Campaign by SRMG Labs

Summary

**Revealing Dark Minds: Launching the First True Crime TV Show with the Largest Ransom Note in Middle Eastern History**



Asharq Discovery, the new free-to-view Arabic-language infotainment platform in partnership with Warner Bros. Discovery, has made headlines with its innovative creative campaign for ‘Dark Minds,’ the Middle East and North Africa’s (MENA) first true crime docuseries focused on serial killers.

Asharq Discovery aimed to capture the attention of true crime fans worldwide. Adopting the appearance and style of a mysterious ransom note, the SRMG Labs team cut letters from a variety of billboards that showcased local, regional and international brands. These billboards, now missing letters, prompted various reactions from the public, including curiosity, speculation and amusement. As anticipation and interest increased across traditional, digital and social media channels, Asharq Discovery revealed its new billboard, marking the creation of the largest ransom note ever and unveiling the show’s name: ‘Dark Minds.’

Dark Minds is the new true crime original show on Asharq Discovery. The docuseries explores the stories of serial killers from Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq, Morocco, Lebanon, and Egypt. It goes beyond the surface to examine why these killers' found relief in murder. Dark Minds offers a unique perspective never seen before in MENA, shining a light on the dark criminal side of the region and bringing attention to stories that have been widely overlooked.

Dark Minds is a journey into human psychology and societal complexities. In season one, it promises to examine some of the most notorious cases that have created fear across the region.

Watch the video and find all assets on this link: [Dark Minds Campaign Assets](#)

### **About SRMG Labs**

SRMG Labs is dedicated to the creation, design and development of new media technologies, products and platforms; and to training the next generation of media professionals and content creators in new technologies and techniques.

A space where creativity lives and where known barriers to innovation are lifted, SRMG Labs is an ideas hub and incubator that will inform and evolve the output of the entire SRMG ecosystem of businesses and brands by exploring new uses of technologies, and using data and analytics to understand how, when and where audiences interact with media content. In addition to creating ideas, concepts, products and services for SRMG, the Labs team will also take on select development and product briefs for commercial partners.

## Part 1 - Objectives:

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To promote the launch of Dark Minds, the team aimed to capture the attention of true crime fans worldwide. Instead of using a traditional approach, the team orchestrated the biggest outdoor heist in Middle Eastern history.

## Part 2 - Approach:

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- Adopting the style of a ransom note to convey a mysterious message, the team cut letters from various billboards representing local, regional and international brands.
- These billboards, now missing letters, generated curiosity and speculation.















THE RANSOM  
BILLBOARD



- As anticipation and attention circulated across traditional and social media, Asharq Discovery revealed its new billboard.
- When the buzz peaked, we revealed our billboard with all the missing letters from the others stuck together, forming the show's name, making it the biggest ransom note ever done.
- The result was the creation of the largest ransom note ever, unveiling the show's name and generating excitement.



### Part 3 - Risks:

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- This concept was groundbreaking and came with a multitude of risks and challenges that needed to be carefully addressed.
- The first obstacle was engaging with various brands, proposing a partnership that was unconventional at its core. It involved a creative reinterpretation of their advertisements, which could be perceived as a form of 'vandalism' in a traditional sense.
- This approach required convincing these brands to allow us to modify their existing ads. We promised to pay for the ad space in return, however, the financial aspect was merely one part of the equation. The greater challenge lay in persuading a diverse array of companies to see the value in this unconventional strategy and agree to participate in our project.
- The second major risk involved the execution of the campaign itself. Given the scale and ambition of this mystery, it was vital to orchestrate the unveiling in such a way that it captivated the audience without provoking negative reactions. This balance was crucial, as the objective was to immerse the public in a narrative that felt like a real-life crime mystery, sparking intrigue and engagement without crossing the line into controversy.
- In essence, the project was a bold step into uncharted territory, requiring a balance of creativity, negotiation, and strategy. The ultimate goal was to transform the conventional advertising model into an immersive experience that resonated with individuals on a deeper, more interactive level, thereby forging a new path in the realm of collaborative marketing.



**Part 4 - Results:**

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- USD 673.000 Earned Media
- 495 MM Global Impact
- +100% Engagement

