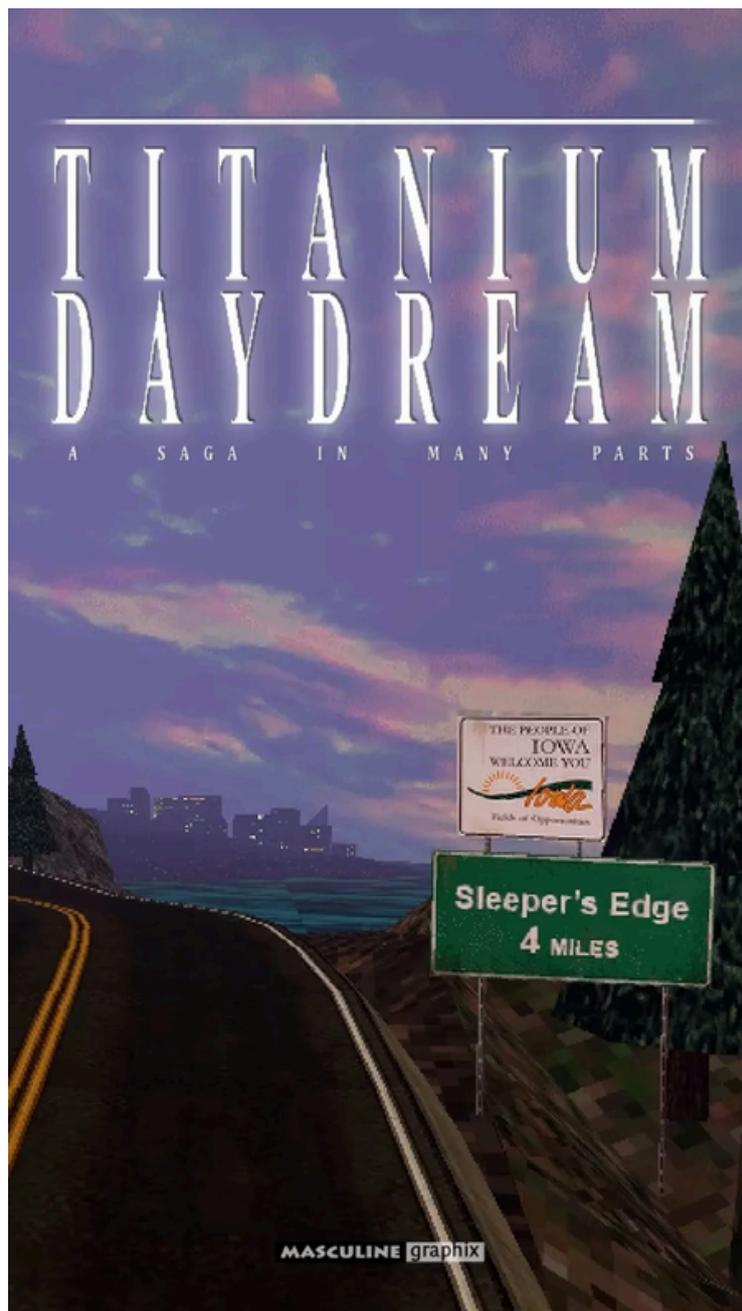


TITANIUM DAYDREAM VS DESTROYED



Titanium Daydream

Hi guys, thanks for doing this. To start things off, can you introduce yourselves and your roles on Titanium Daydream?

Jacob: Hello! Our pleasure. I'm Jacob, I am the 3D model designer and animator of Titanium Daydream, responsible for the visuals.

Ben: And I'm Ben, head writer and the composer of the original score.

Where did the idea for Titanium Daydream come from?

Ben: The ether of our shared love of extremely sincere media. For a while we had wanted to make something with a brooding, unwinking, self-serious tone of poetic indulgence. When Jacob started learning Blender, it was a great excuse to channel this through our narrative vessel - a young man in small shades cruising in his white convertible towards his haunted hometown.

Titanium Daydream feels very specific and fully formed. When you started, did you know the tone right away, or did it evolve through trial and error?

Jacob: We knew the tone we wanted from the jump. But it evolved and took on a life of its own along the way. Early on there were more jokey references to video game tropes, but we discarded that cheap trick.

I want to ask about the PS1 and PS2 aesthetic. Looking at your previous artwork, this feels like a bit of a departure. What attracted you to this look?

Jacob: Partially, the economy of it. With 3D you can reuse assets - unlike 2D. Which makes our weekly schedule possible! Also we wanted to make something cinematic, and 3D offers all kinds of dramatic camera moves and lighting.

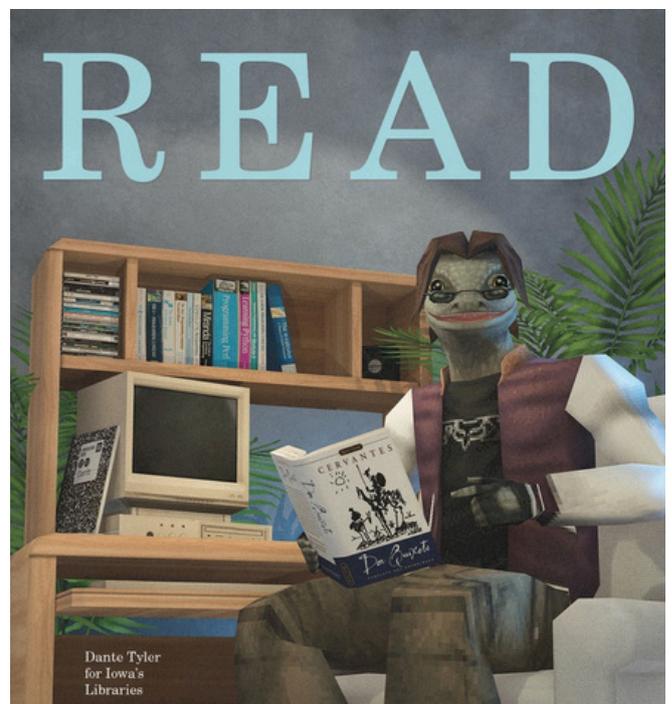
It seems like the PS1 and PS2 look is gaining popularity. You can find other creators working in this style, and there is no shortage of tutorials showing how to recreate it in Blender. Why do you think this retro style has only started gaining traction in recent years?

Ben: It's super accessible! Less polygons, less fuss. More potential for stylization. That and Y2K nostalgia.

Beyond the aesthetic, Titanium Daydream has a familiar feeling to games from the past like Shenmue, but wackier. It is not quite a parody or satire, and feels more like a loving homage. Is that intentional?

Ben: Yeah, in 2018, Jacob and I bought a reissue of Shenmue for PS4 from the Target in Glendale, on a whim. We had never played it. It completely changed our lives and got us through a dark period. We adore everything about how it looks and feels. Loving homage is right - I think it offered us a framework for us to jump off from. Guy in cool jacket unravels mystery.

Jacob: And yeah, we never want to sneer at these influences we love. It's never a parody to us.



How far ahead are you planning the series? Do you have a story bible, or is the story revealing itself as you go?

Jacob: We have a general roadmap of where the story will go, but allow it to unfold naturally week-by-week, indulging some of the strange tangents that entice us.

There is a strange internal logic to the world of Titanium Daydream. Do you keep notes or rules about how that world works, or do you trust instinct?

Ben: Mostly instinct and what feels right emotionally. For instance, Dante is visually a lizard but he doesn't do lizard things like eat insects.

Are there deeper themes or ideas underneath the absurdity that you are consciously exploring?

Jacob: We like to think so.

How long does it take to animate each episode?

Ben: The entire script to final animation pipeline takes one week. Solely the animation is 3-5 days.

What parts of the show come easiest to you, and what parts are unexpectedly difficult?

Jacob: None of it is easy. We are constantly in pain.

The writing is hilarious and full of grand, proverbial statements. My favourite is, "Nothing pierces the heart like the sting of mercy." Where does this writing style come from? Are there particular influences you look to?

Ben: We're from a very literary town, Iowa City - a UNESCO City of Literature and home to the University of Iowa's renowned Writer's Workshop. It's practically illegal there if you don't speak in poems. So our upbringing, basically. Also this grandiose narration that we find funny is pretty common in noir and anime and crap like that.

The music is spot on. Who or what did you look to when developing the retro music style?

Ben: All kinds of influences of the jazz fusion and adult contemporary persuasions. It's easier when I can find a strong reference track. For one of the big musical moments of the show, Cassie's synthpop song "Fly into the Blue", I basically xeroxed the production style of the producer trio Stock Aitken Waterman who were behind the Hi-NRG hits of Rick Astley and Kylie Minogue.

The Rockstar Energy drink is hilarious, and you scatter a lot of real world references throughout the show, like the City of Angels poster or Champion shirts. Are these meant as easter eggs, jokes, or both?

Jacob: They're meant to be funny but they're also meant to inform the characters and world.

Titanium Daydream was made for social media reels. Why did you choose that format?

Jacob: It's just a very easy and instantaneous way to be a storyteller right now.

Was it difficult working within the constraints of the reels format?

Jacob: Coming from a horizontal tradition, I've had to relearn shot composition for vertical, which has been frustrating at times and pleasantly surprising at others.

Ben: It's also a tightrope walk to keep our invested fans engaged with the serialized narrative while also making punchy one-off episodes that attract new followers.

Social media audiences often engage very differently than traditional film audiences. Have viewers interpreted the show in ways you did not expect?

Ben: We've been happy to see there's a lot of viewers with a hunger for more substantive, sincere, cinematic storytelling on such a traditionally disposable medium as reels.

I first heard about your work being turned into a film through the Important Cinema Club, who called it one of the best things of the year. Has that kind of reception surprised you?

Jacob: Most definitely! We didn't think people would take it seriously as "a movie" in its own right. But that has been a huge honor!

Does the reception feel different from responses that come through more traditional avenues like film criticism, box office performance, or TV ratings?

Ben: Yes, the reactions to our independent project are coming mostly from other independent sources - YouTubers, fan artists, student newspapers. Which feels organic and exciting.

Why release the first 52 episodes as a feature film on YouTube?

Jacob: We started off thinking of this cluster of episodes as a "season" which it sort of is... but we realized just by adding a little bit of extra connective footage it had the structure and pacing of a short feature. Which was good news for movie guys like us. Movies rule, TV drools!

In the credits, you make a point of stating that no AI was used. Have there been comments or assumptions about AI and the show?

Ben: We haven't been suspected of using AI which hopefully is a testament to the show. We've had a few comments saying it's a great antidote to the current AI glut, which is music to our ears. Movies rule, TV drools, and AI is complete booty cheeks.

What is next for Titanium Daydream?

Jacob: We've taken a little break just putting out one-off comedic TD stories, but we are soon launching back into the major narrative with Season 2, or Titanium Daydream: The Movie 2, however you want to look at it. Stay tuned!

Iowa seems like a magical place in the show. How close is it to the real Iowa?

Ben: It's a mirror image.

You can follow Titanium Daydream wherever you get your social media.

