



Department of Justice

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REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY US ATTORNEY DAVID B. FEIN AT THE EAST HAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT INDICTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

Good morning. Joining me are Tom Perez, Assistant Attorney General in Charge of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, and Janice K. Fedarcyk, Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Office of the FBI.

We are here today to announce the unsealing of an indictment and the arrests of four East Haven police officers, charged with violating the civil rights of members of the East Haven community. Earlier this morning, Sergeant John Miller and officers David Cari, Dennis Spaulding and Jason Zullo were arrested without incident. They are scheduled to appear before U.S. Magistrate Judge Fitzsimmons in Bridgeport federal court at 2 p.m.

I want to stress that an indictment is not evidence of guilt. Charges are only allegations, and each defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

This morning's arrests are the culmination of a long-term and ongoing federal criminal investigation of the East Haven Police Department. The indictment alleges that four officers – one sergeant and three patrol officers he supervised on the 4:00 p.m. to midnight shift – repeatedly violated the Constitutional rights of individuals who reside, work or travel in East Haven. The four defendants have been charged with using excessive force in the arrest of five individuals, conducting unreasonable searches and seizures, arresting five individuals based on false and misleading pretenses, and ostracizing, harassing and intimidating fellow officers and their own police commissioners in an effort to deter or prevent scrutiny of their misconduct.

Specifically, the indictment alleges that Miller, Spaulding, Zullo and another officer used unreasonable force during lawful and unlawful arrests, and that Cari, Spaulding and Zullo engaged in unreasonable searches and seizures, including unlawful searches of premises and arrests of individuals without probable cause or based on false and misleading information.

The indictment further alleges that Spaulding and Zullo intimidated, harassed and humiliated members of the Latino community and their advocates. Spaulding and Zullo conducted unreasonable and illegal searches at Latino-owned businesses. Spaulding followed, intimidated and harassed advocates who worked to defend the rights of members of the Latino

community. Spaulding and Zullo used racist and other inappropriate language when they interacted with or referred to members of the Latino community.

In total, the indictment alleges more than 30 overt acts by the four defendants and others in furtherance of the conspiracy.

It is alleged that those falsely arrested include a member of the clergy, a man who ran a local business in East Haven and several community members. The victims of abuse were unarmed, neither resisting arrest nor interfering with the police, but rather under the secure control of officers. The abuse occurred in the police station and in the streets of East Haven.

There is no place for excessive force in a police station or in the streets when making arrests. There is no place for false statements in a police report. No person is above the law, and nobody – even a person arrested for a crime – is beneath its protection. The conduct alleged here goes to the core principles of our criminal justice system. An officer who violates his oath betrays his fellow officers, members of the public and his town, state and country.

The crimes alleged in the indictment undermine the public's trust and confidence in the fine men and women of law enforcement who serve all of us bravely and with integrity every day. We know and understand how difficult police officers' jobs are and how important they are to a free society. It is for their benefit – and society's – that we at the Department of Justice are ever-vigilant in investigating and prosecuting wrongdoing by those who have sworn to protect the public.

Our investigation is ongoing as we continue to look at additional incidents and individuals. We know first-hand how difficult it has been for people to come forward with information. As I said, the indictment includes various acts of intimidation, directed at members of the public, fellow officers and police commissioners. If anyone has information relevant to our investigation, including of acts of cover-up or intimidation, I urge them to call the FBI immediately at (212) 384-1000.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the Civil Rights Squad of the FBI's New York Field Office, who have conducted a tireless and thorough investigation, the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice, and Deputy United States Attorney Deirdre Daly and Assistant United States Attorney Krishna Patel who are prosecuting this case.

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