



San Diego City Attorney Jan I. Goldsmith

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 27, 2010

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HOLY BOGUS TICKETS, BATMAN! *San Diego City Attorney thwarts Comic-Con Scammers*

San Diego, CA: San Diego Comic-Con tickets are a hot commodity. That's why it seemed too good to be true when, just days before the convention started, a posting on the Internet website Craigslist.org offered tickets for sale to the sold out convention. It turned out those "tickets" were too good to be true.

Today in San Diego Superior Court defendant Farhad Lame from Los Angeles pleaded guilty to theft in connection with the sale of those bogus tickets. His co-defendant, Navid Vatankhahan, also from Los Angeles, pleaded guilty to the same theft charge last week in the same courtroom. Both defendants were sentenced to three years probation and ordered to pay a fine of \$750 each, complete 10 day of public work service (roadside trash pick-up), and pay restitution to the victims. Additionally, Vatankhahan was banned from re-selling tickets during the term of probation.

The defendants were arrested in July 2010, on the last day of the Comic-Con after two women were refused entry by Comic-Con security with tickets purchased from the defendants. The victims each paid \$120 for what defendants told them were two-day tickets to Comic-Con. The tickets were actually photocopies of an exhibitor's ticket which was not transferable. In fact, no Comic-Con tickets are transferable, nor can they be resold.

The case was prosecuted by the San Diego City Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit. City Attorney Jan Goldsmith cautions consumers to be diligent in making purchases over the internet. "The old adage 'if it seems too good to be true it usually is' applies more than ever to the Internet," said Goldsmith. "This is particularly true when you don't know the identity of the seller, as is often the case with websites such as Craigslist.org," added Goldsmith.

Consumers who believe they are victims of consumer fraud or false advertising are urged to call the City Attorney's Consumer Help Line at (619) 533-5600. Our Consumer Protection Unit is also available to the media to provide tips for shoppers to avoid buying fake tickets and other scams.

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