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The Reliable Source

Park Police Bomb Their Terrorism Test

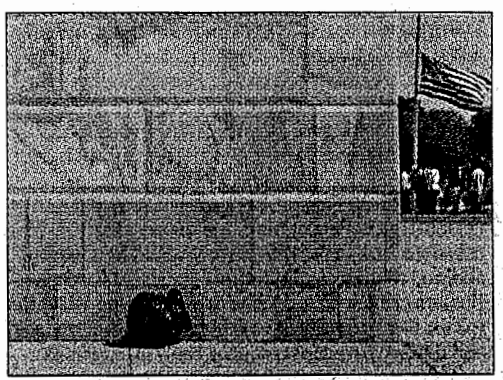
By Richard Leiby
Washington Post Staff Writer

In broad daylight on Sept. 11, 2003, somebody deposited what could have been a "dirty bomb" at the Washington Monument. U.S. Park Police never noticed.

It wasn't a real bomb, just a suspicious-looking black plastic bag stuffed with garbage. And the culprits weren't terrorists, but investigators from the Interior Department's Office of Inspector General, out to demonstrate the monument's vulnerability on that infamous anniversary.

As documented in photos and a memo obtained by The Reliable Source, the feds left the bag at the rear of the obelisk for 20 minutes, then moved it near a security checkpoint where tourists lined up to enter the

See SOURCE, *C3, Col. 1*



HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Last Sept. 11, federal investigators left this bag next to the Washington Monument. No one noticed.

From Park Police, Monumental Insecurity?

SOURCE, *From C1*

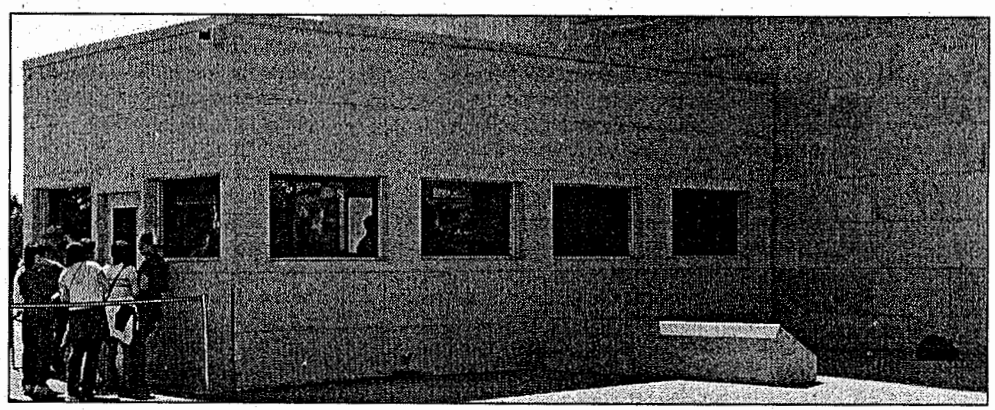
landmark. "Again, the unidentified bag sat there, undisrupted and unnoticed, for roughly 15 minutes," wrote Inspector General **Earl E. Devaney** in the memo, citing his "grave concerns for the security and public safety at these facilities."

No Park Police could be seen on patrol, except for one in an unmarked car who "appeared to be sound asleep," Devaney wrote.

The memo, now in the hands of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, has some staffers in stitches. But Rep. **Jim Turner** (D-Tex.), ranking committee member, is outraged. "Without a doubt, if there had been a terrorist attack on the Washington Monument on Sept. 11, 2003, hundreds of tourists could have been killed," Turner told us yesterday. "Usually when we say someone was asleep at the wheel, it is just an expression, but this time, the Park Police were literally asleep at the wheel. . . . Someone needs to be held accountable for this."

The memo increased controversy surrounding Park Police Chief **Teresa C. Chambers,** whom the National Park Service moved to fire last month after she publicly called the 620-member force overstretched and underfunded. Chambers, placed on leave and under a gag order from her bosses, can't comment. But supporters say she ordered an investigation, confirmed the lapses and tried to fix them—all while under attack from what her attorney calls "internal terrorists."

Tomorrow: deeper inside the Washington Monument "sleeper cell."



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Even when the black plastic bag was left next to a security checkpoint, it went unnoticed by Park Police.