

**chatterbox****Gagging the Fuzz, Part 8**

The sacked Park Police chief seeks to replace ... herself.

By Timothy Noah

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In October, an administrative judge [refused](#) to reinstate Teresa Chambers in her former job as park police chief—a job she lost because she [answered truthfully](#) a question posed to her by the *Washington Post* concerning the removal of park police protection in various Washington, D.C., parks and parkways so that (after dark!) police could guard the city's (empty and easily rebuildable) monuments against terrorist attack. Chambers also stands accused of having answered truthfully some questions posed to her by a congressional aide about the park police's budgetary problems. This is the way they do business inside the Bush administration. Political loyalty trumps honesty and concern for the public interest. Those who don't grasp this don't keep their jobs.

One of the mysteries of the Chambers affair is that Fran Mainella, National Park Service director—i.e., her boss—[claims](#) not to have known in advance that Chambers would be fired, and she further claims not to have discussed with anyone besides the Park Service's legal counsel whether Chambers should be reinstated in her job. When pressed, Mainella seemed to be saying that it would be all right with her if Chambers returned to her job, provided she agreed to "follow procedures," whatever that means. (The agency lawyer prevented Mainella from answering whether one procedure she had in mind was that Chambers seek advance permission to give any future interviews. This exchange occurs on pages 192-193 of Mainella's Aug. 10 [deposition](#) to the Merit Systems Protection Board.)

Mainella said she kept herself ignorant of Chambers' case because she might be called upon to rule on an appeal to Chambers' firing. But Mainella never was called upon to do so, even, it seems, by herself, acting in her capacity as ... well, the boss. Her magnificently open mind was never put to use.

Now she has her opportunity. Chambers, observing that the Park Service has posted a public notice inviting applications for her former job, sent in a job application of her own. You'll find her cover letter [here](#), and her [résumé](#) here. She sure looks qualified to me.

*Teresa Chambers Archive:*

July 29, 2004: "[Gagging the Fuzz, Part 7](#)"

July 12, 2004: "[Gagging the Fuzz, Part 6](#)"

April 14, 2004: "[Gagging the Fuzz, Part 5](#)"

March 25, 2004: "[Gagging the Fuzz, Part 4](#)"

Feb. 19, 2004: "[Gagging the Fuzz, Part 3](#)"

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