

The Business of Show Business: Kevin Hart's Tequila Hits \$200M, YouTube Arms Celebrities Against DeepFakes and the Yankees Push for a New Look on the Road

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Welcome back to the Spotlight! The biggest drama currently unfolding in Hollywood is not one that you can see in theatres (or what's left of them), but is rather focused on the pending \$111 billion merger between Paramount Global and Warner Bros. Discovery (WBD). Although WBD shareholders overwhelmingly approved over the transaction this week, there are still several hurdles for the transaction to clear before it is finalized. Still, many are expressing their opposition to the merger citing concerns about the wide-ranging impacts of the transaction. Indeed as of this writing, over 4,000 industry figures (from A-listers to below-the-line personnel) have signed a petition aimed at blocking the merger and forestalling what they anticipate will be layoffs (or as some might call it "synergy" and "efficiency"), fewer TV shows and movies being made (albeit with bigger budgets) and higher costs for consumers - that's to say nothing of the broader concern about one company having such a massive influence over what people can watch and what gets greenlit. This big budget saga is far from over, and time will tell whether regulators decide to block the deal on antitrust grounds. Until then, get your popcorn ready.

- Hitting \$200 million in retail sales in just three years, Comedian Kevin Hart's Tequila Brand Gran Coramino is experiencing significant growth-which is more than can be said for Kevin Hart.
- YouTube rolls out DeepFake AI detection to Hollywood, allowing celebrities to police content that may make unauthorized use of their likenesses. The service is being offered for free, presumably because of the ease with which one can spot a fake in Hollywood.
- New York Yankees players have formally requested that the team approve the use of alternate, blue jerseys with gray lettering for games played on the road (rather than the gray with navy lettering that they have historically used when not in their home white with navy pinstripes). Meanwhile New York Mets players were considering invisibility cloaks in the midst of their recent 12 game losing streak.

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