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DA VANCE: IDENTITY THEFT RING INDICTED FOR MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR CREDIT CARD SKIMMING AND ATM CASH-OUT OPERATION



Credit and ATM card skimming device found inside a gas station pump

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., today announced the indictment of thirteen defendants for stealing victims' banking information with skimming devices at gas stations throughout the Southern United States, and using that information to steal, and then launder, more than \$2 million using ATMs and banks in Manhattan. The defendants are also charged with laundering the stolen money by making cash deposits and withdrawals of stolen proceeds under \$10,000 in more than 70 different bank accounts.

The four lead defendants – GAREGIN SPARTALYAN, 40, ARAM MARTIROSIAN, 34, HAYK DZHANDZHAPANYAN, 40, and DAVIT KUDUGULYAN, 42 – are charged within the 426-count indictment with Money Laundering in the Second Degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Second Degree, Grand Larceny in the Second and Third Degree, Criminal Possession of a Forgery Device, and Criminal Possession of Forged Instruments in the Second Degree. The additional defendants – AZAT ARAMYAN, 25, NORAYR ARAMYAN, 25, ARGINE ANANYAN, 34, ROSA UNUSYAN, 24, SONA MINASYAN, 51, ARMEN ABROYAN, 36, HASMIK MIRIBIAN, 64, ARTUR POGOSYAN, 31, and ROSE VARDUI PNDLYAN, 47, are each charged with two counts

of either Money Laundering in the Second Degree or Money Laundering in the Third Degree.¹

“By using skimming devices planted inside gas station pumps, these defendants are accused of fueling the fastest growing crime in the country,” said District Attorney Vance.

“Cybercriminals and identity thieves are not limited to any geographic region, working throughout the world behind computers. In this case, the defendants are charged with stealing personal identifying information from victims in southern states, used forged bank cards on the East Coast, and withdrew stolen proceeds on the West Coast. My Office’s Cybercrime and Identity Theft Bureau also operates across borders, and will continue to track and prosecute identity thieves here in Manhattan and around the world.”

According to documents filed in court, the top four defendants used credit card skimming devices to copy credit and ATM numbers, as well as PIN numbers, that individuals used at Raceway and Racetrac gas stations throughout Texas, Georgia, and South Carolina. The skimming devices were internally installed and, therefore, undetectable to victims who paid at the pumps. The devices were also Bluetooth enabled, so the defendants did not have to physically remove the skimming devices in order to obtain the stolen personal identifying information.

These top defendants then allegedly encoded that stolen information onto forged cards. From approximately March 2012 to March 2013, they used those forged cards to withdraw cash at ATMs in Manhattan, and then deposited that stolen money into bank accounts in New York that they had established. The other members of the scheme then promptly withdrew that money at banks in California or Nevada.

Each of the defendants’ transactions was under \$10,000. They were allegedly structured in a manner to avoid any cash transaction reporting requirements imposed by law and to disguise the nature, ownership, and control of the defendants’ criminal proceeds. From March 26, 2012, to March 28, 2013, the defendants are accused of laundering approximately \$2.1 million.

This investigation began after the top four defendants were arrested and charged in New York State Supreme Court on March 21, 2013. This indictment fully supersedes the previously filed indictment against those individuals.

Assistant District Attorney Daniel Brody is handling the prosecution of this case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Patricia O’Connor, Deputy Chief of the Cybercrime and Identity Theft Bureau; and Brenda Fischer, Chief of the Cybercrime and Identity Theft Bureau. Cybercrime Analyst Christine Einerson, Financial Investigator Michael Vecchio, Senior Rackets Investigators Max Adler, and Deputy Chief Investigator Michael Wigdor assisted in the case.

District Attorney Vance thanked Christopher Kalyviotis, Louis Devirgilio, John Munari and Michael Cusamano of the New York City Police Department for their assistance in the case. District Attorney Vance also thanked the Coweta County Sheriff’s Department,

¹The charges contained in the indictment are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

RaceTrac, Chase, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, and Capital One for their cooperation in the investigation.

Defendant Information:

GAREGIN SPARTALYAN, D.O.B. 3/06/1973
Las Vegas, NV

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts
- Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 1 count
- Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts
- Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, 2 counts
- Criminal Possession of Forgery Devices, a class D felony, 1 count
- Criminal Possession of Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D felony, 400 counts

ARAM MARTIROSIAN, D.O.B. 5/06/1978
Las Vegas, NV

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C Felony, 2 counts
- Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Second Degree, a class C Felony, 1 count
- Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C Felony, 2 counts
- Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D Felony, 2 counts
- Criminal Possession of Forgery Devices, a class D Felony, 1 count
- Criminal Possession of Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D Felony, 400 counts

HAYK DZHANDZHAPANYAN, D.O.B. 11/07/1972
Whittier, CA

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts
- Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 1 count
- Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts
- Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, 2 counts
- Criminal Possession of Forgery Devices, a class D felony, 1 count
- Criminal Possession of Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D felony, 400 counts

DAVIT KUDUGULYAN, D.O.B. 11/17/1970
Las Vegas, NV

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts
- Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 1 count
- Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts
- Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony, 2 counts
- Criminal Possession of Forgery Devices, a class D felony, 1 count
- Criminal Possession of Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D felony, 400 counts

ARGINE ANANYAN, D.O.B. 11/20/1979

Las Vegas, NV

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts

AZAT ARAMYAN, D.O.B. 2/1/1988

North Hollywood CA

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts

NORAYR ARAMYAN, D.O.B. 2/1/1988

North Hollywood, CA

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts

SONA MINASYAN, D.O.B. 2/20/1962

North Hollywood, CA

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts

ARMEN ABROYAN, D.O.B. 4/20/1977

Unknown

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts

HASMIK MIRIBIAN, D.O.B. 3/11/1949

Burbank, CA

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts

ARTUR POGOSYAN, D.O.B. 4/11/1982

Unknown

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Second Degree, a class C felony, 2 counts

ROSA UNUSYAN, D.O.B. 10/21/1989

Van Nuys, CA

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Third Degree, a class D felony, 2 counts

ROSE VARDUI PNDLYAN, D.O.B. 9/15/1966

Glendale, CA

Charges:

- Money Laundering in the Third Degree, a class D felony, 2 counts

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