



Anti-citizen Four

'I'll have to wait here a bit longer - until this god-damned hopper-strike is over..'

Letting go of the button on his pocket radio brought the reassuring squelch of static – something familiar to him. Something else he could understand and quantify.

Another crackle - this one snapped his thoughts back to where they should be. A female voice, intensely stressed, reminded him of basic field training. Except - instead of relaying the properties of ionic equilibrium of mag-flux, the voice was now explicitly barking something at him about Combine activity levels.

Apparently the alert stage had been raised to orange earlier that morning, after the escape from the main platform at Nova Prospekt.

He knew he was aggressive, maybe even arrogant – but he didn't think it unfair to consider that this was not what he had expected from life, especially when signing up as an electrical systems engineer for the Civil Branch. He had originally transferred to City 17 to help fix important machinery like generators, to make things work again.

We all thought the human race was supposed to be starting anew.. Not tearing everything apart..

The radio was comforting - but not much help. He already knew that the combine would be after him - everything had been recorded by the scanners and CCTV – at least until the 'Hacks had diced them into scrap.. If only he had the time to shut them all down before he made the uplink..

But hacking the 'Hacks.. (he had to chuckle) using their own translation field against them - that was something new - something the Combine didn't expect.

Something no-one had expected.

At 08.15 on that grey morning, an entire shipping crate of 400 shiny, super-sharp Manhacks had apparently gone mad and turned on a full security detail of their masters - making a *lot* of mess. The main platform of the station at Nova Prospekt was washed with the stale blood of, by his rough count, at least 60 – 80 combine troops.. After the 'Hacks had destroyed every trace of Combine personnel and equipment – they turned on each other.

He couldn't help but gently rub the PDA inside his coat pocket and smile to himself. Neither could he stop the high-pitched, slightly insane laughter which followed. *Thank Shiva*, he thought, that the resistance had found him and taken his training beyond 'basic'. Messy or precise - this *was* revenge.

Again, that one thought flashed throughout his mind. 'But *no-one knows..*'

No-one on the train knew what he had done that morning. No-one knew exactly what he had saved them from and what it meant - and no-one yet knew the cost - at least the ones that had survived.

The ensuing carnage that morning had forced the few survivors from Nova Prospekt to flee – the fear of Combine retribution and reinforcements driving them onwards and eventually, to part company.

He sat alone now - hiding inside the dark and damp confines of an old drainage outlet, listening..

Flanging in from outside came the oddly calming drone of many scanners, and at least one chopper in the distance. On the outskirts of the city, where he had found himself, the massive tannoy systems were a long way off, but he could still make out the message, echoing a metallic whisper across the wasteland and down the gully of the dry river bed..

"ANTI-CITIZEN FOUR: YOU HAVE CONTRAVENED 92 SEPARATE SOCIAL ORDER CODES AND 400 ORDINANCE DIRECTIVES. (In fact it was 401- they *still* didn't know about the PDA) ..YOU ARE ORDERED TO RELINQUISH ALL ARMS AND EQUIPMENT... REMAIN STATIONARY... FORCES ARE EN-ROUTE TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY AND WELL-BEING AND THAT OF THOSE AROUND YOU... HELP US TO HELP YOU."

The monotonous voice went on to further detail the morning's events and their repercussions – he remembered the tannoy in the train station, announcing his AC ranking going up and up as the massacre unfolded. Four?? FOUR??? – How many other people had killed at least 60 Combine that morning?

His thoughts were interrupted by several outbreaks of gunfire; they were closer than the chopper – but still a fair distance away, complete with by now familiar screams and calls.

'Jesus' he sighed. 'Breen's bullshit gets everywhere these days.. Even those damned Combine whores are spewing it. I thought even they knew better.. "*Help us to help you.*" - Fuck me, more like.' He was ranting to himself again - but he was getting used to it these days and didn't really notice – he certainly no longer cared.

'Sixty Combine heads in one morning – and the best they can send is *scanners*..'

He wondered again about the three Anti-citizens that ranked higher than him - and what the hell they must have done. He wondered about his newly discovered trick: could it really mean the end of Combine technology? The thought sent electricity through his nerves so effectively that he had to fight the spasms running up his back.

Despite all he had done to get away from the CPs - he couldn't help but think it was gonna be a very, very long morning.

Then came a moment of clarity - he knew what he had to do, if he wanted to live beyond this day he had one option.

He had to find the *real resistance* and tell them about his discovery. He had to find Anti-citizen One.

Written for Halflife2.net by Earl Danish

Screenshot taken from dm_runoff with Gmod v8