

Dream World

Anton put all of his valuable thoughts onto the internet: Substack, Patreon, his own website. Each day he wrote something about the world he lived in, describing what was wrong and how it could be made right. When he started uploading, he was quickly thrilled, getting hits. However, after a few months, the growth began to level off. Worse, he received not a single response to any of his posts.

If thousands of people were reading his posts, why did not even one or two respond? It was not possible, yet each morning his inbox contained various pleas for money. Nothing about his posts or thoughts. Looking at his online stats, Anton began to think none of it was real. He had Facebook “friends” he never met or heard from. Something, Anton concluded, was very wrong.

He was an experienced hacker, and when he searched discovered there were far less hits. Practically none at all, despite his counters showing thousands of hits. Further investigation revealed he had practically no hits at all. Indeed, when he searched through the stats for the leading influencers, he found the same—practically no hits at all. No one was following them except bots and some insecure people who thought internet advice was a good idea.

Anton realized he was living in a dream world. Shocked, he continued his research and eventually discovered that a handful of influencers had large followings and earned a living from them, but 90% of the other influencers actually had virtually no followers at all. It was all a sham. Which was when two stern men showed up at his door and took him to a helicopter and flew him to a private island where he was taken to a mansion and into a large, ornate room. Sitting at a table as Anton was led to the one empty chair were five men and one woman.

He was told to sit and he did, and one of the men explained to him that, during the birth of the internet, the key power brokers believed people had to be encouraged to use the web, so they installed ongoing protocols that made people think their audiences were far larger than they actually were. The plan worked, and here they were. They were wealthier and more powerful than ever and Anton was busy writing posts that few read. They said they would give him a huge, real audience if he shut up.

When Anton was flown back home and sat at his desk in front of his computer, he thought of the huge audience available to him finally. What would he tell them?

Should he tell them the truth? That they lived in a dream created so billionaires could profit?

Anton sat at his computer, staring at the monitor and the blank page.