SL Google Fiber
We're expanding in your area
Learn More

END OF YEAR SALE: SUBSCRIBE FOR $1/WEEK – SAVE 75% ON OUR BEST DEAL OF THE YEAR. SUBSCRIBE NOW.

'Heated Rivalry' Creator Unpacks Finale's Risky Vibe Shift: 'It Felt Like Bliss'

Jacob Tierney and Ed Brendan Brady tell TheWrap about filming the pivotal cottage getaway, evolving Shane and Ilya's sex scenes and Season 2

Jose Alejandro Bastidas
December 29, 2025 8:12 PM ET

Connor Storrie and Hudson Williams in "Heated Rivalry." (Sabrina Lantos)

This story contains spoilers from "Heated Rivalry" Episode 6.

"Heated Rivalry" ended its triumphant first season with a quiet but impactful finale — and the promise of more romance in the not too distant future.

Episode 6, titled "The Cottage," left the grandiosity of Scott Hunter's (Francois Arnaud) public coming out in the rearview mirror for Shane (Hudson Williams) and Ilya's (Connor Storrie) quiet getaway at the former's secluded home. The hour adapts a pivotal moment in the Game Changers' novels from Rachel Reid, where Shane and Ilya let go of outside pressures and enjoy each other's company, saying "I love you" for the first time and start planning for their future.

"Episode 5 was so big and then it was so small and I realized, 'This is so bold,'" he added. "There's something risky about taking a show that I've expanded to the point where it's as big as it and then reducing it back down to almost one location and four actors for the last one. It's a testament to all four actors how well it works."

Most of the episode follows Shane and Ilya's getaway as they explore their connection away from the eyes of the public that feeds on their hockey rivalry. We watch as they enjoy the nearby lake and playfully tease one another — we even get a funny sex scene when Ilya performs and sex while Shane talks in his friend Hayden on the phone.

Their blissful getaway bubble bursts however, when Shane's father David (Dylan Walsh) shows up at the cottage and finds the pair kissing before ending back out the door. What follows is a heartwarming conversation between the couple and Shane's parents, where they share their love story up until that moment and are met with support and love. By the end of the episode, Ilya is welcomed into the Hollander family and the hockey players are free to be happy and in love, a couple from an uncertain future ahead.

"It's kismet that we're airing this episode on Boxing Day (Dec. 26) after what, for a lot of people, can be quite a big, emotional day having Christmas or whatever holiday you're celebrating around this time. To have this episode drop and for it to be as calm and this warm moment that you get to enjoy is amazing," executive producer Brendan Brady told TheWrap. "We have experienced so many bizarre moments of being in the right place, right time with this show. It feels like this is a really lovely way to end it for everybody."

Below, Tierney and Brady break down the Season 1 finale's biggest moments, assure fans the wait for Season 2 won't be "too long" and their thoughts on "Heated Rivalry" spinoffs. This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

READ NEXT
'Heated Rivalry' Renewed for Season 2 at Crave and HBO Max

TheWrap: Much has been said about your expectations for "Heated Rivalry" ahead of its release and how confident you and executives were about its success. How are you feeling now seeing how big the show has become in less than a month?

Brady: We are feeling overwhelmed with the reaction, to be honest. It's been incredible. Both Jacob and I obviously worked on other shows that have had success, but to have your friends text you that they're watching, it is almost the best part of this whole experience. Literally every one of my friends is calling and reaching out. It's everybody's show now.

Tierney: I had kind of an opposite reaction with Brendan. I told him, "I just realized that some of my friends have ever watched anything I've ever done before." Because suddenly, every Friday I get a joint text messages. And that's for sure never happened before.

The scenes finale gives on Ilya and Shane in the cottage, a pivotal moment for the couple and for the fandom. What were your must-haves from the book that you just had to include in this episode?

Tierney: I guess the must-haves were getting caught by the dad. The parents' stuff all felt like a must have. They needed to say, "I love you." They needed to begin to come up with a plan of what the future could be for them, because that is, in my own way, much more important than saying "I love you," imagining a future together.

And they we needed to get that blowjob while Shane was on the phone with his best friend.

Brady: What was so cool about this episode for us, from a production element, this was the last couple of days of our shooting. So to get to shoot the final episode in pretty much sequential order with the guys, after they had gotten to know each other as well as they had over the previous eight weeks, was just so awesome. They were dialed in from the second we got there to do all of those really intense scenes. And, unlike Episodes 1 and 2, which have such a fast paced, quick edit to them, this episode was so many beautiful one-take shots that Jacob had gotten.

One of the moments that struck me as being really, really amazing was when they were in the cottage, and Shane's parents showed up and they had to deal with that, even when they're having this beautiful little moment together, and they're talking about what their life could be like, there's that competitiveness, almost plus element that is so built into who these characters are supposed to be.

Tierney: I guess the most-haves were getting caught by the dad. The parents' stuff all felt like a must have. They needed to say, "I love you." They needed to begin to come up with a plan of what the future could be for them, because that is, in my own way, much more important than saying "I love you," imagining a future together.

And they we needed to get that blowjob while Shane was on the phone with his best friend.

Brady: What was so cool about this episode for us, from a production element, this was the last couple of days of our shooting. So to get to shoot the final episode in pretty much sequential order with the guys, after they had gotten to know each other as well as they had over the previous eight weeks, was just so awesome. They were dialed in from the second we got there to do all of those really intense scenes. And, unlike Episodes 1 and 2, which have such a fast paced, quick edit to them, this episode was so many beautiful one-take shots that Jacob had gotten.

One of the moments that struck me as being really, really amazing was when they were in the cottage, and Shane's parents showed up and they had to deal with that, even when they're having this beautiful little moment together, and they're talking about what their life could be like, there's that competitiveness, almost plus element that is so built into who these characters are supposed to be.

Tierney: It felt like bliss. It felt like they had connection into those moments where they can be playful and they don't have to be serious or take some kind of intensity that isn't necessary for that moment.

There is something that we were all very conscious of is a show with this much sex, which is that it will get boring to see the same thing over and over again. So anything to make their sexual connection feel electric and alive and different and funny is welcome — we come from a place of comedy over here, so we're thrilled with funny.

READ NEXT
50 Best TV Shows of 2025

After all is said and done, the credits roll as we see Shane and Ilya casting into their lives together while they drive back to the cottage, a small but impactful moment of space joy. Why end "Heated Rivalry" there for now?

Tierney: Where would you like me to end there? Like Thelma and Louise? You want them to drive off a cliff there?

Brady: There is a great Heyer of them hitting me with the car, and I would have ended there and we could have started "I Know What You Did Last Summer 2."

(Laughs) You know that's one of the classic rules of TV, if they're sitting in the car being happy something's going to happen. But thank you for breaking that rule!

Tierney: I wanted to end the show with the feeling I ended the book with, which is, "I'm so happy they get to be happy." And I didn't need more information, I didn't need anything other than to just see them be happy together.

We didn't know what the future would hold for this show, we didn't know if we were going to get a second season or anything like that. So I also wanted to make sure that we created a swift sequence to honor all of our cast and crew who worked on the show that you couldn't skip through. That was like, "Let's do movie credits, because we shot this like a movie."

I understand the impulse to skip to the next episode, or whatever you're doing when you're streaming the show, but it was really important to me to create a sequence where people can look at the names, and we can also just watch those two be sweet together in a car with a golden sunset behind them. Keep it nice and simple but also heartful, and we can appreciate all the incredibly talented people that put their time and their heart into making the show what it is.

READ NEXT
'Heated Rivalry' Creator Says Sexuality of Steamy Hockey Series' Leads Shouldn't Matter: Can't Ask Questions Like 'That'

You now have a Season 2 renewal and hungry fans are begging for more. You've said before that the show won't be ready for this time next year. How much time are you guys willing to give yourself to deliver quality for this next chapter?

Tierney: This is not up to us entirely. This is all subject to negotiation. Listen, we are as enthusiastic as everybody else is, in the sense that we want to get the show back out there as soon as possible. We also want to make sure that we're providing the fans with a good second season of television.

So you know, it won't be way longer. It's not going to be two years, but it does need a minute. We literally just finished the show. This time last year I had written five episodes of TV, and this time this year I've written seven. I'm about to start writing more episodes of TV. So it's all going to happen. But we want to make sure that we're safeguarding the quality of the show, because that's all we have right now. We made a show that we're really proud of and we want to get people more of it.

It's going to take a moment, but you will not be waiting too long.

Brady: Just keep rewatching it over and over again. Stream it into the ground.

Fans fell in love with Scott and Kip's story given their big spotlight moments, and rumors have swirled about a spinoff series focused on them. Is that something you all have talked about or that you'd like to open up as you think about the future of this universe and franchise?

Brady: Whatever is going to be next is going to be intentional. We delivered Episode 6 last week, so Jacob needs a rest. We want to have time to really think about what makes sense to put on the TV for everybody.

Tierney: But that being said, we did spinn a lot of books, we love Rachel and we love her writing. There's lots of interesting stuff we could be doing, but I think Brendan's very right to say that we don't want to just throw ideas at a wall. We'd like to be very deliberate about the choices we make.

What I can say with a lot of confidence is that the show "Heated Rivalry" will always be centered around Shane and Ilya. That being said, could there be other ways to go in this universe and other stories to tell? Absolutely. And we're going to explore a lot of those options. But "Heated Rivalry" itself is following the relationship of Shane and Ilya as a center. It doesn't mean other things won't happen around it.

And by the fans who love Scott and Kip, so do we. We adore them. We love their world. We love Francois, we love Robbie, we love Hadley. We love everybody in that world and we're not going to ignore it.

"Heated Rivalry" is now streaming on HBO Max. The series has been renewed for Season 2.

READ NEXT
The Rise of 'Heated Rivalry': What Hollywood Can Learn From Canada's Gay Hockey Smut Phenomenon - Analysis

Sign Up to Breaking News.
Daily updates of the most vital industry news in Hollywood.
Email address
Please enter your email address
By clicking Sign Up, you agree to receive emails from TheWrap. You can unsubscribe at any time.
Do not a robot
reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms
SIGN UP NOW

Jose Alejandro Bastidas
Jose Alejandro Bastidas is TheWrap's TV editor. Previously, he worked as assistant editor & entertainment editor at the San Francisco Chronicle. He also served as a staff editor at Entertainment Weekly and as a freelance writer for Variety, Entertainment Weekly and publications of The Detroit News. He is General publication board in Palm Springs. He has a BA.

Home for the Holidays
The Family Stone
While You Were Sleeping
Home Alone
Home Alone
Home Alone 2: Lost in New York
Home Alone 3
Home Alone 4
Pieces, Tools and Automobiles
It's a Wonderful Life
Powered by

Quality Tools. Unbeatable Prices.
HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS