

COSMOPOLITAN

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New Lawsuit Alleges Sephora Engaged In Racial Profiling, Discrimination

A number of the cosmetics brand's Asian customers say their e-commerce accounts were shut down unfairly, because Sephora thought they were buying in bulk to resell.



Online shoppers went wild in the e-aisles of Sephora's website during a promotional sale earlier this month, causing enough *Supermarket Sweep*-style madness that the site crashed entirely. The brand threw blame at a particular category of mascara buyers — "bulk shoppers looking to take advantage of the low prices so they could resell the items for a profit," apparently (*Reuters*, via [BoF](#)).

And Sephora allegedly also decided those resellers fit a particular racial profile. (It's not clear what, if any, evidence was considered in reaching this conclusion.) In recent weeks, customers with Asian names and/or email addresses registered in China have reportedly had their accounts deactivated; a new class action lawsuit argues "thousands of shoppers" in total have been affected. Seeking "unspecified" damages, four plaintiffs in particular are now fronting the suit — residents of New York City, Pennsylvania, and Ohio respectively. They say they lost reward points gained in previous transactions when their accounts were shut down, and argue the practice is, on racial grounds, all sorts of discriminatory.

Reuters notes that this "may be the first to face claims of discriminatory Internet security measures by a retailer." Sephora has yet to comment on the filing.