

FEEDING THE RICH: HOW THE CONSUMER PERPETUATES HIGH CONCERT PRICES

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Nothing is more nerve-racking than sitting in a queue for presale tickets to be in the pit at your favorite artists' concert. The screen flashes with "2000+ people ahead of you in the queue."

The nerves hit a new high as you envision your new life once you see that person up on stage, until you get on the app and see the shiny price tag of \$1,000.

It's devastating seeing a concert ticket be in the quadruple digits. Because truly, why is that price tag so high?

The reason why ticket prices are able to climb so high is because the consumer allows it. Tickets are getting more expensive, yet people are still buying them.

Dynamic Pricing

The reason that ticket prices continue to increase is because of dynamic pricing. To put it simply, supply and demand will continue to affect all aspects of our life.

When people get in queue lines for concert tickets, apps like Ticketmaster will take note of seats available and the people in the queue and will alter the price based on that. On Ticketmaster's website, they deem this as "In Demand Tickets," and said that they are being sold at "market driven prices."

These huge corporations know that people will buy tickets no matter the price and are willing to take advantage of that.

Concerts aren't the only avenue that do this. Hotels and planes also use dynamic pricing for their tickets and also always get away with it, because if people need to fly to a new city and stay somewhere, they must do it.

The corporations treat these events like auctions and just wait for the highest bidder collecting the cash. There is no fighting an auction when the highest bidder keeps coming.

The screen lights up and the ticket climbs up right in front of your face, but it's hard to notice when your adrenaline is pumping.

FOMO

With social media use at an all time high, people are increasingly having a "fear of missing out (FOMO)," so even if they aren't a big fan of an artist, they will want to go to be able to post about it and feel included.

Many influencers are seen at concerts, not knowing the words to any of the songs, yet they keep going. Being seen feels like the most important thing for people to do. Concerts are filled with crowds of people who have lots of money yet don't listen to any of the artist's songs.

Is the concert about seeing the artist, or is the concert about being seen?

My "For You Page" on TikTok is filled with videos from

the concert, but it feels like content comes first and enjoyment comes second. This is seen in all facets of life including the phrase, "my camera eats before I do."

The people that truly want to see the concert are left dry with no tickets because they can't afford it, yet rich influencers are able to fill the stands to make more money off of content.

Or if you are a big fan, freak out and think, "what if they never tour again, I can't miss it." Then 20 minutes later, you find yourself pressing purchase on a \$1,000 ticket without thinking twice.

I'd rather go to a concert than not go and miss out on posting, right?

The Expectations

Going to concerts now has very specific expectations. You used to roll up to a concert wearing jeans and t-shirt and having bought the tickets for 20 bucks.

Now you must specifically go out and buy a new outfit to fit the "theme" that the people online have decided is what you must do. If someone showed up to the Taylor Swift Eras Tour not in their specifically crafted costume to fit a specific era, did they really go to the concert?

So, not only do you have to buy the ticket that is over \$1,000, but now you have to buy an outfit you most certainly will never wear again only to not be seen as "lame," by other concert goers.

The Root of the Downfall

The start of when concert prices increased like crazy could be argued. But my belief is that it started with the Taylor Swift Eras Tour.

This tour was larger than life and had people paying thousands of dollars for one singular ticket. And these ticket selling companies take note of that and exploit it.

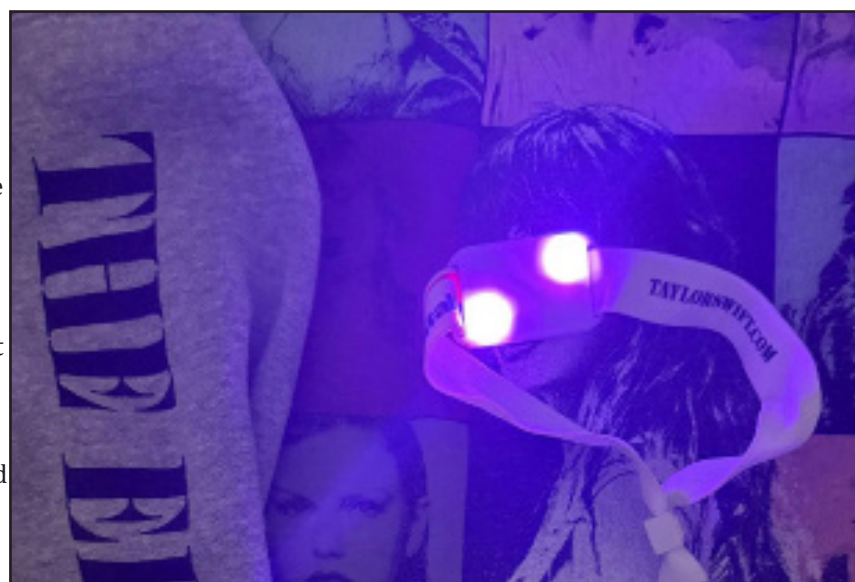
The demand was at an all time high, and the resellers were waiting in line right along with the rest of the people.

In full honesty, I did see the Eras tour. I spent a hefty amount on the tickets, not \$1,000 but still a lot, so I can speak from experience about the tour but not many others.

Production Value

The show itself was three and a half hours not including the opener. If you spent \$1,000 a ticket that's about \$4.76 per minute of the show you watched. It's easier to weigh if the ticket price can be justified and if its worth to pay \$4.76 every minute that she is on stage.

In comparison, Sabrina Carpenter started touring a few years later and also used dynamic pricing. The show



A light up bracelet displayed on top of tour merchandise from the Eras Tour performed by Taylor Swift on June 28, 2023. Photo taken by Sophia Wilson.

was 1.5 hours on average. Her tickets were also selling for around \$1,000, especially with the resellers, but that is \$11.11 per minute.

So, if companies are able to benefit from having the same high prices no matter how long the show is, why wouldn't they?

People have an emotional attachment to their favorite artist. For me, Taylor Swift has always been held in a nostalgic light because I listened to her as a kid. So, when I see she is going on an "Eras Tour," and could be playing my favorite childhood song, I have the need to go.

Almost nothing in the world is stronger than nostalgia. People are willing to pay the price no matter how steep to relive a moment in time.

As someone who has worked on a very small-scale community theatre, I know how expensive those productions can be, and I can't imagine how expensive large, multi-hour concerts are to produce, including paying the hundreds of people on the set.

But this dynamic ticket pricing isn't making up for the cost of production, but the greed that wealthy people can afford.

What is the big call for action on how to fix this?

Some artists have put on their tickets that dynamic pricing is not allowed. And other artists have done their hardest to avoid resellers.

Until every artist puts an end to dynamic pricing or the consumer stops purchasing all together nothing will change.

Because at the end of the day seeing my favorite artist on stage is worth it.

DON'T ALWAYS TRUST SOCIAL MEDIA FOR NEWS

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"BREAKING NEWS" is the first thing you read as you pick up your phone, at 7 a.m. You scroll through stories, posts, reels and tweets seeing story after story of last night's breaking events. You're panicked, afraid and confused.

Face it, you trust the internet too easily. The fast paced news is easy to swipe, read a title and move on.

But social media is the easiest way for someone to twist a story any way they want you to see it. One caption, one edit, and suddenly the story is completely flipped.

I'm not here to kick you down, because I have also fallen victim to the fake news scam. Everytime I open Instagram I see a fake claim. Even if I know it's fake right away, they're still out there and sometimes it's not noticeable right away.

In 2023, I started to keep a closer eye out for fake news after two false stories convinced me they were true. The first was the plane that returned 37 years later, and the second was the claim that Disney World got rid of Cinderella's Castle.

While both headlines caught my attention quickly, after some quick research I found that both stories were a hoax.

Although it's embarrassing to admit this publicly, it happens to us all. The evidence that makes you believe the story, the multiple back-to-back videos in someone's feed, they can really pull you in. Yet when it came time to look it up, Google called you out each time, proving the stories weren't real.

According to Pew Research, 86% of adults get some

news from social media, and 54% report using social media as a news source often. Every year, the number of people using print, radio and even television broadcast media is declining.

Pew Research Center reported that 46% of adults have shared some news on their platform through posts, comments or videos.

Reflect on your social media usage. How many posts have you made? How many comments you've sent or stories you've reshared? From breaking news on recent events around Fresno, to police activity across the country, you see "breaking news" everywhere, whether it's truly breaking or not.

We're all guilty of it. When a friend reshares a post, suddenly it goes viral and everyone's reporting the recent event. But without context, who knows what's really happening.

The Rampage conducted a survey on Instagram, asking Fresno City College students where they get a majority of their news. Of 50 replies, 88% of students said their primary source for news was social media. Only 8% stated they received their news from local news networks.

Compare these results to those conducted by Pew Research, we see a major increase in social media reliance as generations continue.

But these platforms are designed to pull you in by using buzz words that capture your attention and get you to click. And those stories almost never tell you what they're promoting. Instead it's a false rumor that can quickly twist your perspective on someone or something.

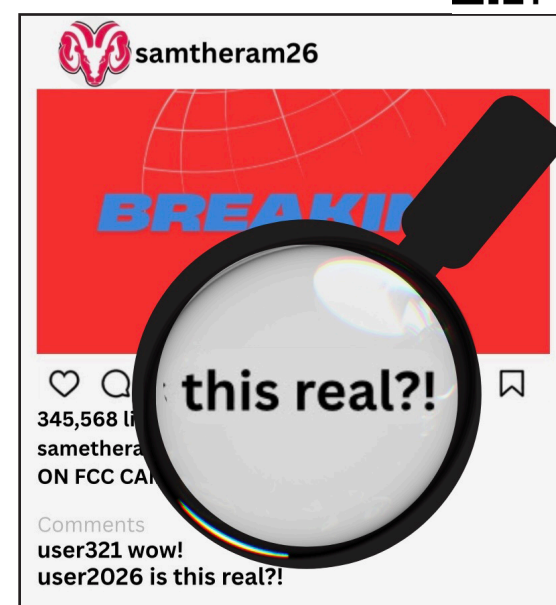
In 2024, Donald Trump was shot in the ear at a rally. Reports circulated on social media saying that the Secret Service officer assigned to protect Trump was told not to fire at the sniper. That news was later debunked. But within a few minutes, many people believed the story

protecting the shooter. In reality, the sniper was taken down immediately.

In order to prevent the spread of misinformation and better your own understanding of news, here's how you can apply media literacy skills.

Before clicking "share" ask yourself "where is this coming from?" Is it a reliable source, or a random spam page? Then fact check your facts. If something looks suspect, look it up!

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A graphic of a magnifying glass zooming in on the fake Instagram users commenting on the credibility of the information from a fake Instagram account. Graphic by Chloe Sills.