

Photo of the Day |



A student riding a scooter on UConn's Storrs campus. The weather was beautiful and warm for the first time in a few weeks.

PHOTO BY DIEGO FLORES-MONTES, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Corporate apathy to the potential of cartoon ‘Infinity Train’ was a mistake

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In a sea of missed opportunities for series that TV channel Cartoon Network hosted but ended up discontinuing and disowning, “Infinity Train” is one of the pearls in the rough, comparatively speaking. Fans of the show adore the groundbreaking writing and how it doesn’t shy away from mature and dark topics, challenging the notion of who cartoons could be for, with episodic and empathetic character-driven storytelling with an overarching plot line that will now never be fully realized. Some have even claimed that, if given the same chances as shows like “Adventure Time” and “Steven Universe,” it would have become just as popular and impactful on pop culture. However, due to a corporate greed unable to take risks and embrace creativity, “Infinity Train” was robbed again and again of the recognition that it deserved.

So, what was “Infinity Train”? For those who don’t know, this

series, spearheaded by director and animator Owen Dennis, features a revolving set of main characters with social, emotional and psychological flaws, who board a mysterious train that pops up in times where people are going through stressful or traumatic challenges. The train’s cars are essentially an in-patient therapy program where the main cast solve puzzles while learning more about themselves and developing as characters. The more they learn about themselves, the lower the number assigned to them gets until they’re allowed to leave the train.

“Infinity Train” was an incredibly progressive piece of media that could have continued to pave the path for more psychologically aware cartoons that could help younger audiences learn more about themselves and other people. Amidst studio and cable censorship, the team behind “Infinity Train” tried their hardest to authentically tell the stories they wanted to tell the way they wanted to with characters that could help the

misunderstood audience members feel seen and heard. They took risks with the character of Lake, for example, who is probably transmasculine and struggles with developing a sense of independence. Similar things could be said about the whole relationship between Min-Gi and Ryan, who are heavily implied — but never quite canonized — to be boys in love with each other.

It is best believed that, when this show was canceled for being too mature and scaring away younger audiences. It was a terrible decision on Cartoon Network executives’ part, especially considering how they aired the adult-oriented (but still technically a cartoon marketed to kids) “Regular Show,” as well as “Adventure Time” with its underlying dark lore. The fact that they are able to air those two examples on Cartoon Network and not [adult swim] makes canceling a show that could comfort young people all the worse in comparison. This becomes especially important in the context of a rising



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youth mental health crisis and makes one wonder why “Infinity Train” wasn’t allowed to tell the story it wanted to tell. It’s a cult classic for a reason; embracing the more mature tone of the series could have helped rake in more money for the studios involved.

To make matters worse, however, Dennis wrote to his Substack in 2022 that “Infinity Train” was one of many underloved shows that got axed from streaming service HBO Max in an attempt to cut costs and even had all acknowledgment of the show by Cartoon Network

erased online. This left fans initially scrambling to ensure that they could access the show, especially since Books 3 and 4 don’t have official physical editions. Regardless of the financial details, this was a symbolic blow and spit in the face to the creators and teams behind these pieces of art that invalidated the fruits of their labor. The fans were rightfully upset at these greedy media corporations that profit from art, but seem to be apathetic toward the creation and meaning behind art.

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The Celebrity Clone Conspiracy: Why the internet can’t handle stars changing

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In our modern world of TikTok and viral speculation, theories of celebrities being replaced by clones have resurfaced. Not that clone theories ever really went away entirely, considering celebrities like Britney Spears and Avril Lavigne have been swept up in similar narratives at various points online. In the early and mid-2010s, viral internet conspiracies claimed that stars like Avril Lavigne had secretly been replaced by doubles, and by the late 2010s similar speculation surrounded Britney Spears. The trend seemed to fade for a time, only to resurface again across social media today. As of recently, Jim Carrey and Selena Gomez have been at the forefront of this clone conversation. Followers and fans dissected photos, compared old and new appearances

to claim that the differences are so drastic they must be evidence of clones, body doubles or even secret replacements.

On the surface, these theories are genuinely absurd. They feel like science fiction plots, or a scene from “The Substance.” Yet, they are increasingly common, especially on platforms built for rapid scrolling and sensationalism. But rather than dismissing them as pure rumor, it’s worth asking: What do these theories say about us — the audience that creates, believes and shares them? Celebrity “clone” conspiracies have resurfaced again and again across different decades and different stars. When the same absurd narrative keeps returning, it suggests there may be something deeper behind it than simple internet nonsense.

This clone phenomenon isn’t new, even if TikTok has accelerated its spread. Long before social media, tabloids and fan

communities speculated wildly about various Hollywood stars. When people become attached to a particular image or moment of a celebrity, any deviation, whether through aging, style changes, health developments or personal evolution, triggers disbelief rather than acceptance.

In Carrey’s case, the conspiracy narratives are often tied to his outspoken criticism of Hollywood itself. He has been vocal in the past about his discomfort with Hollywood culture, combined with a history of personal transformation and artistic evolution. He has frequently criticized Hollywood’s obsession with appearance and superficiality. In interviews, he has reflected philosophically on identity and his overall disillusionment with the Hollywood business.

So, when Carrey showed up all chipper and seemed a little too eager in interviews at the 51st César Awards in Paris, the gos-

sip about whether the man on the red carpet and onstage was really “him” or an impostor began. Viewers pointed to differences in his appearance, hairstyle or voice during red carpet interviews and claimed he must be a body double or replacement. The internet was nitpicking every detail about him, some focusing on the alleged change in his eye color and overall face shape.

A well-known visual effects makeup artist, Alexis Stone, posted images of what appeared to be a Carrey-like prosthetic mask with a caption implying a “transformation,” which only added fuel to the fire. But César Awards officials debunked these rumors, saying that Carrey planned his trip for months, practiced his French meticulously and was genuinely present to accept the award.

The speculation, however, is symbolic of a broader trend: audiences are often unwilling to

accept normal aging or personal evolution. The differences people notice are simply the result of age and life experience (and a little bit of poor plastic surgery), but not anything more sinister. The plain truth is that public figures, just like everyone else, naturally change over time.

From Carrey to Gomez: Appearance, Aging and Speculation And just like Carrey, Gomez has been targeted for appearance-based speculation as well. As Gomez has transitioned from a child Disney Channel star to singer/actress/business owner in her adult years, her public perception has evolved. Some online theorists have claimed that she is not her “real” self, but a replacement or clone. This imagined transformation supposedly explains unexpected personal choices, including her marriage to Benny Blanco.

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