

## *A Comprehensive Look at Illegal Gambling and Alleged Skill Games in Pennsylvania*



This packet compiles publicly available information from news articles, business registrations, and court records concerning illegal gambling devices in Pennsylvania. These machines are frequently marketed or disguised as "skill games," yet they have been the focus of numerous investigations, seizures, and criminal prosecutions.

It is important to note that not all skill games are illegal. For instance, Pennsylvania skill games designed by Pace-O-Matic<sup>2</sup> have been proven in court to qualify as legal skill games.

The aim of this packet is to identify the risks associated with illegal gambling devices and to analyze how certain businesses and individuals have been repeatedly connected to their distribution. By synthesizing this information, we hope to provide a clearer understanding of the challenges and legal implications surrounding illegal gambling practices in the state. This insight will be valuable for stakeholders seeking to navigate this complex landscape legally.

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<sup>1</sup> Graphics & Design / Flyer Design by designer Rifat on Fiverr: <https://www.Fiverr.com/mdrifat15/do-corporate-business-flyer-design-with-unlimited-revisions>.

<sup>2</sup> "Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania, No. 707 C.D. 2023", [https://www.pacourts.us/assets/opinions/Commonwealth/out/707CD23\\_11-30-23.pdf](https://www.pacourts.us/assets/opinions/Commonwealth/out/707CD23_11-30-23.pdf)

## Visual Example: Aurora “Skill Games”

Photo(s) of Aurora “Skill Games” machines with Pinnacle Vending chairs, serving as an example of how these devices are marketed and placed.



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**PINNACLE VENDING**

**WHAT WE OFFER**

**CURVED 43" SCREEN SKILL GAME**

- Game board, selected to maximize play based on field testing
- Industry leading security measures
- Printer linked to your payout kiosk for totally autonomous function

**DIMENSIONS: 72" HEIGHT | 26.5" WIDTH | 22" DEPTH**

The Curved 43" Screen Pinnacle skill game features a high-resolution PCAP touch screen LCD, the same premium quality used in top-tier casino machines. Fully plug-&-play, it supports a variety of vertical screen games, bringing excitement and versatility to any location. Assembled in the U.S.A. with industry-leading security measures, this machine ensures durability and peace of mind.

Table Top version available upon request

- 100% Legal - No Fees
- Exclusive Aurora Gold and X/O Boards
- Selected for your region

**AUTOMATED PAYOUT KIOSK**

- Pays customer based on pay ticket, no employee required for the transaction.
- Secure
- Up To 6 Cassettes For 3000 Note Total Capacity
- Internal Safe with Electronic Lock

**DIMENSIONS: 65" HEIGHT | 19" WIDTH | 20" DEPTH**

Our Automated Ticket Redemption Kiosk is a fast, hassle-free solution designed for all entertainment venues. This self-service kiosk allows users to conveniently scan & redeem their tickets for prizes without the need for staff assistance. Enhance customer satisfaction, streamline operations, and optimize your redemption process with our Automated Ticket Redemption Kiosk—a seamless solution for modern entertainment spaces.



**PINNACLE VENDING**

**HOW WE WILL OPERATE TOGETHER**

**INSTALLATION & PROMOTION**

On installation day, our team will deliver the equipment by truck and complete a quick, clean setup with minimal disruption to your business.

**COLLECTION**

One assigned collector who will build our relationship. Collection will happen on an agreed upon schedule and frequency. Usually once every two weeks.

**PAYMENT**

Payment is made via ACH, wire transfer, or Cash or Check. Detailed reporting submitted with each payment.

**MORE THAN JUST SKILL GAMES**

We also offer pool tables, dart boards, jukeboxes, & ATMs. These services are designed to create an enjoyable atmosphere for your customers while providing additional revenue opportunities for your location.

**SERVICE**

At Pinnacle Vending, we understand that, over time, issues can arise—that's why we have a dedicated in-house team of service technicians working diligently to keep our machines running smoothly. Our proactive maintenance ensures minimal downtime, so your locations stay operational and hassle-free.



**PINNACLE VENDING**

**ABOUT US**

Welcome to Pinnacle vending! Pennsylvania's premier operator of amusement solutions! With years of experience in the gaming industry, we are dedicated to providing top-tier entertainment products that bring fun and excitement to businesses, venues, and events across Pennsylvania and more!

**WHY US?**

At Pinnacle Vending, we go beyond simply supplying skill games. — we deliver a premium, hassle-free experience to your customers. Here's why top companies trust us:

- Cutting-Edge Technology — Our games are fully autonomous & designed for security.
- Reliable Service & Maintenance — fast-response maintenance, we ensure you have minimal down time and your customers' experience is always smooth and uninterrupted.
- Transparent Reporting, we deliver detailed reports on the finances of every game and location.

Choose Pinnacle Vending and let us transform your store with the highest potential profit per square foot solution available today!

CONTACT US: 724-200-7777 sales@pinnaclevend.com



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"We've been working with Rifat on our company's flyers and ma...  
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Away • Avg. response time: 1 Hour



<sup>3</sup> Graphics & Design / Flyer Design by designer Rifat on Fiverr: <https://www.Fiverr.com/mdrifat15/do-corporate-business-flyer-design-with-unlimited-revisions>.

<sup>4</sup> Photo posted by @joann.beltran.9 on Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/p/DN\\_cLWJEyjb/](https://www.instagram.com/p/DN_cLWJEyjb/).

## News Coverage at a Glance

Name	News Article	Publication	Published Date	Legal Actions	Key Connections
Buffalo Skill Games	<i>Onetime Allegheny County video poker kingpin faces new charges: 'The little bit I have left is all legal'</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	5/15/25	Discusses illegal video poker machines marketed as skill games and law enforcement challenges	Mentions Buffalo Skill Games as part of the seizures in Western Pennsylvania
	<i>AG's Office Says It Seized Hundreds of Illegal Gambling Machines Disguised as Skill Games</i>	Pennsylvania Capital-Star	5/14/25	Over 400 machines seized; warehouse search uncovered \$175,000; devices disguised as skill games	Names J.J. Amusements as one of the companies supplying illegal gambling devices; owned by John F. Conley
	<i>Tinicum Motel Raided for Gambling Machines</i>	PennLive	3/27/19	Raid uncovered illegal gambling machines at motel	Buffalo Skill games charged with multiple counts of having gambling devices
	<i>Video Poker Kingpin Pleads Guilty in Sports-Betting Ring</i>	TribLIVE	5/6/09	Guilty plea in sports-betting ring; distribution of video poker machines	Connects Buffalo Skill Games ownership to Conley
J.J. Amusements	<i>Onetime Allegheny County video poker kingpin faces new charges: 'The little bit I have left is all legal'</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	5/15/25	Discusses illegal video poker machines marketed as skill games and law enforcement challenges	Mentions J.J. Amusements as part of broader illegal gambling operations in Western Pennsylvania
	<i>AG's Office Says It Seized Hundreds of Illegal Gambling Machines Disguised as Skill Games</i>	Pennsylvania Capital-Star	5/14/25	Over 400 machines seized; warehouse search uncovered \$175,000; devices disguised as skill games	Names J.J. Amusements as one of the companies supplying illegal gambling devices; owned by John F. Conley
	<i>Video Poker Kingpin Pleads Guilty in Sports-Betting Ring</i>	TribLIVE	5/6/09	Guilty plea in sports-betting ring; distribution of video poker machines	Connects J.J. Amusements' ownership to Conley
John D. Conley	<i>AG's Office Says It Seized Hundreds of Illegal Gambling Machines Disguised as Skill Games</i>	Pennsylvania Capital-Star	5/14/25	Father-son operation; court documents reference kickbacks paid	Named in court documents as co-leader with father of the illegal gambling enterprise; involved in company operations
John F. "Duffy" Conley	<i>Onetime Allegheny County video poker kingpin faces new charges: 'The little bit I have left is all legal'</i>	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	5/15/25	Discusses illegal video poker machines marketed as skill games	Referred to as the individual behind companies distributing illegal gambling devices in Western PA
	<i>AG's Office Says It Seized Hundreds of Illegal Gambling Machines Disguised as Skill Games</i>	Pennsylvania Capital-Star	5/14/25	Seizure of 400+ machines; warehouse search uncovered \$175,000	Named as owner of companies supplying illegal gambling devices; prior convictions for gambling and money laundering
	<i>Video Poker Kingpin Pleads Guilty in Sports-Betting Ring</i>	TribLIVE	5/6/09	Guilty plea in sports-betting ring; distribution of video poker machines	Identified as central figure in ongoing illegal gambling activity; network included machines supplied to storefronts

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<sup>5</sup> “Onetime Allegheny County video poker kingpin faces new charges” ‘The little bit I have left is all legal’ “ by Megan Guza published in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: <https://www.post-gazette.com/news/crime-courts/2025/05/15/pennsylvania-illegal-video-poker-gambling/stories/202505140077>

“AG’s office says it seized hundreds of illegal gambling machines disguised as Skill Games” by Peter Hall published in the Pennsylvania Capital-Star, <https://penncapital-star.com/briefs/ags-office-says-it-seized-hundreds-of-illegal-gambling-machines-disguised-as-skill-games/>

“Tinicum motel raided and machines seized” by Pete Bannan published in the Delaware County Daily Times: <https://www.delcotimes.com/2023/06/29/tinicum-motel-raided-for-gambling-machines/>

“Video poker kingpin pleads guilty in sports-betting ring”, Jason Cato, Trib Live, <https://archive.triblive.com/news/video-poker-kingpin-pleads-guilty-in-sports-betting-ring/>



## News Overview

### 1. “Onetime Allegheny County video poker kingpin faces new charges” ‘The little bit I have left is all legal’<sup>6</sup>

- a. A May 2025 article from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette discusses the prevalence of illegal video poker machines in Pennsylvania. The article details how these machines are often marketed as skill games but operate similarly to traditional slot machines, raising concerns about their legality and the need for regulatory oversight. The piece also touches on the challenges faced by law enforcement in addressing this issue.

John F. “Duffy” Conley, now 61, spent years battling local and federal authorities on a slew of charges related to the video poker empire he built in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The feds alleged in his first trial in early 1995 that his 4,000 video poker machines were pulling in some \$600,000 a week.

Now, some 30 years later, the state Attorney General’s office alleges that Conley was the man behind 400 illegal gambling machines seized from hundreds of locations across the region last year.

i.

The criminal complaints against Buffalo Skill Games and J.J. Amusement lays out the gray area that is the difference between legal and illegal video gambling devices in Pennsylvania law.

It comes down to skill versus chance, according to the complaint. Games of skill are legal. Games of chance are not. That difference, in legal parlance, is known as the “predominant factor test.”

Often, the games operate like a traditional slot machine — spinning wheels feature various symbols, and landing three of the same symbol means a win.

Pennsylvania State police Trooper Eric Guido wrote in the affidavit that video gambling device manufacturers try to skirt that skill vs. chance test by adding what’s called a “nudge” feature. When a player matches two of three symbols, they’re offered a chance to “nudge” the third wheel up or down to create three of a kind.

“When two symbols match,” Trooper Guido wrote, “even a child would be able to identify the correct symbol to ‘nudge’ in order to create three in a row.”

While pushing either the “up” or “down” button creates a degree of interaction, the trooper wrote, “it does not transform a slot machine into a game of ‘skill.’”

According to the complaint, all of the gambling machines in question were either illegal slot machine games or similar games modified with the “nudge” feature. Both, investigators said, are illegal.

ii.

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<sup>6</sup> “Onetime Allegheny County video poker kingpin faces new charges” ‘The little bit I have left is all legal’ “ by Megan Guza published in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: <https://www.post-gazette.com/news/crime-courts/2025/05/15/pennsylvania-illegal-video-poker-gambling/stories/202505140077>.

2. “AG’s Office Says It Seized Hundreds of Illegal Gambling Machines Disguised as Skill Games”<sup>7</sup>

- a. In May 2025, the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office announced the **seizure of over 400 illegal gambling machines** from various establishments across western Pennsylvania. These machines were allegedly supplied by two companies owned by a Pittsburgh man, **John F. “Duffy” Conley**, with prior convictions for illegal gambling.
- b. The companies, **J.J. Amusements** and **Buffalo Skill Games**, are each charged with a felony count of being a corrupt organization. A search of their warehouse in Homestead uncovered \$175,000 in cash and an elaborate surveillance system monitoring gambling locations.
- c. The devices in question were described as **slot machines disguised as skill games**, requiring players to use judgment to win.
- d. Federal court records indicate that the owner, **John F. Conley**, was convicted of gambling and money laundering in 1995. Conley and his son, **John D. Conley**, are also named in court documents as leaders of an illegal gambling enterprise that paid nearly \$100,000 in kickbacks to a former state police corporal.

The owner, John F. Conley, is also named in a 2024 grand jury presentment [charging a former executive of skill game maker Pace-O-Matic](#) with taking kickbacks for ignoring complaints to the company about illegal gambling machines.

The attorney general’s office said its agents and state troopers seized more than 400 illegal gambling devices from dozens of western Pennsylvania establishments in a series of raids in March.

J.J. Amusements and Buffalo Skill Games are each charged with a felony count of being a corrupt organization, according to court documents. No lawyers for the companies are named in the court filings.

”These devices were essentially slot machines dressed up as skill games,” Attorney General Dave Sunday said in a statement. “I commend our partners at the Pennsylvania State Police for helping disband a large-scale operation that netted a tremendous amount of illegal gambling profits.”

i.

Conley and his son, John D. Conley, are also named in court documents as the leaders of an illegal gambling enterprise that paid nearly \$100,000 in kickbacks to Ricky Goodling, a

ii.

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<sup>7</sup> “AG’s office says it seized hundreds of illegal gambling machines disguised as Skill Games” by Peter Hall published in the Pennsylvania Capital-Star, <https://penncapital-star.com/briefs/ags-office-says-it-seized-hundreds-of-illegal-gambling-machines-disguised-as-skill-games/>.

### 3. **Tinicum Motel Raided for Gambling Machines”**<sup>8</sup>

- a. In June 2023, authorities raided the Tinicum Motel, uncovering illegal gambling machines operating on the premises. The raid is part of a broader effort by law enforcement to crack down on illegal gambling operations throughout Pennsylvania. While the article does not directly link the raid to Conley’s businesses, it illustrates the ongoing issue of illegal gambling machines in the state.

On Sept. 19, the machines were inspected by Detective Robert Lythgoe, and members of the state police, Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement, with \$2,168 removed.

On Thursday law enforcement charged John Conley, 60, and Buffalo Skill Game with multiple counts of having gambling devices and allowing gambling on the premises.

- i.

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<sup>8</sup> “Tinicum motel raided and machines seized” by Pete Bannan published in the Delaware County Daily Times: <https://www.delcotimes.com/2023/06/29/tinicum-motel-raided-for-gambling-machines/>.

4. **“Video Poker Kingpin Pleads Guilty in Sports-Betting Ring”**<sup>9</sup>

- a. In May 2009, a prominent figure in the video poker industry pleaded guilty to charges related to a sports-betting ring. The individual admitted to operating illegal gambling activities, which included the distribution of video poker machines that were used in unregulated gambling operations. This case highlights the ongoing issues with illegal gambling devices in Pennsylvania and the individuals behind their distribution.

A former South Side man who ran a multimillion-dollar sports-betting ring pleaded guilty Tuesday to federal gambling charges, his third conviction for such crimes.

John "Duffy" Conley, 45, took millions of dollars in wagers from Allegheny County to Las Vegas, prosecutors said.

i.

In 1995, a federal judge sentenced Conley to nine years in prison for running a \$15-million-a-year video poker business. Conley had about 4,000 video poker machines in businesses throughout Western Pennsylvania.

A federal grand jury in 1997 indicted Conley and a group of co-defendants with ties to the Pittsburgh Mafia for creating a bogus consortium to prevent gambling regulators from learning their identities and criminal records in order to run the Rincon River Oaks Casino near San Diego.

ii.

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<sup>9</sup> “Video poker kingpin pleads guilty in sports-betting ring” by Jason Cato published in the Trib Live: <https://archive.triblive.com/news/video-poker-kingpin-pleads-guilty-in-sports-betting-ring/>.

## Businesses

Despite prior convictions, both Conleys have continued to form new entities linked to skill games and gambling devices in Pennsylvania:

- **Buffalo Skill Games (2020)**

- Registered by John F. Conley, alleged supplier of hundreds of illegal video gambling machines seized across Western PA.

POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT			
Docket Number:	Date Filed:	OTNLiveScan Number	Complaint/Incident Number
		R 853173-6	ASAP-1036381/GEW230004
Defendant Name	First:	Middle:	Last:
	BUFFALO SKILL GAMES		INC.

Buffalo Skill Games, Inc. was formed as a domestic business corporation with a date of incorporation of October 20, 2020, with a registered office at 602 Baldwin Street, Bridgeville, PA 15017. For all times relevant to this affidavit of probable cause, John Fitzgerald Conley (hereinafter referred to as "Conley") was the owner and operator of Buffalo Skills.

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- **J.J. Amusement (1992)**

- An early entity tied to the Conleys' gambling operations. John F. Conley is listed as an owner in historical records.

POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT			
Docket Number:	Date Filed:	OTNLiveScan Number	Complaint/Incident Number
		R 853173-6	ASAP-1036381/GEW230004
Defendant Name	First:	Middle:	Last:
	BUFFALO SKILL GAMES		INC.

J.J. Amusement, Inc. was formed as a domestic business corporation with a date of incorporation of March 24, 1992, with the operations registered at 85 South 27th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203. For all times relevant to this affidavit of probable cause, Conley was the owner and operator of J.J. Amusement. Hereinafter in this affidavit, Buffalo Skills and J.J. Amusement will be referred to as "the companies".

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- **Pinnacle Vending**

- Owned by John D. Conley, the son of John F. "Duffy" Conley, and operates Aurora "skill game" machines. Documentation shows Aurora games with Pinnacle Vending branding, both in-store and in promotional materials. Aurora games are often tied to illegal gambling investigations.

Pinnacle Amusement Holdings Company (13885021)	
Request Certificate	
Initial Filing Date	06/24/2024
Status	Active
Formed In	PENNSYLVANIA
Filing Type	Domestic Limited Liability Company
Filing Subtype	Limited Liability Company
Principal Address	20 STANWIX STREET STE 1100 PITTSBURGH, PA 15222
Registered Office	20 STANWIX STREET 1100 PITTSBURGH, PA 15222 County: ALLEGHENY
Governors	Governor John D Conley

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<sup>10</sup> Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, Criminal Complaint No. ASAP-1036381/GEW23004 (Buffalo Skill Games). This document is part of public record but is not available online. Copies may be requested directly from the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General.

<sup>11</sup> Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, Criminal Complaint No. ASAP-1036381/GEW23004 (Buffalo Skill Games). This document is part of public record but is not available online. Copies may be requested directly from the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General.

<sup>12</sup> Business Search "Pinnacle Amusement" on the Pennsylvania Department of State: <https://file.dos.pa.gov/search/business>.



Court Cases


Recent and ongoing cases highlight how multiple entities, including Buffalo Skill Games and others in the skill game industry, have been tied to illegal or unregulated devices.

1. CP-23-CR-0001589-2024 (Delaware County)<sup>13</sup>

- Filed against **Buffalo Skill Games**.
- Specifically identifies **Aurora machines**.
- Connects directly to prior Attorney General seizures of unregulated devices.

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF DELAWARE COUNTY

DOCKET



Docket Number: CP-23-CR-0001589-2024

CRIMINAL DOCKET

Court Case

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

v.

Buffalo Skill Games, Inc.

ENTRIES

Sequence Number

CP Filed Date

Document Date

Filed By

Service To

Service By

Issue Date

Service Type

Status Date

Service Status

3

08/13/2024

08/12/2024

Kelly, Kevin F.

Order Granting Commonwealth's Motion to Amend Caption

Rhoads, Douglas Andrew

08/13/2024

Interoffice

1

09/23/2024

Kelly, Kevin F.

Guilty Plea - Negotiated

2

09/23/2024

Buffalo Skill Games, Inc.

Guilty Plea Statement Filed

3

09/23/2024

Buffalo Skill Games, Inc.

Statement of Post-Sentence Rights Filed

4

09/23/2024

Buffalo Skill Games, Inc.

Amended Information Filed

5

09/23/2024

09/23/2024

Kelly, Kevin F.

Forfeiture Order \$2,618.00 USC; 5 Gambling Devices (Aurora 1, Jenka Lab Aurora 5, Aurora III, Rhoads, Douglas Andrew

09/23/2024

Interoffice

Silversmith, Jed Michael

09/23/2024

First Class

6

09/23/2024

Kelly, Kevin F.

Order - Sentence/Penalty Imposed

1

09/30/2024

Court of Common Pleas - Delaware County

Entry of Civil Judgment

CPCMS 9082


Printed: 01/31/2025

Recent entries made in the court filing offices may not be immediately reflected on these docket sheets. Neither the courts of the Unified Judicial System of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania nor the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts assume any liability for inaccurate or delayed data, errors or omissions on these reports. Docket Sheet information should not be used in place of a criminal history background check which can only be provided by the Pennsylvania State Police. Moreover an employer who does not comply with the provisions of the Criminal History Record Information Act may be subject to civil liability as set forth in 18 Pa.C.S. Section 9183.

<sup>13</sup> Court of Common Pleas of Delaware County, Docket Number: CP-23-CR-0001589-2024: <https://ujportal.pacourts.us/Report/CpDocketSheet?docketNumber=CP-23-CR-0001589-2024&dnh=5y2Dijn2%2BnzejnmcTPPXWQ%3D%3D>.

## 2. ASAP-1036381/GEW23004 (Attorney General Complaint)<sup>14</sup>

- Criminal complaint against **Buffalo Skill Games**.
- The **Affidavit of Probable Cause** documents seizures of illegal video gaming devices (VGDs).

 <b>POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT</b>			
Docket Number:	Date Filed:	OTN/LiveScan Number	Complaint/Incident Number
		R 853173-6	ASAP-1036381/GEW230004
Defendant Name	First:	Middle:	Last:
	BUFFALO SKILL GAMES		INC.

I transferred to the Bureau of Criminal Investigations Western Organized Crime Unit in May of 2021. In my current position as an investigator, I am responsible for conducting undercover and covert investigations of corrupt organizations relating to racketeering activities as defined by Section 911 of Title 18, PA Consolidated Statutes within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. While assigned to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, I have participated in investigations pertaining to illegal criminal enterprises and organized crime including, organized prostitution, illegal gambling and bookmaking, loan sharking, and public corruption. I have applied for and received numerous search warrants. I have participated in investigations where confidential informants were successfully utilized for the furtherance of investigations. I have conducted and participated in consensual and non-consensual intercepts.

During my career, I have worked with other outside agencies, including, but not limited to, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Local County Task Forces. I have received outside training from agencies including but not limited to: The Pennsylvania State Police, Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Northeast Counterdrug Training Center, to include Illegal Gambling Device Identification, Financial Investigations, Interview and Interrogation, Leveraging Open-Source Resources, Intelligence Gathering, Narcotics Interdiction, Narcotics Investigations, Top Gun Undercover Narcotics Investigations, Identifying Deceptive Behavior, Drug Identification, Clandestine Laboratory Training, and was previously a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE), and other relevant extensive training over the years as an investigator. I have been admitted as an expert witness in regard to Drug Identification and Drug Distribution in Centre County and Juniata County Court of Common Pleas. I am also Class "A" Certified for wiretapping and electronic surveillance (#A4627) as required by Title 18, Chapter 57.

**FACTS IN SUPPORT OF THE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

Buffalo Skill Games, Inc. was formed as a domestic business corporation with a date of incorporation of October 20, 2020, with a registered office at 602 Baldwin Street, Bridgeville, PA 15017. For all times relevant to this affidavit of probable cause, John Fitzgerald Conley (hereinafter referred to as "Conley") was the owner and operator of Buffalo Skills.

J.J. Amusement, Inc. was formed as a domestic business corporation with a date of incorporation of March 24, 1992, with the operations registered at 85 South 27th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203. For all times relevant to this affidavit of probable cause, Conley was the owner and operator of J.J. Amusement. Hereinafter in this affidavit, Buffalo Skills and J.J. Amusement will be referred to as "the companies".

Both Buffalo Skills and J.J. Amusement dealt with, inter alia, the buying and selling of Video Gaming Devices (VGDs), parts and service of VGDs, and the transport of VGDs to operation locations. Both corporations also dealt in the furnishing of ticket redemption terminals to VGD operation locations, as well as the servicing and technical assistance associated with ticket redemption terminals (ticket redemption terminals are machines whereby one can insert a payment ticket that was generated from a VGD in exchange for the cash value associated with the payment ticket).

**EXPLANATION OF LEGALTY OF VIDEO GAMING DEVICES**

The determining factor as to whether a VGD is illegal is whether the outcome of the game is determined predominantly by the skill of the player, or, by chance. This has become known in Pennsylvania jurisprudence as the predominate factor test. In recent years, in an effort to overcome Pennsylvania's predominant factor test, VGD manufacturers and software developers have

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<sup>14</sup> Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, Criminal Complaint No. ASAP-1036381/GEW23004 (Buffalo Skill Games). This document is part of public record but is not available online. Copies may be requested directly from the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General.

**POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

Docket Number:	Date Filed:	OTN/LiveScan Number R 853173-6	Complaint/Incident Number ASAP-1036381/GEW230004
Defendant Name	First BUFFALO SKILL GAMES	Middle:	Last INC.

offered their buyers modified versions of VGDs that require additional player interaction vis-à-vis a traditional slot machine. The purpose of such modifications is to provide a basis for the manufacturers and operators to claim that their machines are based on the player's skill rather than chance.

One such modification is the inclusion of a "nudge" feature. Spinning of the reels on these machines can sometimes result in two matching symbols appearing in a row. When that happens, the player can move, or "nudge," a third symbol up or down so as to create a match of three in a row. Such a match results in a "winning" combination (or at least only a partial loss). When two symbols match, even a child would be able to identify the correct symbol to "nudge" in order to create three in a row. Just in case, however, these machines make it even more obvious: the correct symbol to "nudge" is highlighted in some manner, such as by flashing lights.

While the "nudge" feature does in fact require some degree of player interaction, it does not transform a slot machine into a game of "skill." If there are not at least two symbols already in a row, no successful "nudge" is possible, and therefore no amount of skill can change an otherwise losing spin into a win. Compared to other forms of gambling, such as blackjack or poker, which require a patron to make at least one real decision, no actual skill is required to make a "nudge," and on many spins no "nudge" is even possible. As a result, slot machines with a "nudge" feature are governed by chance, the very essence of gambling. Pennsylvania courts have consistently ruled that VGDs with a "nudge" feature, and nothing more, are gambling devices per se. All of the VGDs upon which this affidavit is based were either standard, unmodified slot machines, depicting spinning reels in electronic form, or slot machines modified with the "nudge" feature. Both versions constitute illegal gambling devices under Pennsylvania law.

A different type of modification, involving the addition of a memory test often referred to as a "Follow Me" feature, has been held by an intermediate Pennsylvania court to qualify as a "skill" game that can in effect legalize what would otherwise be illegal slot machines. This feature is essentially akin to playing the flashing light game Simon whereby the player is required to remember a pattern of increasing lengths. If the player successfully completes the feature, he or she is returned the value of their original wager plus a nominal amount.

The Office of Attorney General is challenging the ruling regarding the "Follow me" feature, and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court is currently reviewing it. The charges at issue here are not based on any machines that contain a "Follow Me"-type feature.

#### March 12, 2024 Seizures

On March 12, 2024, agents from the Office of Attorney General (OAG) and troopers from the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) executed search warrants at 47 locations that were known by investigators to house VGDs and proceeds from illegal gambling controlled by the companies. These were the companies that provided the VGDs to an array of convenience stores, bars, restaurants, gas stations, and stand-alone storefronts that operated as mini-casinos for the companies' VGDs. While most of the aforementioned locations were owned by persons or entities unaffiliated with the companies, some of the locations were owned by the companies themselves. In most cases, in addition to the VGDs, the establishments had ticket redemption terminals where tickets correlating with winnings from the VGDs could be redeemed for their cash value.

Prior to the execution of these search warrants, PSP Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement (BLCE) officers and OAG agents went to each one of these locations in an undercover capacity. The law enforcement officers played the VGDs to confirm whether or not they were equipped with any memory-test features that would arguably make them legal "skill" games rather than illegal gambling machines, as defined under current law. The undercover law enforcement officers also verified that the machines took cash or a

**3. CP-46-MD-0000110-2023 (Montgomery County, Court of Common Pleas)**<sup>15</sup>

- Filed in connection with an **organized crime task force investigation** into **Deibler Brothers Novelty Company**.
- A sample of **31 locations** was reviewed. The task force noted that both **Banilla and Jenka Lab Aurora devices included a “nudge” function**, a feature commonly cited by regulators as characteristic of illegal gambling devices.
- Although not directed at the Conleys, this case reinforces that **Aurora machines** — like those distributed by **Buffalo Skill Games and Pinnacle Vending** — continue to surface in legal proceedings across Pennsylvania.

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- Banilla Games Diamond Skill Fusion – nudge feature
- Banilla Games Diamond Skill Games Platinum 2 – nudge feature
- Banilla Games Fusion 4 – nudge feature
- Jenka Lab Aurora Link – nudge feature

5. King Joe's Tobacco and News, 480 Daleville Highway #6, Covington Township, Lackawanna County

- IGS Golden Master – nudge feature
- Banilla Games Fusion 4 – nudge feature
- Banilla Games Fusion – nudge feature
- Banilla Games Diamond Skill Platinum 2 -- \$15.00 payout on 08/31/23 - nudge feature
- Banilla Games Fusion 5 – nudge feature

6. Penn Jersey Mart, 705 Lehman Street, Lebanon, Lebanon County

- Jenka Lab Aurora Link - nudge feature
- Banilla Games Diamond Skill Platinum 2 – nudge feature
- Jenka Lab Aurora Link – nudge feature
- IGS Golden Master - nudge feature
- Banilla Games Diamond Skills Fusion – nudge feature
- Jenka Lab Favorite Skill 3 - nudge feature
- Banilla Games Fusion – nudge feature

7. J and N Mini Mart, 218 PA-93, Hazleton, Luzerne County

- Banilla Games Fusion – nudge feature - \$25.00 payout on 11/04/23
- Jenka Labs Aurora Link – nudge feature - \$35 payout on 11/04/23
- Banilla Games Fusion 2 – nudge feature - \$60 payout on 08/29/23, \$10 payout on 11/04/23

<sup>15</sup> Montgomery County Common Pleas CP-46-MD-0000110-2023. This document is part of the public record but is not available online. Copies may be requested directly from the Montgomery County Clerk of Courts.



## Conclusion

Illegal gambling devices continue to surface in Pennsylvania, often disguised as skill games. Multiple Conley-owned businesses, including **Buffalo Skill Games, J.J. Amusements, and Pinnacle Vending**, have been tied to these activities.

This document was prepared for educational and informational purposes only. All information contained herein is compiled from publicly available sources, including news reports, court filings, and government records. No confidential or proprietary information is included.

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## Court Cases

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- Court of Common Pleas of Delaware County, Docket Number: CP-23-CR-0001589-2024: <https://ujportal.pacourts.us/Report/CpDocketSheet?docketNumber=CP-23-CR-0001589-2024&dnh=5y2Dijn2%2BnzejnmcTPPXWQ%3D%3D>.
- Montgomery County Common Pleas CP-46-MD-0000110-2023. This document is part of the public record but is not available online. Copies may be requested directly from the Montgomery County Clerk of Courts.
- Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, Criminal Complaint No. ASAP-1036381/GEW23004 (Buffalo Skill Games). This document is part of public record but is not available online. Copies may be requested directly from the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General.

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- “Tinicum motel raided and machines seized” by Pete Bannan published in the Delaware County Daily Times: <https://www.delcotimes.com/2023/06/29/tinicum-motel-raided-for-gambling-machines/>.
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