Introduction

“Catch Me If You Can” is a movie based on a true story about a man named Frank William Abagnale Jr. Frank is a smart, young and charismatic boy. During his early teen years, his parents started to go through a divorce, which left him torn between whom to choose to stay with. After learning about the divorce that was about to take place, Frank decides to runaway. While on the run, Frank impersonates different people in different jobs to make money. He impersonates a pilot, a doctor and even a lawyer. He would cash multiple forged cashier’s checks throughout his run impersonating others, which accumulated to more than six million dollars in 26 different countries total. As the amount of checks get cashed and the amounts get higher and higher, FBI Agent Carl Hanratty gets assigned this case to find the unknown criminal.

This movie follows Frank's adventure with identities and constant running from the FBI until he ultimately gets caught at age 19. Frank served in prison for a few years and then started working with the FBI to help catch other check forging criminals. He also helped develop the designs of current checks being used today to make it more difficult to forge.

Business World Portrayal

The business world is portrayed in a negative light, as far as it’s precautions for hiring. Many of the people that Frank impersonated were individuals with a higher authority and the employees that he worked with never once questioned anything that he said. Frank learned a lot about the positions that he took by watching movies and just copied what he saw, such as when he impersonated a
doctor. When he was faced with blood, he started asking other doctors around about the case, and whether or not they “concurred,” so that he could get around not having to deal with diagnosing a patient.

Another negative aspect of the business world that was portrayed in this film was the fact that businesses had no real way of confirming a person’s informational claims. Everything that Frank used, his certificates, degrees, scores and so on, were all fake and made by him at home. When Frank interviewed for the doctor position, the person hiring looked at his ‘Harvard Degree’ and immediately hired him. He did not ask nor looked into Frank’s history to confirm all that Frank was claiming. Businesses in those days had very loose ends and Frank took advantage of that. The way Frank did his business; it positioned him in a negative light throughout the movie.

**Ethical Issue #1**

In order for Frank to focus attention off of himself in the Miami International Airport where FBI Agents were on the lookout for him, he came up with a fraudulent recruiting system to the local universities. The recruiting system focused on only the best looking females to play his stewardesses. He marketed this by using Panam’s Airline brand name to make the system seem legitimate. After recruiting eight good-looking stewardesses, they accompanied him in the Miami Airport. All of the FBI Agents and other men in the airport stared at these women which took attention off of Frank and that’s how he bypassed all of the agents looking for him.

The issue was portrayed in a positive light because of the fact that Frank’s pilot uniform and claims were convincing enough to recruit the women. The
universities were very enthusiastic about Frank’s recruitment and encouraged many of the women to try out for it. As far as the FBI agent’s perspective, this fraudulent recruitment was negative because they once again, let Frank walk right past them.

This issue was not resolved at all. It was basically completed without anyone thinking otherwise. Frank’s goal was achieved, and the women who he took with him got a free flight out of Miami. The movie really didn’t explain what happened to the women afterwards, it just focused more on Frank’s other fraudulent behaviors.

In this situation, I would have verified Panam to make sure that the recruitment was legitimate. Frank basically called to the universities and came in the next day to recruit. Usually, when recruiting systems are to be set, they are set months in advanced; in this case, it was a one-day notice. This already one-day notice clearly seems suspicious already and I would have checked in to other places to make sure this recruitment was real because it seemed too good to be true.

**Ethical Issue #2**

Company privacy is very important in all aspects of business. In this movie, how Frank learned about check cashing and how to be a doctor and such were all due to unreliable employees. Frank used his charm and wit to sweet talk a teller at a bank to get the scoop on how legitimate checks looked like, routing numbers and even the quality of paper. There was another incident where he learned of an open doctor position available and got information about the hospital by charming a young female nurse.
The issue of company privacy was not resolved at all. The women who gave him the information he needed were not punished for their actions because others did not know that the exchange of information was happening.

How this issue should have been resolved in my opinion is by discharging the employees who gave out the information. It was partially their fault for Frank's fraudulent success. If I were one of these ladies that Frank tried to charm, I'd be adamant about my job and not say anything about the company. Just because a man tells me I'm beautiful, doesn't mean that I'll spill my guts to this guy.

**Ethical Issue #3**

The use of power and exploitation in this film were mainly highlighted. The use of money can position a person to having more authority over the average person. For example, as soon as Frank put on his pilot uniform, children were looking up to him and he also get double looks and smiles from all around. Frank also used his power and money to persuade a prostitute to sleep with him, which is completely unethical. He marketed himself to be a successful pilot with tons of cash on hand, even though in reality, he was a 17-year-old teen who lies and cheats. Due to a simple uniform and some fraudulent checks in hand, he managed to convince others that he's someone else. No one dared to question anyone of authority and Frank took advantage of this.

The issue of power and exploitation since then has changed. Now background checks are being put to use so it makes it more difficult for someone to impersonate a person of higher authority. However, in this film itself, this issue was
not resolved. Frank managed to get everything that he wanted by impersonating multiple high authority individuals.

Someone simply asking for confirmation should have resolved this issue. Anyone can print out a certificate and claim to be a Harvard graduate but confirming whether or not someone really is a Harvard graduate is the real issue. If I were to see someone in a pilot uniform, I would probably assume he’s a pilot. Although if he were talking himself up and making himself seem unrealistically successful, I’d be a bit skeptical.

**What I learned**

This exercise taught me how to understand the use of ethics while viewing films. Sometimes, the underlying issues are the most interesting and when you think about situations, by putting yourself in the same situation, it will give you more insight as to where you stand ethically. After taking this course and watching this film, it gave me an overall understanding of how people take advantage of their businesses/workplace as well as how power comes into play in situations.