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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY OCTOBER 26, 2012
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TWO CHICAGO POLICE OFFICERS INDICTED ON ATTEMPTED EXTORTION CHARGES IN VEHICLE TOWING INVESTIGATION

CHICAGO — Two Chicago police officers were indicted separately on federal charges for obtaining an extortion payment from a cooperating tow truck driver, and one of them allegedly received an additional payment for making a false police report of an auto accident to defraud an insurance company. Both officers, assigned to the South Chicago District at the time, were relieved of their police powers following the alleged crimes that occurred in late 2007 and early 2008.

Deavalin Page, 46, of Chicago, an officer for approximately 19 years, was arrested this morning and later released on a \$10,000 unsecured bond after appearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge Geraldine Soat Brown in U.S. District Court. Page was charged with two counts of attempted extortion and his indictment seeks forfeiture of \$3,200 in proceeds. **Francis Zoller**, 43, also of Chicago, an officer for approximately 17 years, was also released on a \$10,000 unsecured bond after being notified to appear before U.S. Magistrate Judge Sidney I. Schenkier in Federal Court. Zoller was charged with one count each of attempted extortion and mail fraud. The indictment against him seeks forfeiture of \$4,000 in proceeds. Both defendants pleaded not guilty.

The indictments, which were returned yesterday by a federal grand jury and unsealed today, are part of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Operation Tow Scam*. So far, seven Chicago police

officers and three civilians, including two truck drivers, have been charged and convicted in the corruption probe.

The charges were announced today by Gary S. Shapiro, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; William C. Monroe, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Garry F. McCarthy, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department.

Page allegedly obtained extortion payments from the cooperating tow truck driver in November 2007 and January 2008, which also violated various Chicago Police Department rules and orders. Similarly, Zoller was charged with obtaining an extortion payment in January 2008.

Also in January 2008, Zoller allegedly created a false police report for a traffic accident involving an individual's vehicle and a tow truck, knowing that no accident had actually occurred. The individual who owned the automobile made an insurance claim, and Zoller later accepted a \$2,000 payment from the cooperating tow truck driver for participating in the scheme, the indictment alleges.

Each count of attempted extortion and mail fraud carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, and restitution is mandatory. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Donovan.

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

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