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**CHICAGO POLICE OFFICER INDICTED FOR ALLEGEDLY VIOLATING FEDERAL
CIVIL RIGHTS OF MAN BEATEN WHILE HANDCUFFED IN WHEELCHAIR**

CHICAGO – A Chicago police officer was indicted for violating the federal civil rights of a man whom the officer allegedly struck repeatedly with a dangerous weapon while the man was restrained, federal law enforcement officials announced today. The defendant, **William Cozzi**, was charged in an indictment returned yesterday by a federal grand jury in Chicago with one count of violating the victim’s civil right to be free from the use of unreasonable force by a person acting under color of law. The charge was announced today by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Grace Chung Becker, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division; and Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Cozzi, 50, of Chicago, joined the Chicago Police Department in 1992 and was assigned to the 25th District at the time of the alleged incident. He was subsequently suspended from duty.

The indictment alleges that on Aug. 2, 2005, while performing his duties as a police officer, Cozzi used a dangerous weapon to repeatedly strike the unnamed victim, identified only as “Victim A,” who was handcuffed and shackled in a wheelchair at Norwegian American Hospital, resulting in bodily injury to the victim.

“Every citizen, regardless of being in police custody, has a Constitutional right to be free from the use of unreasonable force by law enforcement officers,” Mr. Fitzgerald said.

Cozzi will be arraigned at a later date in U.S. District Court in Chicago.

The Government is being represented in court by Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott Drury and DOJ Trial Attorney Betsy Biffel.

If convicted, the civil rights violation carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The Court, however, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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