

Is this thing on? Yes? Yes. Ok.

We were told to write home to our families and update them on the year, tell them how we are doing and all that.

But, as far as I know, I've got nobody. The Rebs killed us all. And they think I'm in a coffin right next to the rest of 'em on Naboo.

Well, surprise. I'm not. I'm a Captain in the First Recon Division of the Emperor's Hammer. I serve as Squadron Executive Officer of Rho Squadron aboard the Imperial Star Destroyer *Warrior*, and I'm proud to wave our flag.

You'd be proud of me, Balain. It's been a while, and I've changed so much. No longer a little kid studying manuals.

No more manuals, no more yearning for the stars. My home is in the stars now. And I fly real TIEs. You'd be proud.

You too, Mom. You'd be proud. Your kid's grown up. I hate that you can't see what you made, but just know, wherever you are, that I remember you.

Dad. You'd be proud. You probably wouldn't say it, but you would be. I knew you were that one night when I came in and told those NavInt officers about my flight sim scores and their jaws dropped. I knew then you were capable of being proud. Well, I've amounted to something, haven't I. Nearing two years of service, right? Defying survival odds and fighting for the cause you fought so hard for. That ended up betraying you.

Alexis.

We didn't know each other for long enough at all. I promised you forever, and it wasn't that. But I blame myself. I shouldn't have left, I would have been able to do something.

I can hear you saying it right now, 'Don't blame yourself, Alex. It would have been you, too.'

Isn't it fascinating how I can still hear your voice after seven years? You'd be proud of me, too. I've done so much to try and fix the wrong, but nothing can bring you back, and it's taken me this long to burn off all of the hate. It's taken me this long to go back and see what really happened. But in those years, I've become a better man, I've become what I could never have been. But it's not what I wanted.

I didn't want to be a pilot.

I wanted to be a son. A husband.

A father.

And all of that was taken from me, wrenched from my grasp by the Rebels and the Imperials alike. And so I fight for a better galaxy. You would be proud of me. The *Warrior* won IS4. You wouldn't know what that was, but it was a big deal, with a new commodore and all. And then Rho did well in ReMob and then played a pivotal role in the fight against the Ishtari. My uniform is filling up with medals, I'm making friends, I'm climbing the ranks, and I'm living life mostly unburdened of the hate now. But it's hard. Because all of my friends get to send messages back to their families, to their wives and husbands and children and parents. But I won't even send mine. I'll record this for myself, and not even send it. Because there's nobody. There's nobody but me.

I've grown into quite the sentimentalist because of you, Alexis. I still wear my old TIE helmet Balain gave me, but I've given it a fresh paint job. And do you remember, when you told me to come back safely when I left that last time for Chandrila, what you gave me? I haven't told anyone this, not even Dav. He's my commander. I still have it.

You gave me your gold bracelet with our names on it. I hang it in my TIE when I fly, and then take it out when I'm done. Nobody has ever seen it but me. I don't wear it, I put it in the drawer of my quarters and only take it out when I fly.

I'll change that. I'll wear it around. But I don't know what I'll do when people ask what it is.

Although Cam probably knows. He's my closest friend. He's a droid, but not really. It's hard to explain.

I've got off track of the point of this exercise, so let's call it quits. I've got great hopes for the next year, might even get the Rho command at some point. I'll learn more about both the galaxy and myself, and I'll be a better pilot. In a year I would love to have maxed out my flight wings. Unfortunately, I'm nowhere close, not even halfway, but I'll shoot for the stars. I want everyone to know my name, I want to be the best of the best. But progress. One year at a time.

I miss you all. So much. But y'all would love who I am now, and what I'm doing.

I guess I'll just hide it in this drawer. I hope someone finds it someday. Probably Cam will, but someone besides him.

Have a great new year, Cam, 'cause I know it's you listening right now. Rho Five, out.