

METRO

City loses brutality case

\$28 mil. awarded to paralyzed man

BY CAM SIMPSON
FEDERAL COURT REPORTER

Surrounded by tubes running from his limp body and images of Jesus Christ placed near his head, 34-year-old Joseph "Joey" Regalado sat propped up by an automatic bed Monday.

"If you're happy, blink your eyes," said his older brother, Tony Regalado.

A gaping grin and two blinks provided the only answer Joey Regalado can give.

The family of the paralyzed Hickory Hills man won a \$28 million jury verdict Monday for an alleged beating by a Chicago police officer in June 1991.

Jurors in U.S. District Court in Chicago, who heard evidence and arguments for two weeks, deliberated only about two hours before handing down what the city says is the largest verdict of its kind here.

The award is more than 1,000 times the average verdict or settlement in Chicago police misconduct cases over the past seven years, according to city figures. Jennifer Hoyle, a spokeswoman for the city's law department, said it appears to be the largest award ever in any lawsuit—of any kind—against the city.

It amounts to more than the roughly \$23.5 million handed out in all police misconduct judgments or settlements combined during the past five years.

"The family has been waiting eight years

Cruisers with video cameras begin patrol

BY FRANK MAIN
CRIME REPORTER

Ten Chicago police cars equipped with video cameras hit the streets today in a pilot program ordered by Supt. Terry Hillard in his effort to curb police misconduct.

The cameras will record any police misconduct as well as protect officers from unfounded allegations from motorists. "It's like another set of eyes," Deputy Chief Joseph DeLopez said.

Five video vendors have provided cameras to the department for free. Five districts each will have two video cars on patrol 24 hours a day through Feb. 2.

When the blue overhead lights of the cruiser are activated, the camera auto-

matically turns on, recording every traffic stop. The tapes are stored in the trunk and can only be removed by a supervisor with a key. The system costs \$4,000 to \$6,000 per car. Chicago has 1,300 marked vehicles in its 25 districts and its special operations units.

Hillard unveiled the pilot program in September as one of his initiatives in the wake of police shootings of unarmed motorists on a Jupe weekend.

"Because of our commitment to continue to change and improve, we . . . asked ourselves—what more can we do to prevent these kinds of incidents from happening?" he said in a speech.

The districts selected for the pilot program include South Chicago, Englewood, Deering, Harrison and Shakespeare.

for justice," said attorney Jon Loevy, who represented the Regalados.

City officials promised an appeal, arguing that U.S. Senior Judge Milton Shadur should not have barred medical evidence that supported the police.

Officer Jose Garcia, accused of administering the beating, and partner Manuel Acevedo were both cleared in an internal police probe, Hoyle said. Both remain with the police department.

Loevy argued that Regalado's injuries resulted from blows to the back of his head administered with a blunt object by Garcia as Regalado ran from police on a summer

night in June 1991 after an argument with his girlfriend. Regalado had been drinking and had the drug PCP in his system, Blake Horwitz, another attorney for Regalado, acknowledged.

Jurors knew about the PCP, also called "angel dust," but the city was not allowed to present evidence that the drug may have led to the injury.

Shadur said the claim wasn't substantiated by medical evidence.

The city argued that Regalado's injuries were most likely caused when he allegedly slipped and fell during the chase, which occurred near 28th Street and Kedvale on



AL PODGORSKI/SUN-TIMES

Patricia Regalado (right) wants the city to admit guilt in her son Joseph's beating.

the South Side.

But the Regalados' attorneys presented a witness—who emerged only recently—who testified that he saw the beating.

Joey Regalado needs 24-hour home care, said his mother, Patricia Regalado, who is the daughter of a 32-year veteran of the Chicago Police Department.

She said that the family wanted the money to provide the best medical care for her son and still wants the city to admit it was wrong.