



# NEWS RELEASE

## HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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### **Police investigating large-scale identity theft scheme** *Suspects discovered in Elkridge hotel, pursuit followed*

Howard County police are working to identify approximately 100 victims whose financial and personal information was found at a hotel in Elkridge. Four suspects from Florida face charges for a theft scheme that stretches across at least four states – and one of the suspects also faces assault charges stemming from a pursuit in which she fled from authorities. As they continue a detailed investigation and determine the scope of the scheme, police anticipate filing further charges.

On Aug. 10, police were called to a Best Western in the 6700 block of Dorsey Road in Elkridge after a housekeeper found suspicious documents in a hotel room trash can. Police questioned occupants of the room and attempted to stop an Infiniti driven by a suspect as the vehicle approached the hotel. The driver of the Infiniti fled, leading to a pursuit where the driver collided with three Howard County police cars and attempted to strike a Howard County officer with the vehicle.

A search of the hotel room and vehicle produced hundreds of personal and financial documents from various states and victims, including driver's licenses, credit cards, checks, social security cards and bank statements. Police also found \$12,000 in cash and numerous wigs in the vehicle.

The driver of the Infiniti, Bridgette Marie Arendas, 24, of Lauderhill, Fla., was charged with first- and second-degree assault of a police officer, reckless driving, five charges of credit card theft and one charge of general theft, with additional charges anticipated. Arendas is being held on \$175,000 bond at Howard County Detention Center. There is also a warrant for her arrest from Broward County, Fla., for robbery that will serve as a detainer.

Two passengers in the vehicle, Lamisha K. Loffett, 33, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Jamie K. Frazier, 32, of Plantation, Fla., face five charges of credit card theft and one charge of general theft. Loffett posted \$3,500 bond and was released Aug. 11. Frazier posted \$5,000 bond and was released Aug. 12.

Wayne B. Curry, 35, of Lauderhill, Fla., who was arrested at the hotel, also faces five charges of credit card theft and one charge of general theft. Curry is being held on \$75,000 bond at Howard County Detention Center.

Police anticipate filing additional charges in at least six thefts from vehicles in Columbia, Elkridge and Ellicott City since July. Preliminarily, police have identified 18 victims in Maryland, seven in Florida, four in Virginia and one in Georgia. Police are working with neighboring jurisdictions and federal investigators to identify victims and file further charges.

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