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Bunkertor Null is an experiment into apocalyptic noir. The story takes place in the near-future, where codename Charlie and his team of mercenaries are pinned down in the middle of a routine operation. Insurgents are trying to break off Bunkertor Null's main power line. But what's worse is: nobody knows what's inside the bunker.

Bunkertor Null

Charlie's Last Day on the Job

Job went south 'bout five minutes into Sector G. First thing we knew, half my team's in pieces, and then its all shrapnel, slugs and hellfire. Should have known. Routine check my ass. Third run since transfer and everything's gone monkeyshit.

Wrong intel, no surprise. Recon scans picked it too late. Bastard fuck rebels, how the hell d'they get their hands on a bunch of LAWs? Just darted out fast as I could. Saw at least one of mine run off. Maybe two.

Coms garbled on the encrypted channel.

Callsign Charlie Actual. All units respond. Anyone still alive? Over.

Back against some broken plaster wall. Half good cover if there's any concrete in it. Probably not. Thin film of dust everywhere.

Nice, cool evening. What month? October?

Fuck.

Sector G. For Galabovo. Or that's what it was called before the Big One. What a shithole. Just rubble now, in every direction for fifty miles: ruins in a world that's just tearing at the seams.

Delta here. Jesus, what was that? Over.

Delta!

Whiskey, copy. I'm ok, heading South. I think. Over.

Whiskey! My point man. *Two*. Only two?

Tango, reading you Five. Charlie, where in fuck are you?

Three! So everyone else is... I can't - OK, keep it together, goddamnit.

This is Charlie. We got hit by some kind of light antitank weapons. Insurgents in the area. Status reports, *now*. Over.

Machine gun rattle echoes in the crisp night air, skies clear and deep blue, like the ocean.

Oh, Anna -

The mission was simple: we had redlights all over some CMC - Critical Mainline Conduit,

which supplies power to Bunkertor Null – some underground bunker they'd built before the Big One. Use it to store secret shit I guess, cause there sure ain't nothing worth squat in fucken Galabovo. Operations Center sent me and the boys to check it out. We figured, easy shamming, there and back in time for buds.

Just a job.

Whiskey here. Status. Uh, TARFU Charles.

'Things are really fucked up.' Got that right. Motherfucker.

Delta here. Leg's bleeding pretty badly. Sitting duck. Can't - ah, shit. Taking heavy fire. Think it's from the office building North-North-East.

OK, OK, think, *think*, for fuck's sake –

Charlie here. Tango, status. Over.

Right. Got my FN-F2000 assault. Standard issue, but I like it. 5.56 x45mm. Three spare mags. Two frag grenades. Not enough. Mauser 80SA, AP bullets, alright, but just one extra clip. *Fuck*.

Charlie here. Tango, do you read? Over.

Come on Tango!

Whiskey here. Tango's down. Met the enemy. Three on visual. West of drop zone. Charlie, get OC on ASAP, OK? Shit - engaging.

And I'm East. Fuck. *Fuck* –
Gotta reach OC. Switching channels.

Operations Center this is Charlie. Ambushed en route to NAV point 801. We need Medivac now. Do you copy? Over.

Nothing. More scrambled white noise. No reception. Gotta get to higher ground. Quick. Switching back.

- upressive fire, sandwiched, this is FEBA, for fuck's sake, Charlie, get that fucking shooter, third floor, second window. Can't get a shot.

Forward Edge of Battle Area. But I gotta get higher. I see the office tower. It's been bombed to shit, gutted out like some fish on a hook, metal rods sticking out the battered grey concrete like bones. I'll get that shooter. I'll bring OC back.

I'll save you guys.

Break-break, this is Charlie. Comlink down. No help coming. Delta, you hang in there, I see the place, I'm on my way. Whiskey, you give these anarchists hell, OK?

I was just rounding a corner when something moved on the edge of my sight. Burst open without even thinking, unloaded fully into the deserted street, chips of wood and plaster flying off. Crouched. Changed mags. Mechanical motions, years of training. Muscle-memory.

The cat meowed like someone'd stepped on its tail.

Ah, fucken hell.

Whiskey here. Jesus Mary Joseph, they're everywhere, Charlie -

In the distance, a grenade detonated. More garbled sounds hurled from the comset.

- Jesus fuck, taking out my Blooper, mother fucking Christ -

Grenade launcher. Whiskey: my point man. God bless you, soldier.

It sure is cold for October.

You know, Anna, I know you think we're all evil fucks, here, and your mother, well she always disagreed with all I ever did - hell, she was right sometimes, but you know, there's times I'd do just the opposite, and then she'd just say I was stupider, so you now...

Modulated screams torn out through the comlink. Could hear the real echo, somewhere off. One click? Two?

Ah, ah! Eat that, you pinko fags!

Angled another corner. Maybe two blocks from the office.

The shot missed me by a fraction. Light caliber. Heard the whistling next to my ear and wheeled left. Old warehouse lining the alley. Half-broken windows where shadows moved.

Aim. Breathe in. Squeeze the trigger. The recoil pulsing into my shoulder, the FN-F2000 bulky against my chest. The windows shatter. Bullets bite through tin plates. Bricks explode

across the walls. And as the last bits of glass fall from the frames, I throw a frag grenade in, run off, changing mags absent-mindedly as the doors blow out behind in a deafening *bang*.

What's wrong with these people Anna? No leaders, no central organization, just crazy fucks out to get us, four out of five continents - and you bag one, Anna, you just fucken slug one of the little shits... and ten take its place -

We sent undercovers, sure. Best and brightest, Corporate said. Bullocks. Some came back - in pieces. The others switched sides.

Me, I got a job to do.

Charlie, Whiskey, come in, this is Delta. I'm running out of ammo. They're cutting me off. That fucken shooter won't stop, get him, for fuck's sake!

Didn't realize I'd stepped on the mine 'til it shot off. Bouncing Betty. Shit - one of ours, from the Big One. Jumps out two meters and then *boom*. Must have been running pretty quick, cause it didn't take my head off.

Hit the ground like a sack of potatoes. Fire clawing up my leg like molten lava. Blood mingling with dust now. Vertigo gripping tight, but I'm not even moving. Metallic hissing through the headset. Is it Whiskey? Delta?

Arh! No, I'll - geh, brah!

Anna, with your sunny braids, and those flowered skirts you wore in the summer, your mother picked those, but I know you liked them – well you used too, when you were little, but now, well, now, it's different –

Charlie, this is Delta. Do you read? Whiskey is down. I'm done for. I'm...

Is he crying?

You gotta go, I – shit, shit!

Everything's still spinning when I get to my feet. The ruins, the rubble, the dust.

What a cool Autumn breeze.

Blood running down my neck. Left leg's just not right. Body armor's shot to hell, some straps loose. I take it all off as I go, helmet too, but keep the headset.

Fuck, where's my rifle?

Switched. Fourth window South-East. Eighty-six that motherfucker!

Grab my Mauser 80SA. Just a Browning rip-off, but I've got AP bullets.

Copy that, Delta. Charlie here. Hang in there. I'm on my way. ETA two minutes.

Round the corner I see the office building, but there's some of them in front. Can't see straight, blood in my eyes. But I know their type.

Lefties. Godless. Dressed in rags, but they all got something black. They like black.

Last grenade flies off in a great arch, it's so beautiful. And then I go in shooting. It's kinda cool, Anna. I just go in shooting like in the movies. Aim. Breathe in. Squeeze the trigger.

Again. And again.

When the smoke clears there's just a lot of blood and strewn body parts.

Changing clips.

My last clip.

Delta, this is Charlie. Come in.

Limping all the way. Can hear automatic fire. That shooter upstairs. It just bursts on, non-stop. Unflinching.

Come in, Delta.

I just got a job to do. Gotta pay the mortgage. Alimony. And everything else. And you don't like what I do, Anna. But someone's gotta do it. I'm sorry you don't want to me talk no more.

I just miss you so much.

When I burst in the second floor, there was so much noise from the rattle I slipped in unnoticed.

There was the shooter.

Fuck.

Charlie, this is Operations Center. Come in. We are under attack. Repeat, we are under attack.

You are to return immediately. We have a security breach. Traitors inside. Do you copy? Over.

Come in, Charlie!

Come in -

She's gotta be about twelve years old. Just like you, Anna. Got some shit Chinese AK clone from the 50s and a full crate of ammo. And she's raining down hell on the ruined city like there's no tomorrow.

So I aim. Breathe in.

Can't pull the trigger.

Charlie, 0C here, seems like the CMC hit was just a decoy to thin our defenses. The rebels are breaking in Bunketer Null, I repeat, Bunketer Null.

Someone rams me in the head from behind. My headset flies out and I sprawl out on the grimy concrete floor. The Mauser slides beyond my reach. The girl stands up, walk towards me. Suddenly they're everywhere - everywhere around.

It's dead silent outside.

Prerogative 0ne. Come in, Charlie. There is a meeting of the World's remaining governments in the underground facility. The bunker... if they get in -

My world whiffs out of existence, one frail voice squeals out, over and over, from the speaker in the headset.

Charlie, we need you!

Her hair's braided, like yours, Anna.

Just like yours.