

## 2 charged in bi-state fraud at banks including one in Acushnet

**By The Standard-Times**

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PROVIDENCE — Two men are charged with bank and credit card fraud involving several banks in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, including one in Acushnet, the Rhode Island U.S. Attorney's Office said.

Rafael Pedro Dutra DaSilva, 29, of Miami, FL, and Guilherme Mendes Altafin, 28, of Sao Paulo, Brazil, collectively accessed bank accounts at nearly a dozen bank branch offices with the use of gift and credit cards activated with stolen personal identifying information, fraudulently obtaining nearly \$150,000, a U.S. Attorney's news release said.

In October 2019, law enforcement in the two states began receiving reports of a wave of fraudulent activity at bank ATMs, court documents said.

In November 2019, bank managers at an Acushnet bank branch office notified police of a series of suspicious ATM transactions. Bank surveillance video showed the same man involved in many of the suspicious transactions. Acushnet Police established a live-streaming surveillance camera at the ATM, and on Nov. 24, 2019, watched as the same man, later identified as DaSilva, allegedly attempted numerous transactions, completing several of them and placing cash retrieved from the ATM inside a satchel he was carrying.

He was arrested outside of the bank, according to the news release.

Altafin was arrested on Dec. 10, 2019, shortly after an Acushnet police officer, familiar with the DaSilva investigation, watched as Altafin attempted several transactions, completing at least one of them, at the same ATM where DaSilva was arrested. A bank representative confirmed suspicious transactions, including two withdrawals of \$500 each and six declined transactions, the release said.

Altafin's arrest came two weeks after he was seen by an Acushnet police sergeant entering a New Bedford courthouse carrying a bag with what appeared to contain a significant amount of cash on the same day a judge set \$25,000 cash bail for DaSilva, authorities said.

On Thursday, Altafin was ordered detained in federal custody by U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge Lincoln D. Almond. DaSilva remains in custody in Massachusetts. His appearance in U.S. District Court in Providence has not yet been scheduled, the news release reported.