

Once again, Bensalem officials are scratching their heads.

The word has been out for weeks: Police are on high alert for gamblers who illegally leave children unattended outside the Parx Casino.

But once

again, police say, it has happened.

A Northeast Philadelphia man was arrested Thursday after authorities said he left his two young daughters in a minivan in the wee hours of the morning earlier last month while he marked his birthday by gambling inside the casino.

Tan Truong, 38, of the 9600 block of Hoff Street, was charged with endangering the welfare of the girls, ages 8 and 6, who were unharmed.

It was the eighth such incident reported at Parx since June 15, and the first since Sept. 2. Police say 15 children, ranging from 15 months to 15 years, have been left unattended in vehicles by their adult caretakers.

Three fathers, a mother, an aunt, and a grandfather have now been charged criminally in cases that are at various pending stages in the courts.

"You know what? You publicize that people get arrested for murder, but murder still occurs," said Bensalem Police Sgt. Andrew Aninsman when asked why the intense publicity surrounding the episodes hasn't ended them.

The alleged incident occurred Oct. 11, police said, and Truong was questioned at the time, but charges were not filed until last week because the investigation had not been completed.

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Written by Administrator

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Police said that Truong had left the children in a Toyota Sienna minivan about 12:50 a.m., the time he entered the casino. Truong's mother, who had arrived separately a few hours earlier, was already inside.

Less than a half-hour later, Aninsman said, the vehicle's alarm went off. The sound got the attention of Parx security workers. At the same time, the girls were calling their grandmother in the casino with a phone their father had left with them.

The grandmother, who was not charged, spoke no English, Aninsman said. It took 25 minutes to locate Truong inside the casino, police said.

"He minimized it," Aninsman said. He said he was celebrating his Oct. 10 birthday, and "said it was only a couple of minutes."

Police said Truong also had been drinking. A preliminary breath test indicated that his blood-alcohol content was over the legal threshold for intoxication, Aninsman said, but it could not be proved that he drove in that condition into the casino.

Truong, who is free without bail, could not be reached for comment. He is scheduled for a Dec. 1 preliminary hearing, at which time bail is expected to be set.

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