1 GEGGÁØÓÓÁGGÁEJ KEEÁQET SOÞ ŐÁÔU WÞVŸ 2 ÙWÚÒÜQJÜÁÔUWÜVÁÔŠÒÜS ÒËZ(ŠÒÖ 3 ÔŒÙÒÁNÁGGËGËEGÍÌÌËHÁÙÒŒ 4 5 6 7 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON KING COUNTY 8 AMAZON.COM, INC., a Delaware corporation; and AMAZON.COM SERVICES LLC, a 10 Delaware limited liability company, No. 11 Plaintiffs, COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF 12 v. 13 REBATEST INC., a Washington corporation; 14 SONG YAN, an individual; and JOHN DOES 1-5 d/b/a/ "rebatest.com", 15 Defendants. 16 17 18 **INTRODUCTION** 19 Plaintiffs, Amazon.com, Inc. and Amazon.com Services LLC (collectively, "Amazon"), 20 bring this action against defendants Rebatest Inc., Song Yan, and John Does 1–5 (collectively, 21 "Defendants"), who are responsible for the website Rebatest.com ("Rebatest"), for injunctive 22 relief and damages as follows: 23 I. **SUMMARY** 24 1. Every day, millions of consumers who shop in Amazon's stores use customer 25 product reviews to assist with purchasing decisions. Customer trust and fair competition in 26 Amazon's store depend, in part, on the authenticity of those reviews. The bad actors who pay for 27

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product reviews erode that customer trust, compete unfairly with the millions of honest entrepreneurs who sell in Amazon's store, and tarnish Amazon's brand.

- 2. Amazon devotes extensive efforts to combatting product reviews that are false, inauthentic, or incentivized ("fake reviews"). Incentivized reviews that are not identified as such are inherently false and misleading because they are motivated by compensation, withhold that key information from consumers, and therefore are likely to mislead consumers into believing the reviews are from unbiased and independent customers. In 2020, Amazon intercepted more than 200 million suspected fake reviews, leveraging machine learning models and teams of customer-obsessed employees dedicated to keeping Amazon's stores free of fake reviews. Amazon's proactive detection drives more than 99% of fake reviews enforcement in Amazon's stores.
- 3. Despite Amazon's efforts, fake reviews persist because schemes like "free product in exchange for five-star review" are organized and orchestrated largely on third-party websites such as Rebatest.com, or in dedicated groups on social media sites, as opposed to within Amazon's stores where the fake reviews are ultimately posted.
- 4. Amazon is bringing this action against the operators of the website Rebatest.com, which provides product rebates in exchange for fake reviews, in order to shut down the site and seek disgorgement of Defendants' ill-gotten gains from selling fake reviews.
- 5. Defendants in this action own and operate the Rebatest business and Rebatest.com website which are dedicated to the purchase and sale of fake reviews.
- 6. Rebatest's website claims that the company is "a new product testing platform that connects people with 100% cashback in exchange for providing their honest opinions and testimonials." In reality, the company operates a deceptive and unfair service by which a user can pay to obtain fake reviews.
- 7. To obtain reviews through Rebatest, an Amazon seller must agree to refund purchases made by reviewers, in violation the Amazon Services Business Solutions Agreement and related policies. For a fee, Defendants enable Amazon sellers to evaluate applicants who are

willing to review their products, to determine the reviewer's willingness to provide positive reviews, and to preview and approve reviews before they are posted. In practice, these transactions typically result in a five-star review of the product with glowing testimony, affecting both the product's collection of reviews as well as its aggregated star rating.

- 8. Rebatest's home page states: "Since Rebatest was established on October 1, 2018, we have helped more than 235000 participants save over 11 million dollars Each day, there are almost 2000+ trial products[.]"
- 9. Upon information and belief, Defendants are fully aware of the fact that Rebatest provides services that are unfair to legitimate Amazon selling partners, to consumers, and to Amazon itself. Rebatest's entire business model is based on allowing sellers to obtain fake reviews and inflated ratings in deliberate violation of Amazon's agreements with sellers using its stores. The way that Rebatest has structured its services demonstrates this knowledge. For example, Rebatest allows sellers to approve a customer's review before providing a refund for the product purchase price. This practice knowingly violates and induces violation of Amazon's Community Guidelines and selling policies, which prohibit, among other things, providing free or discounted products in exchange for reviews.
- 10. Defendants are actively deceiving Amazon's customers and tarnishing Amazon's brand for their own profit as well as the profit of bad actors selling in Amazon's store. Amazon is bringing this action to protect its customers and selling partners from this misconduct by stopping Defendants and uprooting the fake review schemes in which they participate.
- 11. In this action, Amazon brings claims for violations of the Washington Consumer Protection Act (RCW Ch. 19.86) and Washington common law.

II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

12. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendants who have conducted business activities in and directed to Washington and are primary participants in tortious acts in and directed to Washington. Defendants affirmatively undertook to manipulate reviews, ratings, and rankings of products sold in stores operated by Amazon, a corporation with its principal

place of business in Washington. Defendants' acts deceived consumers who purchased products in Amazon's stores and harmed Amazon. Defendants knowingly committed or facilitated the commission of tortious acts in Washington and have wrongfully caused Amazon substantial injury in Washington.

13. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to RCW §§ 4.12.010–.025 in that a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims pled herein occurred in King County, Amazon seeks damages for personal injury or damage to personal property in King County, and Amazon's causes of action arose in King County.

III. THE PARTIES

- 14. Amazon is a Delaware company with its principal place of business in Seattle, Washington. Amazon owns and operates the Amazon.com store and website and equivalent international stores and websites. Amazon has over three hundred million active customers.
 - 15. Defendant Rebatest Inc. is a Washington corporation.
- 16. Defendant Song Yan is the incorporator of Rebatest Inc. and may be connected to the following address: 10611 Harwin Drive, Suite 406, Houston, Texas 77036.
- 17. Defendants are the registrants of the domain name Rebatest.com, and the owners and operators of the online business at that website.
 - 18. Upon information and belief, the same Defendants operate pingiae.com.
- 19. Upon information and belief, pingjiae.com is the seller-facing website, operating in China.
- 20. Upon information and belief, Mr. Yan owns three entities: Rebatest Inc. in the United States; Su Teng Technology (HK) Limited in Hong Kong; and Shenzhen Fukeside Information Consulting Co., Ltd., in China.
- 21. Amazon is unaware of the true names and capacities of Defendants sued herein as John Does 1–5 and therefore sues these Defendants by such fictitious names. Amazon will amend this complaint to allege their true names and capacities when ascertained. Amazon is informed and believes and therefore alleges that each of the fictitiously named Defendants, along with the named

¹ "Amazon Community Guidelines,"

https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=GLHXEX85MENUE4XF (accessed July 21, 2021).

Defendants (collectively "Defendants"), is responsible in some manner for the occurrences herein alleged and that Amazon's injuries as herein alleged were proximately caused by Defendants.

IV. AMAZON'S PRODUCT REVIEW SYSTEM

- 22. Amazon pioneered online customer reviews 25 years ago, and Amazon.com is now home to billions of unique reviews. Reviews provide a forum for customers to share authentic feedback about products positive or negative. As long as Amazon's customers abide by Amazon's Community Guidelines, which prohibit illegal, obscene, infringing, and other abusive reviews, customers may review and rate any product available in Amazon's stores. Amazon does not remove reviews because they are critical; Amazon believes all helpful information relevant to a product can inform its customers' buying decisions. Honest and unbiased reviews allow customers to trust that they can shop with confidence in Amazon's store, and reviews also help fulfill Amazon's mission to be Earth's most customer-centric company. In short, Amazon takes the integrity and authenticity of its customer reviews very seriously.
- 23. Amazon encourages its customers to review products available in its stores. Amazon displays these reviews on the detail pages for the products. Consumers rely on this customer feedback to make informed purchasing decisions. Customers trust that these reviews will be honest, authentic, and unbiased.
- 24. Each product review is comprised of a "star rating" that ranges from one star to five stars and can also include textual comments and product images or video. Amazon compiles these product reviews, summarizes the compiled star ratings, and displays those results alongside the listed product for shoppers to see while they are shopping. An example of product reviews for the Amazon Echo follows:

All-new Echo (4th Gen) | With premium sound, smart home hub, and Alexa | Charcoal

Brand: Amazon

37,955 ratings | 816 answered questions

Amazon's Choice for "alexa"

Climate Pledge Friendly

List Price: \$99.99

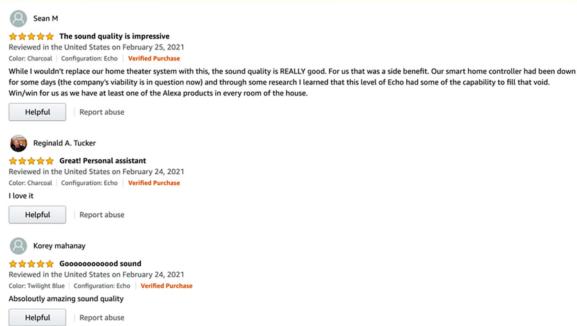
Price: \$79.99 **/prime**

or 5 monthly payments of \$16.00

You Save: \$20.00 (20%)

May be available at a lower price from other sellers, potentially without free Prime shipping.

In Stock.



25. Reviews can impact product sales in multiple ways. Most immediately, positive reviews can encourage customers to purchase a product. In addition, reviews can influence a product's sales ranking: Amazon records and publishes "rankings" of products sold in its stores, which are based on sales. Amazon uses product sales data to create its Best Seller Rank ("BSR"),

and also provides best seller lists for categories and subcategories of products. This information is updated hourly to reflect recent and historical sales of nearly every product sold. This information helps consumers understand which products are popular and how their sales are trending, which may help influence shopping decisions. As such, reviews can indirectly increase a product's sales rank.

26. Additionally, where a customer decides to sort results of a search by average customer rating, reviews and star ratings of a product directly impact the order in which that customer sees products, with the product containing the highest average star rating appearing at the top of the list.

V. BUYER AND SELLER POLICIES AGAINST FAKE REVIEWS

- 27. In order to review a product, an individual must have an Amazon account. As a result, each reviewer of a product has agreed to and is bound by the Conditions of Use of Amazon's stores.
- 28. By agreeing to the Conditions of Use, each product reviewer enters into a contractual relationship with Amazon.
- 29. Similarly, each seller who lists a product for sale in Amazon's store has agreed to and is bound by the Amazon Services Business Solutions Agreement.
- 30. By agreeing to the Amazon Services Business Solutions Agreement, each seller enters into a contractual relationship with Amazon.
- 31. Amazon prohibits fake reviews, as clearly provided in its Community Guidelines² which are part of its Conditions of Use and Business Solutions Agreement, which prohibit:
 - Creating, modifying, or posting content in exchange for compensation of any kind (including free or discounted products, refunds, or reimbursements) or on behalf of anyone else.
 - Offering compensation or requesting compensation (including free or discounted products) in exchange for creating, modifying, or posting content.

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² See fn. 2.

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- 32. The Business Solutions Agreement incorporates Amazon's Customer Product Review Policies, which expressly warns sellers that they may not offer a financial reward, discount, free products, or other compensation in exchange for a review, and may not offer to provide a refund or reimbursement after the buyer writes a review.
- 33. In addition, Amazon's seller-facing website Seller Central provides additional guidelines to sellers:³

If you decide to ask a buyer to leave a review, you may not ask for a positive review or ask for reviews only from buyers who had a positive experience, nor may you ask customers to change or remove their review, or attempt to influence the review. For example, you may not offer any compensation for a review, including money or gift cards, free or discounted products, refunds or reimbursements, or any other future benefits.

Can I offer a voucher or a free gift?

We do not permit reviews or votes on the helpfulness of reviews that are posted in exchange for compensation of any kind, including any of the following:

- Payment (including money or gift cards)
- Refund or reimbursement, including through non-Amazon payment methods
- Free product
- Entry to a prize drawing or competition
- Discounts on future purchases
- Other gifts
- 34. Amazon's Seller Code of Conduct also makes clear that sellers "may not attempt to influence or inflate customers' ratings, feedback, and reviews." Thus, the contracts that govern customers' and sellers' access to using Amazon's stores clearly prohibit the parties from creating, posting, offering, or soliciting fake reviews.
- 35. Amazon takes the integrity of its customer reviews extremely seriously. As part of its efforts to ensure the authenticity of reviews, Amazon has developed sophisticated technologies and protocols to detect and remove such reviews from its stores. Amazon analyzes

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³ "Answers to Questions About Product Reviews," https://sellercentral.amazon.com/gp/help/external/G201972160?language=en_US (accessed Jan. 21, 2022).

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every review that is submitted and continues to scour its stores for fake reviews if they are published, stops or removes fake reviews when it finds them, and takes enforcement actions against sellers that post and/or purchase fake reviews. Amazon is constantly innovating to improve its ability to identify and remove fake reviews, but when that abuse takes place away from Amazon's websites, bad actors are emboldened to act in direct contravention of Amazon's policies and the law.

VI. AMAZON'S PAID REVIEWS PREVENTION EFFORTS

- 36. Unfortunately, at times, unscrupulous sellers try to gain unfair competitive advantages for their products in Amazon's stores by paying for false, misleading, and inauthentic customer reviews. These reviews can significantly undermine the trust that consumers, sellers, and manufacturers place in Amazon, which in turn tarnishes Amazon's brand.
- 37. Fake reviews can also harm consumers by providing misleading information about the quality, authenticity, and nature of products, and harm other sellers who play by the rules and earn positive reviews by offering high-quality products and excellent customer service. By influencing sales volumes, fake reviews can also artificially inflate or deflate the rankings of reviewed products.
- 38. Amazon strictly prohibits any attempt to manipulate customer reviews and expressly prohibits compensated reviews. Amazon's goal is to detect and remove abusive reviews before a customer ever sees them, and thus Amazon invests significant financial and personnel resources to protect its stores from abuse. When it detects a potentially abusive or otherwise objectionable review, Amazon takes steps to protect customers through a variety of enforcement actions, such as preventing further reviews from that customer, removing reviews, and enforcing against associated seller and customer accounts.

VII. DEFENDANTS' DECEITFUL ACTS

39. Beginning at a time unknown to Amazon, but no later than July 2018, Defendants obtained the domain name Rebatest.com, a website through which they operate their illicit business of selling fake reviews.

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- 40. Through the Rebatest.com website, Amazon sellers pay Defendants for a set number of reviews and other services to manipulate their product rankings.
- 41. Through the Rebatest.com website, Amazon customers submit reviews in exchange for a partial or full refund.
- 42. Rebatest advertises its process on its homepage and FAQ page, where it refers to reviews as "trial reports":









Search and apply the product you want

Purchase the item on Amazon as normal

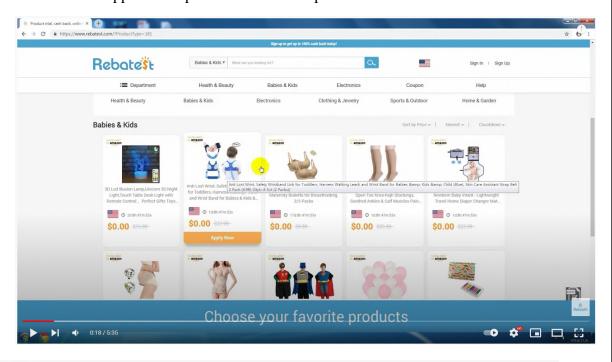
Submit your order No. & trial report

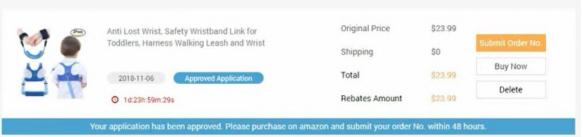
Get cash back

Here are the instructions:

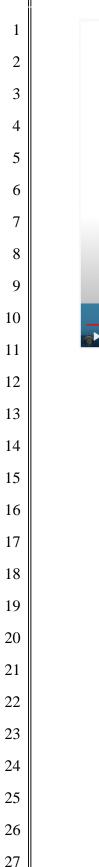
- 1. Search and apply the product you like.
- 2. Waiting for the approval of the seller.
- 3. Purchase the item on Amazon.
- 4. Submit Amazon order No. & trial report.
- 43. Rebatest's website contains a video that is over five minutes long, detailing each step of the process from the point of view of an Amazon customer interested in obtaining a rebate in exchange for a fake review.⁴

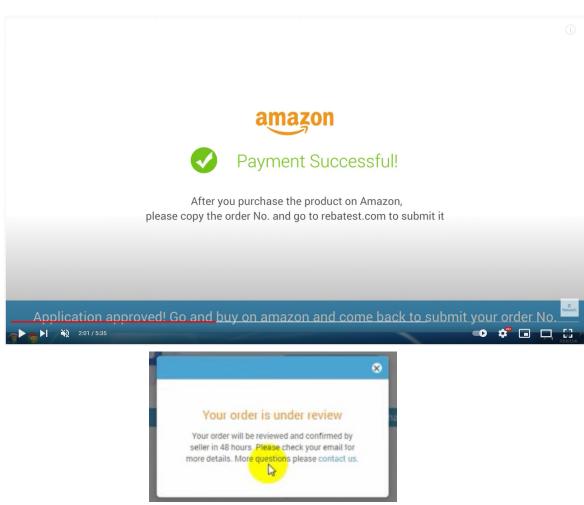
⁴ See "Frequently Asked Questions," https://www.rebatest.com/help/faq (accessed Nov. 9, 2021); "Rebatest Cash Back Process Video – 2018 old," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chpM2K6gN0I (accessed Jan. 21, 2022).





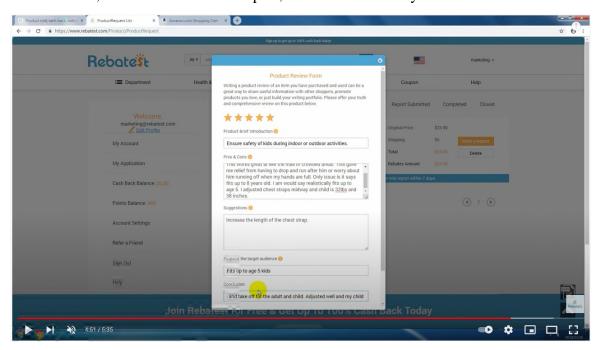
45. Second, the customer purchases that product on Amazon.com and provides Rebatest with the Order Identification Number. The order is then reviewed by the seller.

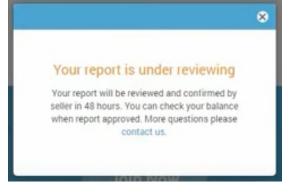




COMPLAINT - 13

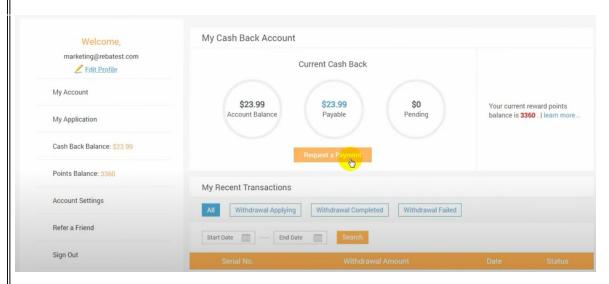
46. Next, the customer must fill out the "Product Review Form" on Rebatest's website. The review, also referred to as a "report," is then reviewed by the seller.





47. Once the "report" has been reviewed, the customer will be paid through the Rebatest platform. The customer can enter his PayPal details to have the money deposited into his account.

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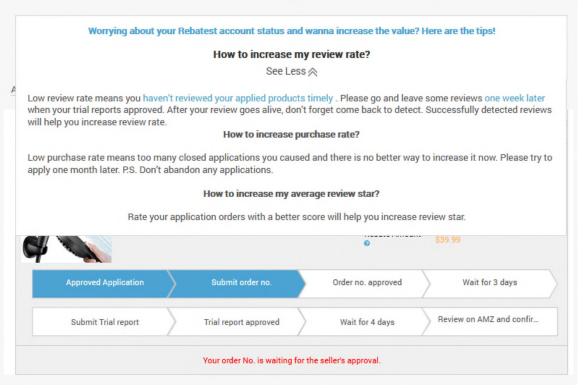
- 48. Not only are reviews brokered through Rebatest incentivized and therefore against Amazon policy, but they are also inflated. Reviewers must maintain a certain average star rating or risk not being "approved" for future rebates. Therefore, if a product does not perform well, a reviewer will still need to rate it highly in order to obtain a refund.
- 49. Rebatest requires that its users wait three days minimum to submit their reviews. Upon information and belief, this is because Rebatest is aware of Amazon's fake reviews detection system, which can detect a suspicious review if a review is left too quickly after a product is purchased.

9. How to submit my trial report?

After your order No. was confirmed by the seller, Rebatest will send you an email and guide you to submit your trial report. Please follow the guide or you can go to your application panel and submit your trial report after 3 days.

50. Once a customer signs into his Rebatest account, he will see the following dashboard, showing him his Amazon Review Rate, Purchase Rate, and Average Review Star.

My Current Status	Amazon Review Rate ?		Purchase Rate ?	Average Review Star ?
	Non-featured Products	Featured Products	100%	5
	100%	100%		
Requirement	≥70%	≥80%	≥50%	≥4.65



- 51. Rebatest's FAQ page defines Amazon Review Rate as "the ratio of the Verified Reviews to Valid trial orders." 5
- 52. Rebatest's FAQ page defines Purchase Rate as "the ratio of the orders you've completed to orders you've applied [for]."⁶
- 53. Although Rebatest does not explain what an Average Review Star is, this is the average star rating that a reviewer leaves alongside his reviews. As shown in the image above, Rebatest requires that reviewers maintain a 4.65-star average.
 - 54. Upon information and belief, Rebatest itself solicits and sells fake reviews.

6 Id

⁵ "Frequently Asked Questions," https://www.rebatest.com/help/faq (accessed Nov. 9, 2021).

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- 55. Upon information and belief, this abuse is happening on a much larger scale. As of January 21, 2022, Rebatest's homepage boasts that "818052 members [have] saved \$11 million" from "1000+ trusted online retailers."
- 56. Upon information and belief, Defendants knew that Amazon maintains contractual relationships with sellers and with product reviewers.
- 57. At all times, Defendants knew that Amazon has contractual prohibitions against fake reviews and thus, would be incentivizing sellers to violate their contracts with Amazon. Defendants further knew and intended that their business of selling fake reviews would improperly manipulate the published ratings and ranking of products listed for sale in Amazon's stores resulting in the deception of Amazon's customers and the erosion of customer trust in Amazon's stores.

VIII. REPUTATIONAL HARM TO AMAZON

- 58. Fake reviews threaten Amazon's reputation and erode trust with consumers. Product reviews are an important part of a customer's shopping experience, and customers rely on the accuracy and authenticity of reviews to inform their shopping decisions. When reviews are false, inaccurate, or misleading, customers' expectations for product quality and performance are not fulfilled. When reviews are not trustworthy, consumers lose confidence in the quality and performance of products and associated ratings in Amazon's stores and are less likely to purchase products.
- 59. Similarly, fake reviews threaten to undermine the trust of honest sellers who attempt to sell products in Amazon's stores. When dishonest sellers use fake reviews to gain a competitive advantage, they harm honest sellers who, in turn, lose faith in the integrity of the Amazon marketplace.
- 60. As a result of reviews abuse perpetuated in Amazon's stores by bad actors, there has been widespread media attention to fake reviews in Amazon's stores.
- 61. The Wall Street Journal published a story regarding fake reviews in Amazon's store on June 13, 2021, titled, "Fake Reviews and Inflated Ratings Are Still a Problem for

https://www.wsj.com/articles/fake-reviews-and-inflated-ratings-are-still-a-problem-for-amazon-11623587313

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(accessed September 20, 2021).

reviews designed to trick consumers. Defendants' acts had the capacity to and did, indeed, harm consumers.

- 70. Defendants' unfair and deceptive business practices have unjustly harmed Amazon and are causing Amazon to suffer damages.
- 71. Amazon is entitled to treble damages and attorneys' fees, pursuant to RCW 19.86.090.
- 72. As a result of such unfair and deceptive acts and practices, Amazon has also suffered irreparable injury and, unless Defendants are enjoined from such unfair competition, will continue to suffer irreparable injury whereby Amazon has no adequate remedy at law.

SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF Intentional Interference with Contractual Relations

- 73. Amazon incorporates by reference the allegations of each and every one of the preceding paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.
- 74. Amazon maintains contracts with each seller of goods in Amazon's stores, as each such seller agreed to the Amazon Services Business Solutions Agreement.
- 75. Amazon maintains contracts with each reviewer of goods in Amazon's stores, as each such user agreed to the Amazon Conditions of Use.
- 76. Defendants have knowledge of these contracts and the contractual prohibitions against fake and paid reviews.
- 77. Defendants intended to disrupt and, with malice and through unfair means, did interfere with the performance of these contracts.
 - 78. As a result of Defendants' actions, Amazon has been harmed.

THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF Unjust Enrichment/Restitution

79. Amazon incorporates by reference the allegations of each and every one of the preceding paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.

- 80. Defendants unjustly received benefits in the form of payments from Amazon sellers in exchange for fake reviews, at Amazon's expense through their wrongful conduct, including their interference with Amazon's business relationships and other unfair business practices. Defendants continue to unjustly retain these benefits at Amazon's expense. It would be unjust for Defendants to retain any value obtained as a result of their wrongful conduct.
- 81. Amazon is entitled to the establishment of a constructive trust consisting of the benefit conferred upon Defendants by the revenues derived from their wrongful conduct at Amazon's expense and all profits derived from that wrongful conduct. Amazon is further entitled to full restitution of all amounts in which Defendants have been unjustly enriched at Amazon's expense.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Amazon respectfully requests judgment as follows:

- 1. That the Court issue permanent and injunctive relief against Defendants and that Defendants, their officers, agents, representatives, servants, employees, attorneys, successors and assigns, and all others in active concert or participation with Defendants be enjoined and ordered to:
 - (a) Cease and desist from selling or facilitating the sale of Amazon reviews;
 - (b) Provide information sufficient to identify each Amazon review created in exchange for payment and the accounts and persons who created or paid for such reviews; and
 - (c) Cease and desist from assisting, aiding, or abetting any other person or business entity in engaging in or performing any of the activities referred to in subparagraph (a) above.
- 2. That the Court enter an Order requiring Defendants to disgorge their profits and declaring that Defendants hold in trust, as constructive trustees for the benefit of Amazon, their illegal profits gained from the sale of fraudulently compensated reviews, and requiring

1	Defendants to provide Amazon with a full and complete accounting of all amounts obtained as a			
2	result of Defendants' illegal activities;			
3	3. That the Court enter an Order instructing Defendants, jointly and severally, to pay			
4	Amazon's general, special, actual and statutory damages, including treble damages pursuant to			
5	RCW Ch. 19.86;			
6	4. That the Court Order Defendants to pay Amazon both the cost of this action and			
7	attorneys' fees incurred in prosecuting this action; and			
8	5. That the Court grant Amazon such additional and further relief as is just and			
9	proper.			
10	DATED this 22nd day of February, 2022.			
11	Davis Wright Tremaine LLP			
12	Attorneys for Plaintiffs			
13	By /s/ Scott Commerson			
14	Scott Commerson, WSBA #58085 865 South Figueroa Street, Suite 2400			
15	Los Angeles, CA 90017-2566 Tel: (213) 633-6800			
16	Fax: (213) 633-6899 Email: scottcommerson@dwt.com			
17	/s/ John Goldmark			
18	John Goldmark, WSBA #40980 920 5 th Avenue, Suite 3300			
19	Seattle, WA 98104-1610 Tel: (206) 622-3150			
20	Fax: (206) 757-7700 Email: johngoldmark@dwt.com			
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