Celly Cel grew up in Vallejo, CA, just north of San Francisco and the Bay Area. Marcellus McCarver aka Celly Cel came on the hip hop rap scene in 1994 with his debut release, “Heat 4 Yo Azz.”

Making records with all the best the west has to offer; he is well known and loved in the Bay Area and has a strong world-wide fan base.

Celly Cel has come along way in his career; in fact he has his own record label Realside Records.

February 22, 2005 Celly Cel dropped his seventh studio album titled "It"z Real Out Here”, and features guest appearances from E-40, W.C., Federation, Jay Tee, Juvenile and Hillside Stranglaz.

www.ThugLifeArmy.com had a chance to talk to Celly Cel about the new drop and the Bay music scene and a lot more.

If you are one of the people who think rap and hip-hop is the same ol same ol and all the ‘real’ is gone from it – then you need to read this interview with Celly Cel and buy his album.

The mix of G-Funk samples and modern beats on tracks like ‘WhatuGoneDo?’ will remind you, or expose you to the ‘roots’ of hip-hop and Celly’s word can take you to where rap is ‘real ‘ again.

Check out this interview and look for his new album. Visit his web site at www.cellycel.net and keep up with all that Celly has going on.

Robert – First off thanks for taking time for us.

Celly Cel – Oh yeah, no problem man. Trying to get out there and do my thing the best I can. Lets spread the word.

Robert – Really I would say in the 'intro' to your new album you ask the best question that could be asked. 'What would life be without Celly'? So let's flip it and what would Celly be like without his artistic talents?

Celly Cel – Wow, that's a good question. Probably minimal man punching the clock somewhere, doing something I don't want to do; but doing it to make ends meet. That's probably what I'd be doing man, barely making it.

Robert – The first thing that hit me when I listened to the album, and I appreciated; was that you aren't trying to tell us it's all a party and fun out here as is portrayed on BET and by most major artist. Do you see the 'realest' approach to your music as a plus or a minus?

Celly Cel – I think it's a PLUS, because I think that's the real reason why everybody still supports me and why they support me to this day; because of that. Because of the connections from coming from that angle, as far as being 'real'.

These are things they see everyday, things they hear about everyday and the stuff is not being covered, like you said; on the video channels or whatever; I'm covering those things to keep people interested in what I'm doing.

Robert – One thing that angers me is that we hear so much complaining about how hip-hop and

rap isn't 'real' anymore and then it seems that when something 'real' does drop, it seems that there is no big mention of it; even on west coast based web sites. What are your thoughts on the reasons behind that?

Celly Cel – I think they are just trying to keep up with everybody else. They are trying to stay current like whatever's hot right now; say as far as MTV or whatever is like getting the top air play they want to cover that, or what ever say a Source magazine is covering, to feel like ,ya know , they right there ahead of the game.

But at the same time it shouldn't be about that, like you said; it should be about what ever is a good album, and especially if it's a west coast based site or whatever it is. Whatever type of promotion it is , it should cover the things coming out of the west that is good and shouldn't worry about what is mainstream.

Robert – Well it just seems, ya know , that ya can't make them happy. People whine that there isn't anything 'real'; you give them something 'real' and they just go on whinning that there isn't anything 'real', ya know?

Celly Cel – Exactly, it's like they expect ya to have Dr. Dre on it, or Snoop Dogg on it and it's like 'oh, ok, oh wow this is hot'. It shouldn't be 2 people that make something hot. If it's hot, it's hot give it its props. It shouldn't be who is connected to it ya know; and that's how it is out here; sad but true.

Robert – On 'Thugged Out 'you talk about Tupac. How come you never did any tracks with Tupac, or am I just not aware of them?

Celly Cel – Yea, it's just unfortunate we weren't able to get down. But like I say every time we seen each other we talked, we kicked it and it was real. He always told me how he kept playing my records, and he was really feeling my records; and I was telling him the same thing. It's funny because when he did come out here and he did record a song for 'All Eyez On Me', I wasn't even aware he was at the studio until he left. And everybody was telling me 'Yea Pac was just here'. I know if I was there, I know I would have been on that track with C-Bo and E 40; we all would have been on that track. So I mean I'm not even mad at that, ya know, cause I know we was kool and that he liked my music and I liked his and that's enough for me.

Robert - Are u hooking back up with Mike Mosley anytime soon?

Celly Cel – Definitely, I just talked to Mike Mosley probably a week ago; so on my next project, which will be a group album, I'm going to get some tracks from him on there

Robert –The first single 'I Want You' is currently getting air play, so how has the response been so far?

Celly Cel – Yea we getting some air play and a few stations showing us some love and it's picking up. Just got added to a station in New Mexico, and it's spreading out man. So hopefully we will get a good domino effect and hopefully cover the whole nation with it.

We get a lot of internet radio sites that picked it up, like Bangkok to Germany, it's everywhere on the internet radio right now.

Robert – How is the whole album being received?

Celly Cel – I've been getting good feedback from it so far. Everybody been talking to me or e-mailing me talking how we really needed something like this, especially after all the main stream stuff you keep hearing over and over; so it was about time for something like this to come out. So hopefully everybody will feel that way and go out and support it.

Robert – On 'WhatuGoneDo?' is that a 'Bootsy' Collins 'Flashlight' sample in there?

Celly Cel – Exactly, (both laugh) had to take it back man.

Robert – Yea I had to ask because it's just a sample and I thought that was it. It fit right there man.

Celly Cel – Yea that's a pretty nice ol school track. It's always been a good party track right there, so I just threw it in there to hype it up a little bit.

Robert – Have you ever met 'Bootsy'?

Celly Cel – Naw never met 'Bootsy'.

Robert – I'm originally from Cincinnati, that's the only reason I asked. He's from Cincinnati to.

Celly Cel – Oh ok. I'm up on a lot of his music though. If ya ever run into him tell him that. I still play it to this day.

Robert – What is your favorite track or tracks off the album?

Celly Cel – My favorite ones are 'No Tomorrow' and 'Keep it Real' because of the personal connection.

While I was working on this record my father passed away and 2 of my cousins were murdered a couple of weeks apart, and I spoke on that on those 2 songs. So they are real personal for me, those are the songs that really hit home for me.

Robert – Well I got six that you could have made an EP out of and I still would have bought it.

Celly Cel – That's good to know man. Thanks I appreciate that.

Robert – The track 'Jealous' who are some of the 'haterz' you're pointing at with that track?

Celly Cel – Just people in general that's out here. Like there's people that grow up with you and they act like they cool with you but at the same time they want to see you fail.

So they may see me and do that 'Aw man I like your music and then I might leave and they tell to somebody else 'Aw he weak man ain't nobody want to hear that'. I was just kinda getting at people like that or people that just don't even give you a chance. People that judge you before they even listen to you. So it's for anybody that doesn't want to give a person a chance really.

Robert – Did you produce the whole album and the beats?

Celly Cel – No, No not the beats. I co-produced 2 songs on there and the rest I had other producers come in and do stuff.

Robert – I really like the mixture of old and new beats. That is like a trade mark of yours isn't it, the G-funk influence?

Celly Cel – Yea it is man because like I said I listen to a lot of that; Bootsy Collins, Parliaments type stuff.

That music is timeless ya know. That's where our music actually comes from. We started out with all the samples of all the old stuff. So it's kind of like a tribute to what started off the rap music game for us and at the same time try to let this new generation know about it and then just blend it with some new music and it's like try to create a whole different sound at the same time. Hopefully it works ya know.

Robert – The album has a mix of tracks for the G's and tracks for the Ladies; do you feel you got a real good mix on this album?

Celly Cel – Yea I think I do. I think it's a well rounded album. I think I pretty much covered every angle you could cover. And it's like you said I got something for the ladies, I got something for the people that's out just hanging out in the streets, I got stuff that touches people, real stuff that make you stop and think; real life type of songs. I think I covered everything and I try to do that every time and I think this album shows that.

Robert – Is this a national drop?

Celly Cel – Yes it is.

Robert – Who's distributing it?

Celly Cel – Bayside Entertainment, and that's owned by Tower Records, it's a Tower Company.

Robert – Do you know what the next single is going to be?

Celly Cel – I think it's going to be 'WhatuGoneDo?' featuring Stress from the Federation. The one we talked about with the 'Flash Light' sample in there.

Robert – Any video's planned?

Celly Cel – Yea we might put a video together for it. Hopefully in the next couple weeks we'll put something together and get it out there.

Robert – Do you know for what song?

Celly Cel – It depends on which one receives the best feedback between the 2 – 'I Want You' and WhatuGoneDo?'

Robert – Has 'bootlegging' been a problem so far?

Celly Cel – I'm sure it has but I won't really know until I see the Sound Scan numbers next week. I don't know but I'm pretty sure it has been. I mean it always is now.

I heard a few people move their dates. I know 50 Cent just bumped his date up because of that. So I'm pretty sure it has been.

Robert – You haven't sent anybody up to the swap meets to look around?

Celly Cel – Naw I haven't man. I don't even want to see it. I don't know what my reaction would be.

Robert – You have many great featured artists on this album. To get so many great featured artists to drop with you they must believe in your work. To get a lot of support from so many artists that's out of respect for you and position in the game isn't it?

Celly Cel – Exactly, because I know a lot of times people say they want to get certain people on an album and it never happens. I think that does have something to do with it because they don't know about them or their not feeling them or what ever.

But I've been real blessed cause like everybody I reach out to, they kind of already know of me and they want to do it. It happens right away, it's like 'Yea lets do it', and they come out and do

it; and I really appreciate that.

Robert – Is there anybody you wanted to get on here but because of scheduling you couldn't get on?

Celly Cel – No not as far as artist, as far as producers I wanted to get songs from Rick Rock but we weren't able to meet up because of schedules. But I'm going to definitely going to get him on some future stuff so it's not a problem.

Robert – At first there was mention of a DVD with this CD, what happened to that?

Celly Cel – Yea, we decided that we are just going to release the DVD a couple months later, probably around May the DVD will come out by itself, so watch for that.

Robert – As artist are in the business more they mature. Do you feel this is your best album to date?

Celly Cel – It's right there with a couple of them. Because to me every time I release an album at that time I feel it is my best work.

I think all my albums are good, they can stand neck and neck but as far as like you said maturing, as far as my delivery, as far as just the way I break things down now, it's kind of like yeah I think I'm at the top of my game right now. So I think it will kinda stick out, things like that will; but over all I think they are all good works.

Robert – WC is on this album, how long have you all been tight and how did you first hook up with him?

Celly Cel – I actually met WC when I was out in LA one time, at a studio out there. They have a studio where a lot of rappers come thru there, and he came thru one day and we just talked and ever since then every time we saw each other we talked and exchanged numbers and all that.

So I just called him up and told him I wanted to get him on a track, and he flew out to the Bay Area and got on it with no problem.

Robert – How is your relationship and Mack 10? Plan to do any work with him soon?

Celly Cel – Yea, I would like to do another song with Mack 10. I had him on a re-mix I did when I was still on Jive Records.

Yea I would definitely want to get down with him. Mack 10 is still my homie , we still kool folks, but yea there's no problem there I would love to get Mack on another song.

Robert – What's your take on the Bay Area scene right now? As far as upcoming artist, and the Veterans like yourself, Spice 1, B-Legit, ect.. And how the Bay is on the rise again?

Celly Cel – Yea I'll say we back but I don't think we ever went anywhere. Myself, B Legit, E-40, Spice 1, Yukmouth we keeping it going.

I see the new people out there doing their thing, like this group I'm getting ready to put out called the 'Hillside Stranglaz'. So that's going to be a new group representing for the Bay Area. So we are trying to keep it going, and I think it's looking real good right now because everybody hearing the same thing recurring over and over on the radio; recurring over and over on the video stations and it's like 'what else is out there?'. People are starting to look for different things, and I think we are going to get our opportunity to shine again.

Robert – What about Balance and some of the New Bay people, are you hip to some of them guys?

Celly Cel – Yea, Balance and the Frontline they doing their thing. They are getting major radio play out here so they definitely going to shine to.

Robert – Do you think, as many do, that the west coast artist don't get enough respect and support from radio stations on the west coast, and that is one thing holding the west back?

Celly Cel – Yea, that plays a big part in it, because if you take radio away from any major artist, that artist is probably going to flop 75% of the time; especially if they don't have any connection to the streets.That's basically what's going to make or break anybody, that's why the major labels have it locked up the way they do; it's very important.

If you were to take a west coast artist and give them the same type of rotation that some of these major artist are getting they would go neck and neck in record sales. It shouldn't be that way but what can you do.

Robert – All the time you got in the game, does it irritate you that some of these guys seem to pop up out of nowhere?

Celly Cel – Yea it does but I understand it though from being on a major label that kind of broke it all down for me. Because I know that the major's are pumping out major ad dollars out there. They had all the radios, they had all the magazines, they have all these major outlets, and they have the money to do that.

Independently there's no way you can compete with a major label. I was telling somebody before that a lot of people get a misconception, that they think that the fans that don't know think 'oh, ok this guy on the radio and this guys not, so the one on the radio he's tight and the one that's not on the radio – he's fake. They don't understand that it's promotion and if you got somebody behind you like a major label pumping all this money into you; then your going to get heavy rotation. You're going to get played on the major video stations. It's not about who you see or hear, that doesn't make them better they just have those people behind them. And I try to tell people that all the time.

Robert – Have u worked with any of the young up-an-coming talent from the Bay yet? And what are your thoughts on some of their music?

Celly Cel – This dude named Turf Talk that's coming out thru Sic Wit, E-40's label; I did a song with him for this mix tape he has coming out.

And My group that I'm developing, they have a track on my album, the 'Hillside Stranglerz'. I'm just trying to get them out there, so that's really it so far as new talent coming out of the Bay.

Robert – What's "the Criminals" group situation looking like these days? Have you been working with either of them (Spice 1, Jayo Felony)?

Celly Cel – Yea, I just talked to Spice probably a month ago, he's already for it. He's like whatever; whenever ya want to do it we can do it. I haven't talked to Jayo since, it's probably been a year since I talked to Jayo, but I know he'll do it. It's just a matter of us getting together and doing it. I know it's not a problem though.

Robert – If you and Spice 1 recorded a new album together, I think that would be a much anticipated release. Ever since the track "Redrum" you and him were on, you two make a deadly combo. Any plans for the future with Spice 1?

Celly Cel – Yea definitely man, if I'm not able to put the whole group together with me Spice and Jayo, then I will definitely do a Celly Cel and Spice 1 record. So there is definitely going to be something like that coming; that's coming for sure.

Robert - You and Spice and Jayo need to make another Criminals album, fans would really love to see that. So can we look for another Criminals album?

Celly Cel – I'm hoping so, but like I said it is all a matter of me getting in touch with Jayo and see if we can make that happen; if all of our schedules are right. If the timing is right we'll do it.

The worse case it will be a Celly and Spice 1, because he's easier to get to. Cause Spice 1 is in the Bay Area a lot , and Jayo is always out in San Diego, so that's the reason why it will be easier to get with Spice.

Robert – Who have you been working with lately in the studio outside of this album (Bay, LA, Sac, anywhere)?

Celly Cel – No I haven't done anything lately. I just finished working on this album and I really haven't done anything. Probably like some people around here that aren't even out yet, compilation type stuff, but I haven't collaborated with anyone yet. But I'm sure something will come up.

Robert – Your from the Hillside, and Mac Dre was from the Crestside and there always seems to be something going between the two hoods; where you and Mac Dre kool with each other?

Celly Cel – Yea, the last time I seen him was at the radio station in the Bay Area, KMEL, and he had gave me his DVD and his CD and stuff. That was the last time I seen him before he got killed.

Robert – How did his passing affect you?

Celly Cel – The way I look at it, it could have been anyone of us, because we all go to different cities and deal with different people, and do shows and stuff like that. I mean it could have been anyone of us in that position. It's real tragic cause it affects all us rappers out this way.

Robert – You have been in the game along time. When Eazy-E passed and then Tupac and Biggie were shot and now the recent losses like Mac Dre and Jam Master Jay, do you ever, or

have you in the past; reconsidered the cost of the game? Is it really worth the cost?

Celly Cel – I don't look at it like that, because you never know what people have going on in their life outside of the music. You never know what's going on.

Sometimes it can be a victim of circumstances; sometimes it can be something that provoked it. You never know what the situation is. You don't have to be in music to get in situations like that.

Like I said I know people that have those problems all the time, or know people that have these kinds of problems, so I don't think it comes from the music. I think it is just the way life is right now these days. And it's sad but that is just how the world is now. You can be the average Joe and somebody come by and hang out the window and shoot you to death over nothing. You know, so that's just the way the world is now, it's sad to say.

Robert - If you could do a Dual'o album with one artist from the Bay, who would it be and why?

Celly Cel – In the Bay? A dual'o album? One person? Do they have to be living?

Robert – No, it can be anybody your feeling to do it with. I just want your thoughts. Like to know where you're at.

Celly Cel – Ok, well Tupac man. I would love to do an album with Tupac. I can't imagine what that would have been like.

Robert – Do you ever hook up with the Outlawz any?

Celly Cel – Yea, I just saw the Outlawz like last week. I kicked it with them for a minute; Kastro and Edi. Yea they real kool every time I see them we holla at each other.

In fact they were just telling me then, when I seen them, how Tupac was the first one to play my music for them and how they always use to listen to it. So that's kool man.

Robert - Who do you think are the best producers working today?

Celly Cel – As far as out here on the west coast; Rick Rock, Binky Mack; does a lot of stuff for Mack 10, and he did something for me on my album as well. Of course Dr.Dre, that goes without saying, Daz and DJ Quik definitely.

Robert – I was asked to ask you about a rumor that's going around so maybe you can clear this up for that person. What happened at the club between you and Dru Down awhile ago?

Celly Cel – Dru Down? Wow (laughs), I have NEVER had any problem with Dru Down. So who ever is thinking that or saying that ya can stop. Me and Dru Down are real kool. Everytime we see each other we shake hands and we talk. He respects my music and I respect his music. So that is now cleared up. That's the first I have heard of that rumor and now it is at rest.

Robert - I seen you sporting Oakland A's gear in videos, are you a big A's fan?

Celly Cel – Actually it's just trying to represent the Bay Area; really that's all that is. Actually I like the Giants better than the A's.

Robert – So what's in the future for Celly Cel? Any shows or tours planned, or drops on other artist stuff?

Celly Cel – Yea, I just did a show out in San Jose, had a record release party and preformed there Friday night, plus I'm going out to Phoenix Arizona on March the 11th and doing something out there. And that's it right now for dates that are locked in. I am definitely going to

get out there and do more shows. I want to hit everywhere really.

And as far as the music, I am putting this group album together. My group album the ‘Hillside Stranglerz’; so I’m getting that together now.

And I’ releasing the DVD too next. That will come out before the group album, the DVD ‘Rap Life Behind The Scenes’. And that’s it for right now.

Robert –Well the album has dropped and I would encourage all to pick it up and support you and the west coast. And to BUY it not burn it off the net.

Any thing we missed or that you would like to address?

Celly Cel – Go cop the album like you said BUY IT don’t burn it. The album is called ‘It’z Real Out Here’ and it’s featuring Juvenile, WC from the West Side Connection, E 40, The Federation, Jay Tee/N2Deep, and my new group that’s coming out the ‘Hillside Stranglerz’.

Ya all go cop that ; support the Bay, support Celly Cel. I put 110% in everything I do and it will definitely be your moneys worth every time.

Robert – I got it and been bumpin it and it definitely is.

Celly Cel – Thanks man I appreciate that.

Robert – Any shout outs?

Celly Cel – I just want to say much love to all the fans that support me. And hit up my site www.cellycel.net
. I really appreciate it, lets keep it going.

Robert – Thanks again for your time it is much appreciated, and good luck with the drop. Looking forward to more of that real shit soon from ya, and stay in touch.

Celly Cel – Yea we got to do it. I appreciate the support. I appreciate your time to.

Robert – Peace

Celly Cel - Alright