Selina Liu

Lindsey Grubbs

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Catch Me If You Can Outline

**Intro:** Steven Spielberg’s film, “Catch Me If You Can,” artfully portrays Frank Abagnale Jr.’s fraudulent escapades. Frank Abagnale Jr. successfully poses as a substitute French teacher, a Pan Am airline co-pilot, a doctor, and a lawyer throughout the movie. As if that was not interesting enough, he accomplished these feats all before he turned 19. Frank Jr. cashes the forged checks he makes from his different “jobs.” By the end of his counterfeiting career, he already embezzled millions from banks using forged checks. Frank was able to get away multiple times because he was aware of his audience: Carl Hanratty (FBI Agent), young female tellers, nurses and airline attendant. The way Frank Abagnale utilizes women in his hoaxes and how he always poses as authoritative figures in society to gain women’s trust and obedience is brow-raising. The prevalent patriarchal language and body language portrayed in the movie captures the cultural relevance of women in the late 1960s.

Thesis:

**-**Spielberg clearly believed that his movie, with a deceitful yet charismatic male protagonist and yielding 1960s women, would do well in the 2000s highlights the present gender disparity in the workforce. **(OR)**

-Spielberg believed that his movie with a deceitful yet charismatic male protagonist and yielding women would do well in the 2000s must say something about the present gender disparity. In fact, “Catch Me If You Can” brings just as much attention to 1960s women in the workforce as Frank Abagnale Jr.’s life story.

1. Similar to how Frank Abagnale Jr. is aware of his audience, Spielberg knew his modern audience would appreciate someone to root for, a charming “authority” wielding male protagonist.

* + 1. Describe scene when Frank Jr. fools Carl Hanratty, the FBI agent that is in charge of check fraud
    2. How Frank Jr. wields his authority:

-impersonates a French teacher, Pan Am airline pilot, Chief Resident Pediatrician, and a

-“From 1964 to 1966 I successfully impersonated an airline pilot for Pan Am Airlines, and flew over two million miles for free. During that time I was also the Chief Resident Pediatrician at a Georgia hospital, the Assistant Attorney General for the state of Louisiana, and a Professor of American History at a prestigious University in France. By the time I was caught and sentenced to prison, I had cashed over six million dollars in fraudulent checks in 26 foreign countries and all fifty states, and I did it all before my 18th birthday.” –**Movie script “Catch Me If You Can” by Jeff Nathanson**

* + 1. The audience sympathizes with Frank Jr. because he is still a boy who is living by himself (the American dream: coming from nothing and making something of himself—supporting himself)

2. In Spielberg’s film, Frank Jr.’s treatment of women in the film mirrors many characteristics society’s treatment of women nowadays.

* + 1. women being afraid to express themselves in the professional field
    2. working women’s reaction to Frank Abagnale’s requests: how in one scene the young female worker’s male supervisor takes over just as Frank Jr. was about to win her over
    3. \*\*\*Although the perception of the ideal woman has changed from 1960s homemaker there is still that notion that…
    4. “Again, this might have NOTHING to do with my vagina, but I wasn't completely wrong when another leaked Sony email revealed a producer referring to a fellow lead actress in a negotiation as a "spoiled brat." For some reason, I just can't picture someone saying that about a man.” **-Jennifer Lawrence**.
    5. Women in Hollywood (unequal pay)
    6. The gender wage gap
    7. “This place is small but it’s gonna be a lot less work, a lot less work for you.” **Frank Abagnale Sr.**

3. Without women in the workforce in the 1960s, Frank Jr. could not have successfully pulled off his multiple “careers.”

* + 1. Describe scenes from the movie: young female tellers falling for his charm, young nurse he marries, the female flight attendants
    2. Frank Jr. was able to dupe these women who did not work the most common jobs; what does that mean?
    3. “The most comprehensive survey of occupations and gender comes from the American Community Survey, which includes about 3.5 million American households. That data, collected between 2009 and 2013, showed that secretary was the most common job for women, as it has been since 1950. Next on the list were nurses and elementary and middle school teachers.” –**CNN Money**
    4. women in the movie were mostly unlike Bonnie from Bonnie and Clyde crime duo because they were unaware that they were helping Frank Jr. commit a fraud

[insert Bonnie and Clyde quote]

v) clueless women falling for Frank Jr.’s lies yet again

4. The lack of an authoritative figure in his life enabled Frank Jr. to do whatever he desired until Carl Hanratty caught onto his fraudulent shenanigans.

* + 1. His mother, in the film, failed to be an effective rule-setter in the house. She was even at Frank Jr.’s mercy when she was caught cheating with another man. In the scene, she bribes Frank Jr. with two five dollar bills. (a pathetic scene which would have been different if it was Frank’s father who was caught cheating)
    2. Describe Carl Hanratty’s fatherly relationship with Frank Jr. in the film
    3. I.E.: Frank Jr. calls him on Christmas every year (becomes a tradition)

**Conclusion:**

-Summarize the cultural significance of my essay

Bibliography

Milgram, Stanley. “Behavioral Study of Obedience”. *Albany: Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 67.4 (1963): 371-378. *Psychological Experiments Online*. Web. 5 Nov. 2015.

I decided to use Stanley Milgram’s famous experiment on authority as my secondary source. I found this source by searching through Emory Library database. After I entered “Obedience to Authority” into the search bar a link to “Psychological Experiments Online” appeared. The link led me to a series of primary sources and letters by Stanley Milgram in the early 1960’s. In Steven Spielberg’s *Catch Me If You Can*portraying Frank Abagnale Jr.’s life, a recurring theme of getting away with fraud through an authoritative figure in society is present.

Hauser, Susan. “The Women's Movement in the '70s, Today: 'You've Come a Long Way,' But…” *Workforce*. N.p., 15 May 2012. Web. 12 Nov. 2015.

This article on women in the workforce is relevant to “Catch Me If You Can” because most of the women portrayed in the movie were working women. In this article, Susan Hauser questions whether or not women have made progress throughout the years. I learned that the goal of women in the 70s changed from being homemakers to a working women.

Lawrence, Jennifer. “Jennifer Lawrence: ‘Why Do I Make Less Than My Male Co-Stars?’” *Lenny Letter*. n.p. 14 Oct. 2015. Web. 11 Nov. 2015.

Her essay on Lenny Letter’s website would be a great secondary source for me because women in the workforce in the 70s most likely suffered the same thing. The fear of coming off as a “spoiled brat” when women voice their opinions in the professional world surely was present for women in the 70s just as it is today. I can use this to help support my thesis, which will elaborate on what Steven Spielberg is trying to say about women in the 1970s and women in the 2000s.

Friedrich, Carl Joachim. *Nomos I Authority*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1958. Print.

This book by Carl Joachim Friedrich talks about the Cold War, WWII, and touches upon Calvinism. Although this source may seem strange and random, it does analyze why people are more drawn towards charismatic leaders and people. In the movie, the charismatic Frank Abagnale Jr. was able to get women as well as an FBI agent to do what he wanted.

"Bonnie and Clyde." *FBI — Federal Bureau of Investigation Homepage*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Nov. (indent)2015.

The FBI government website gives background and information on Bonnie and Clyde as well as other famous crime duos. The women in Spielberg’s film offered Frank Abagnale Jr. a way to create a façade to escape from incarceration. Bonnie may not have been the victim but she had a rough start. Bonnie was 19 and married to an imprisoned murderer when she met Clyde. I can compare her to Frank Abagnale Jr.’s wife in the film.

O'Brien, Sarah Ashley. "78 Cents on the Dollar: The Facts about the Gender Wage Gap." *CNN Money*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Nov. 2015.

This article from CNN points out that the most common jobs for women were secretary, nurses and teachers. Sarah Ashley O’Brien points out many statistics about women that corresponds to the wage gap. In Sarah’s article there are also information on different studies that other organizations, such as American Association of University Women, did.