

FOR YOUR FORENSIC BOOKSHELF

Edited by Tim Louwers

A recent newspaper article cited the bizarre case of the Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman suing long-time pop music writer Bill Wyman for having the same name. Although there is no evidence that Wyman (writer) ever claimed to be Wyman (musician), Wyman (musician) wanted Wyman (writer) to “clearly (indicate) that he was not the same Bill Wyman who was previously a member of the Rolling Stones.” What is particularly amusing is that Bill Wyman (musician) was born William George Perks and subsequently changed his last name to Wyman. I thought this story especially appropriate to introduce the books reviewed in the current volume which address various forms of identity theft and identity pretense.

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

Frank Abagnale
 ©2001; 225 pages
 Broadway Books, New York

Reviewed by Melodie Beavers

Frauds occur every day and they are becoming more and more technologically advanced. Check forgery, credit card theft, false invoices, false representation, ATM fraud, manipulation of

checks, plus many others comprise a loss to businesses of an estimated \$400 billion a year. Federal laws offer little or no deterrence or punishment of these crimes. Prevention is our only protection. How then do we as a society protect ourselves without losing our privacy? Frank Abagnale attempts to answer this question in *The Art of the Steal*. The author, an ex-convict turned FBI instructor, describes the criminal side of fraud investigation by divulging explicit details of how frauds are committed and identifying red flags to help prevent becoming a victim.

The Art of the Steal describes many types of scams including check forgery, counterfeiting money and documents, credit card theft, investment scams, and ATM frauds. Each fraud scheme is broken down in detail, but there are so many types that only brief discussion of each is included. To prevent these frauds, Abagnale demonstrates a number of lessons, such as how to recognize bogus checks and bills, and how to avoid “shoulder surfers” who steal your ATM and credit card PIN numbers. He uses pictures to illustrate ways documents and bills can be fraudulently changed. The chapter on identity theft is the most chilling. Abagnale points out how individuals make it very easy for criminals to steal their identities by carrying unnecessary documents and failing to exercise due care with their garbage. An identity theft quiz testing readers’

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