



# An Old-fashioned Game Of Telephone

by James Seidler

FLYMF January 2006, The Tapping Your Internet Issue, Volume 3 Issue 1

As I sit, and I spend a lot of time sitting, I try to think about what I could have said. I want to bill the resident? The windowsill was reticent? I need some dill and Pepsodent? None of it makes sense, I know that, but I keep trying all of the combinations I can think of because one of them has to work.

I've tried to ask them to let me hear the tape, but they won't let me. Instead, they just ask me to admit to what they think they heard me say, which I didn't really say, and the whole thing goes into a pretty pointless cycle from there. I try to think of different options—I have to fill the precedent?—but they just tell me, “That's not right, Charles. Why don't you tell us what you really said?”

I know it's not right, because the right one will make perfect sense when I say it. So I keep trying, and they keep asking, and in the end they toss me back into the water cell and let me hang out there until they think I'm ready to try again.

I'm not the only one here either. Far from it. I know there are lots of us, although we aren't allowed to talk to each other. Security concerns. Still, I've found that if I put my head underwater in the water cell and shout, sometimes I can make myself heard to the people in the water cells at the end of the hallway.

“What are you in here for?” I'll bubble down to them.

“I don't know,” they invariably bubble back. Most of them add that as soon as they find out, they'll admit to it.

Some of the tactics they try on us don't work too well. Every now and then they'll send a woman in lingerie into the interrogation room to rub up against us a bit and talk sexy—pretty standard Vegas stuff. The idea is that Muslim fundamentalists, to put it kindly, are a bit uptight sexually and will spill the beans to avoid going to hell. I'm an Episcopalian myself, but I've taken to praying five times a day to encourage them to keep sticking with it or, God forbid, double their resources.

A lot of the time, when they're not trying to ask me what I said, they want to know who's working with me. At first I said no one, but that didn't go over very well, so I started naming my co-workers at the insurance office. That got them off my back for a few days, but when they came back they just told me that I wasn't funny and left me in a room blaring the B-52's “Love Shack” for five days straight.

Well, I broke down after that. I started naming names left and right—family, friends, old girlfriends, anyone I could think of. Sometimes when I duck down in my water cell and try to shout, I'm pretty sure I hear my grandma yelling back at me from the

other cell. She's not saying grandmotherly things either. She sounds pissed.

Lately I've regained my composure a bit with the whole naming names thing. Now when they ask me who I'm working with, I just name my interrogators, which is true, since I haven't seen anyone else for a couple months now. When I first came up with the idea, I was hoping they'd take a couple of the interrogators and throw them into cells, particularly the big, dopey one who pissed in the unit's ventilation system when I first got here. But they didn't.

Sometimes, in the period between when my sensory deprivation goggles are first put on and when I dissolve into uncontrollable screaming, I wonder if I'll ever get out of here. What will the world be like out there if I return to it? Will I still have my job? Will I be able to get a job at all? Will they still be making the double Quarter Pounder with Cheese? Because I could really go for one of those right now.

Lately, my interrogators keep bringing up the fact that I'm going to be traveling soon. They don't say where, but I don't really mind—it'll be nice just to get away for a while. There's one thing I don't get though. All of them keep asking me if I smoke, when they all know that I don't. But when I tell them that, they just laugh and say they hope I don't mind being an ashtray.

Weird, huh? I can't figure it out either.