

FROM THE FRONT

“And now that you don't have to be perfect, you can be good.”
EAST OF EDEN JOHN STEINBECK

Jacobson bet millions while embezzling, affidavit says

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for taking a community-oriented approach since he became chief in 2022.

Jacobson wagered over \$4.4 million on two gambling platforms, DraftKings and FanDuel, between Jan. 1, 2025 and Jan. 5, 2026, with a net loss of \$214,365.74 over the year-long period, according to the affidavit. Connecticut legalized sports betting in 2021.

Jacobson is facing two counts of first-degree larceny in connection with his alleged theft of \$81,500 from the New Haven Police Department Narcotic Enforcement Program Fund and \$4,000 from the New Haven Police Activity League, a police-run youth programming organization, during 2024 and 2025, state prosecutors said in a Friday news release.

Jacobson turned himself in to Connecticut State Police on Friday. A Connecticut judge set his bail at \$150,000.

“I will remind everyone that an arrest is not evidence of guilt and allegations are not proof,” Gregory Cerritelli, Jacobson’s lawyer, wrote in a Friday statement to the New Haven Independent on the former police chief’s behalf. “This is the beginning of a very long process. I urge everyone to keep an open mind and avoid a rush to judgment.”

Officer Christian Bruckhart, the New Haven Police Department’s spokesperson, said in a Friday phone interview that Jacobson, who was a New Haven police officer for 15 years before being named chief, had “a lot of close relationships” in the department and the city, and across the state.

“The job was his life. It’s been a very trying time,” Bruckhart said.

According to a sworn statement by Zannelli, provided on Jan. 8 and included in the affidavit, Jacobson — after being confronted by the assistant chiefs — “pleaded for them to let him replace the money, fix the logbook, and then retire” and asked for the “opportunity to avoid potentially going to jail and losing his pension for misusing government funds.”

Under Connecticut law, if any public official or state or municipal employee is convicted of or pleads guilty to any crime, their pension may be reduced or revoked. The status of Jacobson’s pension has not yet been determined.

Nathan Novemsky, a Yale School of Management professor who studies the psychology of judgment and decision-making, said that when it comes to addiction management, “sometimes one dangerous compulsion is replaced by another harmful compulsion.”

DraftKings and FanDuel — online betting platforms approved in Connecticut and free to download — each gained millions of users nationwide after the Supreme Court struck down a 1992 law barring state-authorized sports gambling in 2018.

“With the phone as the ever-present tool for seeking reward, if you now have gambling apps on there that are especially rewarding to you, it’s just like an alcoholic living in a liquor store or a bar,” Novemsky said.

“There’s less stigma today, frankly, to sports betting now that FanDuels and DraftKings are out there and on TV and advertisements,” Novemsky said. Still, Novemsky said, stigma remains a “barrier” for seeking help.

Per the affidavit, a New Haven police sergeant alerted Zannelli on Dec. 23, 2025, to “concerns” about the former chief’s “behavior.”

In November and December last year, Jacobson dispensed \$2,000 from the confidential informants program to a lieutenant, who informed the sergeant who in turn alerted Zannelli, according to Zannelli’s sworn statement. The lieutenant also reportedly told Zannelli that Jacobson then took back \$1,000, which he never returned, and left the lieutenant an “IOU” note.

Zannelli further wrote in his statement that Jacobson had sole authority over receiving and dispensing money from the confidential informants fund, as well as maintaining a log of the fund’s transactions, according to the affidavit.

Upon discovering potential issues with the fund’s management, Zannelli relayed his concerns about Jacobson’s behavior to Assistant Chief Manmeet Bhagtana.

Bhagtana explained to Zannelli that Jacobson had made additional fund requests to repair a door damaged during the serving of an arrest warrant, support controlled drug buys and pay informants for investigations. Zannelli, who also spoke to the lieutenant, learned that Jacobson had requested a “personal loan” of \$500 from the lieutenant at the end of last December, according to the affidavit.

The lieutenant, who kept his own “logbook” of informant money transactions, explained that Jacobson “typically” cashed a \$5,000 monthly check from the fund and had done so since 2019, when Jacobson assumed control over it as the assistant chief of investigations, according to Zannelli’s statement.

Following a temporary pause in its operations, the confiden-

tial informants program is due to restart after city officials on Thursday unveiled a set of new guardrails for its fund.

When questioned in the Jan. 5 meeting with three assistant police chiefs, Jacobson admitted to having “spent too much” on gambling, which had worsened in recent months, Zannelli wrote in his statement.

The former police chief said he had “sought help” and had taken out a loan to replace the misappropriated funds, according to the affidavit. He conceded that he had taken \$20,000 over the last two months from additional checks.

Jacobson said that only he was involved in his misuse of funds, and apologized “for not coming to” the assistant chiefs sooner, the affidavit says. Upon leaving the room, Zannelli wrote, he reported Jacobson’s malfeasance to the New Haven Chief Administrative Officer Justin McCarthy and had the locks on Jacobson’s office door changed.

Jacobson, who retired the same day he was confronted by the assistant chiefs, has not returned to his office, according to the affidavit.

Adele Haeg contributed reporting.

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Arrest on larceny counts comes six weeks after chief's exit

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aged during the serving of an arrest warrant, support controlled drug buys and pay informants, according to the affidavit.

Following Zannelli’s investigation of concerns against Jacobson, he, Bhagtana and a third assistant police chief confronted Jacobson in a meeting on Jan. 5. Zannelli, “in fear” of how Jacobson might react to the allegations against him, “surreptitiously” audio-recorded the meeting on his phone, according to the affidavit.

When questioned about the missing funds and his recent behavior, Jacobson told the assistant chiefs he had a problem with gambling that had worsened over the last few months, and said he had “sought help” and had taken out a loan to replace the misappropriated funds, the affidavit describes. He admitted that he had taken \$10,000 over the last two months from additional checks, per the affidavit.

According to Zannelli’s state-

ment in the affidavit, Jacobson “pleaded for them to let him replace the money, fix the logbook, and then retire” and asked for the “opportunity to avoid potentially going to jail and losing his pension for misusing government funds.”

According to Elicker, an investigation remains underway.

The Connecticut State Police began an investigation into Jacobson’s misappropriation of funds on Jan. 6., just a day after Jacobson was confronted by the assistant chiefs. A search and seizure of items from Jacobson’s office and of the former chief’s bank records corroborated his admission of stealing \$10,000. It also identified an additional \$4,000 stolen from the Police Activity League.

A further forensic analysis conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation comparing Jacobson’s personnel checking account to the confidential informants fund found \$81,500 unaccounted for from the fund in 2024 and 2025, according to the affidavit.

A search and seizure war-

rant issued for records related to Jacobson’s activities from three gambling platforms — Fanatics, DraftKings and FanDuel — identified that Jacobson had wagered \$4,464,884.26 and experienced a net loss of \$214,365.74 from Jan. 1, 2025 to Jan. 5, 2026 on DraftKings and FanDuel. From the beginning of 2025 to Jan. 8, 2026, Jacobson also made 1,366 transfers, totalling \$373,855, to the two applications, according to the affidavit.

“I think from the beginning, we really didn’t know how deep this went,” Elicker said at the press conference.

Jacobson received a \$180,000 annual salary as city police chief, according to the affidavit.

Jacobson was appointed as chief of the New Haven Police Department in 2022, and was due to retire on Jan. 31, 2026.

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Amid blizzard, administrators urge remote Tuesday classes

SNOW FROM PAGE 1

Weather Service.

By Monday evening, snow had stopped falling, but many of the sidewalks on campus were still covered by varying amounts of snow and ice. Workers manning shovels, snowblowers and plow trucks roamed campus in efforts to remove snow as early as Sunday evening.

Parts of the administrators’ Monday message regarding remote classes and work were identical to an announcement sent in late January, when Yale was last hit with a severe snowstorm that halted classes and disrupted various services across campus.

George Hines, Yale’s director of emergency management, wrote in a statement provided to the News that Yale “continues to closely monitor the winter storm.”

“Emergency planning and operations teams are working closely with departments across campus to ensure these functions remain in place while keeping the safety and well-being of the community at the center of every decision,” Hines wrote. “Many dedicated staff members have ensured continuity of

operations during weather events, along with the faculty who sustain the university’s educational, research, and clinical missions despite disruption.”

Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont SOM ’80 announced a state of emergency on Sunday. Lamont ended his emergency order prohibiting commercial vehicles on certain highways at 4:00 p.m. Monday but has yet to lift the state of emergency, which lasts until the end of Monday.

John Humphries, the instructor for Introduction to Data Analysis and Econometrics, wrote to students in an email reviewed by the News that he will hold an in-person lecture on Tuesday but noted that a recording will be made available on Canvas, Yale’s online course management platform.

Katja Lindskog, the director of undergraduate studies of the Directed Studies program for first years, wrote in an email to students that all Tuesday Directed Studies classes would be online in light of “the most recent updates from Yale Operations.”

The snowstorm caused Yale Hospitality to cancel breakfast and lunch hours on Monday, and only 10 res-

idental college dining halls were open for abbreviated hours between 3 and 6 p.m.

Yale Hospitality announced on Saturday that students on meal plans should pick up pre-packaged meals for Monday breakfast and lunch on Sunday afternoon. The message was followed by announcements from the Yale Shuttle service, Yale Health and the Payne Whitney Gymnasium of reduced or interrupted service.

Some residential college administrators reminded students about the storm.

“Yes: there is another snowstorm bearing down on Grace Hopper College,” Head of College Samuel Moyn wrote in an email on Sunday, adding that the college was “developing a system for you to drop off your wrap (in the lunch box) in the student kitchen” to refrigerate the pre-packaged meals.

Yale canceled classes for two days following a February 2013 storm, known as Blizzard Nemo, which dropped 34 inches of snow, according to the Yale Alumni Magazine.

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