Catch Me If You Can



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Photograph of Frank Abagnale taken in 2009. Image online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

I always knew I'd get caught.
The law sleeps,
but it never dies.

Frank Abagnale
December 9, 2002

It was a different Frank Abagnale who addressed the Grand Rapids Economic Club on December 9, 2002. He was older. Wiser. More reflective. As a husband and father, he worried how the upcoming movie would impact his wife and children.

He was, we observed, embarrassed by the movie's subject: the young Frank Abagnale. Cocky, to be sure, and supremely self-confident. But, unknown to most, young Frank was also lonely and suffering from the breakup of his parents' marriage.

Four days before his Grand Rapids visit, while sitting alone, he watched the film version of his life. Steven Spielberg wanted to know what he thought of the movie. Frank's first reaction was the obvious one: The movie (which is not a biographical documentary) depicts some of his escapades. The more important reaction—the one requiring deeper thought—came a day or two later.

In the movie about his life, Frank Abagnale said he recognized four themes:

- "Divorce is hard on kids."
- "This movie is about loneliness."
- "It is about breaking the law and getting punished."
- "And it is about redemption."

How did Frank Abagnale go from notorious American con man to respected FBI Academy instructor?

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
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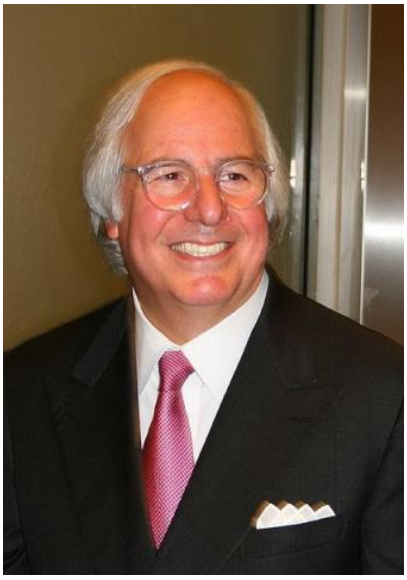
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Frank Abagnale

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