Identity Theft Expert Frank Abagnale Named AARP Ambassador

"Catch Me if You Can" Author Joins with AARP Fraud Watch Network to Raise Awareness of Cybercrime

WASHINGTON, D.C. – AARP today announced that Frank W. Abagnale, nationally renowned expert on identity theft and fraud schemes, has been named AARP Fraud Watch Network Ambassador. Abagnale will work with the Fraud Watch Network to provide online programs and community forums to educate consumers about ways to protect themselves from identity theft and cybercrime.

Once one of the world's most famous con artists, Abagnale's story was told in his best-selling book, *Catch Me if You Can*, and in the 2002 movie of the same name, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks. After successfully posing as various professionals such as an airline pilot, an attorney and a doctor, and cashing millions in fraudulent checks, Abagnale was caught and served prison time. Upon release, he agreed to assist federal law enforcement agencies, and has been associated with the FBI for more than four decades. Abagnale also advises financial institutions, corporations and government agencies around the world.

"Our technology today seemingly has made it easier for the scam artists. There is a new victim of identity theft every two seconds in the United States," said Nancy LeaMond, Chief Advocacy & Engagement Officer, AARP. "Frank Abagnale's guidance as AARP Fraud Watch Network Ambassador will be highly effective in educating our members and the public about ways to protect themselves and their families from fraud."

As part of the AARP education campaign, Abagnale hosts a fun online "Catch the Con" video quiz. He also will participate in AARP-sponsored identity theft forums which are scheduled in communities nationwide. In the coming weeks, events are scheduled for: Omaha, Chicago, Sioux Falls, Seattle, St. Paul, and Hanover, N.H.

"We've all seen the news of the major security breaches which have occurred over the past two years," said Abagnale. "Personal information from some of those incidents is just starting to show up, as it is common for criminals to warehouse personal data for two to three years before they make it available in the marketplace. Too many of us are vulnerable, and I look forward to working with AARP to advise people about the safest ways to conduct their financial transactions and manage social media."

For news about the latest about reported scams, and advice from Abagnale on how to avoid identity theft, visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network.

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make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.