

## REAL?

What is it to be real? Often in the the subculture and prison-culture the word "real" gets thrown about to describe someone that's deep in the "Game". For those that are not familiar with the "Game", I'll break it down briefly: living outside of the law promulgated by established authority, in an effort to get a "piece of the pie", by any means necessary. Being "true" or "real" to the "Game", means one that lives within this particular life-style, maintaining a set code of ethics, known as the "G-Code"---if caught, don't snitch on your crew; never call the police when others in the "Game" go to war with you and yours; if others take what's yours, whoop you, shoot at you or do any of this to your boys, then you regroup and bring it to them twice as hard; and always representing where you're from.

I myself had led this life-style, but came to a disturbing realization---although there are a lot of people deep in the "Game", most of them do not live or follow the "G-Code". At the tender age of nineteen I was charged with multiple murders, faced Capital Punishment and at just twenty-two years old, I became a resident here on Condemned Row; and it is through these series of events, I've discovered the truth of the "Game".

Foremost, everyone that was apart of my crew turned on me without any hesitation, saving their own behind. Secondly (and this really shocked me), one of the individuals that rolled over, quickly ran a smut campaign against me (on the streets and in jail), telling everyone that it was I that ratted on him and everyone else, finding myself having to prove myself to the inmate population that the allegations was false by having them read my police reports---and even then, some expressed, "man, I don't know who to believe?" Thirdly, one of the "paperwork examiners" that combed through my case to verify my innocence, turned around and wrote a letter to the District Attorney's Office, offering to testify against me in exchange for them taking a year off of his two year prison sentence---wait...what?! Okay, obviously these people weren't "real", but surely prison would be a lot different, right? Not really.

'All right! Prison!' I thought, excitedly arriving at San Quentin's



entrance. 'Finally, I will be around the "real" soldiers of the "Game"! Everyone here are straight killers! I mean, I got to step my game up and represent to the fullest!' However, I was dumbfounded once again, as I not only witnessed people telling on each other but became a casualty as well, being sent to the "Hole" behind an informant for six years, while the snitch turned around, notifying everyone in the general population that I told on him and then ran to the "Hole" to hide out---most people believed it, even though I was the one slammed down in the "Hole" (Security Housing Unit) for a 1030 (confidential disclosure form). Moreover, when there's a rat within someone's crew, the newfound philosophy kicks in: if he ain't telling on one of us (his own people) then it's not really telling; turning a blind eye on the rat and even defending him. Although, when someone from another group segment does the same (especially if he is from a minority group that's not liked), then an uproar quickly ensues, complete with fire, pitchforks, and fist waving---even if it isn't true?!

Maybe I'm just not in the right prison, surely it's different in other places? Nope, it's all the same song, though most people can't or won't see it. Why can't they see it, you might ask? Simple, each group creates and projects a hard-core image while utilizing violence as a means to dispute any accusations. In other words, if someone accuses someone of being a rat and the accused fights or stabs the accuser, then everyone concludes that it must not be true. And it is this form of bankrupt logic that blinds everyone to the reality to the point to where they are proud of being in this hostile environment---I was there!---when in actuality, the main reason behind gang or race riots or isolated stabbings, is in an effort to hide weaknesses behind violence, which is looked upon as a **STRENGTH** in the sub or prison culture.

Does this imply that by being "real" is nothing more than self-delusion? Well, let's take a look at a couple of definitions. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines real as: of or relating to fixed, permanent, or immovable things (the subculture characterizes it similarly: concrete or solid). Illusion, thus: the state or fact of being intellectually deceived or misled.



Taking these two definitions we can conceptualize how real a illusion both work hand-in-hand. Those that have dedicated the lives to the "Game" have been deceived! We have been taught to take an illusion as reality, thus binding ourselves to the perimeters of the "G-Code", while the majority works outside this "matrix" staying way ahead of the "Game", always relying on the G-code's "Amendments" (if he's not snitching on us it's not telling and if he's down to fight those that accuse him, then it can't be true), to fool us into acknowledging him as "REAL", "SOLID", and "CONCRETE"

Therefore, my message is for those that are caught up in the illusion, believing they are "real" because they are in fact "keeping real", but heed this warning: the people you look up to, trust, believe in and have been validated by everyone as "bona fide" on the streets as well as in prison, watch out for him, because he may not only send you to prison but have you sitting on a bunk in the "Hole" with an Indeterminate SHU Term.

Speaking In Truth,  
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