Suspect in $1.5 million chip heist nabbed in Las Vegas - Reuters

Written by Administrator
Thursday, 03 February 2011 16:50 -

LAS VEGAS | Thu Feb 3, 2011 6:31pm EST LAS VEGAS (Reuters) - Police in Las Vegas arrested the son of a judge for riding a motorcycle up to the upscale Bellagio casino and stealing about $1.5 million in gambling chips, authorities said on Thursday.

Anthony Carleo, 29, the son of municipal court judge George Assad, was charged with robbery and burglary with a deadly weapon, and was booked at the Clark County Detention Center, Las Vegas police said in a statement.

The arrest stems from the December 14 robbery at the Bellagio, when a suspect wearing a full-face motorcycle helmet walked up to a craps table, pulled out a pistol and gathered $1.5 million in chips before fleeing on a motorcycle.

"I think it goes without saying that as a father, I am devastated and heartbroken to see my son arrested under these circumstances, as is the rest of his family," Judge Assad said in a brief statement released through a Las Vegas public relations firm.

The statement goes on to say: "As a working member of the judiciary, however, I am bound by the judicial canons of ethics and therefore cannot discuss any pending legal matter as it relates to anyone, including my son."

Police said the same suspect may have robbed the Las Vegas Suncoast Casino poker room cashier a week before the Bellagio theft.

In that incident, a suspect wearing a similar helmet got away with about $20,000 in chips.

There were at least 10 casino robberies in Las Vegas last year, although the robbery at the Bellagio was unusual for its brazenness and the size of the haul.

Strict controls make it difficult to cash in large amounts of stolen chips. Internal Revenue Service regulations require casinos to track and report cash transactions involving more than $10,000.

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