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Defendant Pled Guilty to Stealing 38,000 Credit Cards in Harris County Area

*The defendant used a credit card skimming device to
obtain information from gas pumps*

District Attorney Devon Anderson announced today Arkadi Minassian, 44, of Granada Hills, California entered a guilty plea for stealing victims' credit card information with a credit card skimming device at gas stations in the Harris County area.

"Identity thieves are always thinking of new ways to quickly grab your banking and credit card information," said DA Devon Anderson. "Fortunately in this particular case, the defendant was caught before he stole money or compromised any victims' identities. Our Office will continue to work proactively with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to catch and aggressively prosecute these identity thieves."

According to court documents, Minassian is part of a criminal ring that distributed highly sophisticated credit card skimming devices in various cities. The skimming devices are designed to obtain credit card account numbers that can be used later to commit identity theft crimes.

On March 29th 2011, Minassian stole thousands of credit card numbers that were located in the credit card skimming devices attached to gas pumps at two Valero gas stations in Harris County. Minassian obtained the numbers without removing the devices and uploaded the information to his laptop wirelessly.

On Monday May 5th, Minassian plead guilty to fraudulent use of identifying information, a 1st degree felony. His sentencing date is scheduled for August 14th. Ed McClees, Chief Assistant District Attorney of the Organized Crime Section is prosecuting the case.

The Houston Police Department and agents assigned to the Houston Area Fraud Task Force and the United States Secret Service investigated and apprehended Minassian.