

## 3 California men plead guilty in ticket scam case

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(AP) -- Three California men who made more than \$25 million reselling illegally purchased tickets to concerts and sporting events have pleaded guilty in federal court in New Jersey.

Kenneth Lowson, 41, and Kristofer Kirsch, 37, both of Los Angeles, and Joel Stevenson, 37, of Alameda, entered their pleas Thursday in U.S. District Court in Newark. Faisal Nahdi, a fourth man charged in the scheme, remains a fugitive and is believed to be overseas.

The four ran a company called Wiseguy Tickets. Prosecutors say they developed a program to bypass security measures of online ticket distributors to buy premium tickets in bulk and resell them.

Lowson and Kirsch pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud. All three pleaded guilty to unauthorized access to computers engaged in interstate commerce.

Lowson and Kirsch face maximum prison terms of five years, Stevenson a maximum term of one year. In his plea, Lowson agreed to surrender all proceeds from the [crime](#). Sentencing is set for March 15.

Prosecutors said the men worked with computer programmers in Bulgaria to establish a nationwide network of computers that impersonated individual visitors to websites and bypassed safeguards meant to limit the number of tickets available to individual buyers.

It also gave them the capability to flood sites such as Ticketmaster, LiveNation and MLB.com at the exact moment event tickets went on sale.

The group focused on premium tickets to high-demand events such as concerts by Bruce Springsteen, Bon Jovi, Dave Matthews and Hannah Montana and sporting events such as the MLB playoffs, the 2009 Sugar Bowl and the 2007 BCS college football championship game, federal authorities said. Prosecutors said they purchased about 1.5 million tickets, reselling them at a profit of more than \$25 million.

The case was prosecuted in New Jersey because many of the events were held at Giants Stadium, Izod Center and Prudential Center. Others were spread across the country at venues in New York City, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Tampa, Fla.

The men were indicted in March.

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