

# The Game

by Ronald Marshall



In a lifetime, most people will play a game created for sport, fun, and profit, or as a strategy for gaining an end with the participants in direct opposition to each other. The term game is not synonymous with

limits and values, thus upholding social solidarity.

Team Criminal offensively plays the game on America's poorest city blocks where symptoms of social ills and criminogenic conditions ensue. All of this in the face of neighboring statistics such as unemployment, poverty, discrimination and lack of legitimate opportunities. Team Politician defensively plays against Team Criminal on these same socially problematic blocks. Both teams use a variety of moves to gain a monopoly of the cities poorest blocks. Team Criminal uses criminal activities while Team Politician defends their position with law enforcement and moral views.

Every three seconds Team Criminal commits a crime on the block. Every ten seconds the long arm of Team Politician arrests a criminal player on those same blocks. Add the cost of crime and incarcerating members of Team Criminal, these poor blocks are quickly transformed into "Billion Dollar Blocks," as named by criminal justice experts.

Billion Dollar Blocks are hot spots in high crime areas targeted by both teams in the sociopolitical game. Team Criminal targets hot spots to perpetuate crime because of a lack of a solid police presence and because it is more convenient and comfortable to hustle in the 'hood' rather than in gated communities. Team Politician targets hot spots to arrest as many criminals as jails and prisons can house. Both teams profit from targeting hot spots, though team criminal profits are attenuated with significant liabilities.

According to studies conducted by the National Justice Commission, the economic cost of crime perpetuated by Team Criminal has been estimated to cost more than \$674 billion. This cost includes the expenses of victim's lost wages, medical and mental health due to violent crimes, property damage, drug sales, items of value taken during robberies, burglaries, embezzlement and racketeering. Team Criminal has accumulated more liabilities and destroyed more lives and communities than World War I and II, Vietnam, Korean, Gulf and Iraqi wars combined. Six hundred and twenty six thousand African Americans have been murdered on the Billion Dollar Blocks from 1980 to the present. Those figures represent a self inflicted genocide by Team Criminal.

Crime does pay as long as the criminal player does not get arrested. Once convicted, the criminal player becomes an asset to the annual billion dollar prisons-for-profit industry which is maintained by Team Politician. Team Politician has accumulated millions of assets, called inmates, while family and friends of Team Criminal have accumulated

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diversion. Some games have real life consequences. The sociopolitical game is one of them.

In American society, rival groups with conflicting views play mind boggling games in politics, business, religion, government, community, media, etc. The nature of the games played in these fields creates a pattern of inequality, wealth and power that exists in all societies with winners at the top and losers on the bottom. Two particular groups with conflicting views are of interest here.

One view is that of the criminals. They desire to maximize the quality of life by committing crime. The opposing view is that of the politicians who desire to provide a safe society by punishing crime and condemning it as a social problem. These two groups employ counter strategies for gaining an end in a serious game, with consequences that have either positive or negative outcomes, such as reversing financial servitude, ripping up families or tearing apart entire communities all in the name of profits or retribution. This sociopolitical game reflects the goals and aspirations of two teams: Team Criminal and Team Politician.

Team Politician represents the prestigious, powerful protectors of society; the tremendously wealthy. They occupy all branches of government: Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches. They often travel in the company of political pressure groups, bankers and business moguls of corporate America. They use fear mongering tactics to ensure that the public perceives Team Criminal as a constant threat to public safety.

Team Criminal represents those who have defected from social conformity. They are dependant, delinquent and very dangerous. They consciously or unconsciously defy social norms. They assume that the law only reflects the wishes of powerful interest groups who in turn influence the state, to keep them oppressed. Team Criminal strives to level the playing field by increasing crime levels hoping to gain freedom and affluence. These aims often clash with those of Team Politician who must condemn crime in order to establish societal

liabilities called incarcerated loved ones.

Assets are what successful people focus on accumulating so they can build successful lives for themselves and families. Assets are the things people own, that put money in the pocket. Assets will make a person the master of their life while not having assets makes one a slave, who always has to beg, go without and depend on others. On the other hand, liabilities are the things that take money out people's pocket.

Simply put, the Billion Dollars Blocks produce assets and liabilities, slaves and masters. Having generated \$674 billion in cost, Team Criminal should be wealthy and their families well-to-do; but they're not. They should have more assets than liabilities; but they don't. They should be the master of their destiny; but they're not. Team Criminal, at least the convicted players, are liabilities to themselves, families and friends who must provide out of pocket expenses for commissary, exorbitant collect calls, traveling expenses for visits, emotional and financial welfare for fatherless or motherless children.

Since 3.2 million convicted criminal players depend on others, beg, go without, have more liabilities than assets, Team Criminal has been made slaves to Team Politician who have mastered the game by focusing on accumulating millions of incarcerated assets, worth billions of dollars annually.

If the Billion Dollar Blocks have produced more liabilities than assets for a team, then that team is broke or soon will be. Is it reasonable to stay on a team that's mad, frustrated, depressed, and disgusted with themselves and others who accumulate assets? Or, is it reasonable to rebuild the team with a new mindset that could be happy, paid and satisfied with their lives? Isn't now the best time to stop taking penitentiary chances, start getting rid of liabilities and getting more assets? Team criminal can expand their chance of success by shifting the team's paradigm about the Billion Dollars Blocks.

A paradigm is everything a team believes in and will fight for. Both teams have fought over monopolizing the blocks for years. Both teams believe that the Billion Dollar Blocks will produce more assets than liabilities. That belief may be accurate for Team Politician but not for Team Criminal, whose prison experience should make it painfully clear that the Billion Dollar Block is just a more efficient means of reinstituting slavery.

By shifting the paradigm, Team Criminal can change the way it thinks about what's possible on the Billion Dollar Blocks and how they can accumulate more assets without the risk of being imprisoned and murdered. Team Criminal will change from being poor to being rich. Rich is a state of mind. Rich people are willing to go without and sacrifice today to get the skills and means of

production needed to make fortunes. Rich people are willing to be uncomfortable today, so they can be very comfortable tomorrow.

On the other hand, Team Criminal refuses to ever be uncomfortable. This refusal to be uncomfortable with things like learning how to invest or how to run a business leads to imprisoned lives that become extremely uncomfortable by the time they reach their 40's, 50's, 60's. Prison is one of the utmost uncomfortable conditions a man will face, and it's owned and operated by Team Politician.

Check the count. Team criminal is losing an all-important game that will not only make a difference in their own lives or family lives, but also the lives of future generations. Wise up. The objective of a block is for building, not for tearing down.

About the Author: Ronald Marshall was wrongfully convicted for armed robbery and is serving a 50 year sentence in Louisiana's Department of Corrections. He has entered his seventeenth year on incarceration; he's a self-taught legal assistant and unpublished author of several urban novels. Upon his release, he plans to publish his books and launch his own paralegal service, specializing in criminal law, post conviction relief and federal habeas corpus practice. He hopes to create a relief generating engine for deserving prisoners and eliminate the practice of duplicitous attorneys who exalt financial gain over ethical obligations owed to the legal profession. He intends to partner with a licensed attorney whose passion and commitment for criminal justice is strong and determined as his own.

If you have any concerns, questions or comments, you may contact me directly at:

Ronald Marshall #336016  
Rayburn Correctional Center  
27268 Hwy 21, North  
Angie, Louisiana 70426

Or, you can email me at [www.Jpay.com](http://www.Jpay.com). Open an account, add Ronald Marshall; DOC number:336016; Location: Rayburn Correctional Center (RCC)