



Volume1, Issue 7

2008

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# BFS News

## A WHOLE NEW CHAPTER

What a difference a couple of months can make. Since our last newsletter, several really important events have occurred here at BlackFoot Studios. At long last we've acquired the ability to reveal and discuss the awesome graphics engine we are using.

In addition to that, comes the announcement of an entirely new project. That's right, a second game title! And if that's not enough,

we've opened the BlackFoot Studios merchandise store, and are currently offering a one of kind inaugural BFS coin to commemorate this ground breaking year for BlackFoot Studios.

All of the details can be found right here inside this, our best newsletter ever. You can also visit the BFS forums where our ever growing community of gamers are discussing these new and exciting events with the

Studio's developers.

Also inside is our monthly Q&A session with BFS founder John Sonedecker, a look at some more of the weapons being modeled for our games, and other great information into the happenings inside the studio. Have a look, enjoy, and as always Blackfoot Studios thanks you for your support.

~ The BFS staff.

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## BlackFoot Studios Announces Sky Gods

The lights in BlackFoot Studios must be on all night. The candles burn at both ends, and the think tank behind the industry's next big games is always hard at work. Right on the heels of the announcement of Ground Branch, and now the licensing of Epic Game's Unreal 3 technology, BlackFoot Studios is proud and excited to announce another forthcoming title, **Sky Gods**.



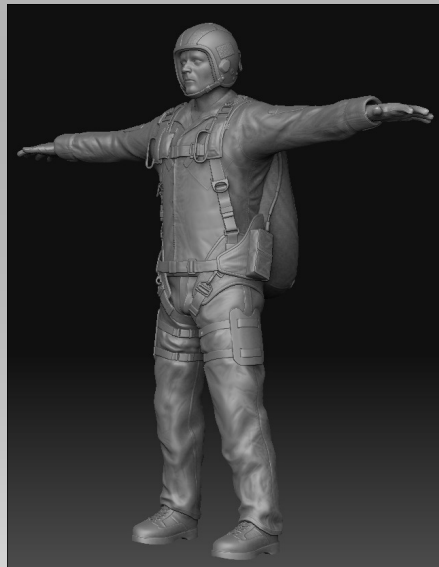
Until now, even the extremely active forum community at BFS has been unaware that Sky Gods has been in the works. Only a select few studio "insiders" have been aware of this exciting new project that is actually set to be released prior to Ground Branch. So, what exactly is Sky Gods? More than just a game, its design is actually being set up for use as a military training tool. From BFS founder John Sonedecker...



*"Sky Gods will focus on a complete Co-Op game experience centering on SOF HALO and helicopter insertion operations. You will be in full control of your player during HALO freefall as well as*



*while under canopy and will be required to properly steer yourself to a landing zone and land without killing yourself. While on the ground, you and your team mates will engage various targets and be presented with missions of ever expanding scope and complexity. A full training system will also be included to familiarize you with both the parachuting and ground movement/firing mechanics."*



Sky Gods is being built using the same technology, design principals and mechanics as Ground Branch. So while still a full stand alone product in its own right, Sky Gods will have the added bonus of giving BFS fans some insight into the elements and design philosophy going into Ground Branch...

*"Sky Gods will incorporate our NORG*

*design philosophy and be built on the very foundation that Ground Branch is. Everything that we have done so far for Ground Branch will be incorporated into Sky Gods and likewise, everything that we do for Sky Gods will go back into Ground Branch. So playing Sky Gods will feel like playing Ground Branch. Those are the mechanics that all of our games will be built upon."*



### Tentative Features

- 8 Coop missions playable with 1-8 people
- At least 4 MP specific maps along with some Coop maps available to MP games
- TvT and PvP MP game modes
- Terrorist Hunt style game mode
- At least 2 unique MP game types
- Customizable weapons and kit
- Customizable player
- Full training scenarios playable solo or Coop

Full mod capabilities out of the box

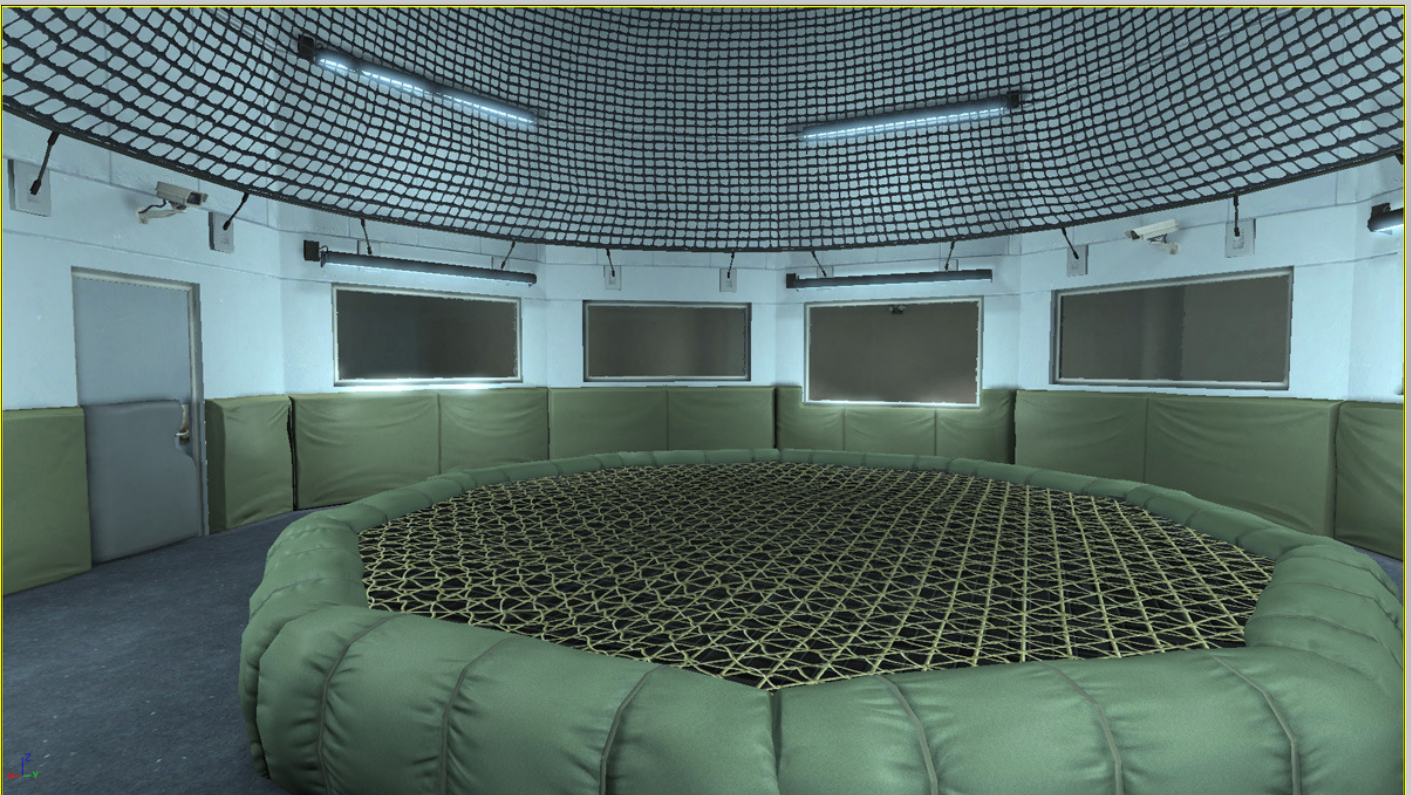
## BlackFoot Studios Announces Sky Gods Cont....

More good news is that BlackFoot Studios is currently planning on releasing Sky Gods worldwide via Digital Distribution as well as a self published Limited Edition hard copy DVD package. Digital Distribution is the way of the future, and BFS is proud to offer its products via this technology which of-

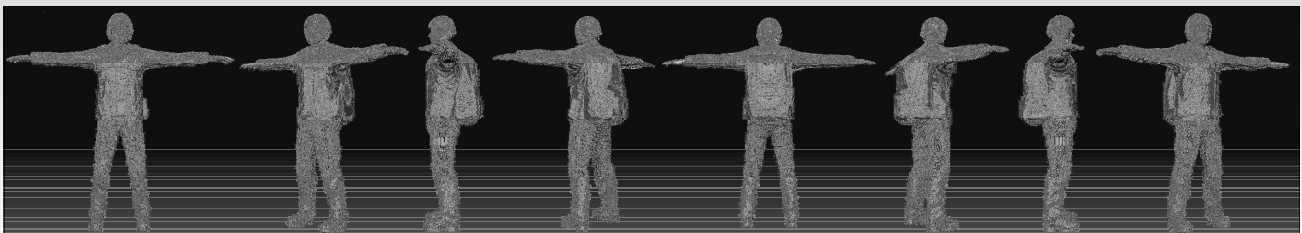
fers a great deal of flexibility and benefits to both the developer and the end user.

Sky Gods is promising to be a unique experience, touching on an aspect of SOF operations rarely seen in other products. With unique gameplay, a

variety of missions, and even full modding support, this is surely a title to keep an eye on.



Vertical Wind Tunnel Training Level



## The Story Behind Sky Gods

Starting a business is very tough. There are a million things that can go wrong or influence the success/failure of the venture. Starting a game development company is much tougher still due to the way the industry works and the fact that we are in an entertainment industry. The entertainment industry is fickle and hard for outside business persons to understand. Therefore it is extremely difficult to fund projects, especially from external private sources.

We have spent a year and a half talking with publishers trying to find a partner to both fund and publish Ground Branch. During that time BlackFoot Studios has managed to stay in business and lay the foundation for a successful company. However, regardless of the foundation, there needs to be progress with building on top of it. I have self funded this company up to this point and unfortunately we have not been able to find an appropriate entity to fund our projects so we have been forced to also seek contract work on outside projects. This is not a sustainable business model for us so the time has come to take our future in our own hands and work under our own resources and be 100% responsible for the outcome.

So what does that mean exactly? Well, we have tossed around a bunch of ideas on how to generate revenue on something we could realistically complete within our current resources and in a timely manner. Everything from racing games, online browser games, pre-sells of GB and even selling the MP portion of GB first. Nothing really seemed to "hook up" or make much business sense. So I started thinking, why couldn't we break Ground Branch down into some of its most fundamental game play parts and make a smaller game that focused solely on

some of those elements. It turned out to be a pretty good idea, and after some brainstorming that is what we decided we were going to do, as it made the most sense. Another event also contributed to things. We have a friend who works in the digital training group at the JFK Special Warfare Center and School, and one day one of us and he was playing a new skydiving game on their PS3. It's not a great game, but turned a light bulb on for them. They realized that the SOF community did not have a good HALO/parachute training application available to them and something similar to that mini game would be really nice. They saw a need and during some casual conversations about it, we saw a solution.

And that is how Sky Gods was born! While no official (or unofficial) communication has been undertaken to make SG a training application for the military, we are designing it as such and will present it to the appropriate persons once we have completed our demo and pitch materials in the coming months. That's great... a true training sim, but what about a game?

Well, Sky Gods will also be a retail game offering as well. Sky Gods will focus on SOF HALO and aerial insertion operations and will incorporate NORG as well as be built on the very foundation that Ground Branch has been. Everything that we have done so far for GB will be incorporated into SG and likewise, everything that we do for SG will go back into GB. Sky God is NOT just a stripped down part of Ground Branch that we sliced off to make money. It is important to note, that this isn't something that is directly related to GB, outside of the tech and principals used to build it. However, since GB will also include HALO and other aerial insertions in its design, every-

thing built will be used in Ground Branch. The product will be distributed via digital distribution and we will also make a limited run of hard copies available via our store as well.

What about consoles? We are in the process of submitting our package to become a certified Sony PS3 developer and plan to release Sky Gods on the PS3 as a Playstation Network downloadable title. However, due to the certification process of the game, it will be released a slightly later than the PC version.. We will also try to support user generated content as well, but that is an unknown at this point simply because we can't look into it until we are certified. Unfortunately there will most likely not be a 360 version. The reason is simple... MS does not offer the ability for independent developers to distribute titles in the same way Sony does, outside of Live. The issue with Live is they impose a 300mb limit on downloads and we cannot fit within that budget. Sony imposes no limit. If that changes then we will look at it. That does not rule out the possibility of signing with a smaller publisher to handle a full retail 360 version for us either. It's important to mention, this is referring to Sky Gods only and not Ground Branch.

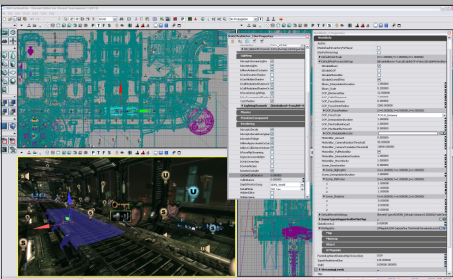
For those that have been following us up to this point, it may be a small shock at first to hear that we are working on a smaller title before completing Ground Branch. While, it is somewhat of a disappointment that GB will take longer to produce, everyone that sticks with us will be able to enjoy the BFS experience much sooner and in a bite sized chunk along the way! Ground Branch will definitely be here soon enough, but now you will be able to experience the fun that is Sky Gods and further support the studio along the way.

# BlackFoot Studios Licenses Epic's Unreal Engine 3

Over the last year the forums at BFS have been buzzing with talk about the graphics engine to be used in the development of Ground Branch and Sky Gods, the studios forthcoming blockbuster title. Speculation, rumor, and even some wild guesses have been circulating the community as eager gamers pondered what the foundation of BFS titles would be.

Well, the wait and speculation are over.

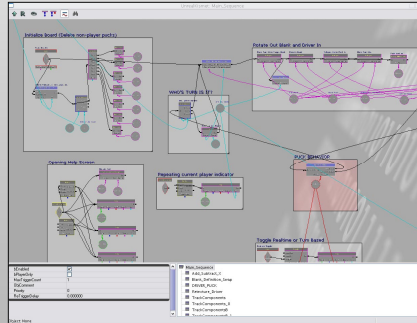
BlackFoot Studios is proud to announce it's partnership with Epic and its licensing agreement for the Unreal 3 engine. Ground Branch and Sky Gods will be built upon the awesome Unreal 3 engine, bringing gamers the combination of BlackFoot Studios visionary development, and Epic's amaz-



ing technology. The Unreal engine has been the foundation of many of the industry's most heralded titles, and

BFS will be adding it's titles to that list.

The partnership between Epic and BlackFoot Studios has been kept under wraps, but has been in the works for awhile.

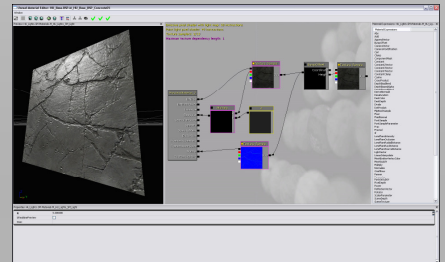


John Sonedecker, founder of BFS, on Epic; "Let's just say sticking with something for the long haul usually pays off....they believe in the little guy. They support the smaller studios; they will work to make it happen. It took a long time to find the right deal for all involved, but they stuck with us until that common ground was found. Epic is a great company to deal with."

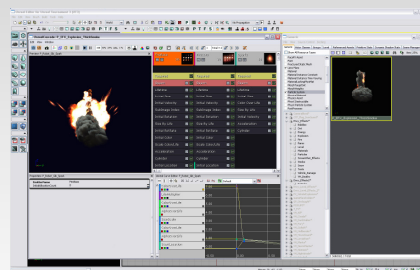
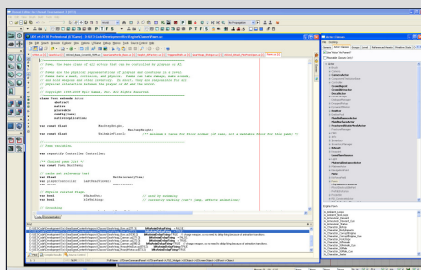
Using the Unreal 3 technology not only provides the Dev team at BFS the ability to provide an amazing gaming experience, but it opens the doors to a great deal of other things as well. While Ground Branch and Sky Gods

are currently being designed with PC in mind, its clear Sonedecker and team have their eyes on Next Gen consoles...

"This actually is one of the main pieces of the puzzle that makes things possible on the consoles. Without a nicely proven cross platform engine we wouldn't be able to do a console game. UE3 is proven on PC, 360 and PS3 and the pipeline to get assets on each platform is the same and that drastically reduces the effort needed to move things across platforms." says Sonedecker.



BlackFoot Studios and Epic, Ground Branch, Sky Gods and Unreal 3 technology; winning combinations with gamers reaping the rewards. Check out the BFS forums for the latest info and updates on this exciting development.



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## The Weapons of BFS

### Mk.17 SCAR-H

The MK 17 is the second part of the FN SCAR family of weapons. A selective-fire semi-auto and full-auto 7.62x51mm NATO rifle using a short stroke gas piston, the MK 17 also offers three interchangeable barrels that can be switched by the individual operator in just minutes for CQC, tactical and precision fire roles. Controllability is a hallmark of the MK 17, firing controlled pairs easily even in full-auto mode. Like the MK 16, the MK 17 remains a completely ambidextrous rifle design with a fully free-floating barrel, multiple integral MIL-STD 1913 mounting rails and a telescoping, folding buttstock with adjustable cheekpiece. All MK 16 and MK 17 rifles offer 98% parts commonality within the same caliber and 82% parts commonality between rifles of different calibers, thus simplifying maintenance, armorer training and logistic support requirements. FN was awarded the SCAR contract in 2004 by USSOCOM for their new assault rifles and grenade launcher, replacing several weapons now in inventory with three while further expanding capabilities. ([www.fnhusa.com](http://www.fnhusa.com))

**Caliber** - 7.62x51 NATO/7.62x39(M43)

**Overall Length** - 997mm(max)/770mm(min)

**Barrel Length** - 330mm/13"(CQC), 406mm/16"(Std), 508mm/20"(LB)

**Weight** - 3.86kg (Empty)

**Rate of Fire** - 600 Rounds Per Minute

**Magazine Capacity** - 20 Rounds(7.62x51)/30 Rounds(7.62x39M43)



## The Weapons of BFS Cont....

### M14

The M14 is a gas operated, magazine fed, selective fire (originally) design. The gas system is located under the barrel, and has a short stroke (about 1 1/2 inch - 37 mm) gas piston which operates the M1 Garand style action rod. The gas system features an automatic gas cutoff feature, which limits the amount of gases used to operate the weapon. The rotating bolt is quite similar to one found in M1 Garand but it has a roller instead of the simple lug, which connects the bolt to the operating rod. US Marine Corps also re-issued M14 rifles for use in Designated Marksman role (DMR), and those rifles are fitted with newly made polymer stocks with adjustable buttstocks and pistol grips, and other accessories such as detachable bipods or sound moderators (silencers). Recently US Special Forces, operating under the US Navy flag, stepped forward with the Mk.14 Mod.0 Enhanced Battle rifle, which is an M14 fitted with many new commercially available parts, new stock with adjustable butt and plenty of Picatinny rails, and new accessories such as noise suppressors and optical equipment. The Mk.14 Mod.0 EBR is currently being used by US Navy SEAL's and possibly some other special operation forces within US Military. ([www.world.guns.ru](http://www.world.guns.ru))

**Cartridge** - 7.62x51mm NATO

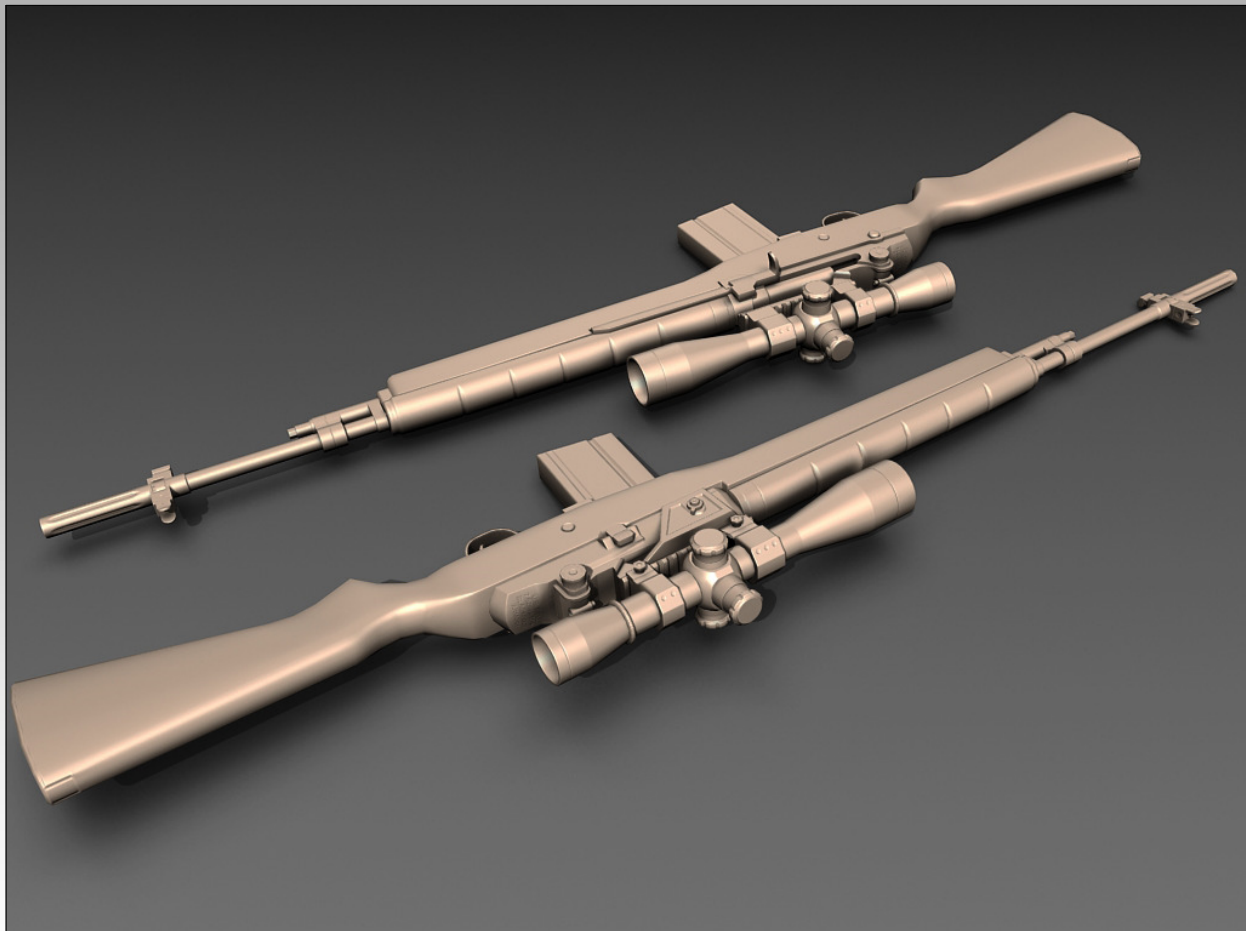
**Overall Length** - 1,181mm

**Barrel Length** - 558mm/22"

**Weight** - 5.2kg

**Rate of Fire** - 700/750 rounds/min

**Magazine Capacity** - 20 Rounds



## The BFS Store is Open

We're proud to announce the opening of the BlackFoot Studios Merchandise store. Many of you purchased our collectors edition T-shirt last year, and that sparked a demand for more cool stuff. We've been working hard at designing everything from new shirts, to coffee mugs and mouse pads. All one of a kind, custom designed BlackFoot Studios exclusives.

At the moment some of the items are marked as "available soon", but this month we've chosen to highlight something very special.

In 2008, BlackFoot Studios really came into it's own, overcoming many adversities and reaching major milestones that have now put us on the

path to reaching all of our goals as a game development studio. To celebrate this great time for us, and to thank all of our community members for their loyal support through our humble beginnings, we're offering a special limited edition collector's coin. Totally custom designed for BlackFoot Studios, this awesome looking collectors piece is engraved with JSonedeckers "Build your game around a community" mantra, the BFS logo, and the now infamous "I wasn't there when it didn't happen" quote.

Each coin is number stamped, so you know yours is a unique one of a kind item. This 2008 Inaugural Edition coin will not be offered again, so get them while you can.

This and our other merchandise can be found at.....

[The BFS Store](#)





**"Do not build your community around a game.... Build your game around a community"**

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[Http://www.blackfootstudios.com](http://www.blackfootstudios.com)

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## Teaser Image: Sky Gods Concept



[High resolution version available here](#)

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## Forum Stats

49,243 posts

**"We are a bit unorthodox, but we are very real!"**

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