



# **The Art of the Steal: How to Protect Yourself and Your Business from Fraud, America's #1 Crime**

*Frank W. Abagnale*

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## **The Art of the Steal: How to Protect Yourself and Your Business from Fraud, America's #1 Crime**

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The world--famous former con artist and bestselling author of **Catch Me if You Can** now reveals the mind--boggling tricks of the scam trade--with advice that has made him one of America's most sought--after fraud--prevention experts.

"I had as much knowledge as any man alive concerning the mechanics of forgery, check swindling, counterfeiting, and other similar crimes. Ever since I'd been released from prison, I'd often felt that if I directed this knowledge into the right channels, I could help people a great deal. Every time I went to the store and wrote a check, I would see two or three mistakes made on the part of the clerk or cashier, mistakes that a flimflam artist would take advantage of. . . . In a certain sense, I'm still a con artist. I'm just putting down a positive con these days, as opposed to the negative con I used in the past. I've merely redirected the talents I've always possessed. I've applied the same relentless attention to working on stopping fraud that I once applied to perpetuating fraud."

In **Catch Me if You Can**, Frank W. Abagnale recounted his youthful career as a master imposter and forger. In **The Art of the Steal**, Abagnale tells the remarkable story of how he parlayed his knowledge of cons and scams into a successful career as a consultant on preventing financial foul play--while showing you how to identify and outsmart perpetrators of fraud.

Technology may have made it easier to track down criminals, but cyberspace has spawned a skyrocketing number of ways to commit crime--much of it untraceable. Businesses are estimated to lose an unprecedented \$400 billion a year from fraud of one sort or another. If we were able to do away with fraud for just two years, we'd erase the national debt and pay Social Security for the next one hundred years. However, Abagnale has discovered that punishment for committing fraud, much less recovery of stolen funds, seldom happens: Once you're a victim, you won't get your money back. Prevention is the best form of protection.

Drawn from his twenty-five years of experience as an ingenious con artist (whose check scams alone mounted to more than \$2 million in stolen funds), Abagnale's **The Art of the Steal** provides eye-opening stories of true scams, with tips on how they can be prevented. Abagnale takes you deep inside the world and mind of the con artist, showing you just how he pulled off his scams and what you can do to avoid becoming the next victim. You'll hear the stories of notorious swindles, like the mustard squirter trick and the "rock in the box" ploy, and meet the criminals like the famous Vickers Gang who perpetrated them. You'll find out why crooks wash checks and iron credit cards and why a thief brings glue with him to the ATM. And finally, you'll learn how to recognize a bogus check or a counterfeit bill, and why you shouldn't write your grocery list on a deposit slip.

A revealing look inside the predatory criminal mind from a former master of the con, **The Art of the Steal** is the ultimate defense against even the craftiest crook.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **The Art of the Steal: How to Protect Yourself and Your Business from Fraud, America's #1 Crime Details**

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# **From Reader Review The Art of the Steal: How to Protect Yourself and Your Business from Fraud, America's #1 Crime for online ebook**

## **Judi Rogers says**

**This book, and Mr Abagnale's first one have great information to protect your identity.**

Even though this book is 18 years old, the things in here will help you to protect your identity. Identity theft becomes bigger every year, and we all need to be concerned

Thank you Mr Abagnale for writing these books, and letting yourself be caught!

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## **Spencer says**

This is a much better book than Catch Me if You Can. It simply presents the information clearly and includes some interesting stories along the way. I wish Mr. Abagnale had written the other book instead of his co-writer.

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## **Kristjan Velbri says**

Wholly US-centric and largely outdated, though an interesting look into how things used to be. Very little information on how to protect one's business from fraudsters, which is a let-down given the title.

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## **Shelley says**

Great book. Now I'm totally paranoid!

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## **Kit Pang says**

The vast knowledge and scam tricks revealed by Frank Abagnale is scary! This book was written 13 years ago and I cannot imagine how destructive fraud and scam can be today...

Very interesting book even though a few of the scams revealed might not be as relevant today as they were 10-15 years ago.

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## **Anastasia says**

Some of the information is out of date, which happens quickly now. All of his suggestions are still good though.

Protect your information at all times is the best suggestion in the world. I am sure he would have a few things to say about Facebook and the idea of voting online now too.

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### **Vagabond of Letters says**

\*\*\* 1/2

Outdated but hilarious.

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### **Pip says**

It's super, super dated! Especially the bits about internet fraud, and the youth of today and our moral decline. But I love reading about all the ingenious scams people have thought up, which made this book definitely worth it for me.

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### **Jim says**

This would have been better to read 10 years ago. Today, a lot of it is only interesting for historical value - what he noticed, what should have changed, & what actually has. Many of the scams are too well known, but it's still a good refresher. If nothing else, the fact that so many are still so possible & popular should be a good warning.

He read the book well & it was interesting to get some personal takes of his history. It sounds as if he's made a successful career out of being a security consultant even if he wasn't all that great in the computer field. He thinks like a crook, knows the chances they'll take, & what effort they'll go to. If nothing else, much of the content is helpful in a general sense. A lot of scams haven't changed in centuries, they've just moved to different technologies. For instance, the Spanish Prisoner is now known as the Nigerian Email scam.

He also did a great job of showing just how little information it takes to steal an identity & which ones can be used best for leverage. The sad thing is that in the 15 years since this book was written, few of the holes have been plugged. The biggest one is our social security number. It's ridiculous how important it is yet how many have access to it. The credit agencies exacerbate identity theft, too.

Normal computer users may well get something out of his warnings on them, but I do it for a living. I was disappointed that he didn't point out the biggest flaw in our email system - anyone can send an email as anyone else & that is often used to scam people. (view spoiler) So you get an email from a familiar name, open it, click on a link or attachment & wind up in the trick bag. Numerous methods for securing email have been tried, but none have become popular.

I did learn a few things & it certainly wasn't a waste of time. This book was highly relevant in its time, but that was over a decade ago & I've had a lot of this shoved in my face for most of that time even if I am only tangentially involved in this aspect of security.

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## Henrik Riskær says

Extremely well written book, although a bit confusing and unrelatable as a european, who's literally never touched a check before. Worth a read!

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## Henry says

This book's good for you to get know about forgery, scam and identify thefts.

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## Zach says

Frank Abagnale is best known for being portrayed by Leonardo Dicaprio in Catch Me If You Can, the true story of how he defrauded millions of dollars while impersonating airline pilots, doctors, and lawyers, all before the age of 21. Abagnale is a conman's conman, a true master of manipulation and exploitation. Luckily for the public, after serving his time in prison in three countries, Abagnale went straight, and has worked as a security consultant for law enforcement and private firms for the last few decades. This book is his attempt to educate laymen about various cons and how to avoid getting taken in by them.

The best part of this book is the explanation of all the creative ways that people have invented to defraud one another. My favorite was the guy who registered an 847 number (like a 900 number but less recognizable) for \$35 a minute, then would go through the yellow pages, leaving messages with businesses for them to call him back at his 847 number. He made over a million dollars with this simple scam, and never got caught or indicted. But most of the scams are far less imaginative and mostly have to do with getting ahold of someone's checkbook or altering a check they wrote. The US is the only western country that still relies on checks for business, and check fraud dwarfs all other forms. The chapter on embezzlement was also fascinating, if for no other reason than that most embezzlers run their schemes for years without anyone suspecting a thing. White-collar crime is incredibly easy to commit, and isn't punished at near the same level as other crimes (e.g. a bank robbery, which nets a paltry \$5,000 on average, gets you more time in jail than stealing \$1M from your employer).

Much of the book is rather dry, consisting of common-sense advice to avoid these scams. Most of it boils down to: don't reveal personal information about yourself, and only do business with reputable people you know if you plan to pay with check or card. Even then, review your statements every month to make sure you won't be held liable if someone skimmed your card number.

Abagnale is an old-school con artist, so it's no surprise that digital payment and the internet in particular leave such a bad taste in his mouth. He's badly out of his depth in his chapters addressing these topics, and it hurts the overall quality of the book. To be fair to him, he was writing at a time when online fraud was much more common, when automated fraud detection on the part of credit companies was in its infancy. But when he makes indefensible statements to the effect that, as the number of online transactions grows it will become harder for credit agencies to spot fraud (the opposite is true), he reveals his fundamental ignorance on the topic.

Overall The Art of the Steal is a quick and entertaining read, written in a straightforward and engaging style. I wouldn't recommend it as a personal security manual, but for someone interested in white collar crime and con artists in general, it's a fun read.

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### **Bill Conrad says**

I liked the movie Catch Me If You Can and I read Frank's Frank Abagnale's first book of the same title. The intent of this book was to get inside the head of a con artist/thief with the intent of showing you how to prevent crime from happening in your own life. For me, the best part was more on Frank Abagnale's background. There were some great insights into what he did and what state criminal justice was like at the time. Overall, the book gave some great insight into the sophisticated mind of a criminal. It reminded me of the book: Social Engineering by Kevin Mitnick. The main take away is that people can be greedy and gullible. Criminals take advantage of this. I recommend reading this book, but I think it is time for: The Art of the Steal 2.0. The information in the book is dated with regards to technology and many criminals in different countries using the Internet for scams. It would be nice to read Franks thoughts on topics such as Facebook.

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### **Julier says**

August 2018. I listened to about half of this book. I enjoy Frank Abagnale's narration of his own book-he is quite a character. But the book was published almost 17 years ago, so it is out of date since technology has advanced so much. I decided not to finish it for that reason. It would be good background material for a fiction writer who needed to incorporate timely technology for around 2000.

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### **j says**

The one thing I did not expect is that this book would be funny, but it totally is. I "read" the audiobook, and when the narrator deadpanned that the title of one chapter is "Forgery: Hours of Fun!" I actually snorted, causing everyone else on the train to turn around and stare.

I suspect that many of the criticisms of this book will be based on its timeliness; for example, many people don't use checks at all nowadays, and thus an entire chapter on check fraud may not interest them that much. But even though I may not find check fraud all that relevant for myself, I still find the information pretty fascinating, just not something I would use on a day-to-day basis.

The only thing I think I could do without is the occasional moralizing; Abagnale loooves to tell us that the reason there's more fraud today is because people are greedier and their families don't imbue them with the same sense of morality as previous generations. I'm not sure that's true, or that there's any real research to back that up; it comes across as very "When \*I\* was your age" + "get off my lawn, you damn kids." The good news is that these segments tend to be few and far between.

I would definitely recommend this book; it's a good, amusing, informative read.

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