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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California**

**United States Attorney
Randy S. Grossman**

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For Immediate Release

**Skimmer Gets Prison for Million-Dollar
Financial Identity Theft Scheme**

Potential Victims Urged to Contact Justice Department

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – July 24, 2023

SAN DIEGO – A Los Angeles metropolitan resident was sentenced today to 41 months in prison for repeatedly installing specialized devices to steal the financial information of unwitting victims at gas pumps throughout Southern California.

Haykaz Mansuryan, age 34, admitted in his plea agreement that he broke into dozens of gas pumps to install “skimmers”—customized electronic devices to steal credit and debit card information from unknowing patrons using the pumps. Mansuryan admitted that the conspiracy he participated in purloined over \$1 million while he was involved.

“The public has the right to safely conduct everyday financial transactions,” said U.S. Attorney Randy S. Grossman. “Anyone who steals from unwitting victims will face justice.”

Mansuryan admitted that he and his accomplices broke into gas pumps throughout Southern California and installed customized skimming devices, built by other members of the scheme, to steal victims’ credit and debit card information during otherwise legitimate transactions. Mansuryan and his conspirators would then make unauthorized cards encoded with victims’ information for their own use, stealing victims’ funds, or otherwise sell victims’ financial information outright to others who would exploit it for their own gain.

According to court documents, law enforcement recovered 54 skimming devices from different Southern California gas stations visited by Mansuryan.

Mansuryan admitted in his plea agreement that he personally received \$931,213.92 from the scheme over the course of his participation, which lasted from August 2018 to October 2021. He was ordered to forfeit that amount, and to participate in paying restitution of \$923,374.14 to the victims of his crime together with his codefendants.

Other defendants in this and a related case previously received prison time for similar conduct. On January 6, 2023, Robert Fichidzhyan was sentenced to 41 months in custody for his role in building the skimmers used by Mansuryan and his associates. He was also ordered to pay \$619,923.45 in restitution. On June 23, 2022, Margar Simonyan was sentenced to 12 months and 1 day in custody in related case number 21-cr-2659-BAS, together with \$11,810 of forfeiture and restitution. One defendant remains a fugitive. Two defendants, Hayk Shakaryan and Vasilii Polyak, are presently set for jury trial September 12, 2023. The remaining defendants are pending sentencing.

“This case is a great reminder that even the most technical and sophisticated criminal groups can be dismantled by the collaborative efforts of law enforcement professionals. I am truly proud of the hard work our dedicated men and women have performed on this case, which continues to show we will continuously pursue those taking advantage of unknowing victims and protect the U.S. financial system,” said Jason Reynolds, Special Agent in Charge with the San Diego Field Office of the United States Secret Service.

This investigation involved significant contributions from many different sources, including the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation; the San Diego Police Department; the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department; the Glendale Police Department; the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Bureau of Weights and Measures; the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California; and other state, local, and federal law enforcement partners, as well as assistance from and partnerships with the financial and private sectors, such as the National Cyber-Forensics Training Alliance (NCTFA). Anyone who believes that they may be a victim of this offense can visit the U.S. Department of Justice’s large case website for more information: www.justice.gov/largecases.

DEFENDANTS

1. Haykaz Mansuryan	34
2. Hayk Shakaryan	34
3. Davit Babayan	36
4. Artour Hakobyan	39
5. Petros Armutyan	36
6. Hakop Karayan	44
7. Robert Fichidzhyan California	40

Case Number 21-CR-2660-BAS

Residence: Granada Hills, California
Residence: Glendale, California
Residence: Granada Hills, California
Residence: Glendale, California
Fugitive
Residence: Glendale, California
Residence: North Hollywood,

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Conspiracy to Use Unauthorized Access Devices and Possess Device-Making Equipment, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1029(b)(2), 1029(a)(2), and 1029(a)(4)
Maximum Penalty: five to ten years in prison, depending upon prior convictions; fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss

Aggravated Identity Theft, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1028A
(Defendants 1, 2, and 4 through 6 only)
Maximum Penalty: mandatory minimum two years in prison, consecutive to any other sentence

AGENCIES

U.S. Secret Service