



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

For Release

FTC Takes Action Against Elite Events for Bypassing Ticket Purchase Limits in Violation of Better Online Ticket Sales Act

Proposed order settling FTC allegations will require company and its executives to pay \$300,000 and ban them from using unlawful tactics to bypass ticket purchase limits

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Ticket broker Elite Events and its operators will pay \$300,000 in civil penalties to resolve Federal Trade Commission allegations that the firm purchased millions of dollars' worth of tickets to high-demand events by illegally circumventing measures designed to limit the number of tickets that can be purchased to a single event.

In a [complaint](#), the FTC alleged that Elite Events and Tickets LLC, which also does business as Smart Scalpers or smartscalpers.com, and its owners, Kevin W. McKerley and Aaron L. Fera, violated the Better Online Ticket Sales Act. That law makes it illegal for any person to "circumvent a security measure, access control system, or other technological control or measure on an Internet website or online service that is used by the ticket issuer to enforce posted event ticket limits or to maintain the integrity of posted online ticket purchasing order rules." The complaint alleged Elite Events used a variety of unlawful tactics to bypass ticket purchasing limits for more than 2,400 different events and resold those tickets on the secondary marketplace at a significant profit.

"Consumers should be able to purchase tickets to events without having to contend with bad actors who drive up prices and make it harder for fans to see their favorite artists and athletes," said Christopher Mufarrige, Director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection. "Elite Events operators

utilized a range of unlawful tactics to deprive consumers of the opportunity to purchase tickets for events at prices set by the ticket issuers."

For example, Elite Events used 75 accounts to purchase 277 tickets to a Metallica concert at Virginia Tech University between September 2024-March 2025 even though the ticket seller limited purchasers from buying more than six tickets. After Elite Events spent between \$50 to \$270 per ticket, they resold the tickets in the secondary marketplace for \$100 to \$400 per ticket, according to the complaint.

Ticket issuers such as Ticketmaster and AXS have put in place measures to block resellers from violating ticket purchasing limits to popular events. These security measures include ticket quantity selectors capped at the ticket purchasing limit and monitoring whether purchases are associated with verifiable accounts and unique credit cards, email addresses, phone numbers and IP addresses, according to the complaint.

The complaint alleged that Elite Events employed hundreds of agents, many of whom are based abroad, to purchase tickets utilizing unlawful tactics, such as using:

- Hundreds of ticket purchasing accounts created with fictitious names, addresses and phone numbers, or with names, addresses and phone numbers belonging to the company's employees;
- Numerous virtual credit card accounts to generate thousands of unique credit card numbers;
- IP Proxy services that helped conceal the IP address used to make ticket purchases and made it appear as if the purchases were coming from different consumers in different locations; and
- Multi-session browsers, which allow individuals to open multiple independent browsing sessions within one internet application.

The FTC alleged that Fera and McKerley were directly involved in the unlawful conduct. In fact, they even appeared in an April 2025 CBS Mornings documentary and boasted about their ticket reselling operation and use of circumvention software.

The [proposed order](#) settling the FTC's allegations imposes more than \$10.7 million in civil penalties against Elite Events, Fera and McKerley, which will be partially suspended after payment of \$300,000 due to their inability to pay the full amount. The full amount will be due immediately if they are found to have lied about their finances. In addition, Elite Events, Fera and McKerley also are permanently prohibited from engaging in the unlawful activities outlined in the complaint including:

- Circumventing security measures, access control systems, or other technological controls or measures to exceed posted ticket purchasing limits or to circumvent ticket purchasing order rules;
- Using multiple ticket purchasing accounts, multiple IP addresses or multisession browsers to circumvent ticket purchasing limits; and
- Purchasing or paying for a ticket on an Internet website or online service from a credit card account, debit card account, bank account, prepaid card account or a digital wallet or online payment system in the name of anyone other than Fera or McKerley.

The Commission vote authorizing staff to file the complaint and stipulated final order was 2-0. The FTC filed the complaint and final order in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia, Augusta Division.

NOTE: The Commission files a complaint when it has "reason to believe" that the named defendants are violating or are about to violate the law and it appears to the Commission that a proceeding is in the public interest. Stipulated final orders have the force of law when approved and signed by the District Court judge.

The FTC staff attorneys on this matter are Ryan McAuliffe and Sung W. Kim in the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

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