Written by Administrator Thursday, 03 February 2011 20:52 -

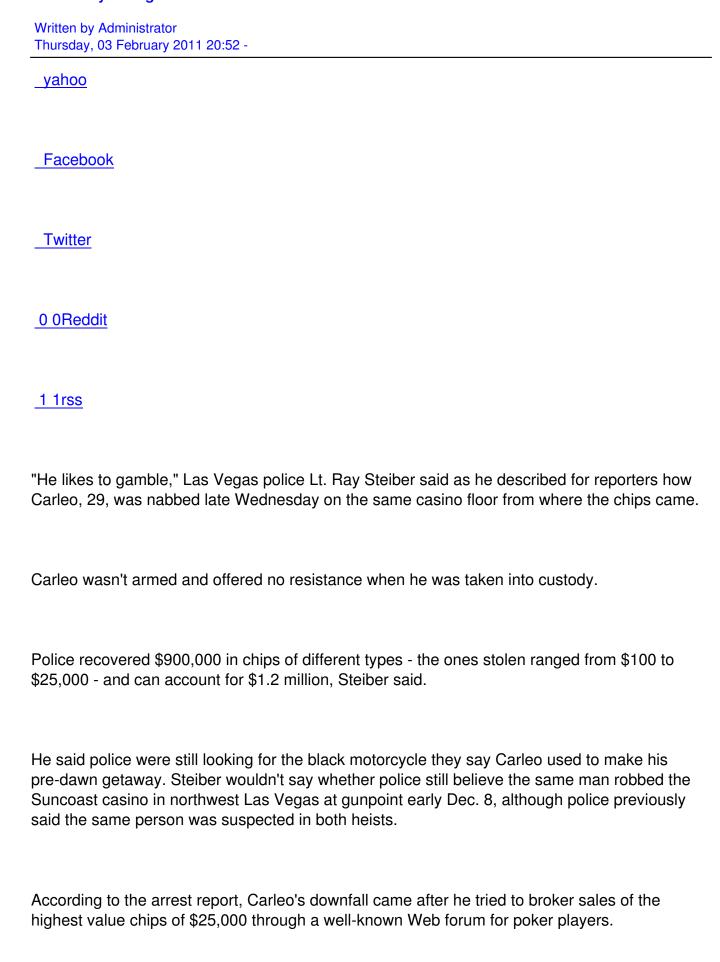
LAS VEGAS --The bankrupt son of a Las Vegas judge followed a crude holdup at a posh casino by racking up hundreds of thousands of dollars in gambling losses and spending a week like a high roller, but got caught after trying to hawk his stolen chips online to

poker players, police said Thursday.

An arrest report for the helmeted bandit, who ran out of the Bellagio hotel-casino with \$1.5 million in chips during a gunpoint heist Dec. 14, said Anthony M. Carleo lost about \$105,000 at

the resort over the next month - including \$73,000 on New Year's Eve. He stayed at least one week at the resort in late January, enjoying meals, drinks and rooms furnished by the casino. **Article Controls** email

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Using the handle "Oceanspray 25" - a reference to the beverage company because \$25,000 chips are known to gamblers as "cranberries" for their color - Carleo traded e-mails and phone calls with another user who eventually led him to police, the arrest report said.

It said Carleo sold five \$25,000 chips to an undercover officer, and told him he had robbed the Bellagio.

Carleo's father, Las Vegas Municipal Court Judge George Assad, issued a statement saying he and his family were "devastated and heartbroken to see my son arrested under these circumstances."

Assad said that as a working judge, he couldn't comment about "any pending legal matter as it relates to anyone, including my son."

"I can say that as a prosecutor and a judge, I have always felt people who break the law need to be held accountable," he added.

Jail records showed Carleo was being held under the name Anthony M. Assad. The name was also used in Carleo's bankruptcy filing.

Carleo is a former real estate broker and student who declared bankruptcy in Colorado in May 2009. On his bankruptcy filing, he listed among his personal belongings a .40-caliber Taurus pistol.

His bankruptcy filing said Carleo received at least \$19,000 from his father over a three year period, but owed nearly \$188,000 in debts. The case was closed seven months later, and the firm that represented him in that case said Thursday that it was not currently representing him.

It wasn't immediately clear whether Carleo had a lawyer.

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Voting records in 2010 showed that Carleo lived at the same address as his father in Las Vegas.

His bail was set at \$15,000 on felony armed robbery and burglary charges. Court spokeswoman Mary Ann Price said he was due Monday for an initial appearance in Las Vegas Justice Court.

Carleo won't be required to appear when a judge reviews the charges against him on Friday, Price said.

A police statement early Thursday said Carleo would face a drug trafficking charge. But Steiber said that officials decided not to seek that charge, but he did not specify why.

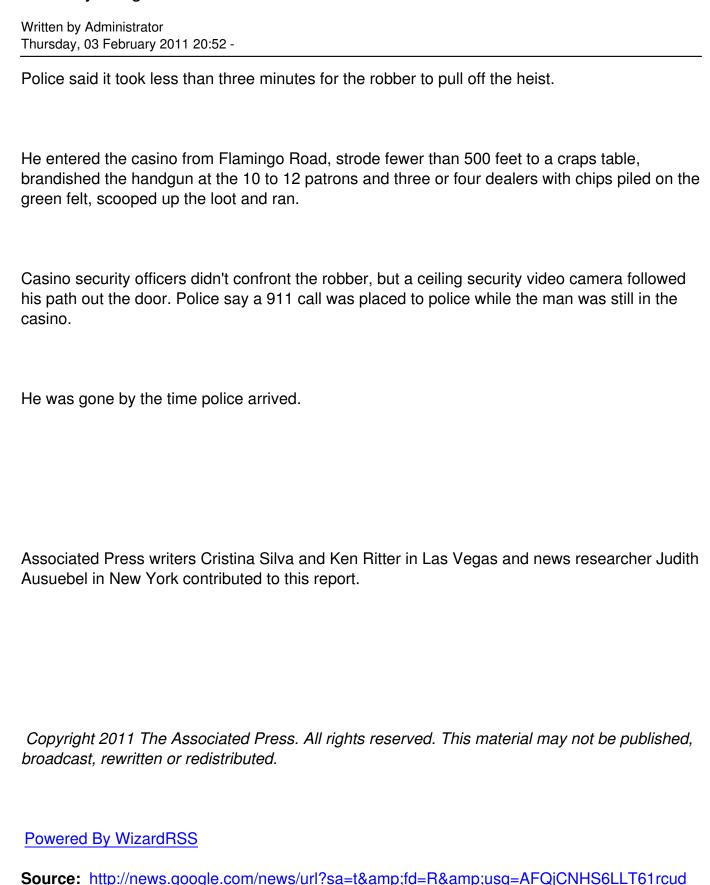
Experts and police noted after the heist that stealing \$1.5 million in chips isn't like stealing \$1.5 million in cash.

Chips are unique to casino properties and are generally not interchangeable, although state regulations let casino companies redeem sister properties' chips with some restrictions.

Bellagio has since replaced its \$25,000 chips and announced plans to discontinue in April those designed like the ones stolen, setting a deadline for the thief to try to use them.

Steiber said investigators followed numerous tips in the case, and on Dec. 23 interviewed a Salvation Army bell ringer who tried to cash a \$25,000 Bellagio chip. He told police that a man he didn't know put the chip in his pocket while he was manning a charity collection bucket.

Bellagio officials would not say whether MGM Resorts International properties, which include the posh hotel-casino on the Strip known for its fountains, are among Las Vegas casinos that embed radio frequency devices inside the tokens.



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