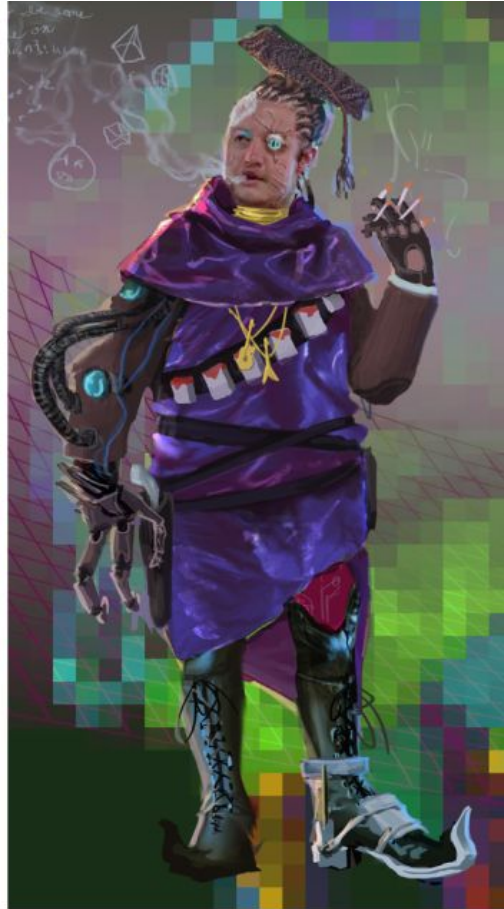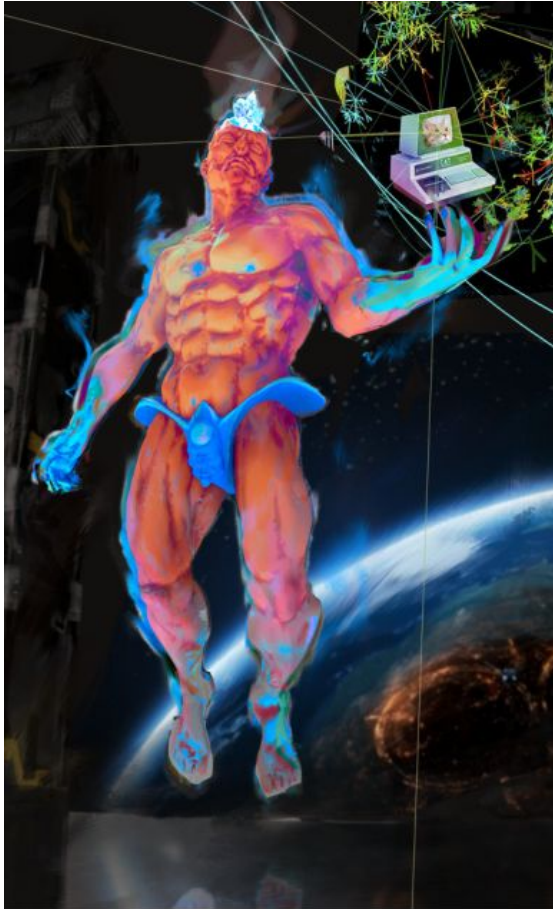# The Joyride Universe

A game by Million Dollar Extreme, the creators of *World Peace* (Adult Swim)
PC/Xbox Live/PlayStation Network
Target audience: 17-30, male
Rating: M

Original concept art
by Aldo Katayanagi
(aldo-art.com)

Overview

Extra-dimensional nebulas of malevolent thought particles (known as '**snowglobes**') want to clear up multiverse real estate for existence's largest ever retail megaplex. Unable to destroy matter/energy, they enlist Lucifer as their corporeal agent to go from universe to universe, changing people, places, objects--making them incrementally more similar. Anything that doesn't conform to this new shared reality simply vanishes, and technically speaking never existed anyway.

2MASX

Is a decadent, technofetishist, late-stage Type I civilization, on the verge of collapse. **Level 9 Zones** are paradise enclaves where the descendents of political dynasties chase stimulation under the protection and guidance of dysfunctional but benevolent AIs. **Level 1 Zones** are barbaric hellholes where raiders use scavenged tech and harpoon guns to pilfer what they can from traders and partiers who've strayed too far from the beaten path.

Ritchie Kisses is a gender-bending pop star, kept under supervision and sedation by his scheming manager **Gime-Goch**.

Simon Cube is a 'visionary trillionaire' who leaves the planet on a space pilgrimage and comes back with delusions of godhood, possessed by an alien parasite.

Professor Jick is the headmaster of an academy for young magic users. The students are all children with terminal cancer. The type of cancer is linked to one's magical affinity--boils and cysts are status effects/buffs/debuffs, lung cancer is air/gravity magic, mouth cancer is fire magic, etc.

Looks like: Omega from Mass Effect 2, The Fifth Element, Strange Days

Neo-Schneider

A 1930's America-esque world of newspapers, railroads, budding air travel, and private detectives has been systematically dismantled by the snowglobes almost past the point of no return. This universe's last hope is a J. Jonah Jameson-type media figurehead who goes by his intelligence agency codename--the only name he remembers--**Bud**.

Hank and **Rodger** are Bud's agents, sent to **Yong Teng** for corporate espionage. As fragments of reality start to go missing, Hank and Rodger are left stranded in a sweltering Yong Teng shanty apartment, boxed in on all sides by motorcycle assassins.

Slane is an opportunistic grifter whose eyes light up when he hears of a secret underground train used by **Thunderhawk** casino bosses to transport gold and other precious metals. He finds out the hard way that the train takes the gold straight to the planet's mantle for disposal ("reunification with World Mother").

Looks like: Chinatown (1974), Dark City

Var Felona

It is three million years after the technological peak of a human-like society, and its subsequent conquering by a now-long-gone alien race. The people of Var Felona live in a permanent dark-age.

When the **Old Ones** came, they used insane technology to remotely suppress the intelligence and inquisitive nature of the Var Felonans. They stripped the planet of its resources and left almost immediately thereafter. On their way out, they decided it simply wasn't worth their time to disable the monolithic **mind-control wave emitter**--it's been running ever since.

People are bewildered by magic flying boots and lances that shoot spectral fire, oblivious to the underlying golden age nanotechnology that makes these seeming miracles a reality.

Hairy is a scientist who is at least 1000 years old and has transferred his consciousness into the brain of a genetically-modified dog to escape detection.

The Prince of Flowers is immune to the alien monolith thanks to a mental aberration similar to what we would call autism, but he is kept prisoner in the **Recursive Garden** by a small army of sycophantic courtesans and well-meaning guards.

Spider and **Redips** are twin indigo children (immune to mind-control due to autism), who are tasked with slaying **The Black Dragon** (the euphemism Var Felonans use to describe the phenomena of vanishing people, places and things, holes in reality, and other side effects of snowglobe meddling).

Looks like: Kingdom (PC), Legend (1986), The NeverEnding Story

The Joyride Universe

Is the universe that lends the game its name. Approx. 40% of gameplay takes place here. Other universes are subtractive--the snowglobes use their influence there to destabilize reality, making it seem as though things are simply disappearing. **The Joyride Universe** is the template universe towards which all other universes are shifted. It is a chaotic and hellish place.

It also happens to be *our* universe, a few thousand years from now. The poles are reversed--Mexico is covered in glaciers and the southern reaches of Canada are a sweltering tropical jungle.

Jackshow is The King of The Lands, A-Number-One, The Boy Who Became A Legend--the despotic, schizophrenic, brutal ruler of **Urth**. His pact with **Lucifer** gives him free reign to torment the people with his **Red Method** so long as he keeps any resistance stifled under his greasy thumb.

The Ratters are mutated and anthropomorphized rats with Japanese samurai ethics. They have a fierce distrust of outsiders but will fight for justice if given no other choice.

Koppos specialize in finding caches of pre-collapse police equipment that give them the edge in combat. Despite their advanced gear and unique costumes, they're a tribe of hardscrabble scavengers and killers like all the rest.

Abe Stahl is a seasoned veteran traveller who criss-crosses the **dustway** in search of a god-damn root beer. **Phil** is his hapless hitch-hiking compatriot. Together, they explore bombed-out parking garages, abandoned hospitals, and dens of iniquity, all in the name of quenching a sugary thirst.

Looks like: Escape from New York, The Running Man, Mad Max

Misc.

Jack and Jill are a paired AI that exists within an improbability bubble created by **Dr. Winkum Dice** shortly before the final stages of deresolution in their universe. Equipped only with some incomplete historical logs, they use fuzzy logic and various simulations to pursue their prime directive: restore existence.

Blue is a gelatinous alien lifeform which bounces from universe to universe collecting the essences, memories, and 'souls' of lost civilizations and derezzed peoples. Dr. Winkum Dice suspects it was created by timeless proto-beings as a failsafe for just this sort of disaster.

Skeleton Crew 22 is an elite squadron of astronauts sent forward in time (as backwards time travel is impossible) to the beginning of the next multiverse cycle (after all universes have reached heat death, contracted, and exploded outwards again).

Gameplay

The player will live many different lives in the multiverse, each time starting without much information or useful equipment, and it is up to her to talk to people, make sense of who's telling the truth, unravel exactly why things are disappearing (in the case of the subtractive non-Joyride universes) and do something about it.

Each universe can be thought of as an 'act', with multiple levels in each act. The player will be able to choose from 10-20 characters, all of whom are unique to the act.

Joyride will use simple 2D pixel art and a limited color pallette (like Cave Story, Nuclear Throne, Broforce) so that we have more time/resources to build multiple gameplay modes and an expansive story. Approximately 60% of the game will be a top-down isometric shooter/beat-em-up with heavy action RPG elements, satisfying action, and dense skill trees. There will be a meaningful level system and different ways to play effectively.

In addition to the main gameplay mode, there will be illustrated *choose-your-own-adventure* interactive fiction sequences (like MadMaze), and dungeon crawler areas (like Legend of Grimrock) at regular intervals.

We have also talked about a fully 3D, open world game, with a rudimentary-but-excellent graphical style (like the original System Shock). We think this could work equally well, though it would require a bigger budget.

Features

- Broforce/Minecraft-style destructible terrain and buildings - put skill points in arson.
- Upon dying, player is taken to Cab City, must successfully hail a cab to continue.
- Work a menial job for two hours real time, take your first paycheck, buy a gun to kill your boss.
- Trenchcoat inventory system
- Crackpots and dreamers don't get any time on the supercollider, it's just a popularity contest.
- Road bombs and IEDs from nowhere, loud as hell
- Sell your organs at the pawn shop to afford a Setsuko-Araska PDW.
- Unblades are negative space weapons, and can cleave any thickness of any material. Hard to hold properly though.
- Terminal illnesses and fatal wounds--the player is doomed but continues to play for 15 minutes before actually bleeding out.
- Cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and vape products function like rings and amulets, giving the user a temporary boost to certain stats.
- Cool, meaningful active and passive skills, like arson
- Why would I learn math? Why would I want to learn something that's changing completely every 14 days? There's a number between one and two and it's an integer, just so you know.
- Plot uncovered by examining items and exploring locations, not by reading huge walls of text.
- Munitions caches that can only be reached by a half-hour jetpack ride, straight into the air.
- Sections where to progress you'll need to call an actual real life phone number, staffed by one of hundreds of mentally unstable volunteers (Million Dollar Extreme fans).

Similar Games: Barkley 2 (Tales of Game's), Chrono Trigger, Borderlands, Earthbound, Nuclear Throne, Hotline Miami

Gameplay Influences: Diablo II, Cybernator, Delver, Pico's School, Pixel Dungeon, Deus Ex (2000), Broforce

Aesthetic Influences: Chiller (1986), System Shock (1994), Metal Slug, SotN, The Super Spy, Lonely Star, Octopus City Blues

Style/Reference Images

(not original art)