

= Catch Me If You Can =

Catch Me If You Can is a 2002 American biographical crime film , based on the life of Frank Abagnale , who , before his 19th birthday , successfully performed cons worth millions of dollars by posing as a Pan American World Airways pilot , a Georgia doctor , and a Louisiana parish prosecutor . His primary crime was check fraud ; he became so experienced that the FBI eventually turned to him for help in catching other check forgers . The film was directed by Steven Spielberg and stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks , with Christopher Walken , Martin Sheen , Nathalie Baye and Amy Adams in supporting roles .

Development for the film started in 1980 but did not progress until 1997 when the film rights to Abagnale 's book were sold to Spielberg 's DreamWorks . David Fincher , Gore Verbinski , Lasse Hallström , Milo? Forman , and Cameron Crowe had all been possible candidates for director before Spielberg decided to direct . Filming took place from February to May 2002 . The film was a financial and critical success , and the real Abagnale reacted positively to it .

= = Plot = =

In 1963 , teen @-@ aged Frank Abagnale ( Leonardo DiCaprio ) lives in New Rochelle , New York with his father Frank Abagnale , Sr. ( Christopher Walken ) , and French mother Paula ( Nathalie Baye ) . When Frank Sr. is denied a business loan at Chase Manhattan Bank due to unknown difficulties with the IRS , the family is forced to move from their large home to a small apartment . Paula carries on an affair with Jack ( James Brolin ) , a friend of her husband . Meanwhile , Frank poses as a substitute teacher in his French class . Frank 's parents file for divorce , and Frank runs away . When he runs out of money , he begins relying on confidence scams to get by . Soon , Frank 's cons increase and he even impersonates an airline pilot . He forges Pan Am payroll checks and succeeds in stealing over \$ 2 @.@ 8 million .

Meanwhile , Carl Hanratty ( Tom Hanks ) , an FBI bank fraud agent , begins tracking Frank . Carl and Frank meet at a hotel , where Frank convinces Carl his name is Barry Allen of the Secret Service , and that he was also after the fraud . Frank leaves , Carl angrily realizing a minute too late that he has been fooled . Later , at Christmas , Carl is still at work when Frank calls him , attempting to apologize for duping Carl . Carl rejects his apology and tells him he will soon be caught , but laughs when he realizes Frank actually called him because he has no one else to talk to . Frank hangs up , and Carl continues to investigate , suddenly realizing ( thanks to a waiter ) that the name " Barry Allen " is from the Flash comic books and that Frank is actually a teenager .

Frank , meanwhile , has expanded his con to include the identities of a doctor and lawyer . While playing Dr. Frank Connors , he falls in love with Brenda ( Amy Adams ) . While asking her father 's permission to marry her , he admits the truth about himself and asks for help with the Louisiana State Bar exam . Carl tracks him to his engagement party and Frank is able to sneak out a bedroom window minutes before Carl bursts in . Before leaving , Frank makes Brenda promise to meet him in Miami two days later so they can elope . Frank sees her waiting for him two days later , but also notices plainclothes agents waiting to arrest him , realizing he has been set up and escapes on a flight to Europe .

Seven months later , Carl shows his boss that Frank has been forging checks all over western Europe and asks permission to go to Europe to look for him . When his boss refuses , Carl brings Frank 's checks to printing professionals who claim that the checks were printed in France . From an interview with Frank 's mother , Carl remembers that she was actually born in Montrichard , France . He goes there and locates Frank , and tells him that the French police will kill him if he does not go with Carl quietly . Frank assumes he is lying at first , but Carl promises Frank he would never lie to him , and Carl takes him outside , where the French police escort him to prison .

The scene then flashes forward to a plane returning Frank home from prison , where Carl informs him that his father has died . Grief @-@ stricken , Frank escapes from the plane and goes back to his old house , where he finds his mother with the man she left his father for , as well as a girl who Frank realizes is his half @-@ sister . Frank gives himself up and is sentenced to 12 years in prison

, getting visits from time to time from Carl . When Frank points out how one of the checks Carl is carrying as evidence is fake , Carl convinces the FBI to offer Frank a deal by which he can live out the remainder of his sentence working for the bank fraud department of the FBI , which Frank accepts . While working at the FBI , Frank misses the thrill of the chase and even attempts to fly as an airline pilot again . He is cornered by Carl , who insists that Frank will return to the FBI job since no one is chasing him . On the following Monday , Carl is nervous that Frank has not yet arrived at work . However , Frank eventually arrives and they discuss their next case .

The ending credits reveal that Frank has been happily married for 26 years , has three sons , lives in the Midwest , is still good friends with Carl , has caught some of the world 's most elusive money forgers , and earns millions of dollars each year because of his work creating unforgeable checks .

= = Cast = =

Leonardo DiCaprio as Frank Abagnale , Jr . Before his 19th birthday , Frank successfully conned millions of dollars ? worth of checks as a Pan Am pilot , doctor , and Louisiana parish prosecutor .

Tom Hanks as Carl Hanratty , an FBI agent who pursues Frank for most of the film . Hanratty is often teased by other agents who take check fraud as a joke . Hanratty is divorced , and his daughter and ex @-@ wife live in Chicago . In the end , Carl and Frank become great friends .

Christopher Walken as Frank Abagnale , Sr. , Frank 's father , and a World War II veteran . Frank , Sr. loses his wife Paula and most of his wealth after he committed tax evasion . Frank , Sr. dies after falling down a staircase in a train station .

Nathalie Baye as Paula Abagnale . Frank , Sr. meets her when she is 18 years old in Montrichard , France during World War II . Five weeks later , the couple marries . They divorce when Frank Jr. is 16 , leaving Paula to marry Jack Barnes , with whom she has a daughter .

Amy Adams as Brenda Strong . Before becoming a nurse , Brenda had an abortion . Her strict Lutheran parents disown her , until they meet Frank , Jr .

Martin Sheen as Roger Strong , Brenda 's father , and Carol 's husband . Roger is a well @-@ recognized district attorney in Louisiana and is not easily convinced that Frank , Jr. graduated from law school .

James Brolin as Jack Barnes , an associate of Frank , Sr. at the New Rochelle , New York Rotary Club . Barnes later carries on an affair with Paula , leading to the divorce of Frank Jr. 's parents .

Nancy Lenahan as Carol Strong , Brenda 's mother and Roger 's wife . When thinking that Frank , Jr. is a doctor , lawyer and Lutheran , she is highly ecstatic for her daughter 's marriage .

Brian Howe , Frank John Hughes and Chris Ellis portray FBI agents . Jennifer Garner cameos as a call girl . Ellen Pompeo , Elizabeth Banks , and Kaitlin Doubleday have small roles . The real Frank Abagnale appears in a cameo as a French police officer arresting his character .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

Frank Abagnale sold the film rights to his autobiography in 1980 . Executive Producer Michel Shane purchased the film rights in 1990 , for Paramount Pictures . By December 1997 , Barry Kemp purchased the film rights from Shane , bringing the project to DreamWorks , with Jeff Nathanson writing the script . By April 2000 , David Fincher was attached to direct over the course of a few months , but dropped out in favor of Panic Room . In July 2000 , Leonardo DiCaprio had entered discussions to star , with Gore Verbinski to direct . Steven Spielberg signed on as producer , and filming was set to begin in March 2001 .

= = = Casting = = =

Verbinski cast James Gandolfini as Carl Hanratty , Ed Harris as Frank Abagnale , Sr. , and Chloë

Sevigny as Brenda Strong . Verbinski dropped out because of DiCaprio 's commitment on Gangs of New York . Lasse Hallström was in negotiations to direct by May 2001 , but dropped out in July 2001 . At this stage Harris and Sevigny left the film , but Gandolfini was still attached . Spielberg , co @-@ founder of DreamWorks , offered the job of director to Milo? Forman , and considered hiring Cameron Crowe . During this negotiation period , Spielberg began to consider directing the film himself , eventually dropping projects such as Big Fish and Memoirs of a Geisha . Spielberg officially committed to directing in August 2001 .

The search for Strong 's portrayer lasted months but Amy Adams was eventually cast . Spielberg " loved " her tape and producer Walter F. Parkes commented that she was " as fresh and honest as anyone we ? d seen , " which was an important element in the role . Christopher Walken was cast as Frank Abagnale , Sr. following Parkes ? suggestion . Martin Sheen played Roger Strong as he had " intimidating presence " . Spielberg wanted a French actress to portray Paula Abagnale to stay true to the facts . He asked for the help of Brian De Palma , who was living in Paris and he did tests with several actresses such as Nathalie Baye . Spielberg had seen Jennifer Garner on Alias and wanted her to play a small role in the film due to her busy schedule .

= = = Filming = = =

The original start date was January 2002 , but was pushed to February 7 in Los Angeles , California . Other locations included Burbank , Downey , New York , LA / Ontario International Airport ( which doubled for Miami International Airport ) , Quebec City and Montreal . The film was shot in 147 different locations in only 52 days . DiCaprio reflected , " Scenes that we thought would take three days took an afternoon " . Filming ran from April 25 ? 30 in Park Avenue , just outside the Waldorf @-@ Astoria Hotel . Production moved to Orange , New Jersey and returned to Brooklyn for bank and courthouse scenes . Shooting also took place at the TWA Flight Center at John F. Kennedy International Airport . Quebec City was chosen for its European character and French feel . Place Royale , within Old Quebec , stands for Montrichard ? the church in the background of the arrest scene is Notre @-@ Dame @-@ des @-@ Victoires . Filming ended on May 12 in Montreal .

= = Music = =

The film 's soundtrack was released on December 10 , 2002 by DreamWorks Records . The original score was composed by John Williams .

= = Fictions = =

Despite the various changes from real @-@ life events , Abagnale believed Spielberg was the only filmmaker who " could do this film justice " . However , Abagnale had little involvement with the film . In November 2001 , he had " never met nor spoken to Steven Spielberg and I have not read the script . I prefer not to . I understand that they now portray my father in a better light , as he really was . Steven Spielberg has told the screenplay writer ( Jeff Nathanson ) that he wants complete accuracy in the relationships and actual scams that I perpetrated " , Abagnale reported . " I hope in the end the movie will be entertaining , exciting , funny and bring home an important message about family , childhood and divorce " .

The real Abagnale never saw his father again after he ran away from home . Spielberg " wanted to continue to have that connection where Frank kept trying to please his father ; by making him proud of him ; by seeing him in the uniform , the Pan @-@ American uniform " . However , Abagnale praised the idea . " Even though I didn 't see my dad again , every night after living a brilliant day and meeting many women , and making much money , I 'd come back alone to a hotel room and I would just think of my mom and dad and fantasize about getting them back together again , and cry . It 's the justification of a fantasy . " Carl Hanratty ( portrayed by Tom Hanks ) is based on FBI agent Joseph Shea . In the shooting script the character was referred to as Joseph Shea , but was changed to Carl Hanratty for unknown reasons .

## == Themes ==

Catch Me if You Can deals with themes of broken homes and troubled childhoods . Spielberg 's parents divorced when he was a teenager , similar to Frank Abagnale 's situation . In the film , Carl Hanratty is also divorced from his wife , who lives with their daughter in Chicago . " Some of my films have had to do with broken homes and people on the run from their sad pasts " , Spielberg stated . " But there are those strands that got me to say : you know , there 's something also about me that I can say through the telling of this kind of lighthearted story " .

Spielberg also wanted to create a film that sympathized with a crook . He explained , " Frank was a 21st century genius working within the innocence of the mid ' 60s , when people were more trusting than they are now . I don 't think this is the kind of movie where somebody could say , ' I have a career plan . ' " .

## == Release ==

Game Show Network aired the 1977 episode of the television game show To Tell the Truth that featured Frank Abagnale . Segments were shown on December 29 , 2002 and January 1 , 2003 as promotion . The marketing department was careful to market the film as " inspired by a true story " in order to avoid controversy similar to that surrounding A Beautiful Mind ( 2001 ) and The Hurricane ( 1999 ) , both of which deviated from history . The premiere took place at Westwood , Los Angeles , California on December 18 , 2002 .

## === Box office ===

Catch Me If You Can was released on December 25 , 2002 , earning slightly above \$ 30 million in 3 @, @ 225 theaters during its opening weekend . The film went on to gross \$ 164 @. @ 6 million in North America and \$ 187 @. @ 5 million in foreign countries , coming at a worldwide total of \$ 352 @. @ 1 million . The film was a financial success , recouping the \$ 52 million budget six times over . Catch Me If You Can was the eleventh highest grossing film of 2002 . Minority Report ( also directed by Spielberg ) was tenth highest .

## === Critical response ===

On Rotten Tomatoes , the film has a rating of 96 % , based on 195 reviews , with the site 's critical consensus reading , " With help from a strong performance by Leonardo DiCaprio as real @-@ life wunderkind con artist Frank Abagnale , Steven Spielberg crafts a film that 's stylish , breezily entertaining , and surprisingly sweet . " On Metacritic the film has a score of 76 out of 100 , based on 38 critics , indicating " generally favorable reviews " .

Roger Ebert heavily praised DiCaprio 's performance , and concluded " This is not a major Spielberg film , although it is an effortlessly watchable one " . Mick LaSalle said it was " not Spielberg 's best movie , but one of his smoothest and maybe his friendliest . The colorful cinematography , smart performances and brisk tempo suggest a filmmaker subordinating every other impulse to the task of manufacturing pleasure . " Stephen Hunter believed DiCaprio shows " the range and ease and cleverness that Martin Scorsese so underutilized in Gangs of New York " .

James Berardinelli observed , " Catch Me if You Can never takes itself or its subjects too seriously , and contains more genuinely funny material than about 90 % of the so @-@ called ' comedies ' found in multiplexes these days " . In addition Berardinelli praised John Williams ' film score , which he felt was " more intimate and jazzy than his usual material , evoking ( intentionally ) Henry Mancini " . Peter Travers was one of few who gave the film a negative review . Travers considered Catch Me if You Can to be " bogged down over 140 minutes . A film that took off like a hare on speed ends like a winded tortoise . "

At the 75th Academy Awards , Christopher Walken and John Williams were nominated for Best

Supporting Actor and Best Original Score . Walken won the same category at the 56th British Academy Film Awards , while Williams , costume designer Mary Zophres and screenwriter Jeff Nathanson received nominations . DiCaprio was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor in a Motion Picture ? Drama . Williams also earned a Grammy Award nomination . Elements of the film were later parodied in The Simpsons episode " Catch ' Em If You Can " .

= = = Home media = = =

Catch Me If You Can was released on DVD on May 6 , 2003 and on Blu @-@ ray on December 4 , 2012 .

= = Musical adaptation = =

A musical adaptation of the same name premiered at the 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle , Washington in July 2009 , starring Aaron Tveit and Norbert Leo Butz . It began previews on Broadway at the Neil Simon Theatre on March 11 , 2011 and officially opened April 10 , 2011 . The musical was nominated for four Tony Awards , including Best Musical .