

your life



“my dad tried to **destroy** my business!”

Rachel, 19, and her dad created a successful company, but while she was doing all the work, he was being *super-shady*.
AS TOLD TO jane bianchi



caught!
Rachel's dad got arrested for his crime.

MAIN PHOTO: TILMONES; FASHION STYLIST: HAIR: ANDY MAKEUP: TIA BEAGAN FOR FREERIRD PRODUCTIONS; PHOTO OF RACHEL'S DAD: BOB PENNELL; MAIL TRIBUNE; SMITH: VENTURELLI/WIREIMAGE; GOMEZ: CHRISTOPHER POLK/WIREIMAGE; JENNERS: ROBERT KESHISHIAN/LONDON ENT.

My friends always joke that I have big breasts. So one summer afternoon when two of my friends were hanging out in my bedroom, I wasn't surprised when one of them picked up one of my white bras, held it up to her chest, and said, "I wish mine were this large!" Then the two of them grabbed rainbow markers and drew all over my bras! I didn't stop them—it looked so cool not to have boring white bras.

A week later, while looking for a shirt, I rushed into the kitchen in one of my newly designed bras and accidentally ran into my dad. As I dashed back to my room, he said, "That reminds me of the Doodle Bear you used to draw on as a kid." I said, "I bet if you could decorate bras with washable markers, people would buy them." And that's how our Doodle Bra business was born!

A PROMISING BEGINNING

We sold white bras and markers for \$15 through our Web site. I ordered materials from a supplier in India and sent kits to customers. My dad handled the money, since he had run a business in the past. We got about 15 orders a week.

My dad said any money we made would go back into helping the company grow. He kept promising me that the business would make us "bazillionaires"! Some family friends, Teri and Dave, and Teri's parents liked our idea, so they invested about \$20,000. So did my boyfriend, Justin, who gave us \$10,000 that he had saved from two Marine deployments. My dad assured them that it was low risk and that they'd profit from owning a piece of the company.

About a month after he got the

money, my dad started going on vacations with my stepmom to Hawaii and Reno as "belated honeymoons." That should have been a red flag, but he'd always been random—he'd given us two days notice when we moved from Georgia to Oregon a year earlier. So I thought: It's just Dad being Dad.

A MATTER OF TRUST

We had run the company for a year and a half and sold hundreds of bras when the supplier suddenly stopped returning my calls. Then we got complaints. My dad said he didn't know what was going on and promised that he'd refund unhappy customers. Our business ground to a halt. I was devastated—there was nothing I could do but watch my dream die.

Then last summer while Justin and I were on a road trip, we got a call from the police. Teri and Dave weren't making any profit, so they had secretly filed a report with our state's fraud division.

“There was **nothing** I could do but watch my dream die.”

It turned out that my dad had stolen thousands from the business and had spent it on those vacations and other stuff for himself! All the evidence was there. I was so stunned that my mouth hung open! Then I cried. He'd betrayed me! I was angry, mortified, and annoyed at myself for being so naive. I was never once suspicious of him. How could I not



luck of the draw
This is the Doodle Bra that started it all! Rachel's business was so successful, she appeared on The View!

have seen what was going on? I apologized like crazy to Justin, Teri, and Dave. I knew I wouldn't get in legal trouble because I didn't do anything wrong, but I still felt guilty that customers and investors had been ripped off. Justin had been saving for a house, and Teri and Dave are having financial trouble because of the money my dad stole.

STARTING OVER

A few months ago, Dad was found guilty of "aggravated theft," and he has to pay back everyone. He even went to jail and was locked up for 40 days. I haven't spoken to him since. Even though he pleaded guilty in court, he's too stubborn to admit to me what he did, so I've cut him off completely. Bringing him back into my life would only be asking for trouble. It's ironic, because he used to say the secret of success was to "avoid negative people."

I'm studying to be a nurse now and planning to save money so I can relaunch the company in my own name. When I do, I will keep a better eye on what's going on. I have to keep my guard up a little—even around close friends and family—because in the end, the only person I can really trust is myself. 17

ALL IN THE FAMILY
It's not always bad news to work with your folks! These celebs love their momagers!

Selena Gomez
Selena always consults her mom, Mandy, and says she keeps her down-to-earth.

Kendall & Kylie Jenner
Kendall and Kylie don't make career moves without first asking their mom, Kris.

Willow Smith
Willow's mom, Jada, oversees her projects and shares advice.

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