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CLAYTON AND SHANE Jacobson have tasted big screen success before with mockumentary *Kenny*, which they later adapted into a successful TV series. This time around they have the small screen lined up again – computer and portable digital screens in fact – with another comedy.

*Mordy Koots* is a 10-episode online series featuring *Kenny* star Shane as an oblivious fighter pilot leading a fly-boy squadron into battle against enemy planes.

But unlike other online projects, the entire world inhabited by the key characters has been lifted from a popular Xbox game - Ubisoft's *Blazing Angels*.

Clayton says the idea behind the MOGIE – a movie over game integrated entertainment – came about by accident.

"I'd come home and have my nine-year-old sitting on the couch playing an Xbox, very freely moving around a 3D space with just the flick of a thumb. And I thought, 'Isn't this bizarre?'"

"He's just got total access to this 3D world that I find almost impossible to get on a professional level without large sums of money. And something just dawned on me: if only I could put my actors in an Xbox game. Then I thought, 'Well, why couldn't I?'"

Convinced by the potential photo-real visuals of *Blazing Angels*, Jacobson set up a test shoot and enlisted his brother, who he sat in a makeshift cockpit he'd constructed from a desk chair and parts cobbled together from the local Bunnings – then filmed his hero against a green screen.

Clayton then went into *Blazing Angels* on Xbox and played the game to "match" Shane's foreground action, utilising the game's dogfight scenarios to create the backgrounds he needed.

"For \$15,000 we were able to create a trailer that had all the makings of a *Pearl Harbor*-type sequence," the director recalls. "It's just shooting live action and slapping it over game footage – and the possibilities for it are just endless."

*Mordy's* fusion of narrative filmmaking and gaming visuals in an online context seems obvious. "It's one of those classic ideas," says series producer Jim Shomos, "that once you hear it, you think, 'Why hasn't anyone else done this?'"

Making *Mordy* a commercial proposition required the blessing of Ubisoft, so Jacobson and Shomos pitched them the trailer. Despite having limited awareness of the brothers' prior work, the company was impressed. It endorsed the project and committed to a major promotional campaign.

Early last month, Ubisoft also announced plans to release three 8 to 12 minute short films based on its *Assassin's Creed II* game. Shomos and Jacobson also took test footage of *Mordy* to Screen Australia, which agreed to assist in funding the series through its innovation program.

"For content makers, it opens up a huge new canvas that you normally couldn't consider," Shomos offers.

"If I'd have gone into Screen Australia and pitched a series idea and said, 'We're gonna set it in World War II and we wanna crash a few planes and blow up a few buildings', they'd throw us out within two minutes. With this, we get to play in that kind of world for a fraction of the cost."

The planned budget for the entire project is about \$300,000 and the producers are also hoping to attract some creative integrated branding via sponsorship.

"If it was for TV or film it'd be a much longer process," continues Jacobson, who says *Mordy* was always designed for the web. "It can all be done in house, very simply and relatively inexpensively, and we can get to a wide audience very quickly."

Production on *Mordy Koots* begins later this month, with the intention of shooting the entire series in less than a week before going live in November – at which point, the marketing campaign will be crucial to the series' success.

In addition to Ubisoft, Shomos says he's close to a deal with a major online content partner, and Jacobson is considering the likes of MSN, YouTube, and Xbox to cross-promote the series.

Should the plan succeed, Jacobson sees a future in producing more MOGIEs based on different gaming titles – and fostering a creative environment in which other directors can work.

"Hopefully, with the relationships that we set up with some of the gaming companies," he enthuses, "we can invite other creatives in to just go down to their local JB Hi-Fi, look at the shelf and – if they see a game they're interested in – then we'll help them with the funding to get one of them made."

*Mordy* could be just the beginning for the Jacobson brothers.

"There are a few other ideas that we've got when it comes to the world of gaming," Jacobson says.

"The one thing about the gaming world is that it's constantly changing – so there are definitely more characters that could see the light of day."

"There's just no such thing as too much," he laughs. "Not in this."

Check out the *Mordy Koots* trailer on the [INSIDEFILM website](#).