

# JUMP POINT

A ROBERTS SPACE INDUSTRIES PUBLICATION

ISSUE 01.01

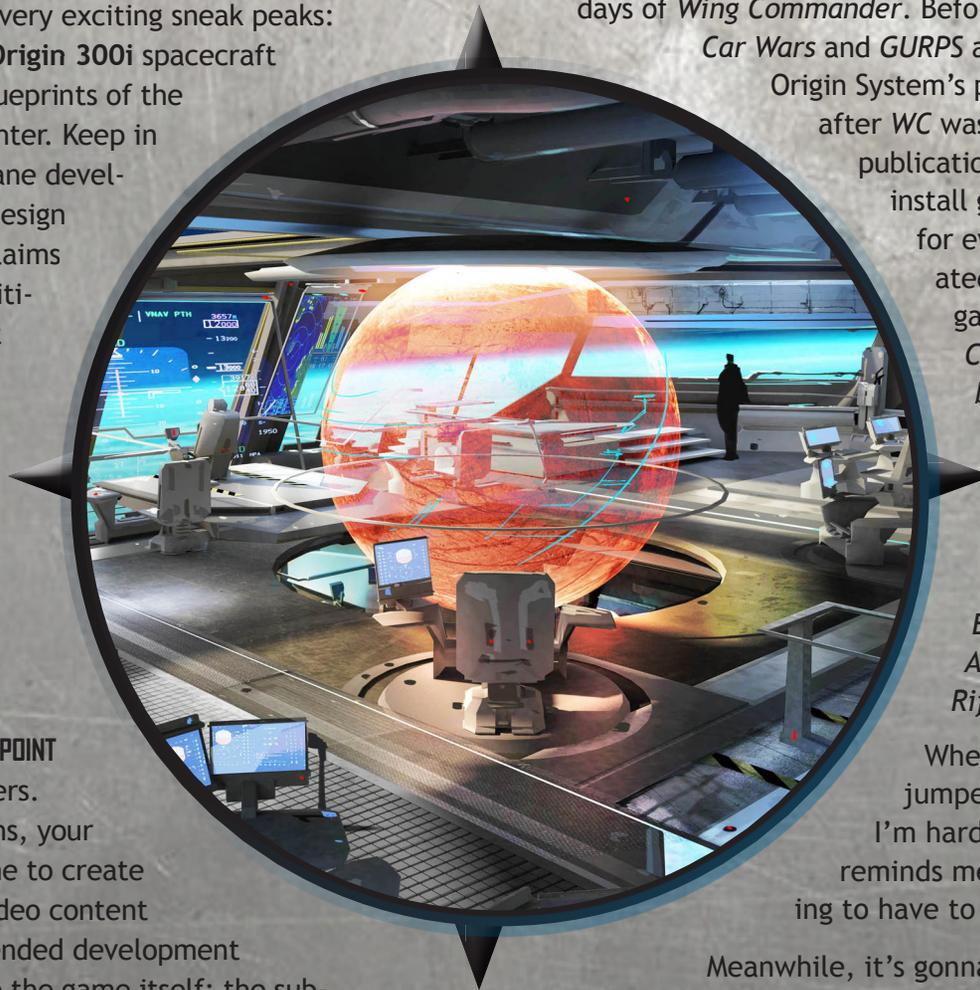
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GREETINGS, CITIZENS! Welcome to the inaugural issue of **JUMP POINT**, the official subscriber-only magazine of the *Star Citizen* development team. We're excited to offer you this very first taste of the content you'll be receiving as a subscriber and we're eager to showcase the latest and greatest from the world of *Star Citizen*.

This month we're offering you two very exciting sneak peaks: the development sequence of the **Origin 300i** spacecraft that many users pledged for and blueprints of the famed **Hornet** space superiority fighter. Keep in mind that this is very early; most sane development teams wouldn't release a design at this stage, but (a) we make no claims to sanity and (b) we feel that our citizen subscribers can appreciate that there are still changes to be made. We also have a behind-the-scenes look at the now legendary 24-hour Livestream marathon and an all-new tale from Spectrum Dispatch (and *Star Citizen*) writer Dave Haddock!

But before we go any farther, we'd like to take a moment to thank you for your support. The truth is, **JUMP POINT** couldn't exist without our subscribers. As you will see in the coming months, your monthly fees allow us the extra time to create updates like **JUMP POINT**, exclusive video content like Wingman's Basement, and extended development features. You're also helping add to the game itself: the subscription fees mean we can create more content for everyone in the finished game!



And finally, let me take a minute to introduce myself. There are going to be lots of people working on **JUMP POINT**; it's likely that everyone on the team will contribute to one issue or another as we make our way to final release. But as your editor, you'll have me with you all along the way.

I'm David Ladyman, and I've worked on Chris's projects since the early days of *Wing Commander*. Before Origin, I was system guru for *Car Wars* and *GURPS* at Steve Jackson Games. I became Origin System's publications manager a few days after *WC* was released, and from that point my publications team put together every manual, install guide, ref card and strategy guide for everything Chris and his team created at Origin (including the *Privateer* games in England), and then the *Wing Commander Confederation Handbook* for the movie. (In between Chris's games, we found time for a few *Ultima* and *Jane's* books, as well.) After Origin, our team (Incan Monkey God Studios) created game guides and manuals for *EverQuest*, *EQ2*, *Asheron's Call*, *Dark Age of Camelot*, *Star Wars Galaxies*, *Rift* and many others.

When Chris invited me to help, I jumped at the chance, and 12 hours later, I'm hard at work on this first issue. Which reminds me, Chris — at some point we're going to have to talk about compensation ...

Meanwhile, it's gonna be a wild ride!

David

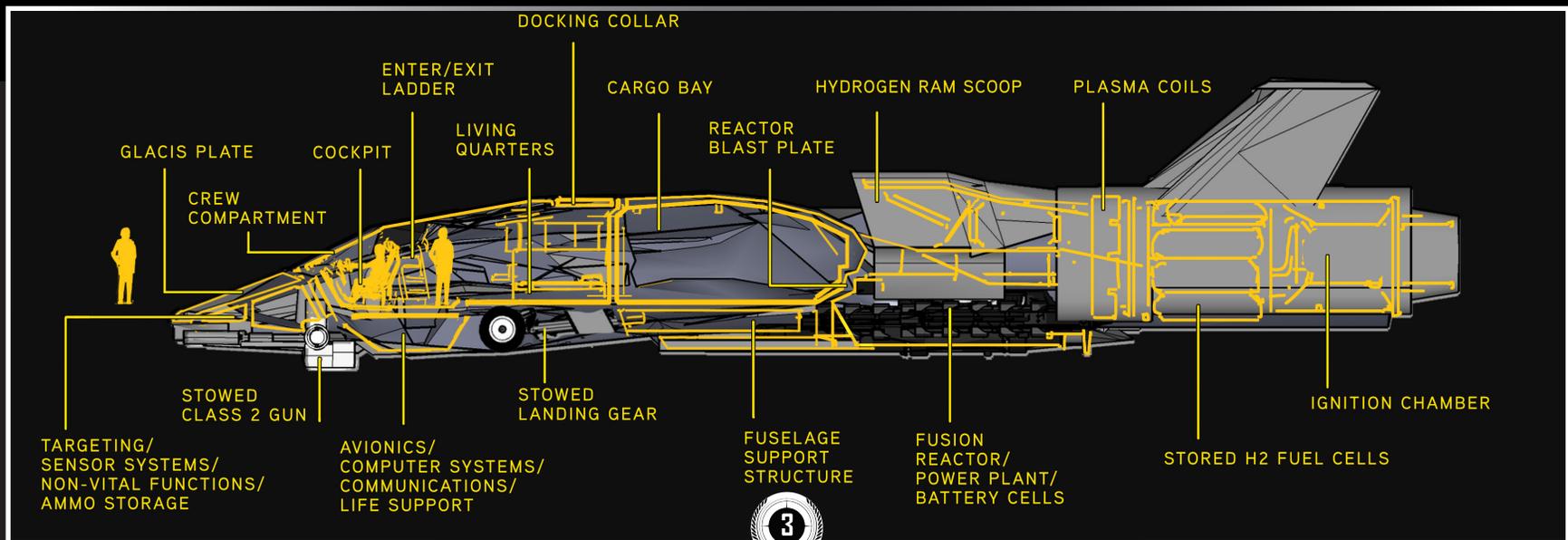
NEXT MONTH, LOOK FOR A SIT DOWN WITH CHRIS TAYLOR IN *Game Changers* (AND MAYBE A FOLLOW-UP IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW IN **JUMP POINT**). WE'LL ALSO HAVE AN INTERVIEW WITH ERIN ROBERTS, PLUS MORE ART-IN-PROGRESS AND A TEAM PROFILE!

# 300i



THIS IS WHAT IT IS NOW.  
BUT HOW DID IT BEGIN?  
SEE THE FOLLOWING  
PAGES FOR THE 300i  
DEVELOPMENT.

ORIGIN JUMPWORKS GmbH  
300i



KEMP REMILLARD, SENIOR CONCEPT ARTIST WITH MASSIVE BLACK SINCE 2005, HAS DONE VEHICLE DESIGN WORK FOR *DUST 514*, *G.I. JOE* (TOYS AND MOVIES), *RED FACTION GUERRILLA* AND *KILLZONE 2*. HE WORKS MOSTLY IN PHOTOSHOP OVER 3D MESHES MADE IN SKETCHUP. WHAT FOLLOWS IS HIS COMMENTARY.



01

THIS IMAGE WAS DONE BY BY ANOTHER ONE OF OUR SENIOR CONCEPT ARTISTS HERE AT MASSIVE BLACK, SAM BROWN.

AS THUMBNAIL SKETCHES, THESE ARE INTENDED TO PRESENT CHRIS WITH A FEW OPTIONS FOR DIRECTION, BASED ON THE 300I'S DESCRIPTION AS A STYLISH BMW-ESQUE SHIP "THAT SENDS AS MUCH OF A MESSAGE WITH ITS SILHOUETTE AS IT DOES WITH ITS PARTICLE CANNONS."

*A LATER NOTE FROM CHRIS:*

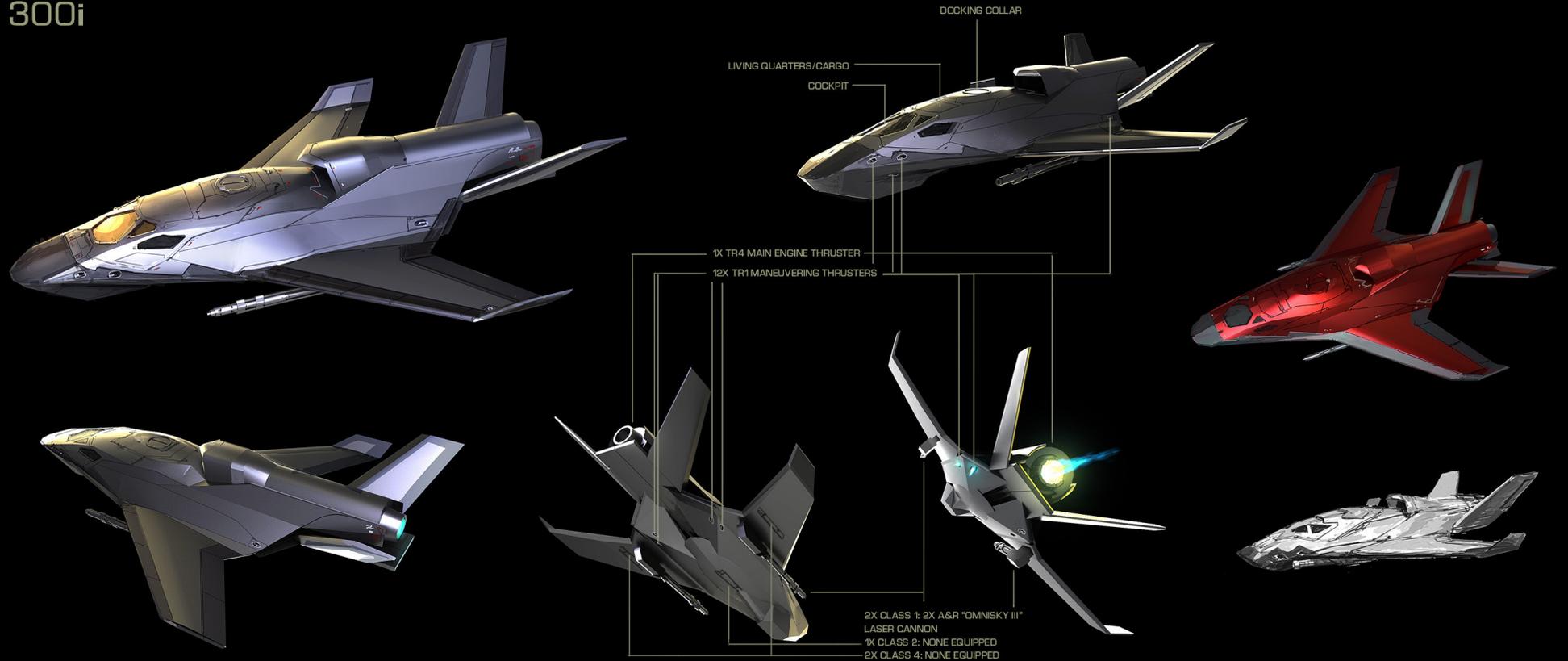
*SKETCHES 1-3 WILL BE USED AS AN INITIAL STARTING POINT FOR THE OTHER PLAYABLE ORIGIN JUMPWORKS SHIP, THE M50, AS I FELT THAT THEY WERE COOL BUT A LITTLE SMALL FOR THE 300I.*



02



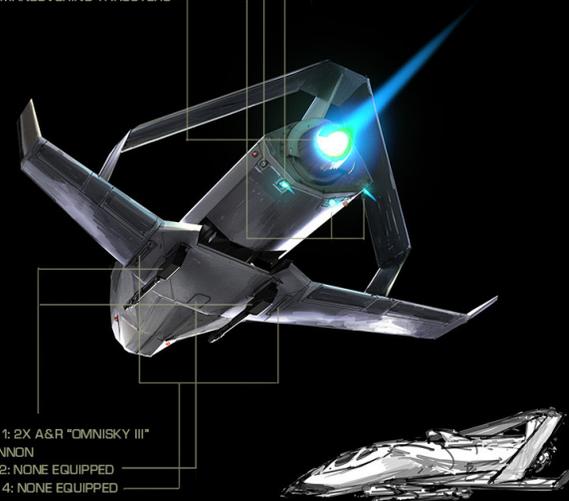
03



OPTION #4

THIS WAS THE FIRST OF MY TWO INITIAL OPTIONS FOR CHRIS. I WAS THINKING OF THIS AS A SORT OF SPACE-YACHT, WITH A TIGHT BUT LIVABLE SPACE FOR THE PILOT TO LIVE IN OVER LONG JOURNEYS. I'VE BEEN LOOKING AT UAV DESIGN A LOT RECENTLY, AND TRIED TO WORK IN SOME OF THE SLEEK LINES FOUND IN THESE RELATIVELY NEW AIRCRAFT ON PLACES LIKE THE ENGINE IN-TAKE AND THE WING CONFIGURATION.

FOR THIS STAGE I STARTED WITH A FEW QUICK SKETCHES IN PHOTOSHOP, THEN BUILT OUT ROUGH SKETCHUP BLOCK MODELS, MADE A FEW RENDERS, THEN FINESSED THEM WITH A PHOTOSHOP PAINT OVER.

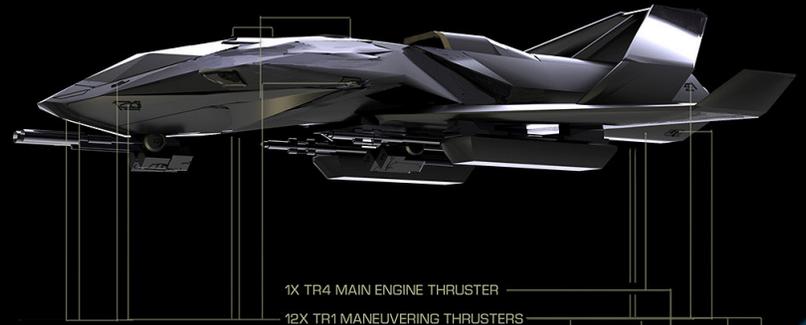


OPTION #5

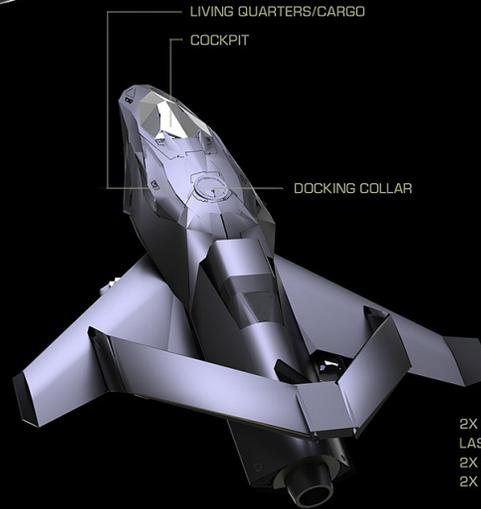
THIS IS MY SECOND INITIAL OPTION FOR THE 300i. IT WAS LOOSELY BASED OFF OF A CHINESE UAV THAT USES A CLOSED-LOOP WING CONFIGURATION. THIS IS A RELATIVELY NEW CONVENTION IN AIRCRAFT DESIGN SO I THOUGHT IT'D BE COOL TO SUGGEST IT AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE NORM.

LUCKILY, THE CHOICE WORKED OUT AND CHRIS WENT WITH THIS OPTION.



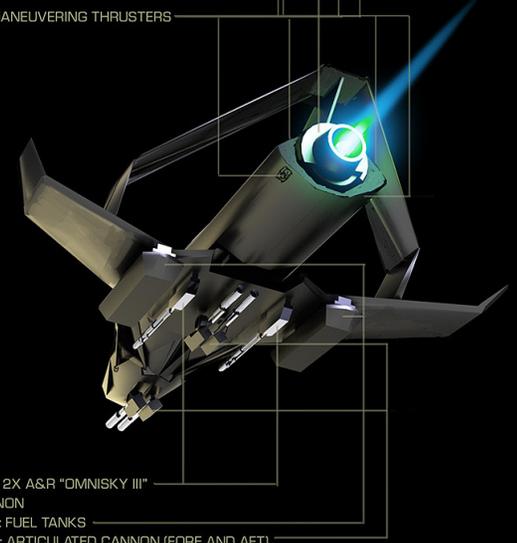


1X TR4 MAIN ENGINE THRUSTER  
12X TR1 MANEUVERING THRUSTERS



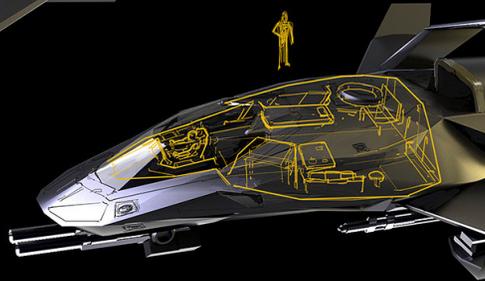
LIVING QUARTERS/CARGO  
COCKPIT

DOCKING COLLAR



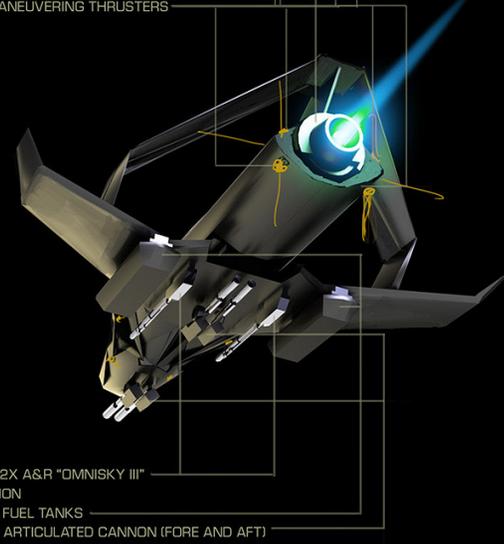
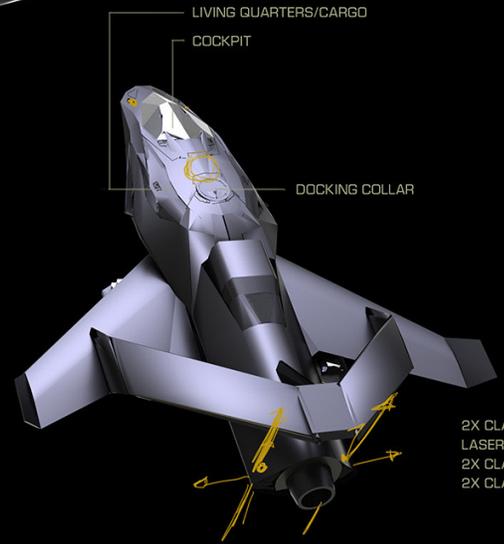
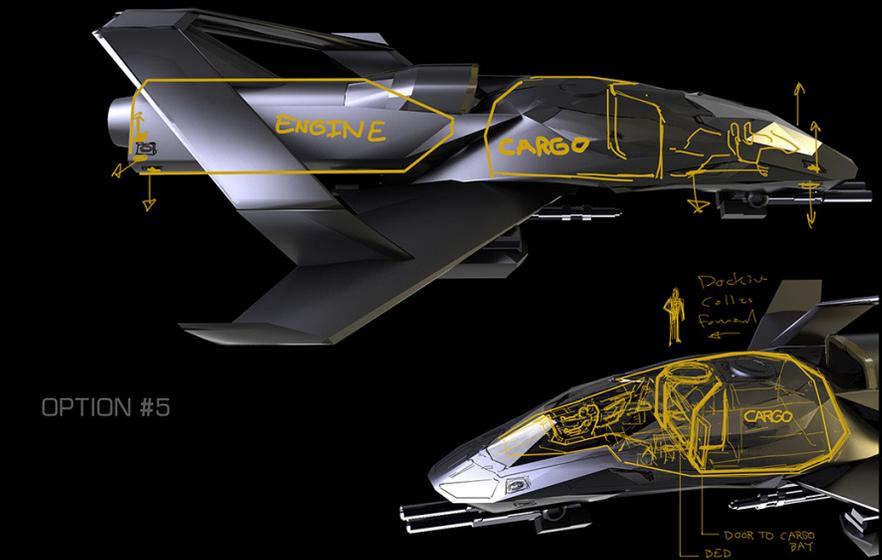
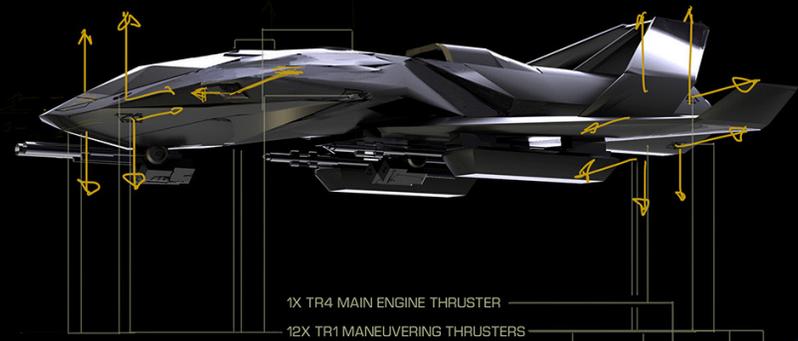
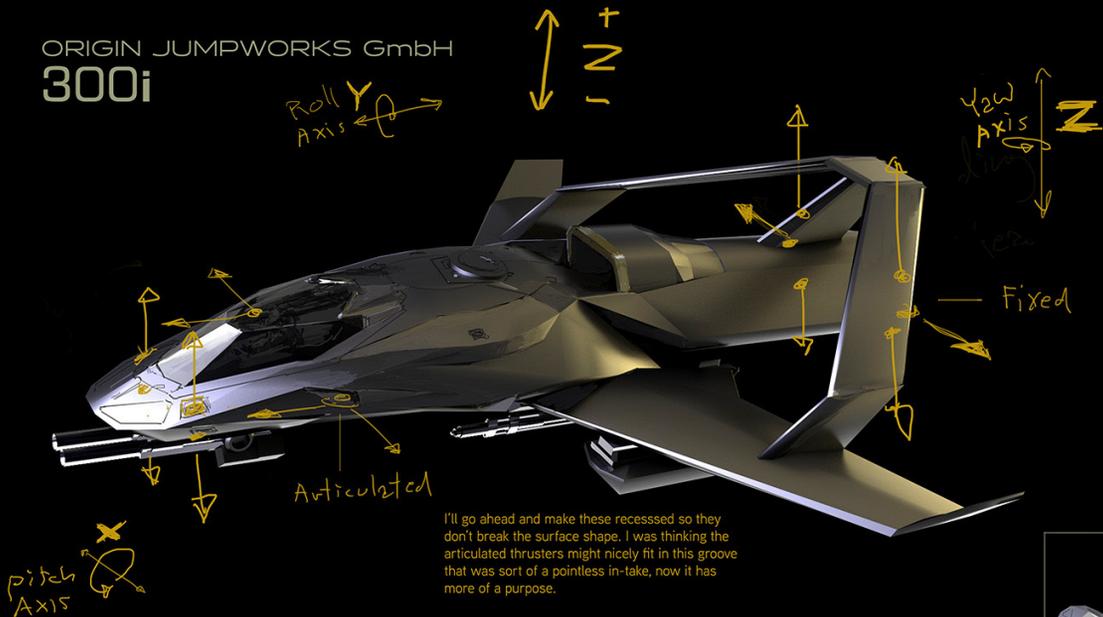
2X CLASS 1: 2X A&R "OMNISKY III"  
LASER CANNON  
2X CLASS 2: FUEL TANKS  
2X CLASS 4: ARTICULATED CANNON (FORE AND AFT)

OPTION #5



CHRIS LIKED THE OVER-ALL DESIGN ON OPTION #5 BUT FELT THAT THE NOSE LOOKED TOO MUCH LIKE AN F-22. SO THE LOOK WAS ALTERED WITH A FLATTER NOSE AND A TILT-DOWN TO GIVE THE PILOT MORE VISIBILITY FROM HIS VIEW-PORT AND STEER AWAY FROM TOO MUCH OF A FIGHTER-JET LOOK. THE CLASS 2 WEAPON WAS MOUNTED ON THE FRONT UNDER THE NOSE, AND A ROUGH INTERIOR WAS SKETCHED OUT TO WORK OUT SOME OF THE INTERIOR SPACES.

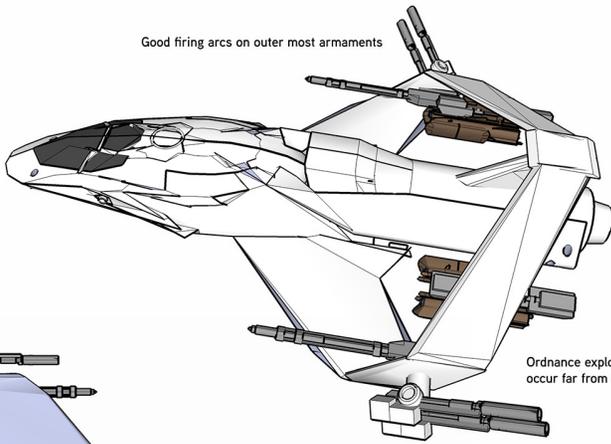
ORIGIN JUMPWORKS GmbH  
300i



AT THIS POINT CHRIS AND I HAD A FEW CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE THRUSTER SYSTEM IN *SC* AND HOW TO OPTIMALLY DO THAT WITH THIS DESIGN. WHAT WE DECIDED ON WAS HAVING 12 MANEUVERING THRUSTERS ALL-TOGETHER (WHAT'S IN THE DOC), WITH 2 OF THEM BEING MOUNTED ON THE FRONT AND ARTICU-

LATED ON ONE AXIS. THESE TWO FRONT MOUNTED THRUSTERS WOULD CONTROL YAW (SIDE MOVEMENT) AS WELL RETRO THRUST FOR BREAKING/REVERSE. THE INTERIOR CABIN WAS REDRAWN TO INCLUDE A LARGE CARGO HOLD AND A MORE COMPACT LIVING QUARTERS FOR THE SINGLE PILOT.

Good firing arcs on outer most armaments



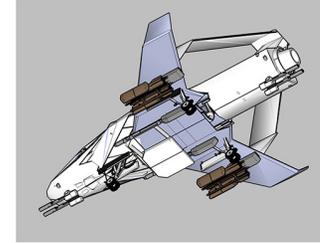
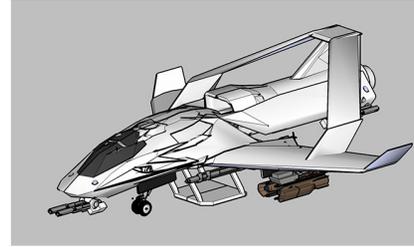
What do you think about using this configuration? This made the most sense to me after thinking more about the function of the wings in space. This is an issue I should have asked about initially and unfortunately made an assumption on. Will actual wings serve a flight purpose in SC? In other words will these be traveling into the atmosphere of planets and need the appropriate flight controls?

Regardless of the answer it got me to thinking about eliminating the outermost wing tips and using the wing-loop as a large weapons rack/platform. This seemed to make the most sense after I made the change for a few reasons. It gives ample room underneath the craft for the cargo doors and landing gear, gives nice and wide firing arcs for the outermost mounted guns, and places the missiles away from the cabin in-case of an ammo strike by enemy fire.

Also, since the wing surface is still there and un-obstructed it could still fly into an atmosphere and make sense.

Ordnance explosions/strikes occur far from the crew cabin

Old configuration made for a lot of clutter underneath and the redundant necessity of wing tips (don't need them because it's space)

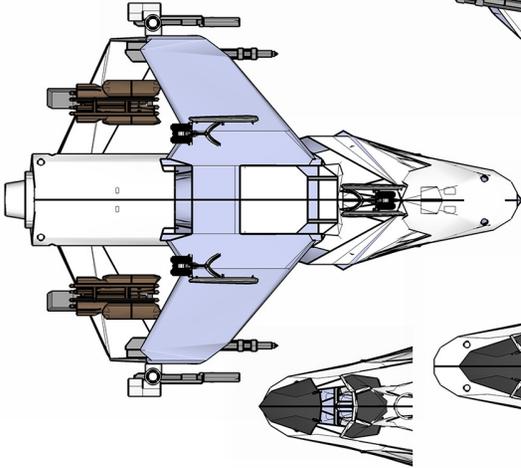


ONCE THE CARGO BAY WAS ESTABLISHED, CHRIS WANTED TO SEE A MECHANISM FOR LOADING CARGO INTO THE BAY. ONE IDEA WAS TO USE AN ELEVATOR THAT DROPPED OUT FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE CRAFT.

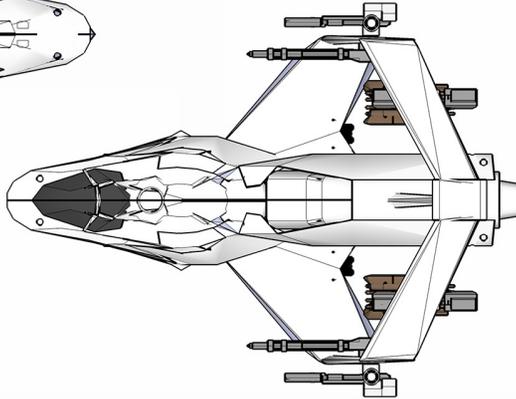
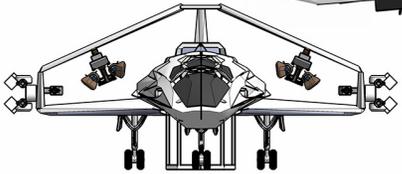
WHEN I WAS TRYING TO WORK THAT OUT ALONG WITH THE LANDING GEAR, I REALIZED THAT THE HARD-POINT LOAD-OUTS WERE GETTING VERY CRAMPED WITH THE REST OF THE STUFF UNDER THE FUSELAGE. ALSO, I HAD BEEN EYEING THE WINGS WITH SUSPICION SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS FOR THE 300i. IN SC, CRAFT DO ENTER AND EXIT PLANETS IN A STORY CONTEXT, BUT THE NEED FOR WINGS AND WING-TIPS IS NONESSENTIAL.

I LIKE TO HAVE ALL THE ELEMENTS IN A DESIGN SERVE SOME KIND OF FICTIONAL PURPOSE, AND I WAS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW BEST TO SOLVE MY PROBLEM WITH THE HARD-POINTS, SO I CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF ELIMINATING THE OUTER-MOST WING-TIPS AND MOUNTING THE WEAPONS ON THE WINGS. ALL OF THE SUDDEN THIS WING STRUCTURE HAD A PURPOSE!

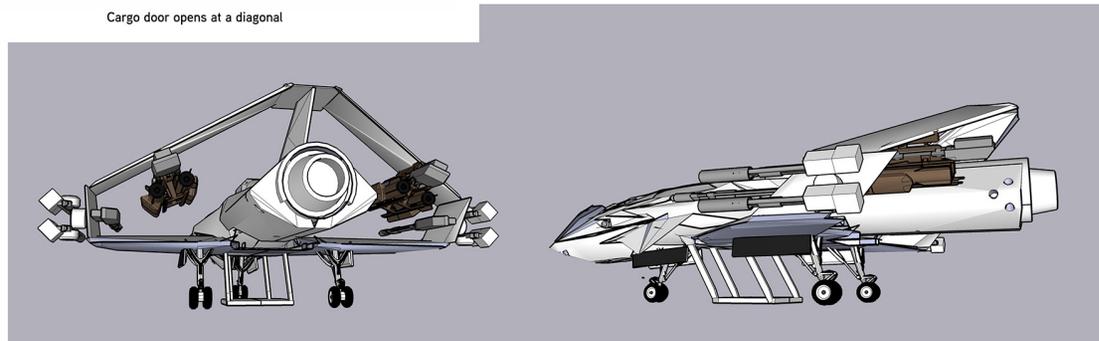
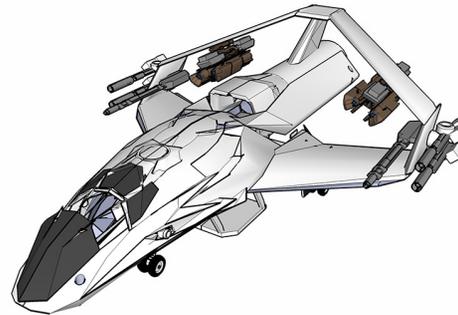
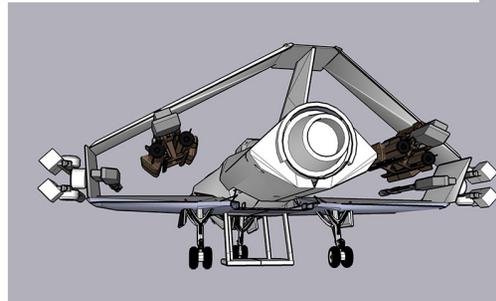
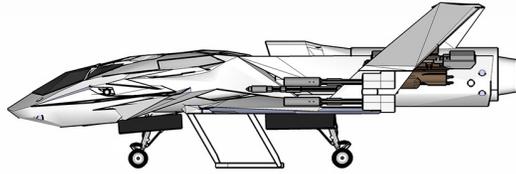
I RAN IT BY CHRIS AND HE SEEMED TO AGREE.



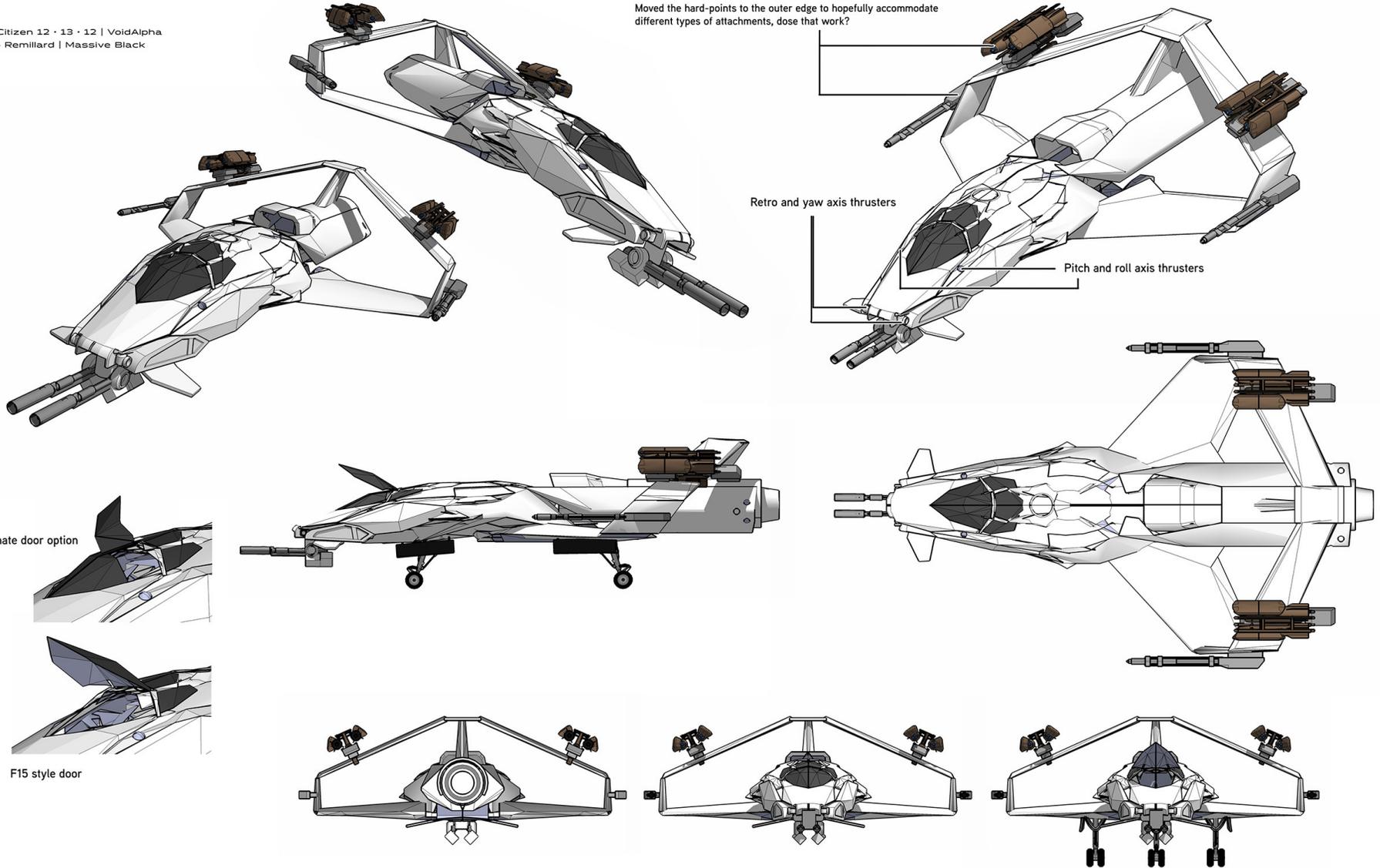
Cockpit door slides forward



Cargo door opens at a diagonal



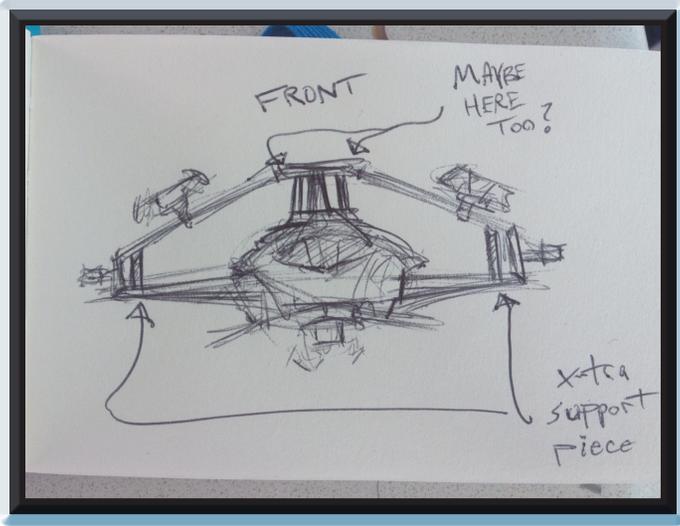
3001  
Star Citizen 1.2 · 1.3 · 1.2 | VoidAlpha  
Kemp Remillard | Massive Black



THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS, CHRIS HAD BEEN EYEING THE NOSE CONFIGURATION ON THE INITIAL #3 SKETCH FROM THE FIRST ROUND, SO FOR THIS PASS A MODIFICATION WAS MADE TO THE NOSE TO REFLECT THAT DESIGN. ALSO CHRIS WANTED TO MOVE THE CLASS 2 WEAPON BACK TO THE UNDER-NOSE MOUNT (I HAD MADE 2 OF THEM MOUNTED ON THE WINGS BY MISTAKE WHEN

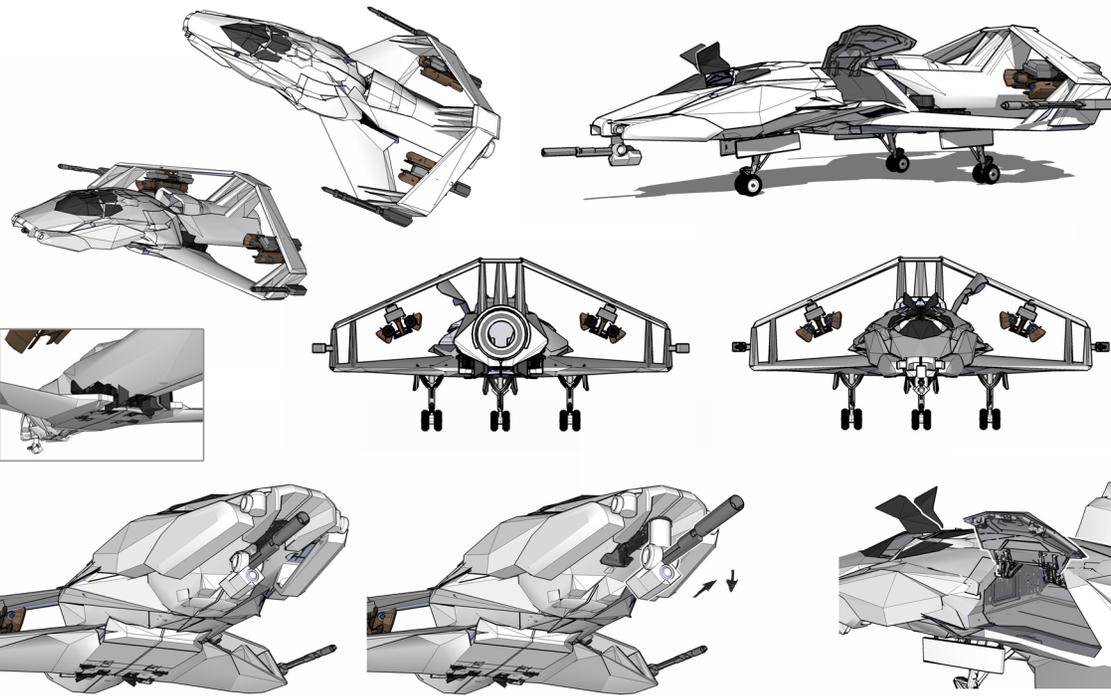
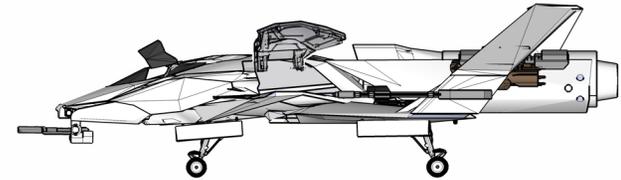
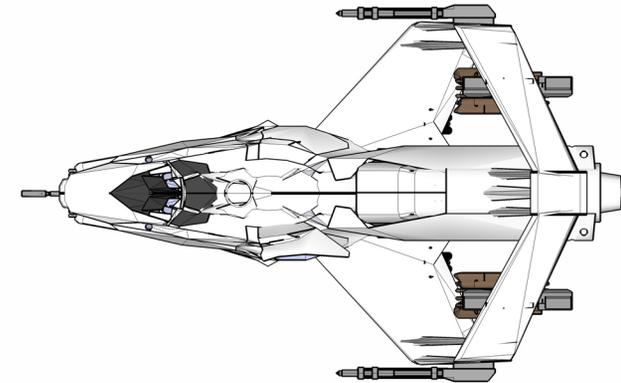
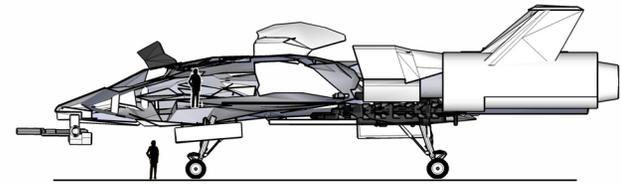
RE-DOING THE WINGS), AND THE CLASS 1 GUNS TO THE OUTER SIDE OF THE WING. I'D PROPOSED MOVING THE CLASS 3 HARD POINTS (MISSILES) TO THE OUTER SIDE OF THE WING TO ACCOMMODATE VARIOUS SIZES OF WEAPONS, BUT THIS SWITCHED BACK IN THE NEXT PASS (BECAUSE IT LOOKS COOLER UNDER ;). PILOT DOOR OPENING OPTIONS WERE ALSO PRESENTED.





CHRIS AND COMPANY WERE FEELING GOOD ABOUT THE DESIGN AT THIS POINT BUT WANTED MORE REINFORCEMENT ON THE WINGS.

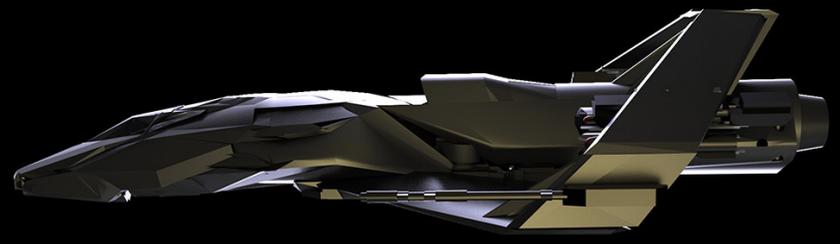
SC PRODUCTION DESIGNER CHRIS OLIVIA PROPOSED ADDING ADDITIONAL VERTICAL WINGS/SUPPORTS ON EACH WINGS AND THE FUSELAGE.



SO THIS BRINGS US TO THE CURRENT CONFIGURATION FOR THE 300i. SOME ADDITIONS AND CHANGES OF NOTE ARE CARGO BAY DOORS (THIS WILL LIKELY BE ONE BUT POSSIBLY TWO), RETRACTABILITY FOR THE CLASS 2 GUN MOUNT, REMOVAL OF THE FRONTAL NOSE CANARDS (DON'T REALLY NEED THEM IN SPACE),

PLACEMENT OF THE CLASS 3 MOUNTS, AND REINFORCEMENT OF THE ENGINE MOUNT. AT THIS STAGE I THOUGHT I'D GET CREATIVE AND TRY TO WORK OUT SOME OF THE FICTIONAL DETAILS OF THE INTERIOR LAYOUT, ALONG WITH LOCKING DOWN THE PROPORTIONS OF THE SPACES COMPARED TO PEOPLE.





SOME MORE GLAMOUR-  
RENDER PAINT-OVERS  
OF THE CURRENT  
DESIGN.



12X TR1 MANEUVERING THRUSTERS

ORIGIN JUMPWORKS GmbH  
300i

12X TR1 MANEUVERING THRUSTERS



12X TR1 MANEUVERING THRUSTERS

**CREW COMPARTMENT**

COCKPIT

LIVING QUARTERS

CARGO BAY

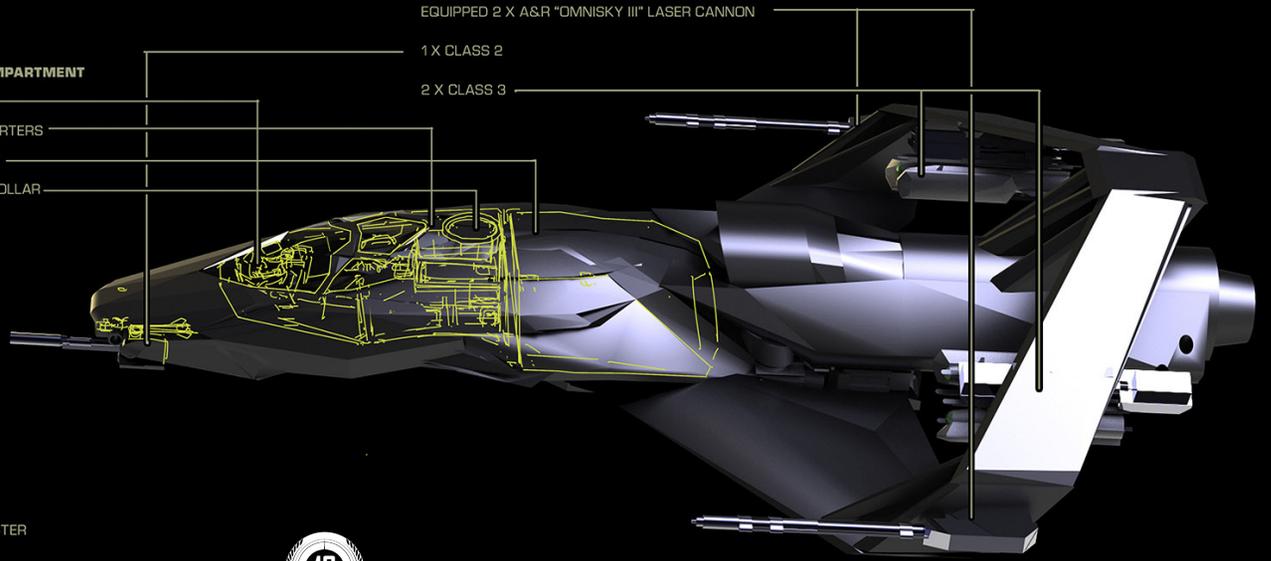
DOCKING COLLAR

**HARDPOINTS**

2 X CLASS 1:  
EQUIPPED 2 X A&R "OMNISKY III" LASER CANNON

1 X CLASS 2

2 X CLASS 3



1X TR4 MAIN ENGINE THRUSTER

12X TR1 MANEUVERING THRUSTERS



# THE 24-HOUR LIVESTREAM CAMPAIGN

NOVEMBER 18-19

BY BEN LESNICK

*In the coming months, we will use this space to tell stories from the development team, about the work we do together and the fun we have doing it. At the moment, though, the team is still coming together and we don't have anything more exciting to report than the story behind how Wingman arranged for our office furniture. So, this month I thought it might be fun to go through the inside story of the 24-hour livestream that many of you enjoyed, letting everyone know what it was like on the ground ...*

In truth, we weren't sure what we were going to do for the final event until the very end of the campaign. Suggestions ranged from having everyone Skype in from home (too confusing) to renting the space shuttle that had recently arrived at a Los Angeles museum (too extravagant!). In the end, we settled on the 24-hour telethon-style pledge drive because we wanted to show everyone how much fun we have together as a team, to prove that this isn't an ordinary development process and also to show you that we're going to respect your investment. No crazy party spending your money to celebrate something we haven't earned yet.

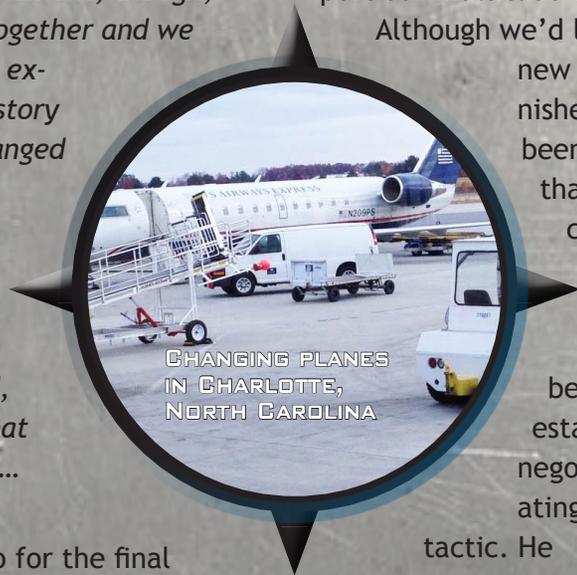
Wingman went right to work, calling in favors to locate a temporary office for the party with an internet connection that could support our multitude of interested backers.

Although we'd located Cloud Imperium's new office, it wasn't yet furnished and the lease hadn't been signed ... and we felt that 'by the way can we come in early and celebrate having millions of dollars' probably wasn't the best real estate negotiating tactic. He ultimately found a developer willing to host us: Lightbox Interactive, the team behind the excellent *Starhawk* which unfortunately had just lost their funding. And so with a scant few hours to go before the big event, I boarded the first of a series of tiny commuter jets making my way to Austin, Texas, to join the team!

I was met at the airport by Michael, one of our investors, an Austin local who had generously offered to help with the logistics for the event. We arrived at Lightbox in downtown Austin early. As we waited for the third member of our troupe, CIG audio engineer Martin Galway, to bring the keys, we chatted with the security guard.

"Hey, I'm curious," he asked, "this name on the list. Is this THE Richard Garriott?"

Yes, I explained and he started on a rambling story about how he'd once met Lord British in New Orleans and that he was a class act through and through. My phone buzzed and I turned to answer it: Chris Roberts was on the ground and wanted to see how everything was going. The conversation couldn't have lasted more than thirty seconds ...



... but when I turned back to Michael and the security guard, he had somehow transitioned from meeting Richard Garriott to an incredibly graphic description of his service as a sniper in the Vietnam War. Little did we know that this crazy transition would set the tone for the next day!

The event started off with a whimper rather than a bang. The setup could kindly be described as makeshift. Joined by Martin and then (soon after) Sandi and another investor (Denis), we rushed to arrange our laptops and webcams. A computer was placed precariously on top of a standing lamp, others around a conference table.

As soon as Chris Roberts arrived on the scene, we very quickly got into the swing of things! Word of mouth spread throughout the Austin game development community and we began to have visitors (how

they made it past the trained sniper, I do not know). Chris Douglas, the man responsible for the look of the ships in *Wing Commander III* and *IV*, was the first guest to stop in. A childhood hero—I memorized the bios in Origin’s playtesters’ guides instead of baseball statistics as a boy—I think I had my first ‘woah, am I really here’ moment as I nervously

interviewed him for the stream.

David Swofford, CIG’s PR man par excellence arrived soon after that.

And then, of course, there was the lamp.

Wingman had arranged for a team dinner next door for everyone and we decided it was best not to broadcast it. Let’s be clear here: you should nev-

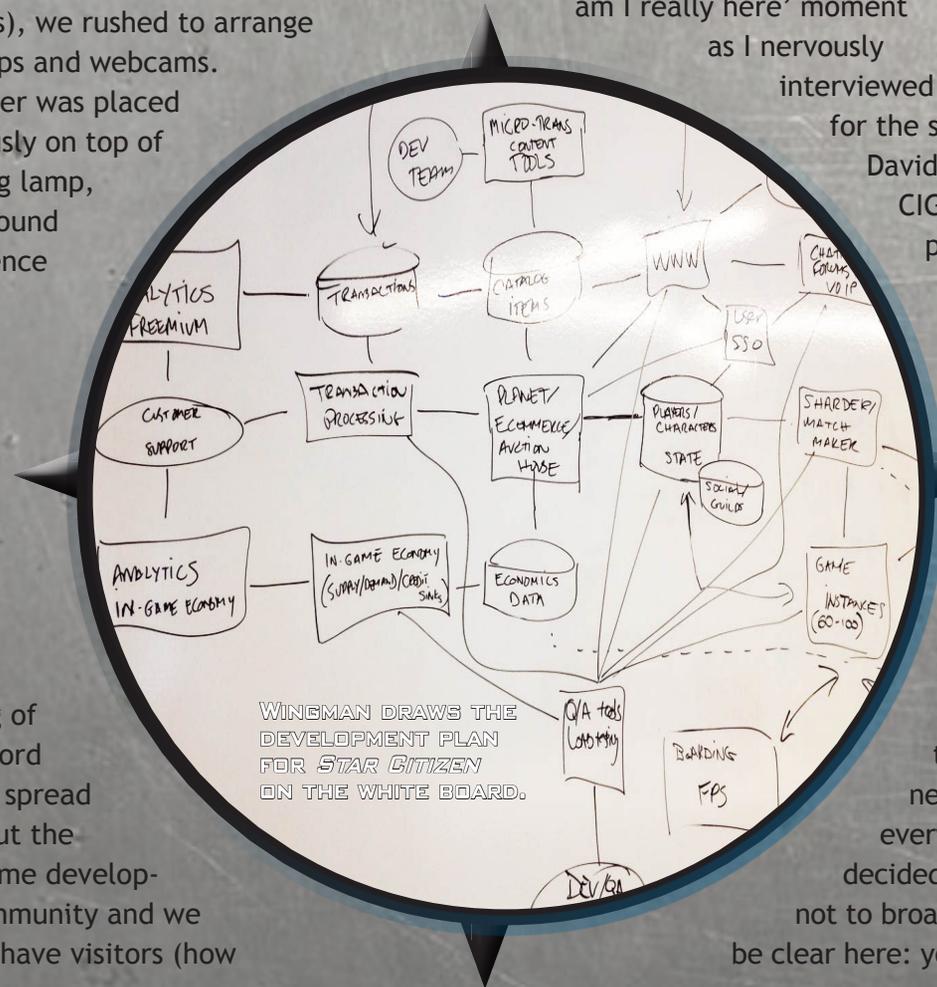
er, even on the best of days, watch me eat. How do we tell the viewers we were going to be away? Michael hit on a solution: tape a little note to a square Ikea lamp (the same type we’d been using to stack our overhead camera on) and leave it there.

After dinner, the party atmosphere took over in a way that it is truly difficult to express. My mind became an insane mix of responsibilities—getting new content up to meet demand

we’d never expected, answering design questions with Chris on the fly and so on—and genuine celebration as we ticked off stretch goal after stretch goal and opened our doors to various ex-Origin luminaries. You all saw Fred Schmitt’s insane LED-lit interview (“He’s like this all the time!” almost everyone would later explain to me), the crazy antics in Wingman’s Basement, like taking your Skype calls live, and Billy Cain’s alcohol-fueled rant, and were likely as amazed as I was.

As the night wore on, we got tired. Sometime after midnight our special guests went home and we were left with a core group of five people to carry the flag until morning when Richard Garriott would be stopping by for an interview. I will go ahead and admit here—unavoidable, as there is photographic evidence—that I dozed off in front of the camera. I humbly throw myself on the mercy of the court and beg your forgiveness!

BEN LESNICK: STILL WIDE AWAKE.



That aside, we had an amazing night, chatting with fans, writing up our funding goals on the white board and just feeding off the lingering energy from the night before. It sounds like a sad cliché, but I will never forget Chris Roberts stopping us to see the sunrise over Austin. It was an especially beautiful array of reds and oranges that morning, a bright new start for our project.

Richard Garrott, aka Lord British and the man behind Origin and the famed Ultima franchise, arrived later in the morning for an interview. Richard now runs Portalarium here in Austin and he had been incredibly kind to lend us his office space during the GDC announcement a month prior. You all saw him appear live with Chris, answering live chat questions together. For me, it was another 'oh my god' moment, reading questions off to gaming's two greatest legends. How did I go from *Wing Commander* fan fooling around with a website in high school to here in a decade?



THE *STAR CITIZEN* TEAM AND FRIENDS. TOP: DENNIS, DAVID SWOFFORD, ERIC PETERSON, SERGIO ROSAS, CHRIS ROBERTS, CHRIS OLIVIA, BEN LESNICK

BOTTOM: MICHAEL, MARTEN DAVIES, SANDI GARDINER, BILLY CAIN

Another more private moment that stuck out happened soon after: Richard, the man who used up so much of my childhood with his role playing adventures, took the empty seat next to me. "Think you have enough Apple power cables?" he asked me, gesturing to the tangled web of white iPhone, iPad and MacBook cables to my left. He then picked up an iPhone 5

connector and examined it, explaining that he hadn't seen one yet. There was something about that moment, seeing him apply his sharpened design mind to figuring out how the omnidirectional dock worked instead of talking about *Ultimate Collector*, that capped the event for me, making it all feel like a bizarre dream.

As soon as it had begun, it was over. Michael had procured a bottle of moderately priced champagne and we toasted your generosity and the amazing future the team and *Star Citizen* now had ahead of it. Reporters had finally picked up on the story and wanted to meet us, so we stayed in the office, exhausted in mind and body but glowing in spirit. Chris answered some questions and we posed for group photos; my arm ended up in Austin's local paper!

Tired to my bones but full of hope for the future, Martin Galway drove me to the second finest \$30-a-night hotel north Austin had to offer. I ordered a pizza and FaceTime'd my girlfriend. "I don't even feel tired!" I remember explaining shortly before everything went black. Twelve hours later, I awoke next to an uneaten pizza.

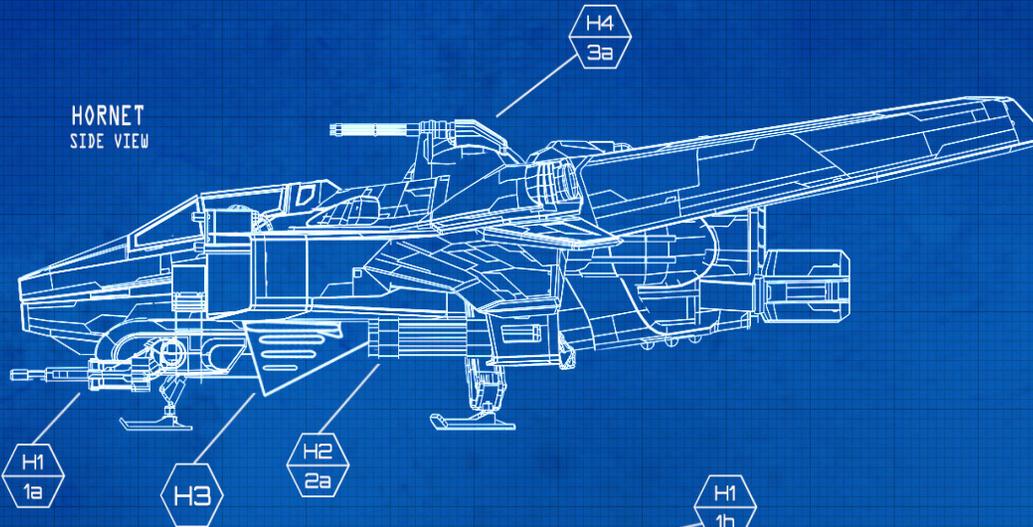
So ends the story ... or, so begins another: a week later I was on a plane to join the team in Austin, ready to help Chris Roberts and the rest of the team build a truly amazing game, one like nothing anyone has ever seen before. I'm throwing caution to

the wind here, trading a steady job in Washington, DC for a chance to move to Austin and help create something I've always wanted to see with a group of people I've followed for my whole life. It's going to be a very exciting ride and I'm both incredibly thankful for the opportunity and eager to share the story!

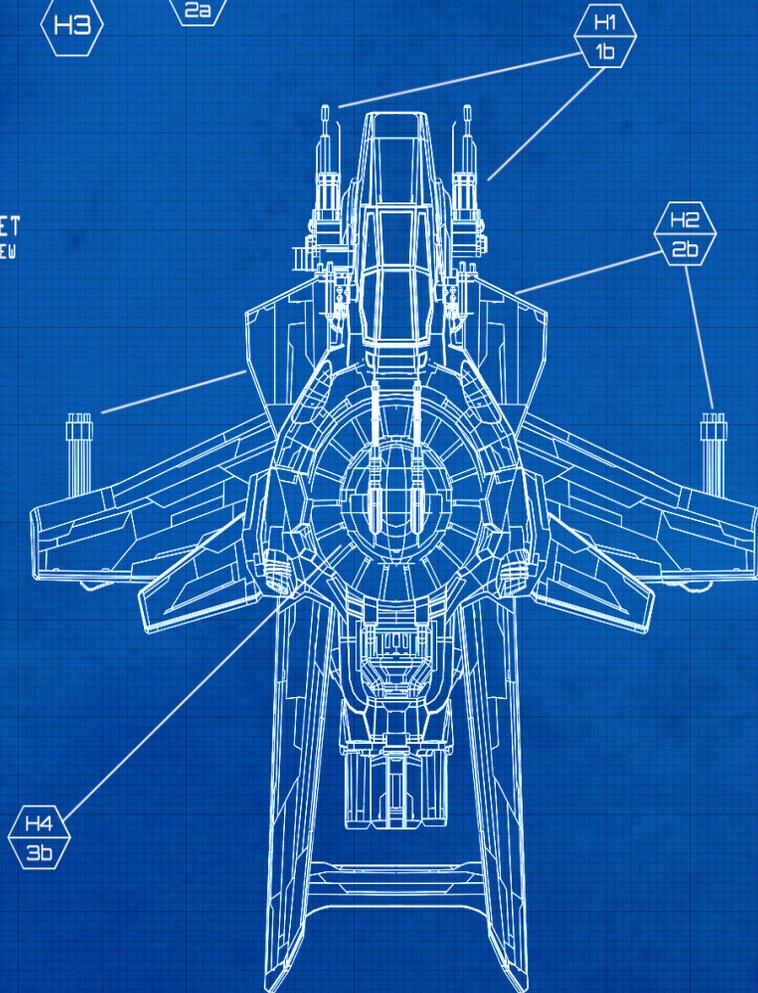


THE SUN RISES OVER AUSTIN, TEXAS.

HORNET  
SIDE VIEW



HORNET  
TOP VIEW

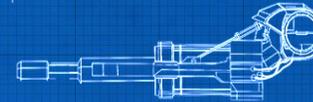


KEY	CLASS	HARPOINTS
H1	2 X CLASS 1	EQUIPPED 2 X MAXOX NN-13 NEUTRON GUN
H2	2 X CLASS 2	EQUIPPED 2 X KLAUS S. WERNER CF-111 LASER GATLING
H3	2 X CLASS 3	EQUIPPED 4 X TALON DEVASTATOR (HS) MISSILES
H4	2 X CLASS 4	EQUIPPED 1 X ASR CANNONBALL TURRET

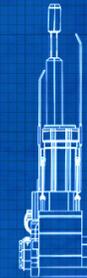
NOTE:

On the military version of the Hornet the two Class 4 hardpoints are utilized by a Ball Turret with twin Laser Gatlings and a Canard Turret with twin Neutron Guns. The Ball Turret takes 4 Upgrade Slots (Its a ball turret or the decreet size cargo hold).

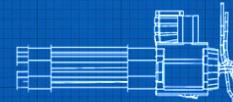
1a  
SIDE VIEW



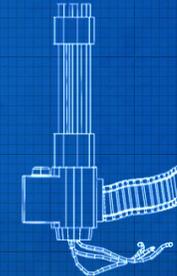
1b  
TOP VIEW



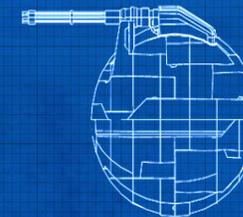
2a  
SIDE VIEW



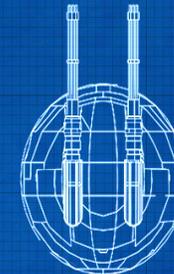
2b  
TOP VIEW



3a  
SIDE VIEW



3b  
TOP VIEW



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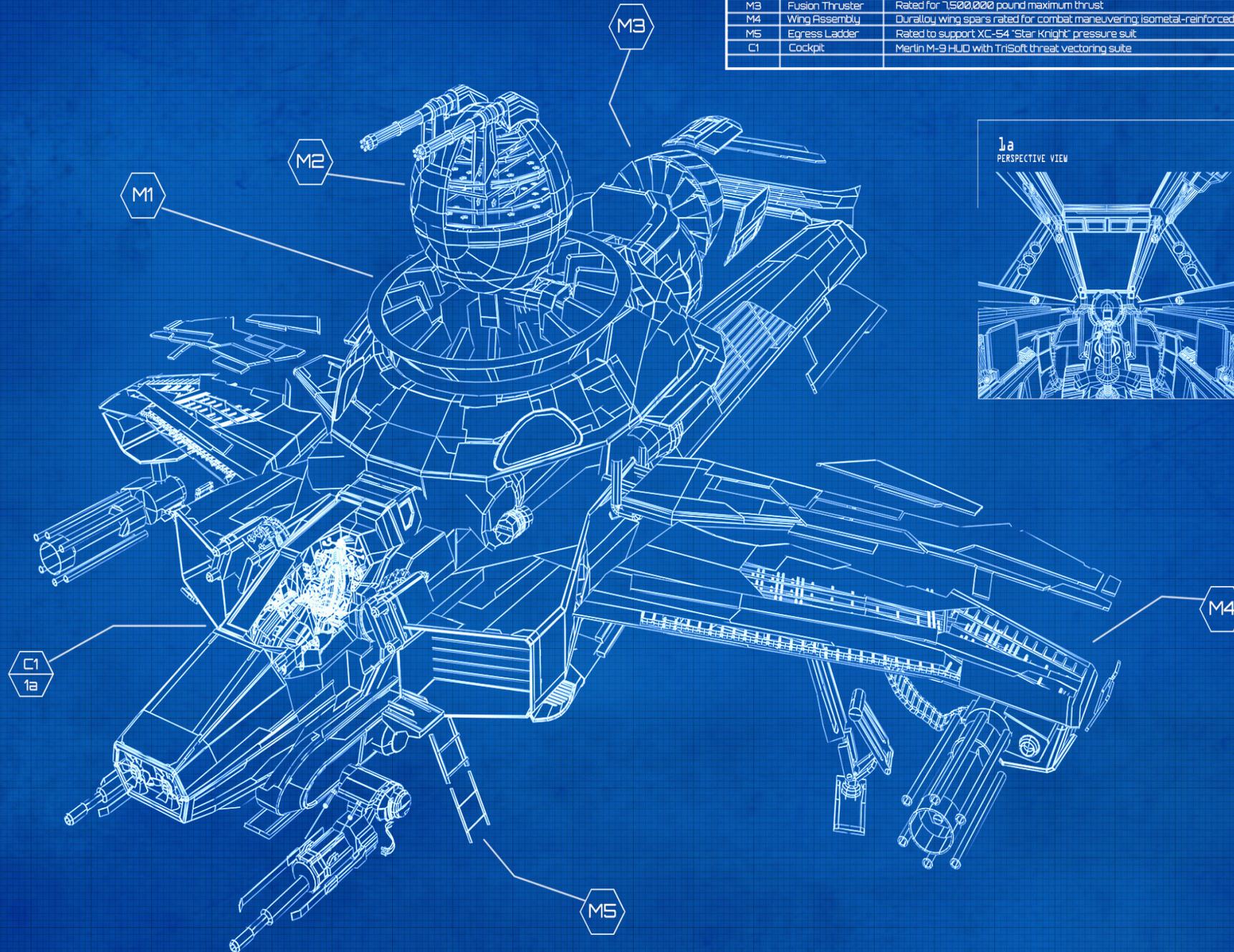
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HARPOINTS  
M7A Hornet Plan

DISCLAIMER: These are our current specifications on paper. Some of this is likely to change during the SD design and game balancing process over the next 24 months.

Sheet  
HP-1

KEY	Body Components	Description
M1	Spaceframe	Carbon-isometal nano-construction conforms to M7A MILSPEC
M2	Cannonball Turret	Auto-targetting rapid fire turret with 540-degree protection radius
M3	Fusion Thruster	Rated for 1500000 pound maximum thrust
M4	Wing Assembly	Duraloung wing spars rated for combat maneuvering, isometal-reinforced skin
M5	Egress Ladder	Rated to support XC-54 "Star Knight" pressure suit
C1	Cockpit	Mertin M-9 HUD with TriSoft threat vectoring suite



BUILDER:  
ANNIL  
AEROSPACE

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**EXPLODED**  
M7A Hornet Plan

DISCLAIMER: These are our current specifications on paper. Some of this is likely to change during the 3D design and game balancing process over the next 24 months.

Sheet  
EXP-1



# Whisperer in the Dark

by David Haddock

*People complicate things. That's what they've always been good at. Take a look at any functioning civilization and you will see chaos, confusion, and frustration. It could be human, Xi'An, Banu, Vanduul, whoever. We may look different, be built different, but boil us down and you'll find the same insecurities, fears, and anxieties gnawing.*

Tonya Oriel watched the yawning abyss outside the window. Kaceli's *Adagio in 4* gently wafted through the otherwise empty ship. Scanners cycled through their spectrums on the hunt for any flagged anomalies.

*The void. It was pure. It was simple. It was permanent.*

A calm serenity huddled around Tonya's shoulders like a blanket, the kind that can only exist when you are the only person for thousands of miles. Everyone else can have Terra, Earth, or Baachus, with their megacities teeming with people. Never a moment where there wasn't a person above, beside, or below you. Everything was noise. Tonya needed the silence.

Her ship, the *Beacon*, drifted through that silence. Tonya customized almost every hardpoint and pod with some form of scanner, deep-range comm system, or surveying tech to get her further and further from the noise.

The problem was that the noise kept following.

\* \* \*

After three weeks on the drift, Tonya couldn't put it off any longer. She was due for a supply run and to sell off the data and minerals she'd collected. After repairs, new scrubbers, and a System Almanac update, she hoped she'd have enough for some food.

The Shipping Hub in the Barker System had been the closest thing to a home she'd had for the past few years. Tonya set her approach through the shifting entry/exit patterns of ships. The Orbital was busier than usual. As soon as the *Beacon* docked, her screen buzzed with a handful of new messages from the CommRelay. She passed them to her MobiGlas organizer and went to the airlock.

Tonya paused by the entry and savored this last moment of solitude, then hit the button. The sound of people swept inside like a wave. She took a second to acclimate, adjusted her bag and crossed into the masses.

Carl ran a small information network out of his bar, the Torchlight Express. An old surveyor for a long-defunct Terraforming outfit, Carl traded moving minerals for slinging booze and information. Tonya had known him for years. As far as people went, Carl was a gem.

The Express was dead. Tonya checked local time. It was evening, so there was no real reason why it should be like this. A group of prospectors sat at a table in the corner, engaged in a hushed conversation. Carl leaned against the bar, watching a game on the wallscreen. His leathery fingers tapped out a beat to some song in his head. He brightened up when he saw Tonya.

“Well, well, well, to what do we owe the honor, doctor?” he said with a grin.

“Don’t start, Carl.”

“Sure, sorry, doctor.” He must be bored; he only called her that when he wanted to pick a fight. Tonya slung her bag onto the ground and slid onto a stool.

“Anything interesting?” Tonya pulled her hair back into a tie.

“I’m great, Tonya, thanks for asking. Business is a little slow, but you know how it is,” Carl said sarcastically and slid a drink to her.

“Come on, Carl. I’m not gonna patronize you with small-talk.” Carl sighed and looked around.

“At this point, I’ll take any patrons I can get.” He poured himself a drink from the dispenser. Tonya swiveled her MobiGlas around and showed him her manifest. He looked it over.

“Running kinda light this time, huh?”

“I know. You know any buyers?”

“How much you looking to get?”

“Fifteen?” Tonya said as she sipped. She knew she was pricing high and from the look on Carl’s face, he thought so too. “I need the money.”

“I might be able to get you ten.” He said after a long pause.

“I would give you my unborn child for ten.”

“With all the unborn kids you owe me, you better get started,” he said. Tonya smacked his arm.

One of the prospectors drifted over to the bar with empty glasses. He was young, one of those types who cultivated the dirty handsome look. Probably spent an hour perfecting it before going out.

“Another round.” As Carl poured, the prospector looked at Tonya, giving his looks a chance to work their magic. They failed. Carl set a fresh batch of drinks down. The prospector paid and went back slightly deterred.

“I think someone liked you,” Carl teased.

“Not my type.”

“Living?”

“Exactly.” Tonya watched the prospectors. They were really in an overtly secretive conversation.

“Any idea what they’re here for?”

“Of course I do.”

“Yeah? What’d they say?”

“Nothing . . . not *to* me anyway.” Carl pulled an earpiece out and held it out to her. Tonya wiped it off and took a listen. Suddenly she could hear their conversation loud and clear. Tonya looked at Carl, stunned.

“You have mics on your tables?!” she whispered. Carl shushed her.

“I deal in information, honey, so yeah,” Carl said, almost offended that he *wouldn’t* listen in on his customers.

Tonya took another sip and listened to the prospectors. It only took a little while to catch up. Apparently Cort, the prospector who tried to woo Tonya with his ruggedness, got a tip from his uncle in the UEE Navy. The uncle had been running Search & Rescue drills in the Hades System when their scanners accidentally picked up a deposit of Kherium on Hades II. Being the military, of course, they couldn’t do anything, but Cort and his buddies were fixing to sneak in there and harvest it for themselves.

Kherium was a hot commodity. One of the core minerals the Xi'An used to armor their spacecraft, it was exceedingly rare in UEE territory. If these prospectors were on the level, they were talking about a tidy little fortune. Certainly enough to patch up the *Beacon*, maybe even install some upgrades.

Even better, they obviously didn't know how to find it. Kherium doesn't show up on a standard metal or rad scan. It takes a specialist to find, much less extract without corrupting it. Fortunately for Tonya, she knew how to do both.

"You've got that look," Carl said and refilled her glass. "Good news?"

"I hope so, Carl, for both of us."

\* \* \*

Carl offloaded her haul at a discount so she could set out as quickly as possible. Last time she checked, the prospectors were still at the Express, but from the sound of it, they would leave in hours maybe a day.

Tonya disengaged the *Beacon* from the dock and was back in her beloved solitude. The engines hummed as they pushed her deeper into space, pushed her toward a lifeline.

The Hades System was a tomb, the final monument of an ancient civil war that obliterated an entire system and the race that inhabited it. Tonya had it on her list of places to study, but every year Hades was besieged by fresh batches of young scientists exploring it for their dissertation or treasure hunters looking for whatever weapon cracked Hades IV in half. So the system had become more noise to avoid.

Tonya had to admit that passing Hades IV was always a thrill. It wasn't every day you get to see the guts of a planet killed in its prime.

Then there were the whispers that the system was haunted. There was always some pilot who knew a guy who knew someone who had seen something while passing through the system. The stories ranged from unexplained technical malfunctions to full-on sightings of ghost cruisers. It was all nonsense.

There was a loose stream of ships passing through Hades. The general flight lane steered clear of the central planets. Tonya slowed her ship

until there was a sizeable gap in the flow of traffic before veering off toward Hades II.

She passed a barrier of dead satellites and descended into Hades II's churning atmosphere. The *Beacon* jolted when it hit the clouds. Visual went to nil and suddenly the ship was bathed in noise, screaming air, and pressure. Tonya kept an eye on her scopes and expanded the range on her proximity alerts to make sure she didn't ram a mountain.

Suddenly the clouds gave way. The *Beacon* swooped into the light gravity above a pitch black ocean. Tonya quickly recalibrated her thrusters for atmospheric flight and took a long look at the planet around her.

As was expected, it was a husk. There were signs of intelligent civilization all around, but all of it was crumbling, charred, or destroyed. She passed over vast curved cities built atop sweeping arches meant to keep the buildings from ever touching the planet itself.

Tonya maintained a cruising altitude. The roar of her engines echoed through the vast empty landscape. The sun was another casualty of this system's execution. The cloud systems never abated, so the surface never saw sunlight. It was always bathed in a dark greyish green haze.

Tonya studied the topography to plot out a course and set the scanners to look for the unique Kherium signature she had programmed. She engaged the auto-pilot and just looked out the window.

Being here now, she kicked herself for not coming sooner. It didn't matter that this was one of the most scientifically scrutinized locales in the UEE. Seeing the vastness of the devastation with her own eyes, Tonya felt the tug that a good mystery has on the intellect. Who were they? How did they manage to so effectively wipe themselves out? How do we know that they actually wiped themselves out?

A few hours passed with no luck. Tonya had a quick snack and ran through her exercise routine. She double-checked the settings on her scans for any errors on the initial input. A couple months ago, she was surveying a planet and found nothing, only to discover on her way back that there had been one setting off that scuttled the whole scan. It still bugged her; it was an amateur mistake.

She brought up some texts on Hades. Halfway through a paper on the exobiology of the Hadesians, her screen pinged. Tonya was over to the display like a shot.

The scope gave a faint indication of Kherium below. She triple-checked the settings before getting her hopes up. They seemed legit. She looked out the front. A small city lay ahead, perched above an endless sea of dead trees. It looked like an orbital laser or something similar had hit it, excising massively deep craters from buildings and ground.

Tonya took a closer look. The craters went about six hundred feet into the ground, revealing networks of underground tunnels. They looked like some kind of transport system.

Tonya looked for a suitable landing spot with cover from overhead flights. If she was still here when the prospectors showed up, spotting her ship would be a dead giveaway and things would get complicated.

She strapped on her environment suit and respirator. She could check the ship's scanners through her MobiGlas but threw another handheld scanner/mapper in with her mining gear just in case. Finally, she powered up her transport crate, hoping the anti-gravity buffers would be more than enough to lug the Kherium back.

Tonya stepped out onto the surface. The wind whipped around her, furiously kicking up waves of dust. She pushed the crate in front of her through the blasted forest. Gnarled branches clawed at her suit as she passed. The city loomed overhead, black silhouettes against the grey-green clouds.

Her curiosity got the better of her so Tonya decided to take a ramp up to the city streets. She told herself the detour would be easier on the crate's battery. Smooth streets are easier for the anti-grav compensators to analyze than rough terrain.

Tonya moved through the barren streets in awe. She studied the strange curvature of the architecture; each displayed an utterly alien yet brilliant understanding of pressure and weight dispersal. This whole place seemed at once natural and odd, intellectually fascinating and emotionally draining.

The Kherium signature was still weak but there. Tonya maneuvered the crate around destroyed teardrop-shaped vehicles. Pit-marks in the

buildings and streets led her to suspect that a battle took place here, however many hundreds or thousands of years ago.

The crater closest to the Kherium was a perfect hole punched through the middle of the city into the ground. Tonya stood at the edge, looking for the easiest way down. The crate could float down, but she would have to climb.

In a matter of minutes she secured a line with safeties for herself and the crate. She stepped over the edge and slowly rappelled down the sheer wall. The crate was making what should be a simple descent a little more complicated. The anti-grav buffers meant that any kind of force could cause the crate to drift away, so Tonya needed to keep a hand on it at all times. To make matters worse, the wind started picking up, flinging small rocks, branches, and debris through the air.

A shrill scream tore through the air. Tonya froze. She heard it again and looked for the source. The screaming was just exposed supports bending in the wind.

Suddenly, she realized the crate had slipped out of her grasp. It slowly drifted further out over the crater, the swirling wind batting it around like a toy. Tonya strained to reach it, but the crate floated just out of reach. She kicked off the wall and swung through the churning air. Her fingertips barely snagged the crate before she slammed back against the wall of the crater.

Her vision blurred and she couldn't breathe from the impact. The HUD went screwy. Finally she caught her breath. She took a moment or two before continuing down.

The scanner from the *Beacon* couldn't isolate the signature any more clearly to determine depth, so she had to rely on her handheld. The Kherium looked like it was situated between two tunnels.

Tonya secured the crate, climbed into the upper tunnel, and tied off her ropes. She checked her suit's integrity after the debris-storm. The computer was a little fuzzy, but gave her an okay. She turned on a flashlight and activated the external mics on her suit. The tunnel was a perfectly carved tube that sloped into the darkness. A transport tube? Tonya couldn't see any kind of power or rail system to confirm her theory. She started walking.

Hours passed in the darkness. Feeling a little queasy, Tonya stopped to rest for a few minutes. She sipped on the water reserve and re-checked her scanner. She was still above the Kherium and it was still showing up as being in front of her. That much hadn't changed . . .

She heard something. Very faint. She brought up the audio settings and pumped the gain on the external mics. A sea of white noise filled her ears. She didn't move until she heard it again. Something being dragged, then stopping.

IR and Nightvision windows appeared in the corners of her HUD, but she still couldn't see anything. In the far stretches of these tunnels, there was no telling how far that sound had travelled. Still, she went to the crate and pulled the shotgun out. She made sure it was loaded, even tried to remember the last time she had cause to use it.

Tonya started moving a little more cautiously. She doubted it was the prospectors. For all she knew it could some other pirate or smuggler down here. Regardless, she wasn't going to take any chances.

The tunnel started to expand before finally giving way to a vast darkness. Tonya's Nightvision couldn't even see the end. She dug through her supplies and picked out some old flares. She sparked one.

It was a city. A mirror city to be precise. While the one on the surface reached for the sky, this one was carved down into the planet. Walkways connected structures built out of the walls on the various levels. She'd never heard of anything like this before. Everyone speculated that it was civil war that destroyed this system. Was this a city of the other side?

She came to an intersection and the first real sign that the fighting had spread here. A barricade of melted vehicles blocked one of the tunnels. The walls were charred from either explosions or laser blasts. A shadow had even been burned into the wall. Tonya stood in front of it.

The Hadesian was probably seven to eight feet tall. It seemed to have a roundish, bulky main body with multiple thin appendages. A thousand-year-old stain on a wall is hardly much to go by, but it looked like it had four to six legs and two long arms. Even as a silhouette, it looked terrified.

A cavernous structure was built into the wall nearby. Tonya stood and approached to examine the craftsmanship. It was certainly more ornate than most of the other buildings down here. There weren't doors down here, just narrow oval portals. There was some kind of tech integrated into the sides.

Tonya decided to take a look. It was a deep bowl with rows of enclosures built into the sides. All of them were angled towards a single point, a marble-like cylinder at the bottom of the bowl. Tonya descended toward it. There was a small item sitting on top of it. She kept her light and shotgun trained on it. It was made from a similar marble-like stone as the cylinder. Tonya looked around. Was this some kind of church? She leaned down to get a better look at the item, careful not to disturb anything. It was a small carving. It wasn't a Hadesian shape, at least not one she was familiar with. She weighed whether she should take it. Tonya's head suddenly swam. She stumbled back and steadied herself on the enclosures. After a moment or two it passed. A subtle stabbing pain started to ache in her arm. She stretched, trying to work out the ache. She took a last look at the small carving.

Tonya stepped out of the ornate building and brought up her scanner. The Kherium was close. She followed the scanner's directions into the dark and twisted tunnels. Her eyes stayed locked on the growing glow of the screen. She tripped over something. The scanner clattered across the floor. It echoed for a minute.

Tonya shook her head slightly. This place . . . She turned her lights back right into the face of a rotted corpse, its mouth open in a silent scream.

"Hell!" she yelled as she scuffled away from it. She looked around. There was another form on the floor about twenty feet away. A strongbox sat between them. The initial shock subsided.

Tonya got up, grabbed her scanner and walked over to the first body. Its skull had been cracked open. There was no weapon, though. No club or bar nearby. That was odd. The other one had clearly shot himself. The gun was still in his hand. They were definitely human, and based on their clothes, they were probably surveyors or pirates. She didn't know what kind of elements were in the air here so she couldn't give an accurate guess how long they've been dead, but suspected months.

She shuffled over to the strongbox and kicked it open. Kherium. Already extracted and carefully wrapped. Sweet relief drifted through the exhaustion.

“Thanks guys.” Tonya gave them a quick salute. “Sorry you aren’t here to share it.”

Something flitted across her IR window.

Tonya snatched up her shotgun and aimed. It was gone. Her breathing became rapid and shallow as she waited. Her finger hovered over the trigger. She pumped the gain on the external mics again and scanned the hall. The whole time, telling herself to calm down. Calm down.

Every movement of her suit was amplified a hundred times in her ears. She tracked the rifle through the tunnel, looking for whatever was in here with her. Something came through the static. Close.

“Welcome home,” it hissed.

Tonya fired into the dark. She spun behind her. Nothing down there. She racked another round and blasted anyway. The shots blew out the speakers in her helmet.

She grabbed the strongbox and ran.

Ran through the slippery, sloping tunnels of pitch black. Now in total silence. She passed the intersection, where the Hadesian still raised its arms in terror. She kept looking back. She could swear something was there, just beyond the range of the IR, watching from the static.

Tonya sprinted up a rise to see the grim overcast light of the exit, now just a pinhole. Her legs burned. Her arm killed. All she wanted was to go to sleep, but she wasn’t going to stop. If she stopped, she knew she would never leave.

She pulled herself up the rope and pushed through the blasted forest back to the *Beacon*. Thirty seconds later, the thrusters were scorching earth. One minute after that, she broke atmo.

As Hades II drifted away, she tried to steady her nerves. Her environment suit slowly twisted on the hanger in the decontamination chamber. She noticed something.

The respiratory functions on the back were damaged. The fall in the crater must have done it. It bashed up the feeds and she was getting too much oxygen. The headaches, nausea, and fatigue . . . even that voice. Even though it chilled her still. They were all probably just hallucinations and reactions to oxygen poisoning.

Probably.

Tonya set a course back for the Shipping Hub in Barker. She had goods to sell, true, but even more right now, she wanted to be around people.

She wanted to be around the noise.

Back in the decontamination chamber, the tiny Hadesian carving sat on the floor.

THE END



Hey Everyone,

Its Sandi Gardiner here. I may have helped you out with your account or answered one of your questions about *Star Citizen*.

If not, a warm greeting to you and welcome to our *Star Citizen* universe.

It's going to be a lot of fun being part of subscriptions, and if you enjoyed the 24-hour livestream then you'll enjoy being a part of this, too.

**JUMP POINT** is where you'll read everything first, and will be featuring many notable contributors as time goes on.

We'd really like to build the video into a full SC channel. Here's a snippet of the segments we are going to build on:

**Game Changers.** Be privy to the inner thoughts of industry leaders, and join along while they interact and have some fun. First up will be a fun segment with Chris Taylor and Chris Roberts, as well as an insider's interview with Erin Roberts.



CHRIS TAYLOR AND ERIN ROBERTS INVADE CHRIS ROBERTS' OFFICE.

**Tech Hotspot.** The best tech for *Star Citizen*, from Oculus Rift to what joystick should you use. As a heads up, Oculus Rift is slated for January and Chris is going to get in there while we film it! This will be a prime example of the fun video clips we can offer going forward with enough manpower to do so.

**Space Voyager.** Watch all the work in progress with designers, artists and programmers, led by Chris. You saw a snippet on the Freelancer, but this will be a lot more in-depth in the future so you can get more of an insight into the process.

**Wingman and the Lamp.** Live chat with your favorite duo. Some of you tuned into Wingman this morning. We hope for you to be able to up-vote questions in the future and have them answered by the talkative one. :)

**Wild Cards.** There's always something going on in the *Star Citizen* Universe and nothing wrong with the element of surprise.

**Office tours.** I know there are most likely few of you who live in Austin or Los Angeles and so it takes planning to fly, stay and then visit us. Having said that, I will slate a once a month tour and will do my best to accommodate, should you fall outside of the scheduled dates.

I'd like to thank all of you who have subscribed – on behalf of Roberts Space Industries we really appreciate having such an awesome and active community and will find ways to help you participate and evolve subscriptions into something to look forward to. Realizing the full potential of subscriptions requires manpower, so the more of you who subscribe the more we can show. If you would like to subscribe and haven't, please sign up [here](#).

Sandi



EDITOR: DAVID LADYMAN, INCAN MONKEY GOD STUDIOS  
WITH MICHAEL MORLAN & BEN LESNICK

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