

MetroChicago

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News from
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Jury awards paralyzed man \$28 million

Most ever in Chicago cop case

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TRIBUNE STAFF WRITERS

With surprising swiftness, a federal jury on Monday awarded \$28 million to the family of a man who suffered a paralyzing injury in an alleged beating by a Chicago police officer and was left "a prisoner in his own body," as his lawyers put it.

Blows to the back of Joseph Regalado's neck or head ripped an artery, cutting off blood to his brain and leaving him unable to talk or walk or care for his basic needs but still conscious and aware of his surroundings, according to testi-

mony at the two-week trial.

In just two hours, the jury decided that in June 1991, Officer José Garcia used excessive force on Regalado and that Garcia and his partner, Officer Manuel Acevedo, failed to provide him with medical assistance. They then awarded what some veteran civil rights lawyers believe is by far the largest award of damages ever in a Chicago police misconduct case.

Lawyers for the City of Chicago balked at settling the case for up to \$16 million moments before the verdict was read in federal court, according to Regalado's attorneys, Jon Loevy and Blake Horwitz.

"They rolled the dice and



Tribune photo by Stephanie Sircial

Patricia Regalado tends to her son, Joseph, who is paralyzed as a result of injuries suffered in 1991. On Monday, a jury awarded the Regalados \$28 million in damages from the city and police.

lost," Loevy said.

The \$28 million verdict is believed to far exceed any other award in a police misconduct case in Chicago. Between 1992

and 1998, city records show that there were a combined 1,298 judgments or settlements in police misconduct cases of all kinds, costing the city a total of

about \$34 million—or an average of about \$26,400 each.

City lawyers in the case and both officers declined to com-

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