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# Dolce restaurant owner scuffles with would-be robber

## Incident leads to arrest of Oscar Isaac Lopez in connection with four Hagerstown robberies



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Dolce restaurant owner Luliana Manea pauses from the lunch rush Thursday, a day after a man tried to rob her Frederick Street business. (By Kevin G. Gilbert, Staff Photographer / February 14, 2013)

By DON AINES and CALEB CALHOUN  
dona@herald-mail.com

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An owner of a Frederick Street restaurant scuffled with a would-be robber Wednesday night, causing him to spill the cash and flee empty-handed, according to charging documents filed in Washington County District Court.

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The Wednesday night robbery at Dolce restaurant led to the arrest of a man in connection with that and other robberies, including two of three recent robberies at the AC&T gas station a block away from the restaurant, according to the Hagerstown Police Department.

Oscar Isaac **Lopez**, 18, of 607 Hayes Ave., Hagerstown, has been charged with three counts each of robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery and theft, and a single count of second-degree assault, court records said. His bond on the three cases totaled \$135,000, court records said.

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The Hayes Avenue address is part of Frederick Manor townhouse apartment complex off Frederick Street, north of the gas station and restaurant.

The arrest came after Hagerstown officers were dispatched at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday to 792 Frederick St. for a robbery in progress at Dolce restaurant, according to police.

When officers arrived, they learned that a male wielding a stick and wearing a dark, hooded sweatshirt and a mask tried to steal a jar containing approximately \$30 in tips, the charging document said.

The man came in the back door, got the tip jar, and tried to leave, Hagerstown Police Sgt. John Lehman said.

Lehman said the female owner of the restaurant grabbed the robber to keep him from leaving and he hit her on the arm. The woman had a bump on the hand, he said.

Dolce restaurant owner Iuliana Manea said that she wanted to stop the man from stealing tips earned by restaurant employees.

"I was just mad. I wanted to follow him," Manea said. "I wanted to keep him here."

Manea said she was cooking when the man came through the back door, walked to the order counter, picked up the tip jar, and started to leave. A scuffle ensued as she attempted to block his way out, she said. The man dropped the tip jar and the money fell out, according to Manea and police.

Manea said the anger she felt kept her from being scared.

At the time of the Dolce robbery, there were three employees, but no customers in the restaurant, Lehman said.

Retired **Maryland State Police** Trooper Doug Lowery and his bloodhound were called in and the dog led police to the area of 607 Hayes Ave., Lehman said.

The track followed by the bloodhound and information from a prior investigation about a robbery at Side Pockets bar led police to apprehend Lopez at his home about an hour after the Dolce robbery, Lehman said.

As the result of an investigation by the Criminal Investigations Division, Lopez was charged with the Dolce robbery, police said.

Police said Lopez also was charged with robberies at the AC&T at 724 Frederick Street on Jan. 9 and Jan. 18, and with being the second person involved in a Jan. 29 robbery at Side Pockets bar at 807 S. Potomac St.

However, district court records as of Thursday afternoon included charges only for the Jan. 9, 29 and Feb. 13 robberies.

One man was previously charged in the Side Pockets robbery, which police said at the time involved two men.

Parsram Kevin Sukhram, 18, no fixed address, was arrested on Feb. 1 and charged with robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery and theft in connection with the robbery at the bar, police said at the time.

Staff writer Julie E. Greene contributed to this story.

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