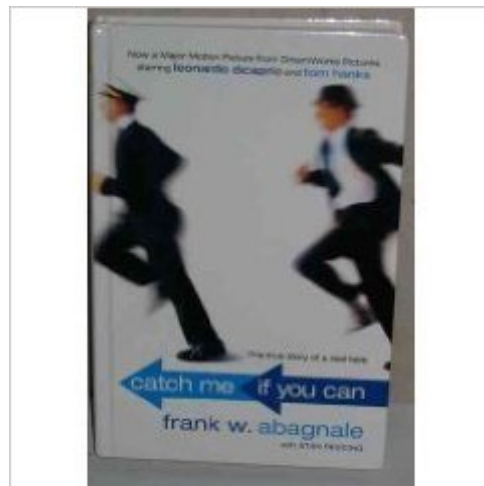


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Catch Me If You Can



Synopsis

Movie Tie-In Edition with Afterword and Q&A with author. The true story of a real fake. True Crime.

Book Information

Hardcover: 293 pages

Publisher: NEWMARKET PRESS.; 1st Movie Tie-In Edition edition (2002)

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (711 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I really enjoyed the movie, but I did not believe any of it. How could a 16 year old pull off all these scams posing successfully as an airline pilot, lawyer, doctor, and FBI agent. Only in Hollywood! I had to read the book to uncover the truth. To my amazement, almost nothing in the movie was dramatized. Frank Abagnale did it all. And, this even includes the acrobatic escape from a commercial plane as it lands. The book depicts a far richer story than the movie. At the start, the family situation is more complex. The scams are more intricate. The career path is more extraordinary. The movie skipped over interesting jobs, including a stint as a college sociology teacher. Also amazing is that this teenager acquired far more knowledge about the meaning of every single digit on a personal check than any banker I know. And, I know, having been engaged in banking and finance for over two decades. Frank's character development make the whole story more likely. Frank was not your regular 16 year old dude. At 16, he could easily pass for a fit 25 year old. He was 6 feet tall, 170 pounds. He also acquired quite a real world education by hanging out with his Dad. His Dad exposed him to political, business, and social circles that teenagers do not know. Thus, Frank Abagnale, being a keen observer, learned quickly how adults behave among themselves. Frank was also strikingly handsome, and confident. So, the story includes many romantic interludes. This aspect of life is described most tastefully. There is nothing graphic here. And, it does not detract from the story. To the contrary, women were a key element in this scammer's education. They were often insiders to the professions he attempted to fake.

One can't help but be impressed by Frank Abagnale's resourcefulness at such a tender age. At the age of sixteen he manages to forge a pilot's license and "deadhead" his way around the country bouncing checks. He also passes himself off as an pediatrician, a college professor, and an assistant district attorney. The last is probably his most impressive exploit, as he passes the bar exam (on his third try) with only two years of high school. After years of exploiting the gullibility of bank tellers and airline clerks, Abagnale is finally captured in France, where he spends six hellacious months in a Devil's Island of a prison. He is then transferred to a Swedish prison, a one hundred and eighty degrees difference, more like a college dorm than a prison. He could've spent the rest of his life being handed from one European penal system to another, some of them vying for brutality with France, but he is saved by a Swedish judge who extradites him to the U.S. Back home, he escapes from apprehension at the airport and from prison later, embarrassing the F.B.I. and his nemesis agent O'Reilly. But, by then, just about every law enforcement official in America is on the lookout for him. He is ultimately captured and does four years jail time, only to emerge once more smelling like a rose. After a few years bouncing around doing such scut work as managing a grocery store and a pizza joint, he convinces a bank manager to let him give a lecture to his employees on how to spot a "paperhanger." From there, he's referred to another bank and another and so on. These days he teaches at the F.B.I Academy.

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