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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MISDEMEANOR CHARGES IN HOOKAH LOUNGE MELEE

Misdemeanor charges of battery on a peace officer were filed today against three men in connection with a July 8th, 2017 disturbance at the Hookah Lounge in downtown Merced, District Attorney Larry D. Morse II announced today.

Isa Bey, 23, of Oakland, Nedir Bey, 21, also of Oakland and Ciasonne Ratto-Foster, 21, of Richmond were charged following an 11 month review of a melee that took place inside Chandelier's Hookah Lounge at 435 Main St. where a party had been advertised on social media (see attachment).

Merced Police had received information that a person sought in connection with an armed robbery had been reported to be in attendance at the party. When police officers arrived and began to search the premises for the suspect, some of those attending the event began to crowd the police officers and a confrontation ensued in which the officer was assaulted by the three men.

The incident was captured on body cameras worn by police officers at the scene, Morse said. A filing decision in the case was delayed, however, as efforts were made to slow and enhance the footage by two outside video companies.

Morse also noted that body camera footage showed 10 people attending the party who appeared to be recording events on their cell phones. Despite repeated public requests by the District Attorney's office and the Merced Police Department, no one has come forward with any additional footage of the events of the evening.

"Under no circumstances should any uniformed law enforcement personnel be assaulted while engaged in the lawful performance of their duties, as these officers were. The defendants have been charged for their actions in this matter and will be held accountable," Morse said.



The above photo is the flyer that was distributed to advertise the event at the Hookah Lounge on July 8, 2017.