


Political interference will drive you bananas

 Political apathy is here again. Leading up to a likely General Election in May, the party political spin machines have been set on over drive – grabbing the headlines and trying to gain the attention of potential voters like a spoilt child shouting: ‘Look at me, look what I’ve got’.

Tory leader Michael Howard has unveiled plans to create publicly elected police commissioners, replacing the existing police authorities. Sound familiar? The Labour Party batted around a similar idea, publicly elected Police Authority members, back in November 2003.

This would enable candidates to be party political, making

promises to the public and asking the police to deliver in order to get themselves re-elected. In this month’s regular personal view column, *Judgement Call*, Tony Judge gives the example of how a man dressed as a monkey was voted in as the Mayor of Hartlepool, on a platform of ‘more free bananas’.

This does not send out a particularly reassuring message when it comes to such locally elected figures, and on a more serious note could see the election of an extreme candidate. The political ramifications of this on policing are obvious.

This month’s *Police* also reports on the campaign launched by the Federation to get the

Government to see sense in relation to the setting up of the Serious and Organised Crime Agency.

Federation representatives lobbied parliamentarians over concerns about less-favourable pay and conditions for police officers compulsorily transferring into the crime fighting Agency and fears of the growing politicisation of policing.

Political interference in policing is not by any means a new phenomenon, but the struggle to keep policing independent from political whims is an important battle which we must win in order to uphold the integrity of the service.



What do you think?

We would like to hear your views on the issues discussed in this month’s magazine.

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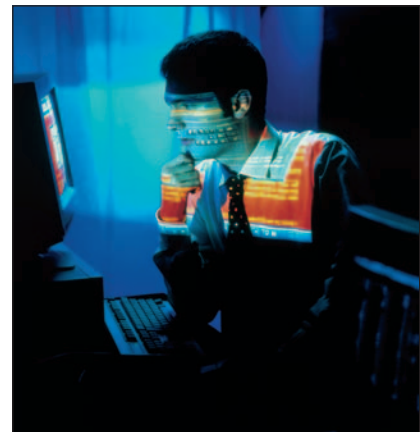
In Focus



Tony Judge examines the troubled relationship between politics and policing as a General Election is on the horizon. **Page 19, 20 and 21**



As police officers face increasing danger from criminals using cars as a means to injure and kill them, Paul Tonks, chairman of the West Midlands Police Federation, argues for a change in the law. **Page 12 and 13**



Phil Chamberlain reports on how the police service across the country are responding to the Freedom of Information Act since it was introduced in January this year. **Page 22 and 23**