

Michelle Renee

Author Speaker Advocate Entrepreneur



Featured Huffington Post "Fearless Voices" Blogger, Interviewed by Gayle King, 2008 MSN Hometown Hero & 2008 Honoree on Chicago Child Trauma Center Survivor Wall

About Michelle



Michelle Renee is a single "Mom on a Mission", published author, speaker, owner of Now dreamBIG™, a media coaching, PR and consulting firm, and a 2008 MSN Hometown Hero.

She and her daughter endured a horrifying violent crime that captured national attention and is the focus of her debut book, [Held Hostage: The True Story of a Mother and Daughter's Kidnapping](#). Michelle shares her journey with passion, grit and courage. From the dark aftermath of violent crime, confronting her abusive past in order to embrace what she calls "her now" and what it took for her and her daughter to overcome this devastating tragedy with self-love, gratitude and a vision for positive change.

Michelle enjoyed a successful 13-year financial industry career; a corporate climb that ended as the result of the violent kidnapping, as Assistant Vice President for one of the nation's largest banks. Michelle has been awarded for her success in banking as well as for her leadership in our community and crime victim advocacy. Michelle studied Communications with an emphasis on Public Relations at the University of Alaska. She is the Founder of The [Violent Trauma Awareness Project](#) & [Rock To Stop Violence](#) and is an active advocate involved in Violence Against Women and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder awareness efforts.

She is a member of the Global Peacebuilders Project, National Association of Women Executives, was named Soroptimist International's 2007 Woman of Distinction, and interviewed with Gayle King for a "what would you do/help women stay safe" segment. In 2008 Michelle was honored to be added to the Chicago Children's Hospital Trauma Center Survivor Wall, became a Family Advocate for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and Children's Hospital Chadwick Center in San Diego and will be featured on The Biography Channel and A & E Television.

Michelle resides in Southern California with her daughter, Breea.



Review!

"Shocking and moving both, this well-written tale is a testament to the bravery, strength, and resilience of both a mother trying to protect her daughter and an innocent child facing unimaginable trauma, and one that everyone should hear."

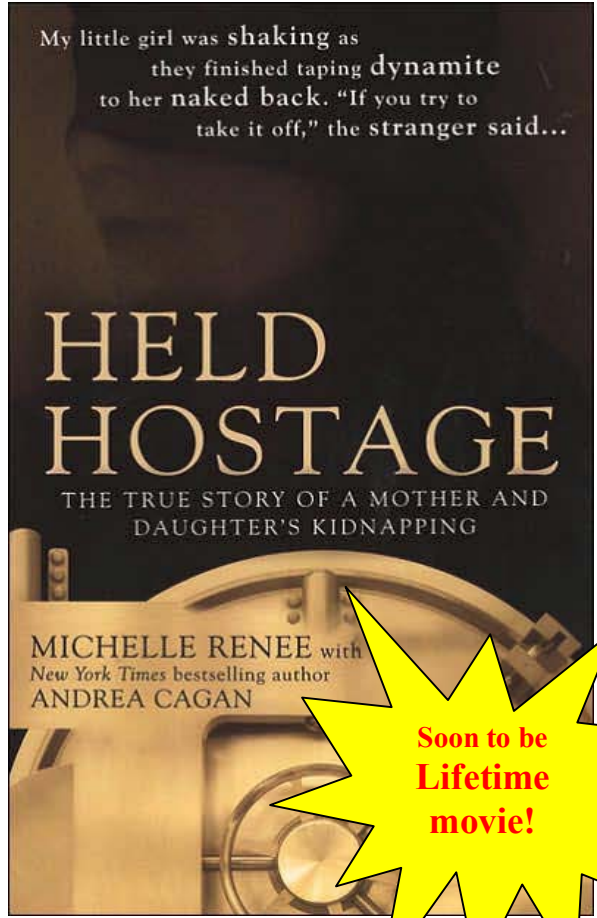
-Book review by [Stacy DeBroff](#)

About Held Hostage



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

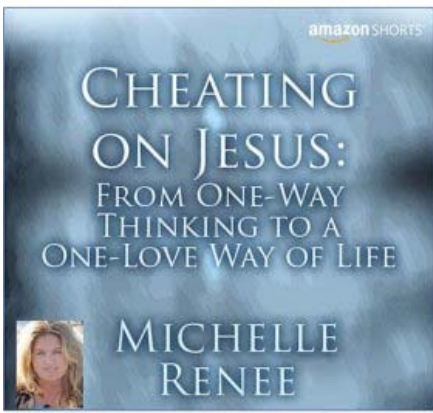
Held Hostage is the incredible true story of a mother's daring bank heist, executed to save her daughter from a deadly fate. Part *Patty Hearst*, part *Panic Room*, this story is every mother's worst nightmare.



Soon to be Lifetime movie!

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.

Other Recent Releases on Amazon.com



Recent Press



"Expert" Topics



- **How To Radically Reinvent Your Life & Embrace Your NOW!**
- **Parenting in the Aftermath of Trauma**
- **Violence Against Women and Woman's Safety Issues**
- **The "Invisible Me" or "Bubble Existence" Following Violent Trauma & Abuse**
- **Youth and Adult Post Traumatic Stress Disorder-*Triggers, Symptoms and Recovery***
- **From Corporate Ladder to Life Ladder- *What Run Your Life Like You Would Run Your Business***
- **Kidnapping, Hostage & Home Invasion Situations: *Victim/Parent Perspective***
- **Banking Security -*Management and at-risk employee perspective***
- **Stronger & Better Than Ever!-*Taking Back Your Personal Power After Trauma***
- **Restorative Justice & Crime Victim's Rights Issues**

Sample Q & A with Michelle Renee



- **You and your daughter were kidnapped and held hostage by masked gunmen. Tell us about the night that changed your life?** I was full of fear, confusion, and coldness. To see my daughter in that way and to know she was seeing me be tormented was almost more than I could bear. It was a miracle that we survived and recovered from that dark situation. No one really knows when the hardships of the aftermath of violent crime will, where we were heading, or when we would see the light at the end of the tunnel.
- **What was it like to be forced to rob a bank?** Robotic. It was as though I was completely programmed, removed from anything that was real. When my hands reached for the money to stuff the duffle bag they had provided me with, it was as though they were the hands of someone else.
- **You are the author of Held Hostage. What was the process of writing this very personal book like for you?** *It was so incredibly freeing, as though I was unpacking my life from a worn and heavy suitcase without wheels brick by brick.*
- **What aspect of your story do you feel will serve to benefit others the most?** *It was scary to be so honest and raw about the crime, my childhood and the abuse I endured, the aftermath and the justice system. I knew I was putting myself in a position to be judged. But the lesson is to understand that in order to become your best self, you must be honest with yourself, except yourself and all your scars, embrace your personal power and never, ever let another human being strip you of that.*
- **You are also a domestic violence/child abuse survivor who ran away at age 15. Tell us about making peace with your past.** *It feels like I finally released the chains that kept me attached to the negative part of my childhood. Seeking to understand more about my parents as people that never dealt with their own issues instead of seeing them in judgment has been a remarkable gift to me and my daughter. After the kidnapping I learned to embrace every part of who I am and that included my past experiences that brought about opportunity and really gave me my drive and ambition. I began to set boundaries and love myself, realizing anything can change on a dime and that has been the most wonderful, unexpected gift that came from a very tragic experience.*
- **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?** *I stayed focused on the truth, on the end result, and taking care of myself and my daughter. I would tell someone to do the same and think about what you are going to say when it is your turn to speak at the sentencing. Know the prosecutor and get in contact with a victim advocate and find an organization that has court accompaniment for victims.*
- **Tell us about the symptoms your daughter suffered with?** *Flashbacks, nightmares, fear, physical sickness and more. PTSD is real and frightening. Without help, it can become completely debilitating.*
- **How is your daughter and what is she doing now?** *She is a teenager with very normal teenage stuff going on. But she has a huge heart for helping others and for her the youth leadership program we started, Girls Against Crime. She and other girls in the community raise money for crime victims.*
- **Tell us about your work for violence against women and post trauma awareness?** *I founded the Violent Trauma Awareness Project and Rock to Stop Violence to raise awareness and help survivors with PTSD. I strive to inspire youth and adults to stand united for peace and non-violence and reach out to women through A Woman's Journey to Wholeness Retreats and my Radical Reinvention workshops.*
- **What are some of the qualities that helped you become successful in Corporate America that you also say helped you in the recovery process?** *Determination, guts, vision, believing in yourself and setting goals.*
- **What has changed the most in your life since the crime?** *I am more aware of the concept of inner peace and how tragedy can be a valuable path to that. I am moving forward with my heart, passion, and self-love focused on being the best role model for Breea I can be, knowing it is okay to embrace my past, happiness, my now with joyful adventure.*

Speaking Topics



Raves!

- **Youth/University Seminars**
- **Corporate/Employee Events**
- **Women's Retreats**
- **Workshops/Breakout Sessions**
- **Non-violence Advocacy**
- **Mental Health Plenary Panels**
- **Professional Conferences**
- **Violence Against Women Awareness**

“Michelle is one of the most determined and courageous women I have ever met.”
Mark Macinelli

“Incredible!”
Bishop George Dallas
McKinney

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

“Her story really inspired me.”
Sarah Martin, SDSU Student

Hostage No More!

This gutsy presentation is delivered with raw honesty, vision and hope. Michelle motivates and inspires others to discover the power of choice by sharing the details of the devastating kidnapping of her 7 year-old daughter and her, the 14 hour hostage ordeal and bank robbery scheme carried out by three masked gunmen; a violent crime ripped from the headlines. However, this impassioned presentation focuses on the choosing to be a Hostage No More to hate, prejudice, anger, self-doubt, blame and “why”. *Great for any inspirational, transformational or motivational event!*



Michelle Renee has been dreaming big all her life. From abused teen run-a-way to Assistant VP for one of the nation's largest banks; from kidnap and hostage survivor to successful author, international speaker, retreat leader and entrepreneur. Michelle Renee coupled her communications education with personal experience and media success to create **dreamBIG™ Consulting**; a media consulting, focus coaching and public relations firm. Now she is taking her “Live Your **dreamBIG™** Life” message to the masses! *Perfect for any event!*

From Corporate Ladder to Life Ladder

This seminar or workshop is the team motivation and inspiration your staff or group needs. This group interactive session asks: What does it take to be successful in business? What tools and attitudes does one need in order to successfully lead themselves and/or their team to peak performance? Michelle delves into her extensive business and team building background to bring you this informative and enlightening topic. *Perfect for Pre-Grad College Students & Corp. Events!*

Radical Reinvention

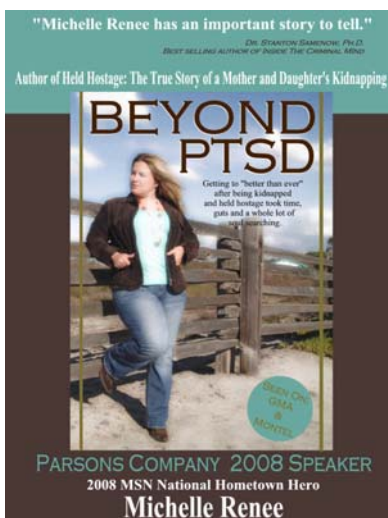
Workshops to Help You Breakthrough Hidden Fears & Self-limiting Beliefs

Michelle: Abused Homeless Teenager. Jana: Labeled Poor White Trash. Together these two honest and bold women who radically reinvented their lives will have you celebrating the gift in every experience we have along the way. Michelle Renee speaks with business partner Jana Fleming in this bold **Radical Reinvention** presentation. This jaw dropping, heartfelt, witty and honest workshop takes participants deep into the heart of hidden fears and helps them breakthrough self-limiting beliefs and into embracing our NOW with self-love to finally achieve what they really want. Get ready to discover your wholeness, dreamBIG and experience a **Radical Reinvention!** *Perfect for youth and adult participants!*

A Woman's Journey To Wholeness Retreats

Michelle is the co-facilitator of A Woman's Journey To Wholeness Retreats. Each retreat holds sacred space for participants to explore the yearning for a more abundant and joyful life. Participants learn a simple processes on how to listen to their inner wisdom, tap into their creative voice and expand their life's vision. Those who allow themselves to go deeply into their own hearts and souls will come away with a greater sense of creative self expression to keep them consciously on their journey remembering they are whole, they are complete. *A perfect retreat for women 18 & up!* www.awomansjourneytowholeness.com

Medical/Mental Health Presentation!





Media

- 2008 Biography Channel “I Survived”
- 2007 Interview with Gayle King
- 2007 Biography Channel UK Final Justice w/ Erin Brockovich
- Montel Williams
- KPBS Full Focus/These Days Guest
- ABC, NBC, Fox 6, KUSI
- Real Savvy Moms TV
- Real Savvy Moms Featured Blog
- Huffington Post Fearless Voices
- Local, National, and International radio talk show guest
- Featured on local news as “expert” on crime Victim/hostage issues
- Featured in multiple major print publications

Partial Client List

- 2008 Center for Child Traumatic Stress Network
- Children’s Hospital
- Women’s Journey To Wholeness Retreats
- Institute on Violence, Abuse & Trauma
- SDSU
- USC-SB
- Center for Peace and Conflict Studies
- Dr. Stanton Samenow
- NYPD Bomb Squad
- San Diego Rotary
- San Diego District Attorney’s Office

Achievements

- 2008 International Conference on Violence, Abuse and Trauma
- 2008 International Woman’s Journey to Wholeness Retreats
- 2008 Chicago Child Trauma Center Survivor Wall
- 2007 Woman of Distinction Award Recipient
- National motivational speaker and crime victim advocate
- Founder of Violent Trauma Awareness Project
- 2006 Points of Light Award
- 2005 San Diego Leadership Award
- 2004 Citizen of Courage Award
- Faculty Member for the 18th & 20th Annual Children’s Hospital Conference
- 2004 ICAN Conference Presenter
- Key note & Award Presenter for NYPD Bomb Squad Centennial Celebration



Representation:

The Parsons Company, Inc.
Phyllis Parsons
(925) 934-5300
P_parsons2001@yahoo.com

www.Michelle-Renee.com

Testimonials



“A few nights ago, I finished reading your book...egads, what an experience you have had! I just love how you have taken such a positive approach to your life and all that it has brought to you...you are amazing. I especially loved reading about your healing trip to Alaska when you drove up by yourself!!! That trip was incredible...It is so awesome that you listen to that inner voice of wisdom!!! I don't know when our paths will cross again...but I look forward to it :) Give your daughter a great big hug from us...she is also amazing!
-Cathy

“Michelle Renee has written a very compelling book detailing her and her daughter's traumatic victimization. But instead of hiding from it, she became a spokesperson for Violent Crime Awareness and now offers hope and encouragement to others who have experienced similar events in their lives. There is no higher virtue.” *June 28, 2008* [Angie Callahan](#), *Advertising Director, Daily Press*

“Michelle is a powerful and heartfelt speaker. She touches everyone who hears her speak. She is a motivational speaker who never fails to motivate and inspire. Bobbi Frank President, The Frank Production Company” *July 6, 2008* [Bobbi Frank](#), *Manager of Special Events, The hollywood Reporter*

“I had the privilege of working with Michelle when she was organizing her business. She is a bright, talented, energetic, detail-oriented entrepreneur who is dedicated and passionate about her work!” *July 2, 2008* [Nancy Russian](#), *Owner, Business Strategies to Success*

“Michelle is a fabulous woman that brings great knowledge to the table. She has experienced in the real world what she is speaking of and it shows her big heart. She is a highly motivated speaker that passes her inspiration out to her audience in full force. Her books are education as well as an incentive to drive you to your fullest potential. I highly recommend her as a speaker and an author.” *June 30, 2008* [Deana Carter](#), *Owner, Carter Financial*

“Michelle Renee has an inspiring story of survival as a victim-survivor of violent crime. We have worked together promoting restorative justice via The Justice & Reconciliation Project (JRP). She proved to be an excellent speaker when part of a panel of victim-survivors also telling of their reasons for supporting restorative justice, a new vision of reform for the criminal justice system in the U.S. Michelle is an over-comer who is compassionate and committed to positive change.” *June 30, 2008* [Lisa Rea](#), *President and Founder, The Justice & Reconciliation Project (JRP)*

“Michelle has a passion for empowering women and helping them to reach for their dreams. Through her personal story in "Held Hostage" she's been able to take that horrific experience and turn it around for something good.” *June 29, 2008* [Tricia Van Dockum](#), *Owner, Ollie Media*

“Michelle is an inspired speaker with a depth of knowledge. She moved our group of ex-offenders to self-reflection...not an easy task.” *June 28, 2008* **Top qualities:** Great Results, Expert, High Integrity [Deke Simon](#) hired Michelle as a speaker in educational documentary in 2006

“Michelle has lived her life fully, and at times harshly, but has risen above adversity. She has an extraordinary story to tell and she tells it well.” *June 28, 2008* [Tony Seton](#), *Executive Producer, Tony Seton Communications*

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 21, 2008

Author Avail in Chicago July 28-31

MEDIA CONTACTS

Phyllis Parsons

925-934-5300

PR@Michelle-Renee.com

BOOK HELD HOSTAGE BY MICHELLE RENEE TO BE LIFETIME MOVIE AUTHOR HONORED ON CHICAGO SURVIVOR WALL

Michelle Renee is the Newest Member of Chicago Trauma Center Survivor Wall and Joins Maya Angelou and Commissioner Of Chicago's Department Of Mental Health, Dr. Terry Mason

San Diego, CA – The La Rabida Child Trauma Center at Children's Hospital in Chicago is taking steps to help give those they treat hope and inspiration for a brighter future with the announcement of their "Survivor Wall". Newest honoree, Michelle Renee, courageously penned a harrowing and inspiring true story of overcoming the devastating kidnapping of her and her 7 year-old daughter, 14 hours held hostage and bank robbery ordeal. Her book, *Held Hostage: The True Story of a Mother and Daughter's Kidnapping* also shares the child abuse and domestic violence she endured growing up and the triumph over all that keeps us tethered to negative experiences. *Held Hostage* is a powerful and inspiring story that is now being adapted for film and will be released as a Lifetime premier movie in May 2009.

"By showcasing the words and stories of adult survivors of violent childhood trauma," say Chicago Child Trauma Center Project Director Bradley C. Stolbach, Ph.D. "Kids visiting the Chicago Child Trauma Center are able to see for themselves that they can have a future filled with success as penned by those who have shared their journey publicly and have graciously accepted our invitation to be added to the first ever Survivor Wall. Michelle has been such an inspiration and we appreciate her work and support."

Michelle Renee is the Founder of The Violent Trauma Awareness and Rock To Stop Violence, an annual rock and roll music and art event that brings together those who stand united against violence. "It is like a fire has ignited inside of me and I found my calling and am able to be a strong role model for my daughter and others through tragedy," says Michelle Renee. "It is such a gift to be a part of this ground-breaking way to reach out to youth grappling with the aftermath of violence the way we did. I feel so honored to have been recognized for using my voice to speak out about our experience, both as a survivor and as a mother, to help others that have experienced a violent trauma in their lives."

"Her gift truly is her heart and her passion for this work," says Vikki Rampala of Child Traumatic Stress Network and La Rabida Child Trauma Center. "Women everywhere are very interested in Michelle as a woman and are all so inspired by her story, her determination."

Michelle has been featured on Biography Channels original series, *I Survived* and has been interviewed by Gayle King. Her speaking topics include *Beyond PTSD*, *Be Your Kids Hero*, *Hostage No More*, also the title of her sophomore book. She is the creator of *Radical Reinvention* workshops and co-facilitates international women's retreats. Michelle is available for interviews and speaking engagements. For more information, visit www.michelle-renee.com.

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