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Catch Me If You Can Prospectus

In “Catch Me If You Can”, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and directed by Steven Spielberg, a character named Frank Abagnale successfully impersonates an airplane pilot, Chief Resident Pediatrician at a Georgia hospital, Assistant Attorney General for the state of Louisiana, and a Professor of American History at a prestigious University in France. Abagnale was merely eighteen years old and achieved to impersonate people of these highly respected jobs before his nineteenth birthday. This movie is the rendition of the true events and recollections of Frank Abagnale Jr.’s autobiographical book that the movie is named for.

It would be very interesting to do a research project on this movie because it is based on real events that came with such high stakes. Everything that has been read in class has been fairly ridiculous or skeptical hoaxes that people have faked, but Abagnale faked his identity, broke laws, and stole money, creating serious federal offense!

For my research project on “Catch Me If You Can” I will be focused more on the psychological aspect of identity theft and fraud.Through the research and analysis of the psychology of identity theft and fraud crime, one can understand not only the criminal’s mind set, but be made aware the complexity of the actions.

Because my research will be based more on the internal analysis of Abagnale, my question that I am focused on is, what were Abagnale’s intensions and motivation behind his fraud that lead to his determination to be as successful as he was. How was he able to pull off such enormous frauds, even with the federal government working on his case to catch and imprison him? These two questions are broad enough to find substantial evidence that aid in describing not only the psychology behind criminals, criminal defense, and the rhetoric and maneuvers that Abagnale had to take into consideration that would have assisted in camouflaging his incredibility and be such a persuasive and believable impersonator.

For the research paper, I will draw from Abagnale’s autobiographical book “Catch Me If You Can” to get the first person anecdotal perspective that will delve right into his entire thought process and procedure to create his convoluted schemes. Likewise, I will use peer reviewed articles of the book and movie, which revolve around the theme of identity theft and fraud. There are books and articles written by Christopher Wilson that I intend to add to my research paper though provide information on criminal defense and criminal studies. In addition, there will be articles and reviews to address the acting and directing of both DiCaprio and Spielberg to analyze and break down the rhetoric of Abagnale’s criminal activity on a more theatrical aspect. In these cases, the reviews and analysis will pertain more on the cinematic portrayal of the character of Abagnale that DiCaprio took on and how that helped in serve an appropriate demonstration of his actions. Analysis of Spielberg’s directing will also point out the technique used that made the movie more persuasive, appealing, entertaining, and embracing of the theme and purpose for the movie.