

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	:	Criminal No. 18- 673 (RBK)
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
NICHOLAS ROMANTINO	:	18 U.S.C. §§ 242, 1519 and 2

INDICTMENT

The Grand Jury in and for the District of New Jersey, sitting at Camden, charges:

COUNT 1
[18 U.S.C. § 242 - Deprivation of Rights Under Color of Law]

Background

1. At all times relevant to this Indictment:
 - a. The Camden County Police Department ("CCPD") was a duly constituted police agency responsible for providing law enforcement services to serve and protect the community of the City of Camden, New Jersey. CCPD Officers were authorized by the State of New Jersey to make lawful arrests.

The Defendant and Other Individuals and Entities

- b. Defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO was a resident of Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey. On or about April 4, 2016, defendant ROMANTINO was sworn in as a CCPD Officer.
 - c. Victim #1 was a 32-year-old-male who resided in Camden, New Jersey.

d. CCPD Sergeant #1 and Officers #1 and #2 were CCPD personnel who were present, among others, when defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO encountered Victim #1 in the vicinity of Collings and New Hampshire Roads in Camden, New Jersey.

The Offense

2. On February 22, 2018, defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO was working in his official capacity as a uniformed CCPD Officer.

3. On February 22, 2018, several uniformed CCPD Officers responded to the area of Collings and New Hampshire Roads in response to a police radio dispatcher's report of a "man with a gun."

4. Upon arrival to the area of Collings and New Hampshire Roads, CCPD Sergeant #1 told Victim #1 to stop and place his hands up. Victim #1 complied.

5. Defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO approached Victim #1 from behind and tried to pull Victim #1's arm behind his back, which startled Victim #1. Victim #1 reacted by pulling his arm away from defendant ROMANTINO. Defendant ROMANTINO then threw Victim #1 to the ground.

6. Once on the ground, defendant NICHOLAS ROMANITNO rolled Victim #1 over onto his stomach.

7. CCPD Officer #1 grabbed Victim #1's legs. While CCPD Officer #2 grabbed Victim #1's right arm which was out by Victim #1's head, defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO grabbed Victim #1's left hand.

8. Defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO, without provocation, punched Victim #1 multiple times in the back of Victim #1's head.

9. Ultimately, Victim #1 was transported in police custody to Virtua Hospital in Camden, New Jersey, where he received treatment for head injuries, as a result of the punches that he received from defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO.

10. After Victim #1 was transported to the hospital, defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO checked himself into Virtua Hospital where he received treatment for injuries to his right hand, as a result of the punches defendant ROMANTINO delivered to Victim #1.

11. Thereafter, defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO returned to the police station to prepare his reports, in connect with Victim #1's arrest.

12. To justify his actions against Victim #1, defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO prepared and submitted a false and fraudulent police report in which defendant ROMANTINO falsely stated that Victim #1 "placed his left hand under his chest and began to try [to] lift himself off the ground. Due to the fact that the male was trying to lift himself up and I was unable to see his right hand I began to strike the male in the head with a closed fist" Contrary to defendant ROMANTINO's representations in his report, defendant ROMANTINO held the victim's left hand while defendant ROMANTINO punched Victim #1 in the back of his head and CCPD Officer #2 held Victim #1's right arm.

The Charge

13. On or about February 22, 2018, in Camden County, in the District of New Jersey, and elsewhere, defendant

NICHOLAS ROMANTINO

while acting under color of the laws of the State of New Jersey, repeatedly punched Victim #1 without provocation, and thereby willfully deprived Victim #1 of a right secured and protected by the Constitution and laws of the United States, that is, the right to be free from unreasonable seizure by one acting under color of law, which includes the right to be free from the use of unreasonable and excessive force. The offense resulted in bodily injury to Victim #1.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 242, and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2.

COUNT 2

[18 U.S.C. § 1519 – Falsification Of Records In A Federal Investigation]

1. Paragraphs 1 through 12 of Count 1 of this Indictment are incorporated as if set forth in full herein.
2. The use of excessive force by a person acting under color of law, statute, ordinance, or regulation is a matter within the jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), which is an agency within the United States Department of Justice.
3. On or about February 22, 2018, defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO wrote a false Offense/Incident Report to justify the force used against Victim #1 and to obstruct any investigation into the deprivation of Victim #1’s right to be free from unreasonable seizure by one acting under the color of law, which includes the right to be free from the use of unreasonable force.
4. As part of that report, defendant NICHOLAS ROMANTINO, in an effort to justify the punches to Victim #1’s head, falsely stated that Victim #1 “placed his left hand under his chest and began to try [to] lift himself off the ground. Due to the fact that the male was trying to lift himself up and I was unable to see his right hand I began to strike the male in the head with a closed fist”
5. On or about February 22, 2018, in Camden County, in the District of New Jersey, and elsewhere, defendant

NICHOLAS ROMANTINO

while acting in relation to and in contemplation of a matter within the jurisdiction of the FBI, an agency of the United States, knowingly falsified, concealed, covered up and made false entries in a document with the intent to impede, obstruct, and influence the investigation and proper administration of that matter, that is, defendant authored and submitted a false and misleading Offense/Incident Report, in order to create a false justification for the assault of Victim #1, with intent to obstruct any investigation into the deprivation of Constitutional Rights described in Count 1.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1519, and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2.

A TRUE BILL

FOREPERSON

Craig Carpenito
CRAIG CARPENITO
United States Attorney

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

NICHOLAS ROMANTINO

INDICTMENT FOR
18 U.S.C. § 242
18 U.S.C. § 1519
18 U.S.C. § 2

A True Bill, , , //

Foreperson

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