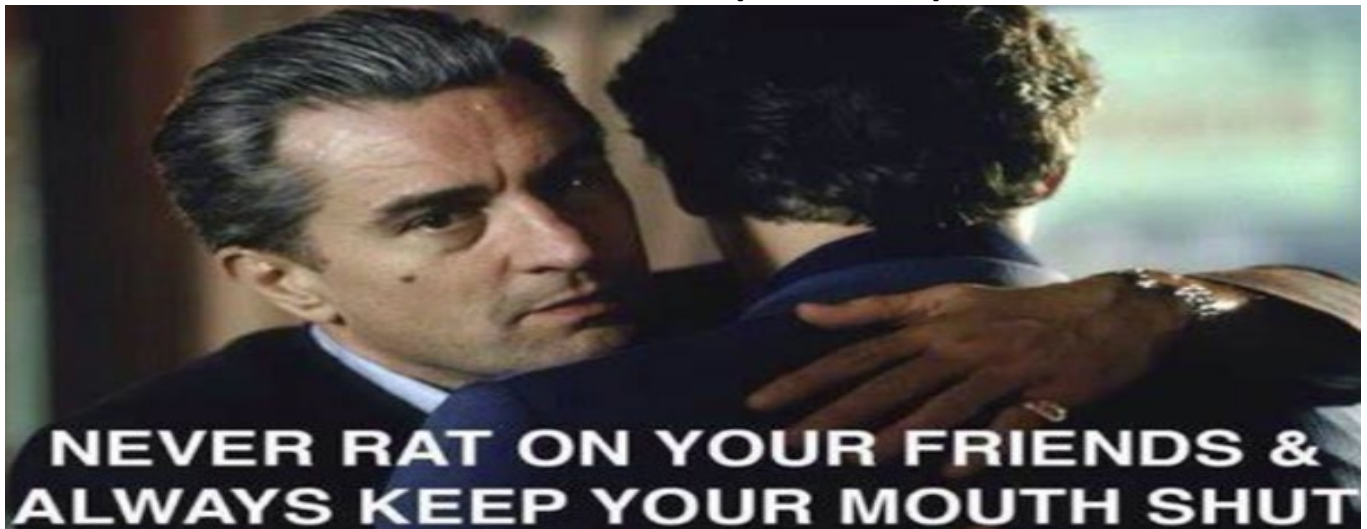


## The DoD Times (Redacted)



### *Snitches Get Stitches: An Uncomfortable Truth About DoD Crews/Teams*

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**Did You Know:** There is an incredible amount of pressure on Department of Defense crews/teams – tank crews, air crews, special operator teams, etc. – to stay silent if one of their members is either guilty of or the victim of misconduct, up to and including criminal misconduct. Crews train and qualify as a team, often a month’s long process, and typically unit readiness is determined by the overall qualification of these teams.

Here are some potential implications of these facts:

1. Crew-Level Pressure: Crew members will hesitate to report misconduct by or against a member of their team given that member will probably be “taken off the line” for the duration of an investigation, thus at least temporarily breaking up the team. The crew members will then bitterly lament that the previous months’ worth of hard training and qualifications were “a – insert colorful language – waste of time.”
2. Crew-Level Pressure: Crew members will actively discourage a fellow member from reporting misconduct against a member of their own team or even a member of another team given the risk of “invalidating” the previous months’ worth of likely hot, sweaty, or freezing cold training conditions.
3. Commander/Leadership-Level Pressure: Leaders will prioritize crew/team readiness – green bubbles and the right numbers in the [Defense Readiness Reporting System](#) – often without understanding crew/team internal pressure to not report misconduct.
4. Commander/Leadership-Level Pressure: Leaders will themselves not report or will minimize the severity of reported misconduct to ensure investigations do not interfere with crew/team training and qualifications, and to keep their bosses happy with the perceived overall high unit readiness.
5. On its face, the DoD incentivizes its leadership to reduce misconduct – this makes sense – misconduct is bad. The DoD does not incentivize, however, the reporting of misconduct and instead is well known for [reprising against those who report and/or are victims](#) of misconduct. Thus, the reporter / victim pays many times over for the DoD’s incentivization schemes.

Our most junior service men and women, like [Specialist Austin Valley](#), pay the heaviest cost for leaders who do not understand, willfully ignore, or actively exacerbate these implications. Commanders/leaders in the DoD are rewarded for high unit readiness to fight – this makes sense given the DoD’s mission – and are also rewarded for

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low levels of misconduct, which also makes sense. High unit readiness and low misconduct are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they are interdependent. Leaders must be aware, however, of the pressures at play to maintain this relationship and not be fooled by or be a part of the [Potemkin Village](#) of low levels of reported misconduct.

If you feel that you have been a victim of these types of concerns, feel free to reach out privately at [francescagraham@walkthetalkfoundation.org](mailto:francescagraham@walkthetalkfoundation.org), or share your story in the comments.

Also, [SIGN THIS PETITION](#) demanding that our leaders in Congress change the DoD's and DHS's Equal Opportunity and Anti-Harassment/Hate Incident Complaint system.

To view this article online, please visit the Walk the Talk Foundation page here: [Snitches Get Stitches: An Uncomfortable Truth About DoD Crews/Teams – Walk the Talk Foundation](#)

Graphic can be found [here](#).