



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

By Frank W. Abagnale

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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.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Author Frank W. Abagnale knows something about fraud--he once committed it for a living. "Through my various hustles, I passed something like \$2.5 million worth of checks, a blizzard of paper that I scattered in earnest throughout all fifty states and twenty-six countries, all before I was legally allowed to drink," he writes. "I was proficient enough at cashing fraudulent checks that I earned the distinction of becoming one of the most hunted criminals by the FBI." Abagnale was ultimately caught, and he served prison sentences in France, Sweden, and the United States. In the 25 years since his release, Abagnale (who also wrote *Catch Me If You Can*) has become a leading consultant on fraud prevention.

"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," he explains. "I've applied the same relentless attention to working on stopping fraud that I once applied to perpetrating fraud." His expertise comes in handy: businesses lose an estimated \$400 billion each year to fraud. The stories Abagnale tells in *The Art of the Steal* provide fascinating glimpses of a criminal underworld. He describes "shoulder surfers" who rip off bank customers at ATMs by videotaping their fingers as they enter PIN numbers, retrieving receipts from wastebaskets, and then creating fake credit cards--all rather inexpensively. Whole sections of the book almost read like a how-to manual for aspiring thieves, though Abagnale has other motives. Throughout, he offers sensible advice on how to foil the con artists. Much of this is common sense (cut up credit cards when they expire), but some of his suggestions aren't so obvious. He warns readers not to write checks to the "IRS," for instance: "Envelopes to the IRS are common targets because of where they're going." Instead, checks should be made out to the "Internal Revenue Service," because criminals can turn the "I" of "IRS" into an "M," and turn a tax payment into a gift for "MRS." Smith. The chapter on the emerging problem of identity theft--with its tips on how to keep Social Security numbers private--is especially helpful. In all, *The Art of the Steal* is captivating and useful. --John Miller

From Library Journal

Former criminal imposter Abagnale (*Catch Me If You Can*) has been a security consultant to industry and the FBI for over 25 years. This detailed and well-written book describes many types of scams, including those involving forged checks, stolen mail, and phony credit cards. After discussing each scam, the author advises on how to avoid it and offers photos to illustrate his points. For example, he will not use a bank that will not give him back his canceled checks. He shreds all financial documents, including unsolicited credit card applications, and he checks his credit reports several times a year using two different services. The book has more of a business orientation than Kevin McKeown's *Your Secrets Are My Business* (LJ 10/1/99). However, McKeown covered topics such as caller ID and computer "cookies," while Abagnale skips these areas, concentrating on secure documents, counterfeit goods, and Internet fraud. The books complement each other and should be read together. For future editions, the author should tell readers how to order their credit reports, discover errors, and report fraud. A useful work on business and personal privacy. Harry Charles, Attorney at Law, St. Louis, MO

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Review

"There's just something about beating the system that's so entertaining and so American." -- Audiobookstoday.com

Users Review

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David Lucero:

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Mary Wing:

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Donald Tuel:

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