Arts & Life

DC superheroes get a new guardian

By ANTHONY ANGELILLO
Copy Editor

Director James Gunn and producer Peter Safran are stepping down as co-CEOs of DC Studios after four years, which will be effective Dec. 1, leaving former Marvel Studios executive Jeremy Latcham in charge of a superhero universe that is still trying to find its footing.

Skydance announced the change Nov. 9, with Latcham starting Dec. 1 as president and chief creative officer (CCO). He will report to co-chairs Dana Goldberg and Josh Greenstein, while Gunn and Safran return to making movies full-time.

The move came as a surprise, since Skydance had kept both men in place when it completed its takeover of Warner Bros. Discovery in October of this year.

About a month later, Skydance Chief Executive Officer (CEO) David Ellison and co-CEO Ynon Kreiz reportedly broke the news to them in person on the Warner Bros. lot.

Skydance publicly thanked the pair for "resetting the foundation" of DC, but the box office tells a different story.

"Superman" made $618.7 million worldwide in 2025, a solid start that still fell short of the cultural splash Ellison was reportedly hoping for.

"Supergirl" followed in June with about $126 million on a reported $170 million budget, and "Clayface" has made $109 million since opening Oct. 23, which is fine for a horror film made for about $40 million but small for a franchise.

Insiders say the chain of command played a role too, since Gunn and Safran's contracts let them answer straight to the top instead of going through Goldberg and Greenstein.

That also meant being slow to share plans and footage with them. Ellison summed up his approach at a company town hall: "We are not here to preserve the status quo."

Gunn sounded more relieved than upset in a long Instagram post, calling his time running DC Studios "trying, to say the least" and saying he disliked the corporate side of the job.

He wrote that the work swallowed the short breaks he used to take between films, time that belonged to him and his loved ones, and he apologized to his wife. He also said he struggled with ADHD, splitting his attention among projects he loved, projects he did not and his duties as a studio head.

Gunn hinted about his troubles in January earlier this year, when he said running a studio while directing might not be sustainable long-term because "there just aren't enough hours in a day."

He says he is "incredibly relieved and excited to get back to pure filmmaking." Gunn's biggest change to DC happened off-screen, where he and Safran pulled film, television and comics under one roof after taking over in 2022, as director Zach Snyder's universe was fading.

Their reboot launched with the animated "Creature Commandos" in December 2024 before "Superman" came to theaters the next summer.

Gunn's specialty was making fans care about characters most people had never heard of, something he did with the "Guardians of the Galaxy" films with Marvel and actor John Cena's Peacemaker at DC.

It was that philosophy that led to the series' success on HBO Max, including the newly released "Lanterns," which has averaged 19.3 million viewers on the streaming platform.

Gunn joined Marvel in 2004 and rose to senior vice president of production and development while working on "Iron Man" and "The Avengers." He was also an executive producer on "Guardians of the Galaxy," the film that made Gunn a blockbuster director, before leaving in 2017 to start his own production company.

Gunn's last project as boss is "Man of Tomorrow," the "Superman" sequel he wrote and directed, which arrives July 9, 2027. Actor David Corenswet returns in the cape, actor Aaron Pierre returns as John Stewart, and Wonder Woman may return to the big screen, with a brand-new actress still to be named.

Director Matt Reeves' "The Batman Part II," starring actor Robert Pattinson, is set for Feb. 18, 2028, but sits outside Gunn's universe, which leaves DC's most bankable hero not connected to him.

On streaming, "Creature Commandos" has a second season coming and "Peacemaker" and "Lanterns" are still awaiting renewals.

Films like "The Brave and the Bold," a Wonder Woman movie and director James Mangold's "Swamp Thing" never received a formal green light. Reports this week said Gunn's long-term plan had his Superman sequels building towards "Justice League" films in 2029 and 2031.

Skydance does not seem willing to wait that long, with Ellison reportedly pushing Latcham to get the Justice League into theaters quickly. That means films for Wonder Woman, Green Lantern and the Flash, with less room for lesser-known characters like Polka-Dot Man from Gunn's "The Suicide Squad" to get movies of their own.

Gunn ended his goodbye by promising that the characters that he and Latcham set up "will live on," and starting Dec. 1, whether that promise holds is up to them.

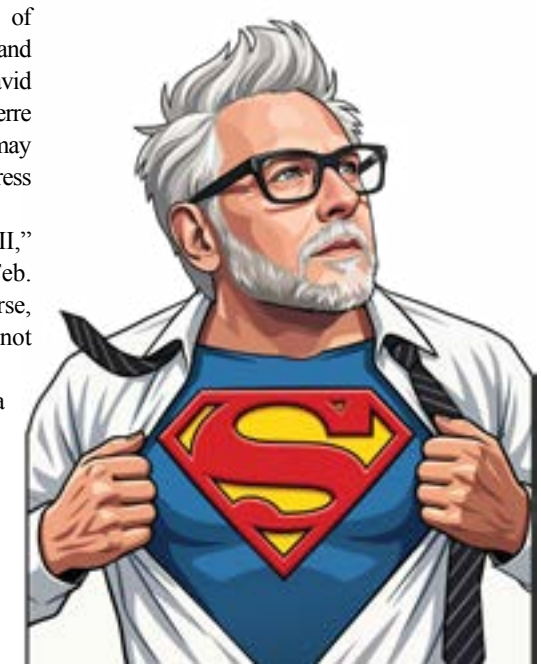

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY ANGELILLO

What happened to YouTube drama?

By ADRIHANNA COLLINS
Staff Writer

There was once a golden age of YouTube. An age where you would lie and wait for the notification of your favorite YouTuber's upload. A time when it seemed the cultural conversation was surrounding the videos posted on the platform and the people who posted them.

So what happened? Why don't we seem to care anymore?

The reason may be the same thing that made YouTube great: there just really isn't that much drama.

The biggest scandal to ever grace the platform was the feud between beauty influencers Tati Westbrook and James Charles in a phenomenon known as "Dramageddon" or "Sistergeddon."

The feud started May 10, 2019, when Westbrook released the now-infamous 43-minute "BYE SISTER" video targeting Charles and his famous catchphrase.

The video accused Charles of betraying her by promoting a competing hair vitamin brand for free Coachella tickets. He had promoted her brand, Halo Beauty, before and Westbrook felt he had undermined her friendship. She also accused him of coercing straight men into sex.

Charles responded with a video of his own titled "No More Lies," where he clapped back at Westbrook's accusations, saying, "I have never and will never use my fame, money or my power to manipulate or get any sexual actions from a guy. That is disgusting."

Charles lost over one million subscribers in a day and over three million overall (all of which he was able to recoup), while Westbrook gained over 3.5 million followers during the scandal. YouTube changed the ability to see a creator's exact subscriber count because the counts were being weaponized online to see who was winning the scandal.

"Sistergeddon" taught many influencers that drama can be harnessed to gain influence rather than diminish it. This created the modern playbook of how drama can be wielded for online clout.

Influencers sustain their careers through a combination of brand deals and ad shares. Increasing engagement and viewership is essential to maintaining relevance and striking deals. Influencers, therefore, pick a moral battle with another influencer to get more engagement.

"It's excellent for traffic because it's the most popular content around. It's impossible not to click on it," Angèle Christin, a communications professor at Stanford University, said in an interview with Time Magazine. "But it's also a great way to get your audience to support you against all odds."

This support can materialize outside of views through purchasing merch, special subscriptions and products through paid partnerships, which earns the influencer even more money.

So at what point did this model stop working?

Some experts argue that at some point the market became oversaturated.

Soon, entire channels became dedicated to covering the drama of internet celebrities. These drama or tea channels served as the TMZ of YouTube, recapping internet gossip with an air of superiority and conspiracy.

Influencers were then put under the microscope by these channels, where every small move could be interpreted as evidence of something bigger.

As more influencers caused unnecessary drama, it was covered by a whole army of YouTube channels dedicated to being opportunists in internet conflict.

"Everybody wants a piece of the viral pie," Jessica Maddox, who researches internet culture at the University of Georgia, said in an interview with Time Magazine. "People will jump on a viral train because that's what algorithms and technological systems that underscore these platforms reward—the content that is getting the most attention."

For a phenomenon that began with an alleged inauthenticity, the whole system started to feel very disingenuous. No longer did the drama feel like a pullback on influencer culture, but rather a corporatized system where influencers could use their audience for economic gain.

"We had the event, the immediate response from drama channels, but then we had the backlash, memes, and commodification," Maddox said. "By the time the brands get in it, that's the kiss of death."

But this doesn't mean people stopped listening to online gossip. Instead, it seemingly transferred locations.

In a society that values absorbing as much information in as short of an amount of time as possible, TikTok has ultimately become the reigning platform in the creator space. When people talk about influencers now, the images evoked are not of the YouTubers of the past but instead TikTokers.

TikTok is like YouTube in that both feature niche content, but TikTok presents it in a more compact format, which allows people to watch more content faster.

Society hasn't necessarily become more altruistic. But as attention spans have shortened, so has the drama cycle. Big scandals no longer shake and take hold of the internet because the entertainment cycle moves so quickly. People don't have a reason to watch hour-long apology videos like they used to if they can get 30 seconds instead.

"The way internet communities view drama now is like a high-speed moving train: it's zipping through your timeline, but you have to find the perfect time to jump on and ride to the end of the line," Time Magazine said.

But where is the end of the line?



ILLUSTRATION BY LILIANA MIRABELLA