



Bunker Mentality

Copernicus Paul

Mount Wilson Publishing (Oct 8, 2024)

Softcover \$18.95 (351pp)

979-898993470-6

Asked to maintain an impossible level of vigilance against nuclear threats, Cold War–era soldiers are pushed to their limits in the biting historical novel Bunker Mentality.

In Copernicus Paul's razor-sharp historical novel *Bunker Mentality*, air force programmers struggle to maintain sanity while watching out for World War III.

In the final years of the Cold War, Roy is assigned to the Bunker in West Germany to serve as the first line of defense in the event of a Soviet nuclear attack. The primary mission consists of surveilling the Soviets as they conduct war games and preparing for a counterstrike in the event of a real war. The secondary mission for those serving in the Bunker is to survive the constant weight of absurdity, pointlessness, and the terror of every minute spent keeping watch for nuclear annihilation.

Indeed, most in the Bunker treat their positions as a joke. The Divisional Active Personnel and Equipment Reporting System that Roy keeps track of is referred to as DiAPERS. Everyone wants to know whether or not newcomers are “real” soldiers, distinguished by their levels of involvement in flying, shooting, and general destruction. And the dorms feature peeling paint and floors littered with bottles shattered during drinking binges.

Asked to maintain an impossible level of vigilance, Roy and his colleagues are pushed to the limits of their seriousness. Their preparation efforts are the only constant; they play at unthinkable and unprecedented annihilation. And their anxiety is pervasive, such that questions about what's real and what's not pop up in all aspects of their lives, even in their memories: In Roy's childhood, he kept watch with his next-door neighbor, a Vietnam veteran who transformed his backyard into an entrenched fortification where he waited for an imaginary enemy.

The book's conversations are sharp, witty, and intimate. During a trip to Amsterdam, a profane, direct discussion of sex and prostitution from four singular perspectives is a mosaic of American sensibilities, beyond which Roy reflects,

On the ground floor of countless townhomes, behind plate glass windows, sat girls for sale. The sales pitch for each girl was a silent movie, their rooms decorated to advertise their innocence, sensuality, or nastiness. They were packaged as competitively as boxes of cereal in a supermarket.

The critiques of the US military machine and the insanity surrounding nuclear war are piquing. These insights are sometimes impeded by the book's digressions, though, as with its frequent commentary on American culture. Still, even those tirades reflect the book's passionate tone well, and their indictments of US media outlets and progressive policies are humorous.

In the vibrant satirical historical novel *Bunker Mentality*, men living on the edge of war experience the limits of absurdity.

BEN LINDER (September 25, 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.