

Michelle Renee

Author Speaker Advocate



About The Author



Michelle Renee is not only a survivor; she is living a victorious life after enduring horrifying violent crime that captured National attention and is the focus of her debut book, *Held Hostage*. Michelle shares her journey with passion, honesty and courage from the dark aftermath of violent crime, confronting her past in order to move forward towards positive change, and what it took for her and her daughter to overcome this devastating tragedy with triumphant results. She inspires others to see adversity as opportunity and the importance of choosing to be the best role models for our youth.

Michelle's 13-year financial industry career included AVP/Regional Sales Manager, Relationship Banking and Customer Satisfaction Manager and AVP/Banking Center Manager for one of the nations largest financial institutions. Michelle has been awarded for her success in banking as well as for her leadership in our community and crime victim advocacy. She is a former member of the Business Woman's Association; President of The Environmental Network-San Diego and has extensive community service experience.

Michelle pursued a Major in Communication with an emphasis on Public Relations at the University of Alaska. She is the Founder of a 501 c3 non-profit organization, The Violent Trauma Awareness Project, and is taking a pro-active stand for legislative changes that would better protect victims of violent crimes by introducing the Crime Victims Integrity Bill. Michelle is actively involved in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder awareness among crime-targeted industry, government agencies and University criminal justice departments.

Michelle resides in Southern California with her daughter, Breea.



Raves!

I had to read your book and hear what other victims had to say. We seem to stand silent in our tracks about our feelings, but you stood up for your rights and ours.

Michelle, your book was wonderful. You have great courage. I can't wait to read your next book.

*Belinda Glencoe
Pensacola, FL*

About The Book



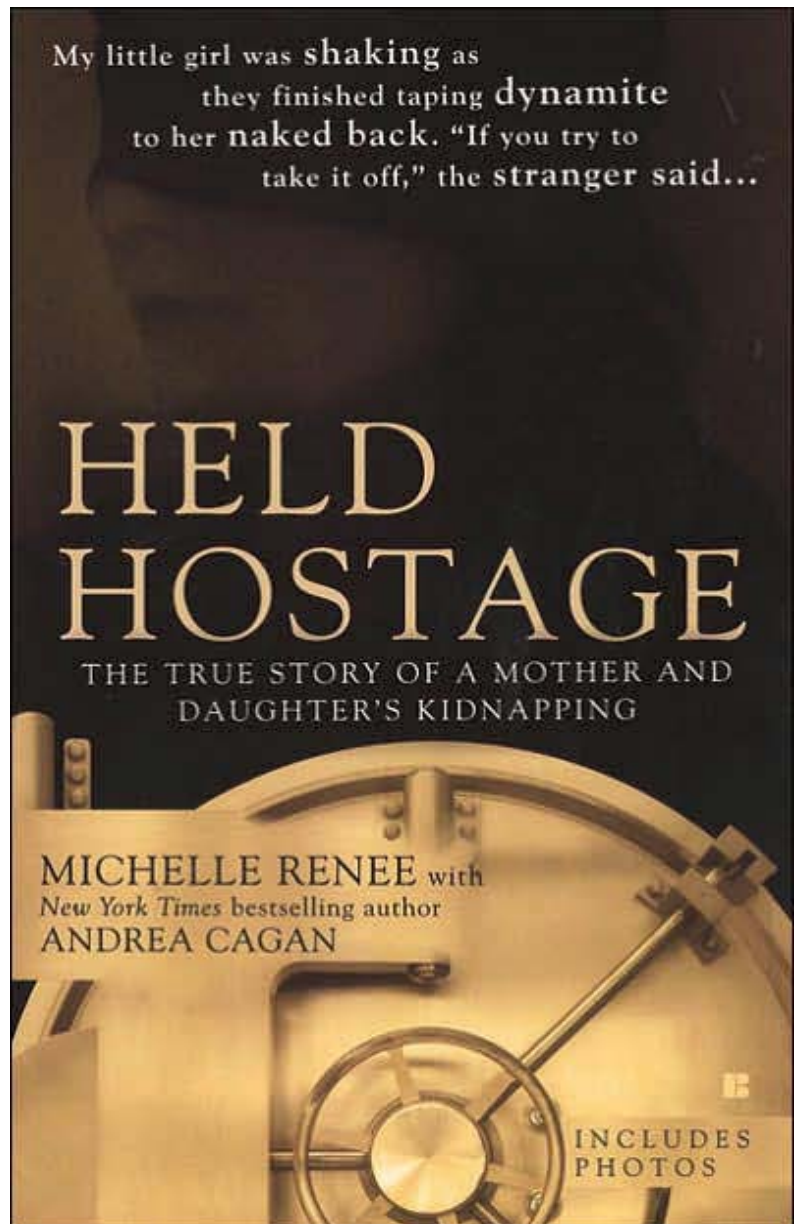
HELD HOSTAGE: *The True Story of a Mother and Daughter's Kidnapping*

(Berkley Mass Market Original; December 5, 2006) by Michelle Renee with Andrea Cagan is the incredible true story of a mother's daring bank heist, executed to save her daughter from a deadly fate. Part Patty Hearst, part *Panic Room*, this story is every mother's worst nightmare.

In November 2000, Michelle Renee, an Assistant Vice President at one of the nation's largest financial institutions, was home playing video games with her seven-year-old daughter, Breea, when three masked gunmen broke into her Southern California hilltop house. Duct taped and tormented with bombs placed on their bodies, they were threatened with murder if Michelle didn't rob the vault of the bank she managed.

After an intense 14 hours held hostage, Michelle pulled off the daring bank heist. But this was just the beginning of her nightmare. Michelle's involvement was called into question as the hunt ensued to capture the gunmen. On top of the post event trauma, Michelle became a suspect. Finally, the FBI concluded their investigation and *America's Most Wanted* aired their story—which led to the capture of the third gunman still on the run. With little help or money, Michelle and Breea went into hiding in Alaska to await the trial.

In this riveting personal account, Michelle tells the story behind her and Breea's harrowing ordeal, the inside details of the bank heist, the threat of death forcing her to confront a turbulent past that drove her to succeed, and the dramatic trial of the gunmen, in which defense attorneys presented a fabricated version of events that stunned everyone. HELD HOSTAGE challenges what is right, what is true, what is ethical, and what it takes to survive.



Target Audience



We are a society obsessed with other people's tragedies and triumphant endings. HELD HOSTAGE offers both. With 1.8 million people victims of violent crime last year, kidnappings and hostage taking on the rise, and more than 10 million single mothers in America (according to recent studies), there is an ample audience for this book. How many of those mothers need to know they can, not only make it, but they can make a difference and be their kids hero? Woman all over the world are a sister hood, wanting to reach out to help their friends and gift to them an inspirational book.

We are also a nation afflicted with post trauma. Many people are asking themselves:

- "Where do we go from here?"
- How should we react to a violent attack?
- How can I ever feel safe again?
- How can we explain this behavior to our children and to generations to come?
- How can we find hope in the midst of devastation?
- How can I be the best possible role model for my child after such a violent tragedy?

Michelle and Breaa dealt with these very same concerns and fears head on. We all need to connect with stories that depict how we can face our worst nightmares and survive all the more stronger, and readers of HELD HOSTAGE will be intrigued and inspired by Michelle Renee and her daughter, their incredible bond and determination. A tale of explosives, crimes, changed identity, self discovery, high courtroom drama, and an unexpected hero make this true story one that grabs heartstrings and doesn't let go.



Book Details

HELD HOSTAGE
The True Story of a Mother and Daughter's Kidnapping
by Michelle Renee with Andrea Cagan
Berkley Mass Market Original
December 5, 2006; \$7.99
ISBN 0-425-21301-3

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Berkley (December 5, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0425213013

ISBN-13: 978-0425213018

Product Dimensions: 6.7 x 4.3 x 0.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.44 ounces

Rave!

This story took my breath away. The horrific crime, the mother and her daughters' bond, everything they went through together and a rough past revisited because of this life altering event. This mother chose the high road even after they were treated wrongfully by our nations justice system. Gritty, raw, honest and inspirational. This book has it all. Loved it.

V. Mathews

Barnes & Noble Online Review

“Expert” Topics



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- Parenting in the Aftermath of Trauma
 - Single Mother/Parenting Issues
 - Woman’s Safety
 - Youth and Adult Post Traumatic Stress Disorder-*Triggers, Symptoms and Best Practices for Recovery*
 - From Corporate Ladder to Life Ladder-*How What We Learn in Business Can Help With the Up’s and Downs in Life.*
 - Kidnapping, Hostage & Home Invasion Situations: *Victim/Parent Perspective*
 - Banking, Security, Home Invasion Robberies
 - Stronger & Better Than Ever!-*Taking Back Your Power After Trauma*
 - *Crime Victims Rights Issues*

Interview Questions



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- Tell us about the violent crime that is the subject of your book, Held Hostage?
 - What inspired you to write Held Hostage?
 - What was the process of writing this very personal book like for you ?
 - What elements in HELD HOSTAGE most appeal to you and will serve to benefit others the most?
 - You never received the help you needed at the scene and you were treated like a criminal during the trial by the defense. What words of wisdom do you have for others facing court proceedings for their accused attackers?
 - In HELD HOSTAGE you tell of how this traumatic event led to your realizing you needed to make peace with your past. How does it feel to have “confronted” your violent childhood and turbulent past?
 - Has this crime, writing the book and what you are doing no impacted your family?
 - Tell us about the symptoms your daughter suffered with?
 - How is your daughter and what is she doing now?
 - How can other parents “Be Their Kids Hero” in the aftermath of such a traumatic ordeal?
 - Tell us about the Violent Trauma Awareness Project.
 - What can employers do to better protect their at-risk staff?
 - What are some of the qualities that helped you become successful in Corporate America that you also say helped you in the recovery process?
 - So, what is next for Michelle Renee?

Speaking Engagements



Raves!

“Michelle is one of the most determined and courageous women I have ever met. What a testimony.”

San Diego Rotary Club

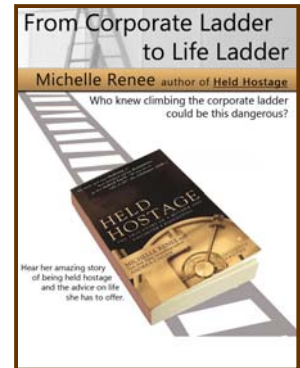
*“Incredible!”
Bishop George Dallas
McKinney*

*“She rocked the house!”
Richard Crawford
Producer/Director*

“Thank you because her story really inspired me to forgive someone that violated me too. And I feel a lot better for doing so.”

Sarah Martin, SDSU Student

- **From Corporate Ladder to Life Ladder**
“Who knew climbing the corporate ladder could be so dangerous? But I discovered that the climb out of the dark aftermath of violent crime into success in life took many of the same skills I used to become successful in business.”



- **Be Your Kids Hero – Shape Their Life With Purpose**
Take the 10-Minute Legacy Test! Being a child’s role model is the most important role of an adult’s life. The impact of a single conversation, how we choose to respond to challenging circumstances and what we feed our children, not on a plate, but the food that shapes their character, their integrity, is what matters most.
- **Living Beyond Blame**
This is Michelle’s powerful and inspirational testimony of a violent crime carried out against her seven year old daughter and herself, ripped from the headlines and has captured the hearts of audiences across the country. “When we move beyond blame following tragedy, loss, or being wronged by another the possibilities are endless. Put an end to blame so that you can be your best self and discover the beautiful reasons for your unique journey.” Michelle Renee

KUSI Good Morning San Diego January 14, 2007:



“There is so much about this story that people don’t know. From the crime to the aftermath, what happened in court and in our lives that changed us forever. There is so much about what victims, youth and adult, go through that people don’t know. Spiraling into trauma, the symptoms of PTSD that leave you grappling with what is real and what is not real is paralyzing. But although one may be a victim now they don’t have to be the victim for the rest of their lives. You can become stronger and better than ever if you set your sights on a positive goal, grow from the experience no matter how horrific it may have been. It isn’t about forgetting what happened to you, it is about embracing who you can and will become because of the experience and the new kind of role model you can be for your children or others. That is really the message in the end of the book”

Press & Achievements

Partial Client List



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- National motivational speaker and crime victim
 - advocate
 - Founder of Violent Trauma Awareness Project
 - 2006 Points of Light Award
 - KPBS Full Focus/These Days Guest
 - 2005 San Diego Leadership Award
 - 2004 Citizen of Courage Award
 - Faculty Member for the 18th & 20th Annual Children's Hospital Conference
 - Key note & Award Presenter for NYPD Bomb Squad Centennial Celebration
 - Local, National, and International radio talk show guest
 - Featured on local news as "expert" on crime victim issues
 - Featured in multiple major print publications
- Children's Hospital
 - SDSU
 - Center for Peace and Conflict Studies
 - Dr. Stanton Samenow
 - California State University
 - San Diego National Bank
 - NYPD Bomb Squad
 - Bishop George Dallas McKinney
 - San Diego Rotary
 - San Diego District Attorney's Office
 - 2004 ICAN Conference
 - KWVE

Contact List:



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- **Literary Agent:** Jill Marsal, Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency
jam@dijkstraagency.com
1-858-755-3115
 - **Sub Rights**
Film, TV Taryn Fagerness, Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency
taryn@dijkstraagency.com
1-858-755-3115
 - **Book Publicity:** Michele Langley, Penguin Group
Book Events 1-212-366-2153
Review Copies Michele.Langley@us.penguin.com
 - **Media/Management:** Eric Estey, Estey Media Group
Interviews PR@Michelle-Renee.com
Speaking Events 1-714-906-6296
Special Projects
 - **Website:** www.Michelle-Renee.com