

Title:

Freedom Of The Press Threatened By Tennessee Police Chief

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Summary:

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Article Body:

The fourth estate received a public rebuke concealed in a not so veiled threat issued by Freeman Cooper, the Chief of Police, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

It could have been a bad April Fools joke but for the fact that it was a day late and not at all funny. It all happened at a hastily called news conference late morning, Wednesday, April 2nd, 2008, where Chattanooga Police Chief Freeman Cooper asked the media to stop asking questions about problem officer Chattanooga Police Captain Jeannie Snyder.

Cooper went on to issue a veiled threat to the media for doing its job by saying the investigation into the female police captain was "bordering on harassment".

He continued, "She is a police officer in good standing and that means that she can be armed at anytime with any weapon, it does not have to be the police department's gun." Snyder who had already voluntarily stepped down as an assistant police chief taking a Ten Thousand Dollar pay cut in November, 2007, also voluntarily turned in her city issued weapon last week citing public concern over her being armed. The Chattanooga reported, however, that she was still carrying her personal firearm. That is just one of the exceptions the city appears to have made for Captain Snyder when their internal rules and regulations says each officer is issued a service weapon and must carry that weapon when on duty.

Chattanooga City Councilman Leamon Pierce is one of the few apparently not afraid to speak up and question Snyder or the Chief. Pierce opined, "You got to deal with what the perception is, she has a problem no doubt it's a medical

problem. I wouldn't want to be around her, in her presence when she has another reaction."

He went on to say what some officers have intimated to the Tennessee Mountain Man - that some of her fellow police officers are leary and fearful of her.

There are those current and retired police officers who tell the Tennessee Mountain Man that they have good reason to walk lightly around Captain Snyder. They maintain that Cooper had little choice but to appoint her an assistant police chief and now has no choice but to defend and protect her to the best of his ability.

Names the Tennessee Mountain Man has not heard in legal and law enforcement circles in 20 years are popping up again. Names like Ralph Cothran, Al Coker, Johnny Wright, and others - even a former madam and drug dealer are surfacing and fueling the rumor mill.

Chief Cooper challenged the press at his news conference, "Tell me something she's done wrong? You can't because she hasn't." He continued, "She hasn't harmed anyone, threatened to harm anyone, or put anybody in any type of danger."

According to public records, it all started in January of 2007 when Snyder was found unconscious in her Red Bank (A Chattanooga Bedroom Community) home after she failed to show up for an appointment. She was "sick", i.e. "passed out" and had to be hospitalized. Drawing on his experience and career as a former intelligence operative, CID Agent, and civilian police officer the Computer Man suspects the roots of Captain Snyder's problems run much deeper and farther into the past.

In September, 2007, she did not show up for work which sparked a search in Marion County, Tennessee. When finally found after costing the city, the state and two counties untold thousands of dollars, she was "sick" and had to be hospitalized.

A few weeks ago Snyder "appeared to be under the influence of alcohol and drugs" at the Town Center Mall, in Cobb County, Georgia at 3 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008 according to an incident report from the Cobb County Department of Public Safety where she produced a weapon when an officer asked for some identification. A confrontation ensued. Captain Snyder was "sick" again. An ambulance had to be summoned with several Chattanooga Police Staff to escort her back to Chattanooga, and, of course, once again she required hospital care before returning to duty.

A recurring theme from police officers is that "I am a man". "I can't sleep my

way to the top." Which prompted City Councilman Manny Rico to issue a counter comment to Councilman Pierce, according to Abena Williams, Reporter, WDEF-TV, Chattanooga, TN, "I've talked to others that aren't (fearful of Snyder), you hear both sides, police people are very funny I'm sure there are a lot of them that didn't get the promotion they should have got."

The former madam perused this story over a snifter of brandy, then handing it back with a slight smile, said, "new paint, new lipstick, new gloss. Nothing ever changes, baby. Between her and the sheriff there are a lot of important people shaking in their boots tonight."

Some believe it is time for a good house cleaning at the Chattanooga Police Department, and that this could be the biggest thing since Bookie Turner. Another story... Another time.

In the mean time, the question remains whether the local press will bow in fear or deference to Chief Cooper?