



MARCH 18-22, 2024
SAN FRANCISCO, CA



THE STRANGE WITHIN THE FAMILIAR

**How Once Human designed
its Supernatural Open World**

#GDC2024

ABOUT ME...

- ▶ Peng (Victoria) Sun
- ▶ Senior World Designer
- ▶ Starry Studio, NetEase Games



ONCE HUMAN, THE GAME

- ▶ Supernatural, New Weird
- ▶ Open world Survival shooter
- ▶ PC/Console/iOS/Android

ONCE HUMAN SOME NUMBERS

- ▶ 130,000 players joined the Dec 2023-Jan 2024 CBT
- ▶ 300,000 members on Discord



Once Human

The official Discord server of the game Once Human by Starry Studio. Find the latest news and discuss the upcoming game!

121,349 Online • 318,442 Members

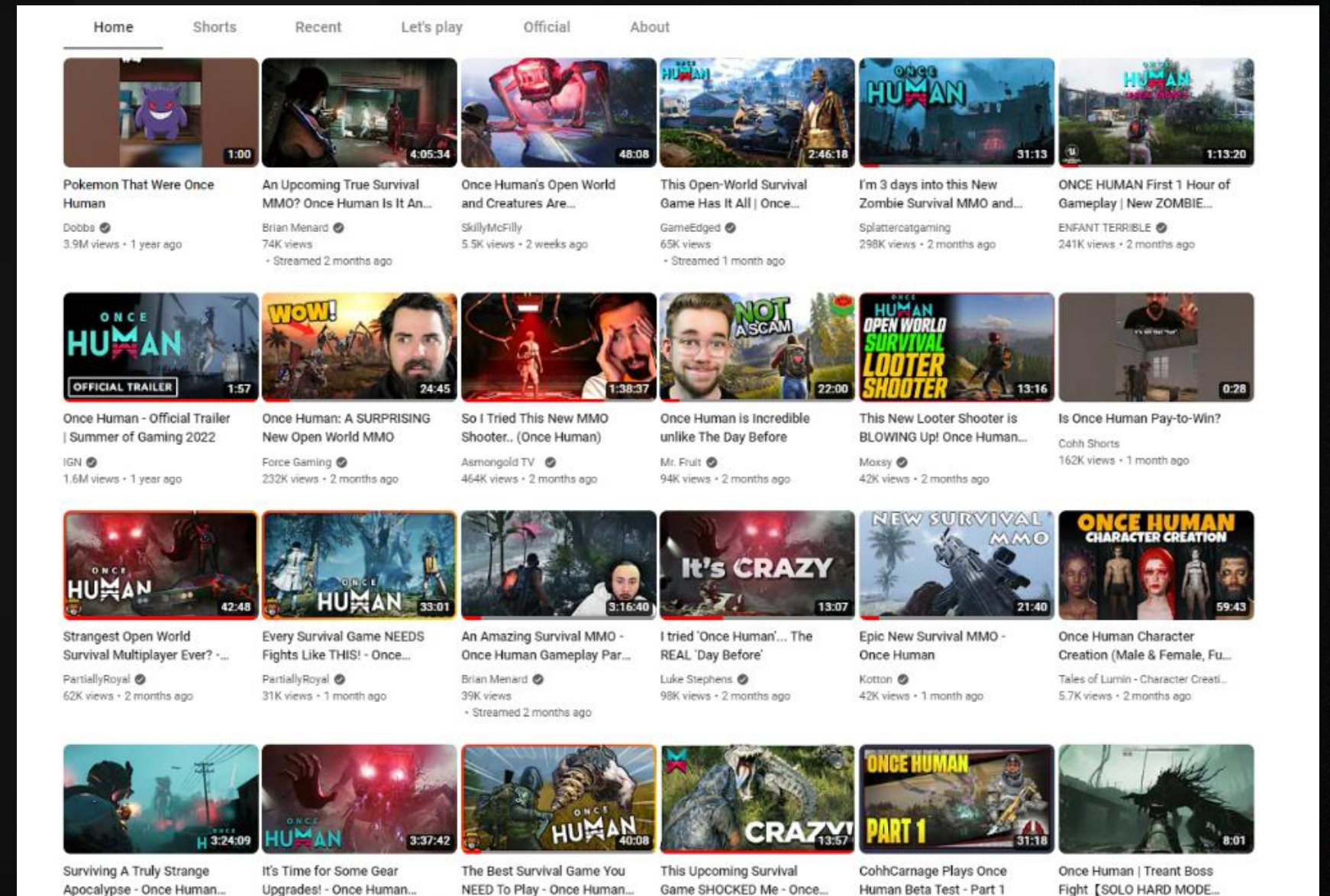
ONCE HUMAN SOME NUMBERS

- ▶ 18,000,000 views on YouTube and 3,900,000 hours watched on Twitch during CBT

3,982,804

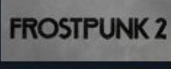
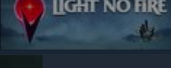
Hours watched

+3,982,730



ONCE HUMAN SOME NUMBERS

- Rank 16 on Steam wish list

	Hades II	To be announc...	
	Manor Lords	26 Apr, 2024	
	Hollow Knight: Silksong	To be announc...	
	Black Myth: Wukong	20 Aug, 2024	
	Frostpunk 2	2024	
	S.T.A.L.K.E.R. 2: Heart of Chernobyl	5 Sep, 2024	HK\$ 389.00
	ARK 2	To be announc...	
	The First Descendant	2024	
	Dragon's Dogma 2	22 Mar, 2024	HK\$ 538.00
	Unrecord	To be announc...	
	Vampire: The Masquerade® - Bloodlines™ 2	2024	
	Blight: Survival	To be announc...	
	Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine 2	9 Sep, 2024	
	Horizon Forbidden West™ Complete Edition	21 Mar, 2024	HK\$ 468.00
	Light No Fire	To be announc...	
	Once Human	Q3 2024	
	Rooted	To be announc...	
	Infection Free Zone		

☐ Special Offers
☐ Hide free to play items

Narrow by tag

☐ Singleplayer 1,789
☐ Adventure 1,378
☐ Action 1,249
☐ Indie 1,011
☐ Exploration 988

search for more tags

Show selected types

Narrow by number of players

Narrow by feature

Narrow by Controller Support

Narrow by Deck Compatibility

☐ Verified 5
☐ Playable 4

Learn More

Narrow by VR Support

Narrow by OS

☐ Windows
☐ macOS
☐ SteamOS + Linux

Narrow by language

IN THIS TALK...

- ▶ How did Once Human define "Supernatural" ?
- ▶ How did we implement this definition in design?
 - MONSTERS -ENVIRONMENT -IN-GAME EXPERIENCE
- ▶ How did we collectively design with players?
- ▶ Some Final Thoughts

PART I

HOW DID ONCE HUMAN DEFINE "SUPERNATURAL" ?

▶ Defining the "Supernatural" tailored for Once Human: the "Strange" within the "Familiar" ◀

WHAT IS "SUPERNATURAL"?

► In the traditional context...

WEREWOLVES



=



+



+



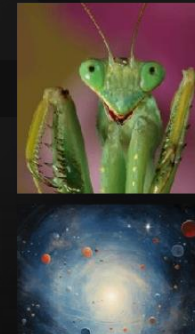
=

GHOST



ALIENS

+



=

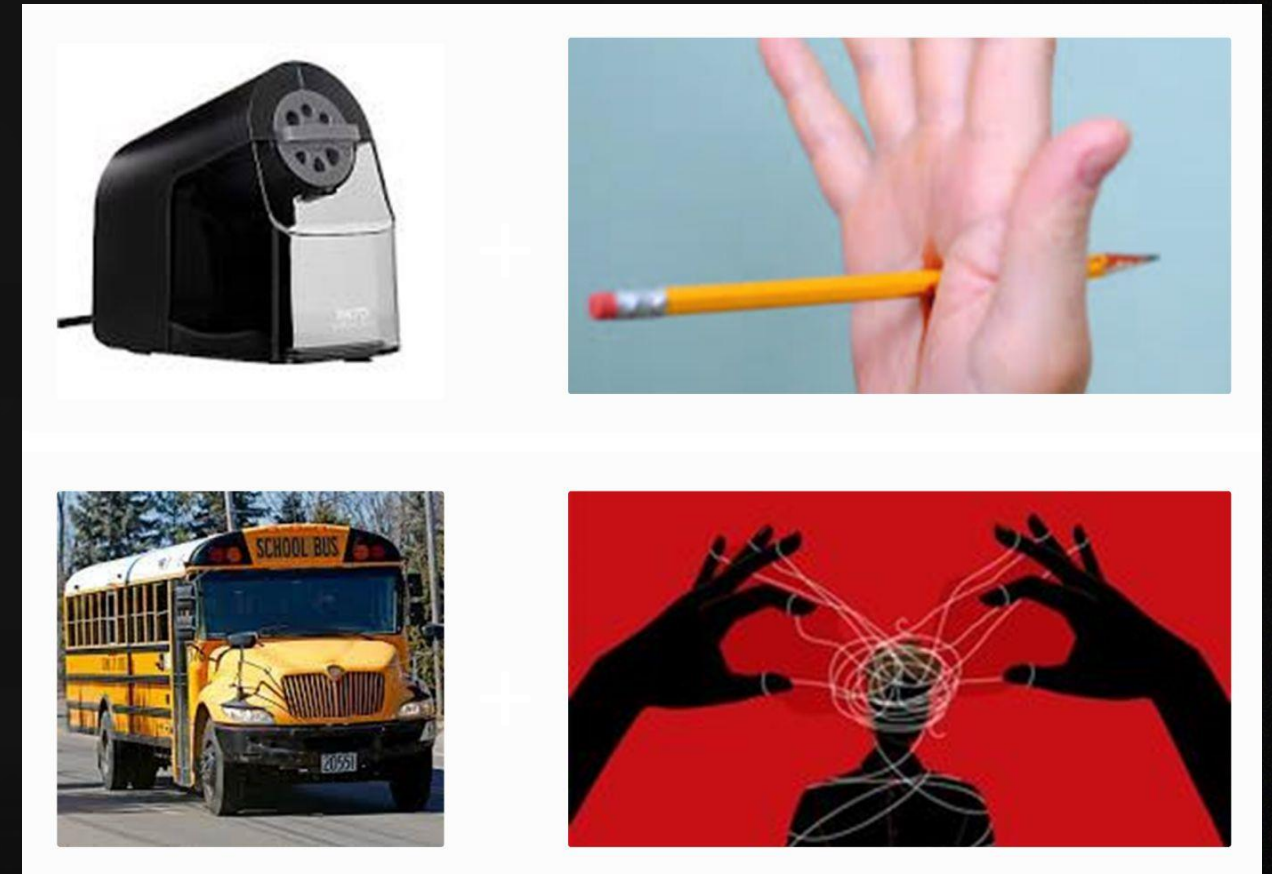


WHAT IS "SUPERNATURAL"?

► In The Modern context



Liminal Spaces



Altered Objects

WHAT IS "SUPERNATURAL"?

► Once Human's definition

The “Familiar”

+

The “Strange”

The “Strange”

WITHIN

The “Familiar”

PART II

HOW DID WE IMPLEMENT "SUPERNATURAL" IN DESIGN?

- ▶ Monsters, Environment, In-game Experience





EARLY ENEMY DESIGN ATTEMPTS:

IMPLEMENTING THE "FAMILIAR"+"STRANGE" METHOD

THE "LIVING MACHINES"

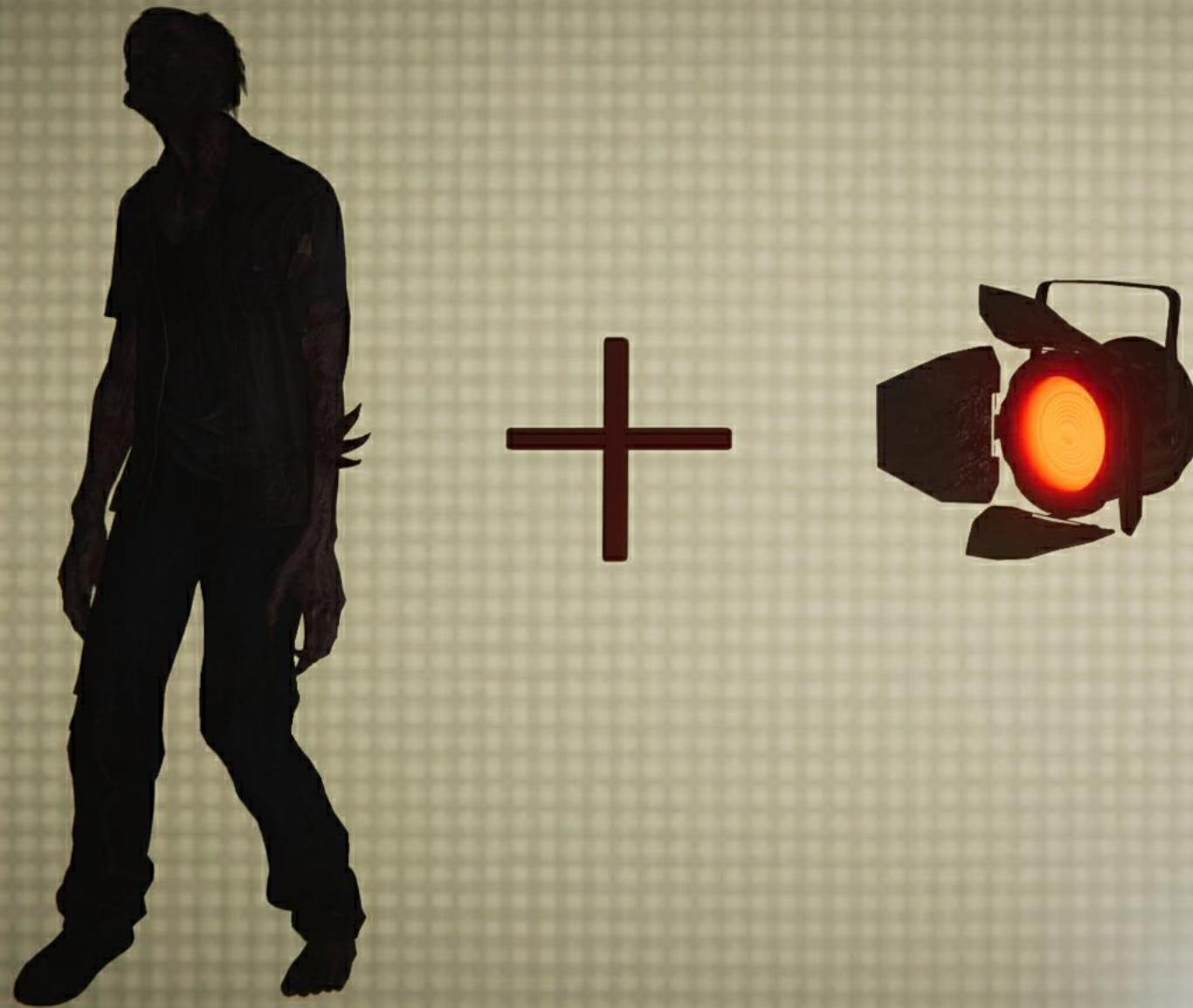


EARLY ENEMY DESIGN ATTEMPTS:

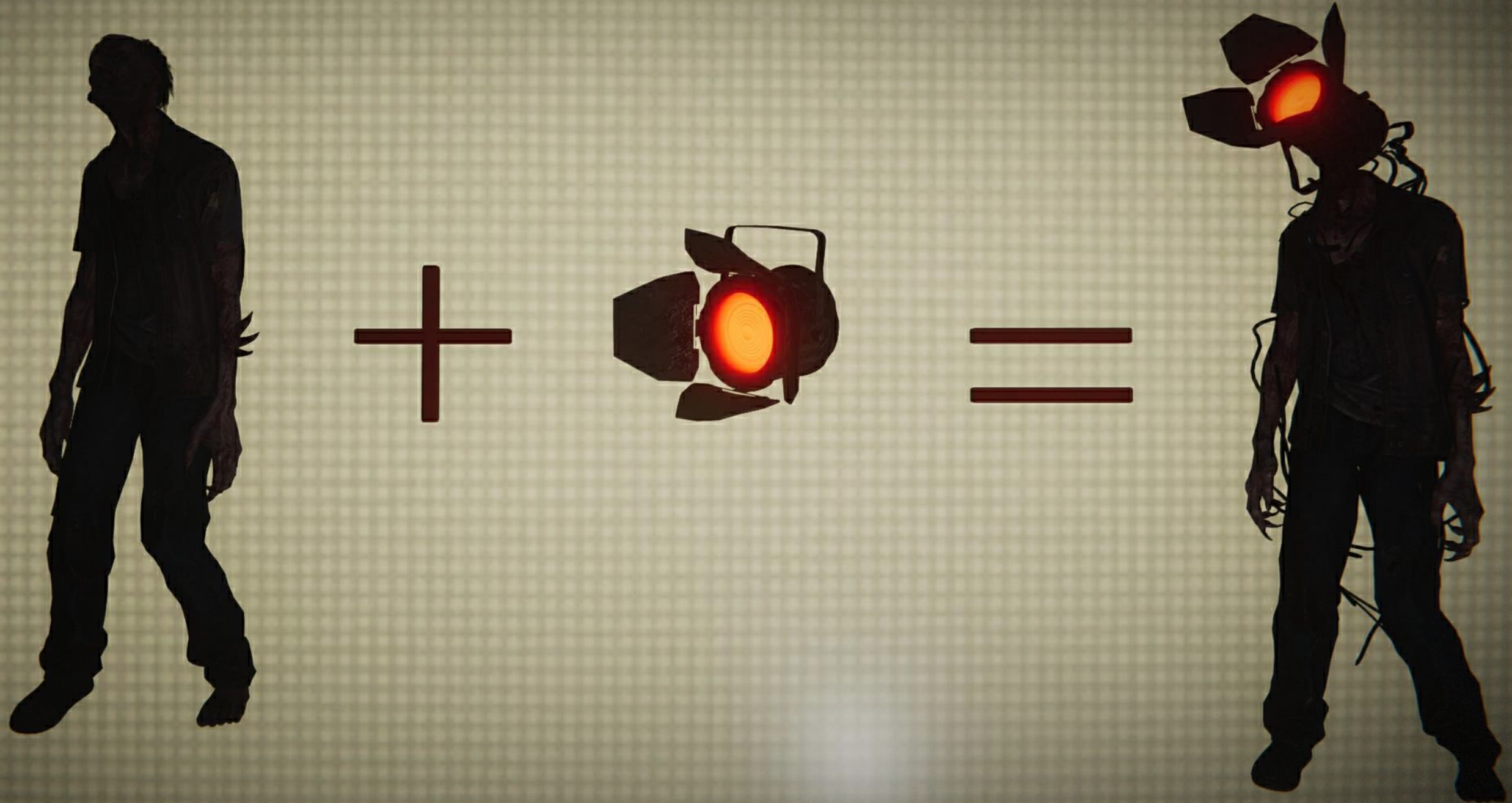
Implementing the "Familiar" + "Strange" Method:



Implementing the "Familiar" + "Strange" Method:



Implementing the "Familiar" + "Strange" method:



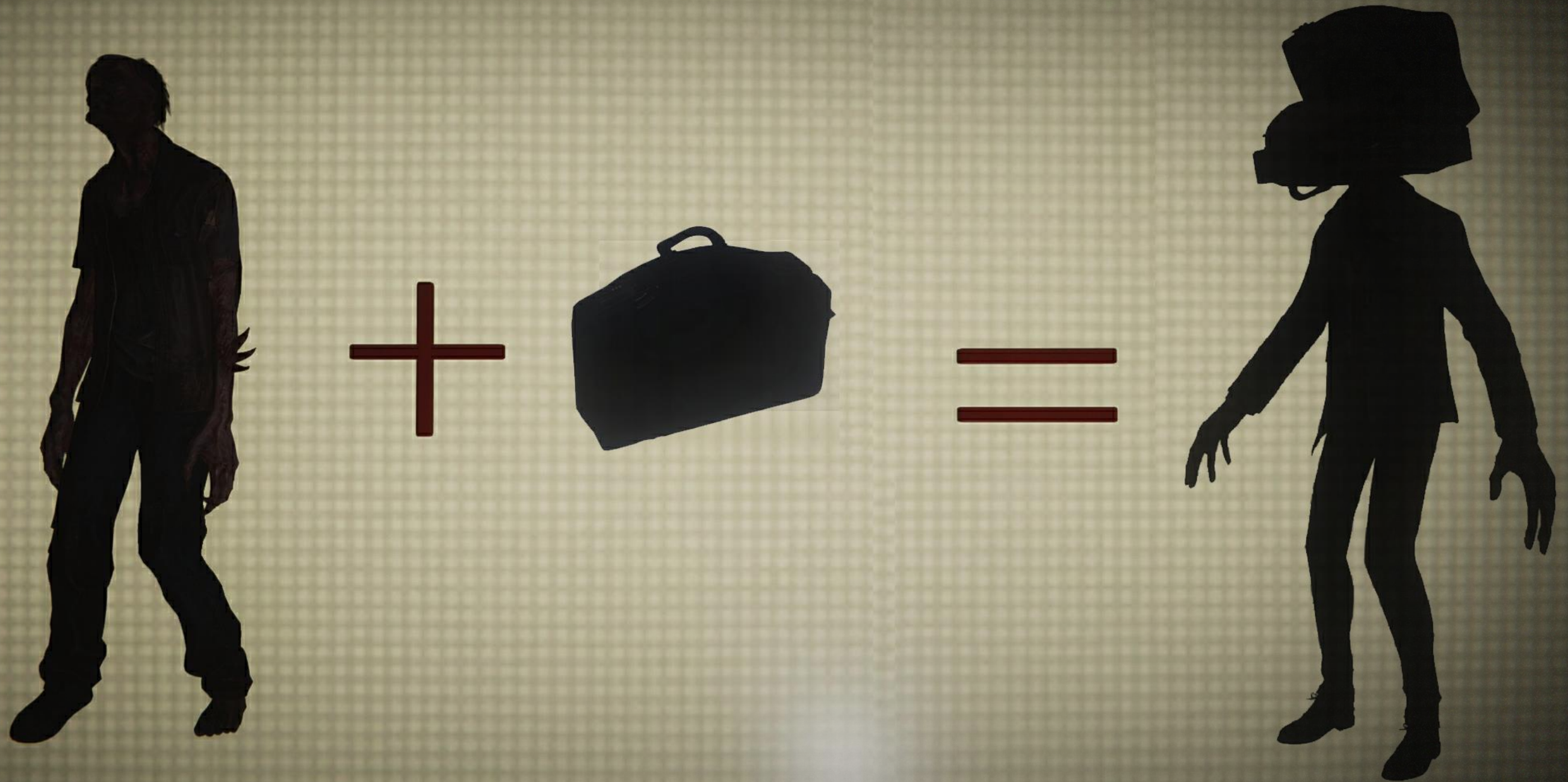


IMPLEMENTING THE "FAMILIAR"+"STRANGE" METHOD:





Implementing the "Familiar" + "Strange" Method:





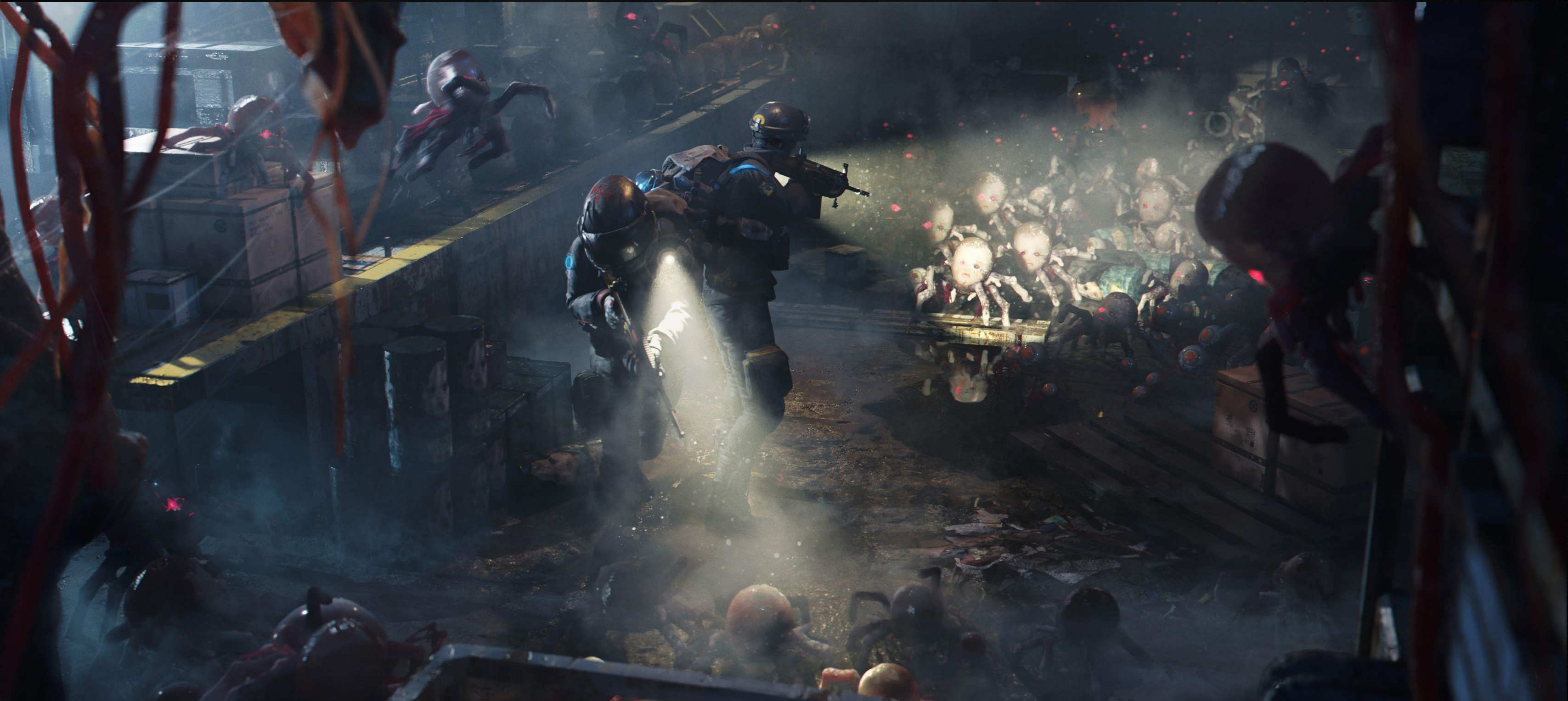


IMPLEMENTING THE "FAMILIAR"+"STRANGE" METHOD:



+









IMPLEMENTING THE "FAMILIAR"+"STRANGE" METHOD:



+



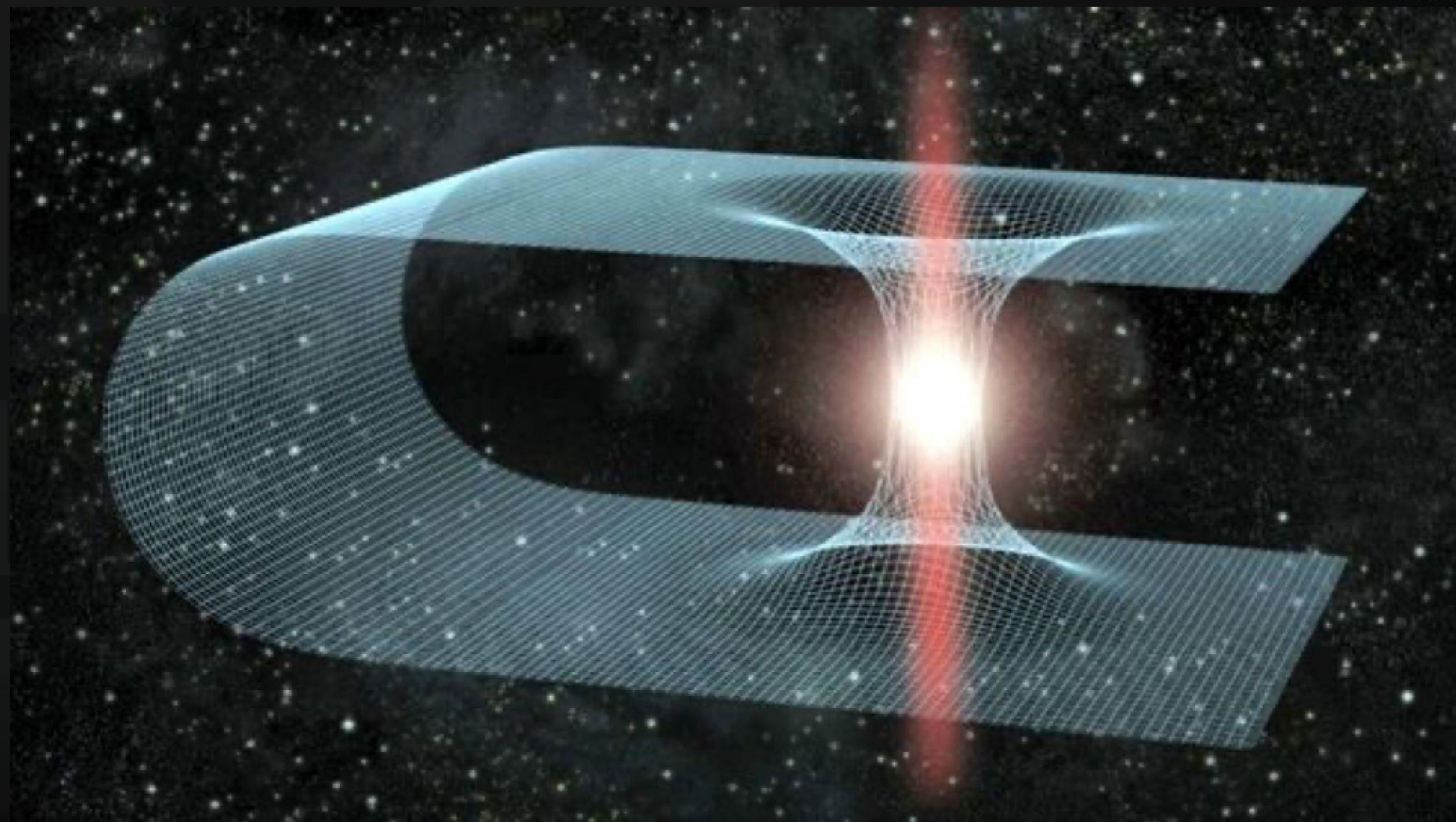






IMPLEMENTING THE "FAMILIAR"+"STRANGE" METHOD:

THE "SPATIAL SEEPAGE"



"SPACE SEEPAGE" IN DUNGEONS

"SPACE SEEPAGE" IN DUNGEONS



"SPACE SEEPAGE" IN DUNGEONS





IMPLEMENTING THE "FAMILIAR"+"STRANGE" METHOD



+





A LIVING MACHINE BUS, IS STILL A BUS

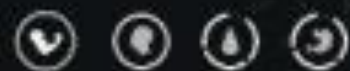


◆ EXPLORE OVERLOOK TOWN

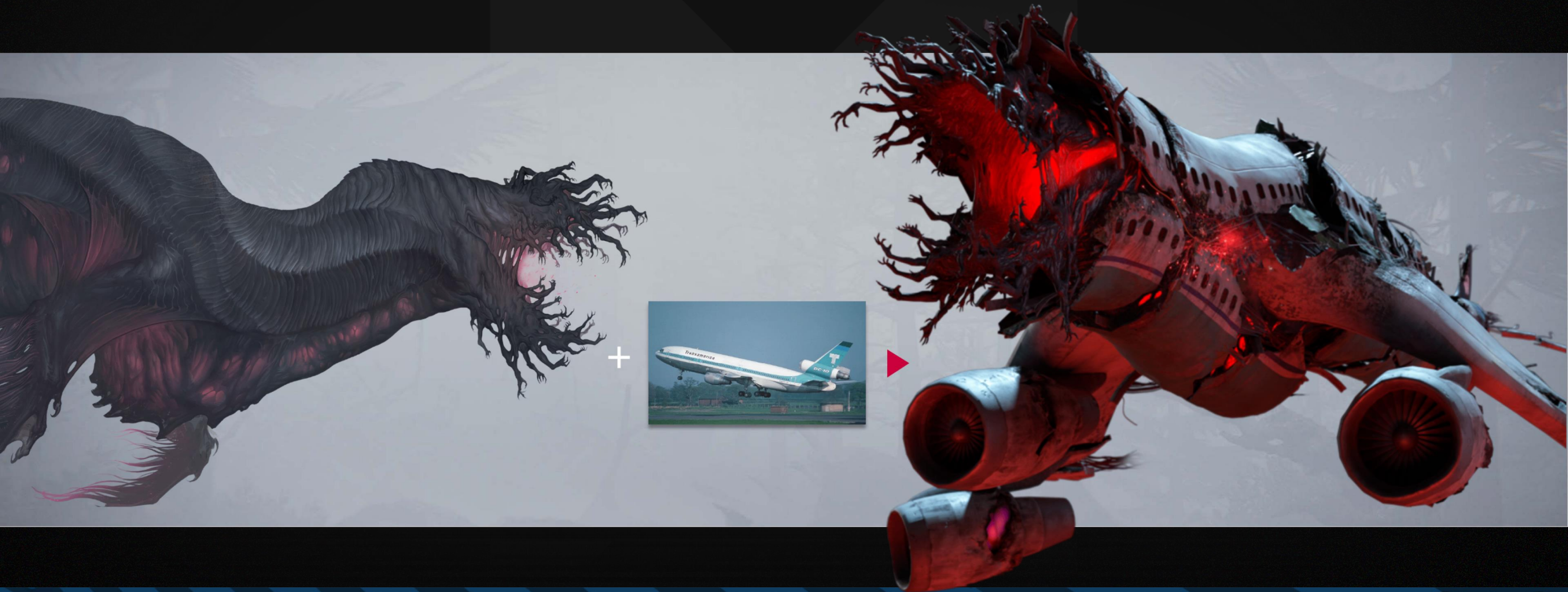
- ◆ Find mysterious treasures (0/1)
- ◆ 激活位面锚 (0/1)
- ◆ Find Weapon and Gear Crates (0/2)

 Aim
 Switch to OTS
 Holster Weapon
 Switch Camera
 手电筒

[System>Welcome to Once Human
[System>Please Enter to start the



IMPLEMENTING THE "FAMILIAR"+"STRANGE" METHOD:







PART III

HOW DID WE COLLECTIVELY DESIGN WITH PLAYERS?

IMPLEMENT PLAYER SUGGESTIONS



Suggester BOT ✓ BOT Today at 17:43

(edited)



Suggestion from [REDACTED]



Me and my friends think that it would be great if we can mount the Watcher's spotlight head on our bike. Or on other vehicles. And, if possible, build it in our territory. Because it would be really nice if we can freeze enemies while driving and defending our buildings.

Votes

Opinion: +1

Upvotes: 1 100%

Downvotes: 0 0%

Suggestion ID: 2160316 | Submitted at • Today at 17:43



ALIGN WITH PLAYER PREFERENCES



PART IV

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

FINAL THOUGHTS

- ▶ Establish a systematic and inclusive design language in the early stage
- ▶ Monster-Environment-In-game Experience: 3-in-1
- ▶ Stay open-minded and always remember to stand in the shoes of the players

Q & A

FIND MORE ON



ONCEHUMAN.GAME

STEAM  ONCE HUMAN



Discord



YouTube



X