

STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT DANE COUNTY

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Plaintiff,

vs.

CONNIE J VACHO
6512 Gina Ln
Deforest, WI 53532
DOB: 11/09/1982
Sex/Race: F/W
Eye Color: Brown
Hair Color: Brown
Height: 5 ft 6 in
Weight: 180 lbs
Alias:

Ref. Agency: Waunakee Police
Department
DA Case No.: 2022DA008011
Assigned DA/ADA:
Agency Case No.: WNPDP 22-232864

Court Case No.: 22 CF
ATN:

For Official Use

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Defendant,

The below-named complaining witness being first duly sworn states the following:

Count 1: MISDEMEANOR THEFT

The above-named defendant On or Between 10/17/2019 and 06/07/2022, in the Village of Waunakee, Dane County, Wisconsin, did intentionally transfer the movable property of Waunakee School District, without consent and with intent to permanently deprive the owner of possession of the property, contrary to sec. 943.20(1)(a) and (3)(a), 939.51(3)(a) Wis. Stats., a Class A Misdemeanor, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than nine (9) months, or both.

Count 2: MISDEMEANOR THEFT

The above-named defendant On or Between 01/01/2022 and 05/07/2022, in the Village of Waunakee, Dane County, Wisconsin, did intentionally take and carry away the movable property of Taher Inc, without consent and with intent to permanently deprive the owner of possession of the property, contrary to sec. 943.20(1)(a) and (3)(a), 939.51(3)(a) Wis. Stats., a Class A Misdemeanor, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than nine (9) months, or both.

Count 3: THEFT - FALSE REPRESENTATION (> \$5000 - \$10,000)

The above-named defendant On or Between 12/03/2020 and 06/07/2022, in the Village of Waunakee, Dane County, Wisconsin, did obtain title to property of Taher Inc, having a value of greater than \$5000 but not more than \$10,000, by intentionally deceiving the person with a false representation which she knew to be false, made with intent to defraud and which defrauded the person, contrary to sec. 943.20(1)(d) and (3)(bm), 939.50(3)(h) Wis. Stats., a Class H Felony, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than six (6) years, or both.

Count 4: FRAUDULENT WRITINGS

The above-named defendant On or Between 12/03/2020 and 06/07/2022, in the Village of Waunakee, Dane County, Wisconsin, being an employee of a corporation, with intent to defraud, did falsify any record belonging to that corporation, contrary to sec. 943.39(1), 939.50(3)(h) Wis. Stats., a Class H Felony, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than six (6) years, or both.

Count 5: MISDEMEANOR THEFT - BUSINESS SETTING

The above-named defendant On or Between 12/03/2020 and 06/07/2022, in the Village of Waunakee, Dane County, Wisconsin, by virtue of her employment, having possession of money of another, did retain possession of such money without the owner's consent, contrary to the defendant's authority, and with intent to convert said property to her own use, contrary to sec. 943.20(1)(b) and (3)(a), 939.51(3)(a) Wis. Stats., a Class A Misdemeanor, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than nine (9) months, or both.

FACTS:

Your complainant is a Court Officer with the Waunakee Police Department and for this complaint is relying on the written police report(s) submitted by Waunakee Detective Brian Pittsley.

Initial Information

Detective Pittsley reports on June 15, 2022, Chief Kreitzman took a phone call regarding a possible employee fraud and theft incident which occurred starting in approximately 2019. The victims in this case were both Taher food services as well as the Waunakee School District, Village of Waunakee, Dane County, Wisconsin.

On June 16, 2022, Detective Pittsley met with the Executive Director of Operations for the Waunakee School District (whose name forms the initials SS) and the Regional Vice-President Operations for Taher Food Services (whose name forms the initials JM).

During this time, Detective Pittsley was explained the relationship between Taher and the school district. Detective Pittsley was explained that the Waunakee School District pays a set price for food service from Taher. Taher then submits charges to the Waunakee School District when they occur and the school district issues payment to Taher. Due to this relationship most of the fraudulent activity in this incident has both the school district as well as Taher as a victim.

SS and JM said a coworker from Taher had reported approximately a week earlier that for approximately the past 6 months that there was a “petty cash” issue involving **CONNIE J. VACHO** (the defendant hereinafter, who was verbally identified), the local Waunakee Food Service Director from Taher. Detective Pittsley was advised the defendant has worked for Taher since April 21, 2008 first starting out as a Director for a smaller school district and coming to the Waunakee School District as Director for approximately the last 6 years.

JM and SS said after looking into the allegations they discovered a number of fraudulent transactions and schemes involving the defendant. On June 15, 2022, JM and SS interviewed the defendant about these allegations and subsequently terminated her employment. During this interview the defendant acknowledged "she did wrong" with transferring money from the assistance fund into her children's lunch fund.

Neither SS nor JM gave permission for their companies' to be defrauded by the defendant.

Fraud 1

The Waunakee School District has a program in place to provide lunch to students for a free or reduced cost due to financial hardships. In order to be eligible to participate in this program, students must provide documentation showing that they fall within the financial range required for the program. The student's parents then complete forms enrolling them in this program, and they are able to receive either free lunches or are provided lunches at a discount.

Each year the school district also receives donations from some civic organizations as well as members of the community to give students in the free or reduced cost lunch program a chance to buy a la carte lunch items as well. The Waunakee School District manages this fund. The way it works is if a student within the free and reduced lunch program wishes to buy an a la carte item, the Taher worker at the point of sale will use the donations to pay for the item. This is done by transferring money from the assistance fund and providing it to the student in need. This money and program are to only be used to pay for Waunakee School District children in the free and reduced lunch program.

During Detective Pittsley meeting with SS and JM on June 15, 2022, he was advised the defendant had repeatedly, illegally, transferred money from the free and reduced lunch fund and placed money from it into her own children's lunch accounts. Both SS and JM advised the defendant's children (whose names form the initials EV and NV) are not eligible for free and reduced lunch, nor would it be ethical for her to transfer funds into her children's account if they were.

Upon going through the documents provided by the school Detective Pittsley can see it appears the first incident of the defendant transferring money into either EV or NV's account took place on October 17, 2019. Between October 17, 2019 through June 7, 2022, Detective Pittsley observed 30 unauthorized transactions totaling \$1078.40 where the defendant illegally transferred funds into her children's accounts.

Detective Pittsley was also able to see there were numerous incidents of the defendant transferring money from the assistance fund into co-workers' children's accounts, Waunakee School teachers accounts, students who do not receive free and reduced lunch, and to pay for "guests" lunches.

Fraud 2

Your complainant is aware that Taher also provides catering for the Waunakee School District Fundraisers. The Waunakee School District employees order the food from Taher and the School District pays the Taher order invoice.

SS and JM provided Detective Pittsley a document indicating the defendant had used Taher for her personal catering needs. This document indicated that in January she ordered a fruit tray, veggie tray and cheese tray for \$90; on April 24, 2022 a taco bar, 40 brownie cookies, 30 dirt cups totaling \$482.50 and on May 7, 2022 she ordered 16 cupcakes lime green for \$20.96. These three personal catered item purchases totaled \$482.50. Per the information provided by the Waunakee School District and Taher these items were ordered but there were no invoices nor evidence of payment for any of these purchases. Without an invoice there would be no way for a payment to have occurred.

Fraud 3

SS and JM provided Detective Pittsley a document indicating the defendant had submitted personal unauthorized charges for reimbursement as well as intentionally mis-categorized purchases to make them appear legitimate. These purchases were made from December 3, 2020 through June 7, 2022.

As a Taher director, the defendant is supposed to make her food and dairy purchases through pre-approved company vendors. This is where the majority of the purchases were made. In limited circumstances directors were authorized to make purchases for the company from other suppliers if they were not able to get them from a vendor or if they only needed a small amount. Taher has an account with the Waunakee Piggly Wiggly and that was to be there to make purchases if the normal vendors weren't able to supply certain items.

Due to Covid there were some supply chain issues and the defendant was allowed a bit more leeway with where she made purchases. However, the defendant began making unauthorized purchases and not always reporting the purchases correctly. Between December 3, 2020, through June 7, 2020, the defendant submitted receipts and was reimbursed from the Waunakee School District and Taher for \$7267.37 in personal charges.

In many of these unauthorized purchases, the defendant would purchase some products for Taher as well as for herself in the same transaction on the same receipt. The defendant would sometimes submit the whole purchase for reimbursement while other times she would submit an amount less than the total receipt without indicating what purchases were personal and which were for Taher. When looking at the items actually purchased, the personal items would be a significantly higher cost than what was reported. The defendant was illegally using Taher and the Waunakee Community School district to pay/reimburse herself for her own personal purchases.

In some incidents, the defendant bought large dollar sum gift cards. In other cases, the defendant would pay for restaurant meals for herself and indicate they were meetings or were for food items when they were not. In at least one incident, the defendant and her coworkers "chipped in" for lunch. The defendant collected money from her staff for lunch, then submitted the bill to Taher for the lunch to be paid. The defendant then kept the cash which her coworkers had given her for their "share" of the lunch cost.

The defendant also bought personal items for her household and children including plants, Girl Scout cookies (which were shipped to Illinois), an Ipad case, storage drawers and other items. In some cases, she listed these purchases as employee appreciation but retained them for herself. She also bought a large amount of health and beauty items, personal groceries, cat items, and toys for her household.

Fraud 4

Taher provides money to food service directors to host an annual holiday party for staff. Taher mails out a check (\$15 per employee) to the director for the cost of the party. There is \$15 allocated to each employee who attends the party with none of the money being allowed to be used for alcoholic beverages. Further, any money not used because of an employee not attending must be returned and the director is required to submit receipts showing what was purchased.

On December 3, 2021, Taher mailed out check number 340085 to the defendant for \$900 to use for the Holiday Party. On March 1, 2022, the defendant endorsed and cashed this \$900 check. As the year went on some of the defendant's employees reminded her they still had the party funds and wanted to have a party.

The party was held on May 20, 2022, at Cuco's Mexican Restaurant located in the 200 block of N. Century Avenue in Waunakee. The cost of the party came to \$517.16 with the tip. The defendant initially tried to expense this party by first claiming the \$517.16 was from Woodman's for a la carte food. She then changed the paperwork and again tried expensing the party claiming the \$517.16 charge to Cuco's on May 20, 2022, was for a la carte food.

Taher requested the receipt for the \$900 check the defendant had cashed which was supposed to be for the party. At this time, the defendant submitted a fraudulently created receipt to Taher making it appear she used the funds for a Holiday Party when she actually kept them for herself. The false receipt was for \$949.50 on May 20, 2022, at 6:39p.m. at Cuco's restaurant in Waunakee.

On June 28, 2022, Detective Pittsley went to Cuco's and met with one of the owners, whose name forms the initials LD. At this time, Detective Pittsley showed LD a copy of the receipt the defendant submitted to Taher justifying the use of \$900 for a holiday party. This receipt was reportedly from May 20, 2022, at 6:39pm and was for \$900.

LD looked at the receipt and was immediately able to identify it as a fraudulently created receipt. LD pointed out the font and layout as being different than actual receipts. He also advised the area indicating the host name read Cecilia and they have never had an employee by that name. The phone number listed on this receipt ended in 6180. LD advised this phone number stopped being used prior to November 2021 due to a physical location move. The receipt also read food items and LD showed Detective Pittsley an actual receipt and this line would read custom item.

Taher was later able to determine that the \$517.16 charge to Cuco's on May 20, 2022, was not for a la carte food but was the actual Holiday Party.

In this incident, the defendant initially cashed the check and kept the \$900 for herself. After being reminded by employees they haven't had a party she did host a party at Cuco's on May 20, 2022, which came to \$517.16. Instead of using the funds she was provided to pay for this party she falsely claimed the charges were for a la carte food items so she could keep the \$900 for herself. When Taher staff confronted the defendant about cashing the \$900 check but not submitting a receipt for it, she forged a receipt and submitted with the intent to defraud her employer.

Fraud 5

On July 20, 2021, Taher hosted a conference at the Waunakee School District. For the conference the defendant ordered \$300 worth of Taher refreshments under invoice 6007. The defendant should have submitted this invoice to the Taher Office who would then issue a check to the Waunakee School District to pay for the refreshments. The defendant initially tried to use the petty cash to pay for the conference. She then went into the computer system and changed the invoice number of 6007 (the original invoice for the Taher conference refreshments) to now be a different order appearing to be from August 10, 2021, for \$110.00 to the Waunakee Intermediate School.

Spreadsheet

The attached spreadsheet was prepared using information and documents provided by the affected businesses, the Waunakee School District and Taher Food Services, herein referenced. This spreadsheet is hereby incorporated for reference.

****THIS COMPLAINT IS BASED ON** the information and belief of your complainant, who is a Court Officer for the Waunakee Police Department, and who learned of the above offense from the reports of Waunakee Police Detective Brian Pittsley, which report your complainant believes to be truthful and reliable inasmuch as they were prepared during the course of the officer(s) official duties.

Further, your complainant believes the information furnished by witness(es) to be truthful and reliable inasmuch as they are citizen informant(s) and witnessed the events described.

Your complainant believes the statements of the Defendant(s) to be truthful and reliable insofar as they are admissions against penal interest.

WNPD 22-232864

SUSPECT- Connie J. Vacho F/W DOB 11/9/1982

DATE RANGE OF UNAUTHORIZED MONEY TRANSFERS IN THE WAUNAKEE SCHOOL ASSISTANCE

10/17/19-6/7/22

VICTIM-WAUNAKEE SCHOOL DISTRICT

LIST OF UNAUTHORIZED USE OF WAUNAKEE SCHOOL LUNCH ASSISTANCE FUND

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>RECEIVER</u>	<u>PERSON TRANSFERRING FUNDS</u>
10/17/2019	15:11	\$50.00	EV	Connie Vacho
10/17/2019	15:11	\$50.00	NV	Connie Vacho
12/13/2019	14:52	\$50	NV	Connie Vacho
12/13/2019	14:52	\$50	EV	Connie Vacho
1/16/2020	16:17	\$50.00	EV	Connie Vacho
1/16/2020	16:17	\$50	NV	Connie Vacho
9/15/2020	19:30	\$40	NV	Connie Vacho
10/9/2020	14:42	\$63	NV	Connie Vacho
10/27/2020	11:41	\$60	NV	Connie Vacho
11/27/2020	12:33	\$100	NV	Connie Vacho
12/18/2020	13:52	\$3.20	NV	Connie Vacho
12/31/2020	19:32	\$30	NV	Connie Vacho
1/12/2021	10:56	\$50	NV	Connie Vacho
12/31/2020	19:32	\$30	NV	Connie Vacho
1/12/2021	10:56	\$50	NV	Connie Vacho
4/2/2021	12:49	\$150	NV	Connie Vacho
6/2/2021	12:13	\$5.50	NV	Connie Vacho
6/2/2021	12:13	\$5.50	EV	Connie Vacho
6/2/2021	12:14	\$5.50	NV	Connie Vacho
6/4/2021	13:48	\$28	NV	Connie Vacho
6/14/2021	21:42	\$35	NV	Connie Vacho
6/14/2021	21:42	\$35	EV	Connie Vacho
12/9/2021	11:04	\$30	NV	The WCSD Food Service

LIST OF UNAUTH. USE OF WAUNAKEE SCHOOL LUNCH ASSISTANCE FUND Cont.

12/9/2021	11:04	\$30	EV	The WCSO Food Service
1/21/2022	11:45	\$10	EV	The WCSO Food Service
6/3/2022	12:59	\$30	NV	Connie Vacho
6/6/2022	9:34	\$8.56	NV	Connie Vacho
6/6/2022	14:09	\$12.68	NV	Connie Vacho
6/7/2022	14:48	\$22.05	NV	Connie Vacho
6/7/2022	14:51	\$24.41	NV	Connie Vacho

Total- \$1078.40