

Laguna Niquel woman offers identity theft help

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Identity theft expert and attorney Mari Frank stresses that anyone can become a victim of the crime, so her new book is written for everyone.

"The Complete Idiot's Guide to Recovering from Identity Theft," part of the series known for keeping it simple, includes information on trends, including medical identity theft, cyber identity theft and government benefit identity, which the Laguna Niquel resident said are becoming more prevalent. With several other books on the topic under her belt, Frank's latest builds on the information she's offered on national TV, congressional hearings and her weekly radio show.

Q. Why did you start writing?

A. I've been writing many articles over the years about negotiation, mediation and privacy. I even wrote a textbook on negotiations called "Negotiation Breakthroughs." Then in 1996, I became a victim of identity theft myself - when there were no laws making it a crime... My first identity theft book, called the "Identity Theft Survival Kit," contained

step-by-step instructions on remedying the situation and protecting yourself. ... I was very active in writing legislation and testified in the California legislature

and in Congress. I also wrote "Privacy Piracy" with Beth Givens.

Q. What is your background?

A. I worked in the district attorney's office as an insurance defense lawyer and then had my own general practice. I have transformed to a mediator helping people resolve conflict out of court. I also serve as an identity theft expert in court cases, I consult with companies, and I assist victims to recover from

identity theft. I also teach negotiation and mediation at UCI and host a radio show called "Privacy Piracy" at the University of California at 88.9 FM Irvine and kuci.org from 8 to 9 a.m. Mondays.

Q. Whom do you consider your audience?

A. Since anyone can become a victim of identity theft, it's really anyone, including children - although their par-

ents would be the ones to deal with the challenges - the elderly and even the deceased (and their heirs). ... Basically, my reader audience is people who are concerned about becoming victims of identity theft or are people who want expert information that's easy to read and easy to follow. Anyone who uses any social networking should definitely read my new book and probably include my book, "Safeguard Your Identity: Protect Yourself with a Personal Privacy Audit."

Q. Tell us about your book.

A. First of all, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Recovering from Identity Theft" isn't meant for idiots, but it is meant to be very user friendly. This book was meant to coach and lead readers through the trials and tribulations to recover completely from any identity theft and to give them tips along the way on how to protect themselves to make sure they are not re-victimized. For those who haven't become victims yet, it helps them protect themselves from various types of identity theft. The book creates an effective and logical step-by-step process to successfully clear their good name.

Q. What are you saying in your book?

A. The message that I'm giving in my book is basically that you have important rights to help you. I teach you those rights and how to enforce them to get your life back and be victorious. For those who haven't been victimized, I empower you so that you will be able to protect yourself and deal with any fraud that does come your way, which according to the FBI will affect you or someone in your family. One in five people will become victims of identity theft.

Q. What do you hope your readers will take away from your book?

A. I hope that my readers will become empowered, knowledgeable, and learn to fight back against the bureaucracies and the various companies and entities that make their recovery even more challenging.

Q. Where can people get your book?

A. They can go through my website at identitytheft.org or go through amazon.com or any of the online bookstores, or they can go to their local brick and mortar bookstore.



Mari Frank