

Safety On:

A [REDACTED] Report

Case File 4 of 9

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This file requires DELTA GREEN Security Clearance

- Language
- Violence
- Sexual content

ABSTRACT: [REDACTED] 07/20/2021 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Jeremy White, alias "Rooster" [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Charlie [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 13:20 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Davis, California [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] gun range training [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Breckenridge [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

As we get the range ready for the 13:30 appointment, I show Charlie our calendar system. She pretends to let me teach her how to get all the details about what types of guns and ammunition to prep for each stall. It's a pretty obvious charade, but the gesture is appreciated. She's a college grad who studied something other than PE and probably knows more about this shit than I ever will. The extent of my computer knowledge is logging on to Xbox so I can school teenagers at shooting games.

I send her to the back room to start picking up the list, and the door buzzes as someone swipes their badge. The appointment was scheduled for 13:30, but my wall clock (which I made sure is synchronized) says 13:36. If this was the Corps, I'd be chewing them out for not being early, but apparently Breckenridge works on Corporate Standard Time.

Because of the layout of the range, I'm able to get a good look at them before they see me. The entrance opens onto the main counter, where guys pick up their equipment, and there's a security door to the right of the counter that heads to the actual range. There's another security door behind the counter that goes to the storeroom, and my office is off-center to the left through a third door. It doesn't require a badge, but it does have a window with blinds I currently have half-closed, and that lets me get a good view of our visitors.

There's four of them, and I recognize the types immediately. The first is a stocky, ex-military type of South Asian descent with a nametag that says Patel. He carries himself with a stance that says he's constantly ready, but isn't going to bother trying to prove it to you. His slight limp says he had a medical discharge, which explains why he's here. The second one is Butler, and he's a professional bruiser. He probably used

to be a bouncer and got tired of working nights, so he signed up with Breckenridge for a better paycheck and reasonable hours.

The other two are going to be a problem. They're buddies, and probably joined together. They're both just out of high school, and they're the type who spend every spare moment at the gym skipping leg day. The tall one is built like a retaining wall. His nametag says Whittaker, and he was probably the linebacker for Ross, the pretty-boy quarterback next to him. Oh goody. Cocky, invincible teenagers who think they own the world and are looking for adventure. I know the type. Hell, I was the type. This could be very interesting or a royal pain in the ass.

Charlie knocks on my office window, and I motion her in. She closes the door behind her as the guys come up to the counter. "You have everything out?"

"Four Glocks and eight full magazines. It's all under the counter, like you asked."

"Perfect." I don't smile. "Do me a favor and stay here for now, okay?"

She looks behind her at the men through the window. "Why? Is something wrong?"

"No, nothing yet. But could be." I haul myself out of the chair and straighten my shirt. "I just have a gut feeling, and it's not from the sausage. The gun range can be a dangerous place if you don't know safety procedures. Or if you don't follow them."

As they get closer, I hear fragments of conversation coming through the door. Damn, the quarterback is loud. "Say he's a sergeant...too seriously...one mission...fucking loser."

Huh. The asshole's heard of me. This is gonna be fun.

I step out from the office and stare them down. This isn't my angry stare, or at least one of them would be wilting. This is the kind of stare you give a kid who fucked up, just before

you tell him you're disappointed in him. The big men respond to it immediately. Patel instinctively goes to attention, and Butler gives me the slow nod that says he understands who's in charge. Tweedle-Dee and Tweedle-Dickhead (guess which one is which) are oblivious, though Whittaker figures it out, eventually. Ross, the quarterback, only looks over when the other three stop talking.

I don't say anything until they're all looking at me. "Welcome to the gun range. My name is White. You can call me White. If you have an issue with that, you can call me Gunny." Tweedle-Dickhead snickers under his breath. "Is there a problem, Ross?"

"Sir, no sir!" Ross says. He's almost as sarcastic as I am when I'm off my game.

"Did I say you can call me sir? I was a marine gunnery sergeant, not an officer. I worked for a living." Patel smiles a tiny bit. He was enlisted too.

"Sure, Gunny, you got it," says Whittaker. I don't know if he's serious or not, but he's playing along, which is something.

I continue the lecture. "Today is your initial assessment. You'll be using a Glock 17, the standard sidearm we use here at Breckenridge. You'll have two targets with a magazine for each. Your scores will be recorded and used to judge your progress. Eyes front, Ross. I'm right here."

The asshole is looking behind me. He must have seen Charlie back there. He makes an exaggerated head roll to bring his attention back to me. "Two targets. Got it. Sir." He sneers the word with as much scorn as he can. He's used to everyone laughing at his jokes. I just stare Whittaker down expressionlessly, daring him to humor his friend. Apparently Tweedle-Dee gets it, because he doesn't laugh.

"Sir?" I ask plainly.

Ross stares back. "Yeah. I said sir. What are you going to do about it? Insult me and call me a baby to go home to my mama? Your big, scary drill sergeant shit doesn't scare me."

I give him a predatory smile. "No. Because you don't care. You're too cool for that to work, aren't you? You're a badass. You're a private soldier at Breckenridge Security. You're here to shoot guns and tear shit up, right? So why don't you go ahead and tell me what I should do. Remind me, how do I turn off the safety on a Glock?"

Ross scoffs. "Easy. It's the lever by your thumb. Or else it's a button. Every idiot knows that."

Oh, man, I really do love it when a dumbass is so full of himself he doesn't even realize he's walking into the trap. "Patel, would you care to explain why Ross is the idiot in question?"

"Permission to speak freely?"

I like this guy. He's playing into it. "Permission granted."

The big veteran looks at Ross. He's so built that he has to turn his shoulders instead of just his neck. "A Glock doesn't have an external safety, dumbass. It's got three of them. A trigger, pin, and drop safety, but no switch."

Tweedle-Dickhead looks for help, but Tweedle-Dee is smart enough not to offer any. So the dumbass reluctantly stands at some semblance of attention but keeps his weight on one foot to show that he's still got attitude.

"We follow standard rules. Always point down range. Your weapon is down if the red light goes on. Your weapon is down if you're finished shooting. Police your brass. Don't be stupid. These rules are posted everywhere and if you break them, you leave. Understood?" I know that there's a poster with those rules right behind me, and yes, it does say, "Don't Be Stupid."

I had them made up special. I look down the line making sure all four of them understand. They do, even Ross who reluctantly nods. "All right, does anyone have experience with this weapon?"

The big men raise their hands. No surprise there.

"Butler and Patel, you'll be at stalls one and two. You may go check out weapons and ammunition from my assistant. Do not begin firing until I give the go-ahead." I look at my office window and gesture Charlie out. She heads over, ponytail and hips swaying as she walks, and starts to enter company IDs into the computer check out program. Then I look at the Tweedle Twins. "You two check out weapons and go to stalls four and five. You get ammunition when I know you're ready."

Chec kout goes smoothly, though none of the men (myself included) can take their eyes off of Charlie. She shoots me that perky smile, and I give a cocky grin back before heading to go learn dem two dumdums how to shoot good. I show the two rookies how to operate the pistol, taking care not to call out Ross too much. I want to give him a chance to shape up. If there's one way to make sure an asshole stays that way, it's to keep treating him like it. Ross seems to actually be getting it a bit and pays attention, showing decent control as he practices with an empty weapon and follows all the safety rules. I hand them ammunition, make sure everyone has their eye and ear protection, then give Charlie a thumbs up to turn on the green light.

The alarm klaxon in my head starts screaming as soon as the first shots ring out. Ross's face lights up like a kid who just got his first iPhone at Christmas, and he keeps looking over at Whittaker with a "check this out" kind of expression.

Everything goes wrong after Whittaker finishes his magazine and sets the Glock down. Ross takes one more shot, then turns to talk to Whittaker.

I hit Tweedle-Dickhead (he earned the name back) in the wrist with a knife palm and knock the gun out of his hand. It falls with a clatter as he grabs at his wrist in pain. "What the fuck, asshole?" he yells. He rips the earmuffs off his head and lunges at me in that classic teenager posturing. His chest is out and his hands are back with a come-at-me-bro look. All he needs to do is say "hold me back," and he'd have the whole package.

I don't budge. He's not going to hit me. But when I speak, my voice is ice cold. This guy isn't going to respond well to aggression. "Never point your weapon at something you're not ready to kill."

"Yeah, yeah, I get it."

"Do you? Say it."

"Point to kill. I got it."

I narrow my eyes and take a step toward him. "Never point your weapon at something you're not ready to kill. Say it."

"Come any closer, and I'll be ready to kill you, motherfucker!"

Well, that's all I need to hear. He's pointing at me, not punching, but it doesn't matter. He's given me reason to take him down. I grab the wrist I already hit and apply leverage. He turns to relieve the pain, and with a simple sidestep, I've got his arm locked behind his back. He yelps in a distinctly unmacho tone, and I lean into him, putting pressure on the position and yell loud enough for everyone to hear. "You want to kill someone? You were about to kill your buddy over there. If you'd pulled the trigger again, you would have splattered his brains across the wall."

"What the fuck, man?" he screams through the pain. "It was empty!"

I shove him into the plexiglass barrier between stalls a little harder than I mean to and hear a pop from his shoulder. Oops? I lean down to pick up his "empty" Glock with my left hand and without looking, fire the final round. Because I counted.

I slam the gun into the plexiglass next to his face, then lean close and whisper so only he can hear. "You are a disgrace. How many branches denied you when you tried to enlist? Did you try to be a cop too? Was Breckenridge the only place that would take you?" I don't wait for a response. "They wouldn't take you because they know you're the kind of fuckwit that gets people killed. And they knew that eventually one of your own squadmates was going to frag you to save their own lives. Now get out of my range before I put a round in the back of your head and put us all out of our misery."

Tweedle-Dickhead flees with his tail between his legs. He doesn't even try to pretend he's cool anymore as he scampers away, holding his dislocated shoulder.

I hear someone give a low whistle, and Butler says "Ice cold, Gunny."

"Bring in your targets, check in your weapons. You're all done for the day." I spin on my heel and stride toward my office without looking back, because badasses keep walking while things explode behind them. "Then go make sure your friend gets clean pants."

I slam my office door behind me hard enough to make the blinds rattle. Then I watch the remaining three like a hawk to make sure they're not putting Charlie in danger as she checks their weapons back in. After they leave, she takes a moment to steel herself before opening my door. In spite of her forethought, words don't come quickly. She thinks for another long moment, but doesn't say anything because her breath is coming in quick gasps, and she's biting her lip.

Goddamn it. Sex drives need safeties.

