

### Intro for December 18, 2025

DECEMBER 18, 2025 14:31:00 BY LAINEY

Dear Gossips,

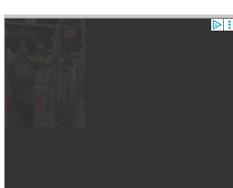
I don't want to sound smug or anything – but actually I do – but for the last few weeks, and several times already this week, I've been posting about how *Heated Rivalry* has yet to peak. One reason is because there are still people who haven't seen it in the markets where it's already been released, saving to watch during the holiday break. And they'll be able to binge it because the last episode of season one doesn't drop until next Friday. Episode five is now available and there's about to be another wave of horny obsession this weekend when more people have viewed it. Plus there's the rewatch factor. A member of our Squawk community on Substack yesterday commented on one of our threads that "I have watched all episodes minimum 3 times but I will for sure have at least 1 or 2, 6 episode marathons in the tank for the holiday tv vacation days."



Another reason *Heated Rivalry* is still on the ascent is because it's actually not that available around the world, yet. But, as noted, negotiations over distribution rights have undoubtedly been taking place in other territories and yesterday came the announcement from Bell Media confirming that Sky has acquired the series for the UK and it will broadcast on its streaming service Now starting in January. Bell Media owns Crave, the Canadian streamer that produced *Heated Rivalry* and there were reportedly multiple bids in play. And this, by the way, is the dream – to greenlight a show, fund it, and then make back the money multiple times over when the series is a smash hit.



The issue, especially here in Canada, is the initial funding. We don't have as many funding options here – and that's an oversimplification but it's true – which means there are fewer opportunities. The success of *Heated Rivalry* and the fact that a second season is confirmed has, at the very least, guaranteed more work for the Canadian crew. Optimistically it'll generate more interest in investing in content made here, having seen the standard of content that is made here.

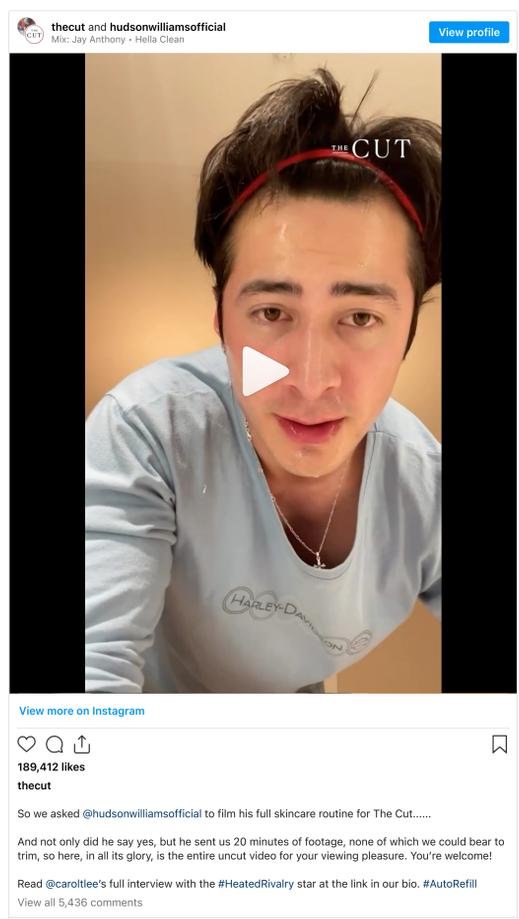


That's the business of it, briefly. Now let's talk about the celebrity of it, briefly. Yesterday I mentioned that Jordan Firstman, who stars in *I Love LA*, stepped it in when he trash-talked the sex scenes in *Heated Rivalry*. The beef seemed to be squashed when he and Hudson Williams posted a photo of themselves together. I guess they wanted to double down on how good the gays are now because HBO Max posted this last night.



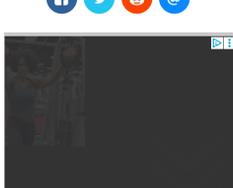
*I Love LA* was supposed to be HBO Max's show for Gen Z but they did not see *Heated Rivalry* coming. *Heated Rivalry* is HBO Max's crown jewel for the season, currently the #1 show on the platform with its two chaotic lead stars continuing to go viral every few days.

Hudson's skincare routine, in print, was already popping off on social media. And then yesterday came the video – 20 minutes long, unscripted and unfiltered and so much fun. As people kept saying in the comments, media training here would be the enemy. But the comms teams throughout the industry could probably take a few notes from what we've been seeing from Hudson and Connor Storrie. Including the skincare tips. More men need to moisturise!



Yours in gossip,

Lainey



PHOTOS: MATT BARON/ BEI/ SHUTTERSTOCK

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