



# NEWS RELEASE

## HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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### **Police charge three suspects in credit card theft scheme**

Howard County police have arrested and charged three California men in a credit card theft scheme after a hotel employee reported their suspicious activity.

Raymond Gharibia, 24, is charged with theft scheme, theft and possession of false government identification. Rudolf Mekhakian, 30, is charged with theft scheme and possession of a skimming device. Kamo Unanyan, 30, is charged with theft scheme, theft and possession of a skimming device.

In late February, police began an investigation after an employee reported suspicious activity at the Sleep Inn hotel in the 10100 block of North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Laurel. Three men were paying for multiple rooms in cash on a daily basis and leaving the hotel only during overnight hours. Upon checking out of one of the rooms, the men left behind evidence of credit card fraud.

Through investigation, an officer determined that one of the suspects, Raymond Gharibia, was the same man pictured in recent ATM surveillance photos in an ongoing fraud investigation.

When the suspects returned to the hotel, they were stopped by officers, who discovered more than \$50,000 in cash, \$20,000 in money orders, hundreds of plastic cards, a skimming device and other evidence indicative of credit card fraud. All three suspects were arrested without incident.

Mekhakian posted a \$5,000 bond; Gharibia and Unanyan each posted a \$2,500 bond. All were released from the Howard County Detention Center.

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