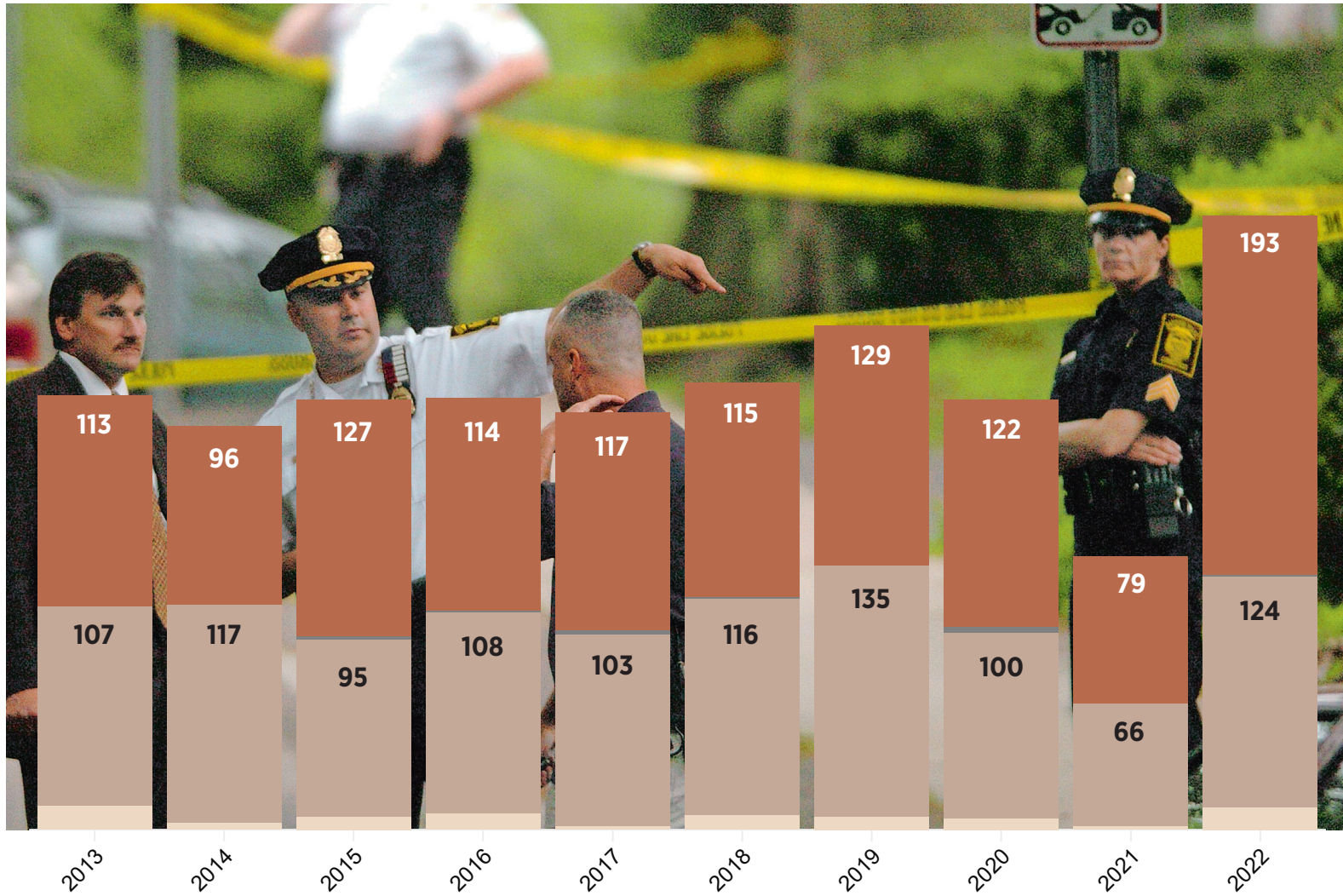


The offense: Criminal possession of a pistol or revolver

How the charges were resolved: ■ Dismissed ■ Guilty ■ Not Guilty ■ Nolle



GRAPHIC: SCOTT RITTER/THE DAY | PHOTO: AP | DATA: CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
In many cases, an individual is charged with multiple offenses and some charges will be dismissed, or nolle, as part of an agreement to plead guilty to other charges. Go to theday.com to see additional firearm-related statistics from the Office of Legislative Research.

Gains made in Gaza truce talks

Israel downplays chances of ending war with Hamas

By SAM MEDNICK and JACK JEFFERY
Associated Press

Tel Aviv, Israel — A Hamas delegation was in Cairo on Saturday as Egyptian state media reported “noticeable progress” in cease-fire talks for Gaza. But Israel hasn’t sent a delegation and a senior Israeli official downplayed prospects for a full end to the war while emphasizing the commitment to invading Rafah.

Pressure has mounted to reach a deal halting the nearly 7-month-long war. A top U.N. official says there is now a “full-blown famine” in northern Gaza, while the United States has repeatedly warned close ally Israel about its planned offensive into Rafah, the southernmost city on the border with Egypt, where more than 1 million Palestinians are sheltering.

Egyptian and U.S. mediators have reported signs of compromise in recent days, but chances for a cease-fire deal remain entangled with the key question of whether Israel will accept an end to the war without reaching its stated goal of destroying the militant group Hamas.

Egypt’s state-owned Al-Qahera News TV channel said that a consensus had been reached over many disputed points but did not elaborate. Hamas has called for a complete end to the war and withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Gaza.

A senior Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing negotiations, played down the prospects for a full end to the war. The official said Israel was committed

SEE FAMINE PAGE A6

RELATED STORIES ON A3, A6

Prosecuting gun offenders

Is Connecticut enforcing its strict laws? Prosecutors say stats don’t tell the whole story

By GREG SMITH
Day Staff Writer

When Franc Gjergjaj of East Lyme was arrested in connection with the Feb. 17, 2021, shooting death of 17-year-old Ronde Ford in New London, he faced four criminal charges: carrying a pistol without a permit, having a weapon in a motor vehicle, tampering with physical evidence and interfering with an officer.

Police allege Gjergjaj, then 22, shot and killed Ford in the middle of Grand Street.

Gjergjaj and his two co-defen-

dants never did face charges related to Ford’s killing. When Gjergjaj was sentenced on Aug. 23, 2023, he pleaded guilty to a single felony charge of illegal possession of a weapon in a motor vehicle and walked out of the courtroom without a prison sentence.

Of the hundreds of court cases that flow into the state courtrooms each year, the majority end with plea agreements between prosecutors and defense attorneys.

Gjergjaj’s case was no different.

Evidence showed he was likely the victim of a robbery by Ford and the two other men and that he shot Ford

in self-defense during a struggle. He deserved no prison time, his lawyer William Gerace successfully argued.

Critics would point to it as one more example of the state’s gun laws not being enforced. Gjergjaj did, after all, have a gun and did not have a permit for that gun but was not prosecuted for it. His case was plea-bargained down to a charge that did not require a mandatory prison sentence.

Statistics compiled annually by the Office of Legislative Research show that between 2011 and 2022 a high percentage of some of the most common gun-related offenses ended without a conviction. For example,

of the 601 cases in 2022 where an individual was facing the charge of criminal possession of a firearm, ammunition or electronic device, 61% were either dismissed or not prosecuted, known as a nolle.

During the same year, the courts entered nolles or dismissals on 66%, or 428 of the 648 cases, of the charge of carrying a pistol without a permit.

The numbers are sometimes cited as evidence that the state — which prides itself as having some of the strictest gun laws in the country — is not using those laws.

SEE PROSECUTORS PAGE A4

Radio Mitchell: A judgment-free space for budding student broadcasters

By JOHN PENNEY
Day Staff Writer

Inside a sound-dampening booth on Wednesday morning, a red “on air” light flicked on as Mitchell College sophomore Alex Nardone launched into a half-hour sports update program while his colleagues fiddled with analogue mixers and their modern digital equivalents in an adjacent room.

Welcome to Radio Mitchell, the student-run radio station, right above the Michael’s Dairy ice cream shop on Montauk Avenue in New

London, that every minute of the day broadcasts music, musings, live-event coverage and other programming to the nearby campus and beyond.

Nardone, a 21-year-old communications major and one of the organization’s two dozen student DJs, joined the radio station’s club in September and soon after had a regular, hourlong Tuesday night show — “Sports Knowledge” — of his own.

“I used to film my little brother’s football games and talk to coaches,” Nardone said. “It’s my passion.”

That kind of devotion to a niche subject is reflected in the offerings of his fellow broadcasters. For Jared Hague, 23, it’s sharing his opinions on politics, current events and governmental minutiae that brought him to the station last year.

“I like social studies and history and sharing my voice,” the 23-year-old junior said. “I want my voice to be heard.”

The station, which broadcasts its content globally through the Radio FX app and is piped into the campus

SEE RADIO PAGE A5



Radio Mitchell IT Director Colin Steinberg, a Mitchell College junior, checks to make sure a mixer is connected to a computer, while group Treasurer Paige Cornetta, a freshman, looks over the financial records while working at Mitchell Radio at Mitchell College in New London. DANA JENSEN/THE DAY

Burning betrayal



PETROS KARADJIAS/AP PHOTO
Men stand in front of a bonfire Saturday during Christian Orthodox Easter celebrations in Xylophagou village, southeast of the island of Cyprus. Effigies of Judas Iscariot are burned in the bonfires.

WEATHER

Today, cloudy, chance of showers. High 53. Monday, showers mainly in the morning. High 64. **B6**

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WORRIED ABOUT YOUR ELECTRIC BILL?

With Connecticut electricity rates expected to surge as much as 19% on July 1, The Day is asking readers to tell us how they are handling the high cost of power in the state. Are you on a fixed income? What does this do to your budget? What do you have to give up to afford your bill, or what is your strategy for keeping your power use to a minimum or saving on electricity in some other way, such as shopping for lower rates? Does the high cost of electricity make you rethink the possibility of solar or geothermal heat? What’s holding you back? If you have thoughts on your personal situation, send them to business editor Lee Howard at l.howard@theday.com.

I-95 OVERPASS SCORCHED DURING FUEL TRUCK INFERNO DEMOLISHED

Norwalk — A bridge damaged in a fiery crash that kept Interstate 95 in Connecticut closed Thursday and Friday has been demolished.

A live camera operated by the Connecticut Department of Transportation on Saturday showed excavators and bucket loaders scooping up rubble from the destroyed Fairfield Avenue overpass above I-95 in Norwalk and dumping it into large containers and dump trucks to be hauled away.

Crews started tearing down the bridge on Friday morning and work, including the repaving of damaged parts of the roadway, was expected to last through the weekend.

Workers are aiming to get all six lanes of traffic on the interstate reopened before rush hour Monday morning.

The bridge was scorched Thursday morning after a gasoline tanker collided into two other vehicles and burst into flames.

— Associated Press