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# *Heated Rivalry:* How to Mint Two Stars in 60 Days or Less

Connor Storrie and Hudson Williams, the stars of *Heated Rivalry*, have seen their public profiles skyrocket from obscurity to global obsession in the scant two months since the show premiered.

BY KASE WICKMAN

JANUARY 23, 2026

Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie. CHELSEA LAUREN/SHUTTERSTOCK

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It might not have officially registered on the Richter scale, but on November 28, 2025, the world shook a little. That, of course, was the day that the first two episodes of *Heated Rivalry*, the queer hockey romance produced by Canada's Crave and streamed in the US by HBO Max, premiered. That was also the day that the stars of **Hudson Williams** and **Connor Storrie** were born.

In less than two months, Williams and Storrie have gone from short-film obscurity and waiting tables (Williams at the Old Spaghetti Factory in British Columbia's New Westminster, Storrie at Laurel Grill in Culver City) to viral fame, parlaying their steamy roles as hockey rivals turned secret paramours (don't say lovers, it's gross) into coveted industry invites, heavyweight talent representation, and, most recently, a stint carrying the Olympic torch ahead of the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan in February. The Olympics announced the honor Thursday, but did not note when or where the duo would serve as ritual flame transport (nor whether they would hold hands or do something else cute while doing so).

It's hard to remember the last time a celebrity—let alone two at once—went from zero to superstar on the normie scale this quickly. And seeing as it's been less than two months since the pair's grand debuts (with respect for Storrie's roles as "Young Inmate" in *Joker: Folie à Deux* and "Shitty Apartment Guy" in *Tiny Beautiful Things*), it's impossible to know whether the arc is a sustainable one.

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In the interest of scientific inquiry, we present Storrie's and Williams's trajectories and moves up the fame ladder so far, as a case study for near-overnight fame.

**November 28, 2025: Day 0**

*Heated Rivalry,* the TV adaptation of one book in a popular series of hockey romance novels by **Rachel Reid,** premieres its first two episodes on Canada's Crave. HBO Max makes a last-minute deal for distribution just days earlier. In the first two episodes of the hump-heavy, time-jumping show, we meet Storrie's Ilya Rozanov and Williams's Shane Hollander. We see both of their butts and are entranced.

Before the premiere of the show's trailer, both Storrie and Williams had roughly 10,000 followers apiece on Instagram. After the first two episodes, their counts balloon to more than 40,000 each.

**December 5, 2025: Day 7**

*Heated Rivalry* episode three, "Hunter," airs.

**December 9, 2025: Day 11**

Storrie and Williams stop by West Hollywood gay bar Hi Tops to surprise patrons at Tuesday trivia night. "We're nervous that they won't be excited and…," Storrie says in a hushed tone in a video posted to HBO Max's Instagram page. "They won't even recognize us," Williams adds. Reader, they recognize them, if the screams in the clip are anything to go by. Three episodes have aired at this point in the Gregorian calendar. "Thank you for tweeting about our butts!" Storrie tells the jubilant patrons.

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About last night's #HeatedRivalry sneaky link...
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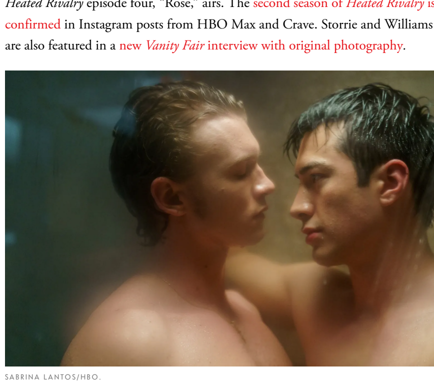
**December 12, 2025: Day 14**

*Heated Rivalry* episode four, "Rose," airs. The second season of *Heated Rivalry* is confirmed in Instagram posts from HBO Max and Crave. Storrie and Williams are also featured in a new *Vanity Fair* interview with original photography.



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**December 14, 2025: Day 16**

Drop the glute routine? If you insist, Williams says, sharing just that with *Men's Health*. Fans latch on to the service journalism. For health reasons. Certainly not for comments like this: "I'm okay talking about my butt, but poor Connor Storrie—who has the fattest butt I've ever seen on a man—I'm sure just wants to stop talking about his beautiful cheeks."

**December 16, 2025: Day 18**

Williams shares his skin-care routine with *The Cut,* including 20 minutes of self-shot footage of him performing it, complete with a jaunty little headband to keep his bangs clean. One commenter notes the cuteness of Williams encouraging Storrie to use sunscreen, then laments, "jfc this routine lolol my skin would explode like a dying star if I did half of this."

At a home game, the Boston Bruins play t.A.T.u.'s "All the Things She Said," which soundtracked a pivotal scene in the previous week's episode of *Heated Rivalry,* over the PA. The fans go wild. Containment has been broken.

**December 17, 2025: Day 19**

Williams signs as a client with Hollywood powerhouse CAA.

**December 19, 2025: Day 21**

*Heated Rivalry* episode five, "I'll Believe in Anything," airs.

**December 22, 2025: Day 24**

*Teen Vogue* publishes a video of Storrie and Williams engaged in a "compliment battle." Storrie drops a statement that launches a thousand GIFs: "I'm 90% butt, y'all. I'm more butt than man. When I register to vote, it says, 'male, female, other.' I put 'other' and then put 'butt.'" Williams, too, has many winners of his own. The parasocial fan relationship only grows stronger. The video racks up more than 2.1 million views in one month.

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**December 23, 2025: Day 25**

*GQ* releases an article featuring an interview with Storrie and Williams. The photos, some of which feature the actors wearing wet T-shirts—which they are also lifting up to show their torsos, and which Williams is also *biting* while *cuddling* with Storrie—are especially…impactful.

BuzzFeed contributes its own canon event with a video of Storrie and Williams reading thirst tweets about themselves. Here, Williams makes history by revealing that thanks to a supercharged glute routine while filming, he "gained, like, nine pounds of clappable material" so that "there's more meat for Ilya to rock, and he does. I'm proud to be double-cheeked-up on whatever day of the week that was, and prone and boned."

The Boston Bruins post photos of a player brawl during a game and caption it "Heated rivalry" on social media. The replies are full of photos of Williams and Storrie, many NSFW.

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**December 26, 2025: Day 28**

The sixth episode and season one finale of *Heated Rivalry,* "The Cottage," airs. Williams reaches roughly 1 million Instagram followers, while Storrie has more than 900,000.

SABRINA LANTOS/HBO.

**December 27, 2025: Day 29**

*Interview* magazine posts behind-the-scenes video from its shoot with Storrie to Instagram. He is wearing short-shorts and a tight T-shirt and prances around a backyard lip-synching to **Madonna**'s "Like a Prayer." The earth shifts slightly on its axis.

**Instagram content**

This content can also be viewed on the site it originates from.

**December 30, 2025: Day 32**

*Ember & Ice,* an original three-episode audio-erotica series featuring Storrie and Williams narrating the characters of two feuding fae princes, premieres on the subscriber-based Quinn app. By January 19, 2026, according to Quinn's data, users have spent more than 27 million minutes listening to it.

**December 31, 2025: Day 33**

While hosting CNN's New Year's Eve festivities, **Andy Cohen** tells **Anderson Cooper,** "You're Ilya and I'm Shane." Later in the evening, the two ask **Brandi Carlile** if "lesbians care about *Heated Rivalry.*"

"It's all I can think about. It's all I can think about. I can't even sleep at night without thinking about [the show]," Carlile responds. Cooper laughs for 25 seconds straight.

**January 6, 2026: Day 39**

Storrie signs with CAA.

**January 10, 2026: Day 43**

Storrie and Williams attend the *Vanity Fair* and MGM Amazon Studios pre–Golden Globes party at the Bar Marmont.

"**Awkwafina** came up to me last night and said, 'I love you,' and I was like, 'I cannot believe you're talking to me right now.' These were people who were really big when I was in high school," Storrie told *VF.*

**January 11, 2026: Day 44**

Despite the fact that *Heated Rivalry* is not eligible for consideration for either the 2026 Emmys or Golden Globes, Storrie and Williams are invited to present the award for best female supporting actor in a TV series at the 2026 Golden Globes. "Let's go, baby boy," Williams is overheard telling Storrie as the two head backstage at the awards show.

**January 12, 2026: Day 45**

Rachel Reid announces a third book focused on Ilya and Shane, following *Heated Rivalry* and *The Long Game.* It's titled *Unrivaled,* and it carries a September 29, 2026, publication date.

**January 14, 2026: Day 47**

On *Today,* Storrie estimates that shooting on season two of *Heated Rivalry* will begin by the summer.

**January 15, 2026: Day 48**

NHL commissioner **Gary Bettman** tells *The New York Times* that he "binged it [*Heated Rivalry*] in one night" and that the show's popularity could be connected to a more inclusive fan base and NHL culture. "There are a lot of things about the game that we think are driving more and more people to the game," he said, "and I do believe *Heated Rivalry* is one of those things."

**January 16, 2026: Day 49**

Williams makes his Fashion Week debut, opening the show for Dsquared2 in Milan.

**January 20, 2026: Day 53**

**Simone Cromer,** better known as the person behind the **Timothée Chalamet** mega-stan account Club Chalamet, announces that she will start a new stan account, Storrie Times, focusing mainly on Storrie, but including some Williams info as well.

**January 22, 2026: Day 55**

Storrie and Williams are announced as torchbearers in the Olympic torch relay for the upcoming 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan. As of publication of this story, Storrie has 2.7 million followers on Instagram, and Williams has 2.7 million followers himself.

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**KASE WICKMAN**

Kase Wickman is *Vanity Fair*'s culture and society reporter. She's the author of the book, *Bring It On: The Complete Story of the Cheerleading Movie That Changed, Like, Everything (No, Seriously)* from Chicago Review Press. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *New York* magazine, *Rolling Stone*, The … Read More

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