

The Allure of the Snyder Cut and Where We Go From Here

By **Murjani Rawls** - May 22, 2020



Photo Credit: Warner Brothers

I remember the first time I sat in my seat with my friends and watched 2017's *Justice League* in theaters. You mean I get to see the likes of Batman, Wonder Woman, and The Flash on screen together? Was it a little rushed? I'll give you that. Two movies rolling into a team-up is pretty quick. Now, if you're looking across the row at Marvel, they were already two Avengers movie in and another team-up movie with *Guardians of the Galaxy* in the bag. Ok, DC – let's see what you got.

Unless you were living under a rock, there was a big shakeup behind the scenes with this movie. With the polarizing feelings towards the darker tone of 2016's *Batman v. Superman*, Warner Brothers were looking to lighten up the DCEU in a hurry. This resulted in the inclusion of director

Joss Whedon – who had a lot of success with the first two Avengers movies. I understood what they were trying to do. The kids don't buy 'Death of Superman' action figures, after all.

I sat there and I noticed the mustache. Yes, that mustache. How could you not? It was downhill from there. I don't think that the Justice League version we got isn't entirely bad. It just felt unfinished and some of the major story points felt very unearned. For the major occurrences that happened in *BvS*, it felt like most of the stakes were discarded. When the big team moment ultimately happens, there are so many tonal changes that it doesn't feel as triumphant. "Oh, well they won." I thought.

Composer Danny Elfman was brought in to impose the old Batman and Superman scores. They did not fit here. Perhaps they were added to the movie as a, "Hey, remember when you bought happy meals and toys of these characters? We want you to remember that!" The John Williams Superman score is classic. The Hans Zimmer score for this incarnation of Superman is the one for the world I live in. I walked out of the movie theater feeling that Warner Brothers left a lot on the table. The \$657 million gross at the box office would concur with those sentiments. The DCEU was in full retreat and now Warner had to start all over again in building fan confidence.

The view of Zack Snyder is a rather divisive topic among movie fans. Many love him and his signature cinematography style. Some people don't care for it and don't understand why people are so enamored with him. I've always appreciated his visual flair for movies. 2006's *300* is where that started for me. 2009's *Watchmen* is where it continued. I have a special appreciation for directors that take chances. Whether they hit the landing or not, I always felt that Snyder's movies did that.

I hold the Christopher Reeve Superman movies very dear. There's a certain aesthetic there that is always a joy to revisit. Watching those movies feels like the cookie recipe your Grandma can only make. With 2013's *Man of Steel*, it was the Superman for me. This was a character that felt like an outcast. He's in between a world he knows and a world he doesn't know. He feels that loneliness. Kal-El was gifted great power and elected to do great things with it. To me, that is the total embodiment of the Superman character. The one that would live in 2013. One that has to make tough choices. It was hope that no matter where we are, we can belong. This is where I really appreciated how Zack Snyder told a story.

Zack Snyder's *Justice League* is more than just a sequence of undone footage and unfinished visual effects shots. This is bigger in the scheme of things. During the project, he, unfortunately, lost [his daughter to suicide](#). Finally being able to work on this again would be a monument to her. A pillar that he didn't give up. There's also the subject of Warner Brothers doing a major 180 that would trickle down to *Justice League* and 2016's *Suicide Squad*. (I mean look at the first trailer for *Suicide Squad*. Way different and way more fun.) The success of movies like 2017's *Logan* and both *Deadpool* movies showed that people want mature superhero films. The first one over the hill is always a casualty. With the immersive success of 2019's *Joker*, hopefully, Warner Brothers have learned to be more like themselves.

Take a look at the movies that have happened since *Justice League*. Warner Brothers have given more control over to the directors and they have been better for it. You can see Patty Jenkins's storytelling style in *Wonder Woman*. You can see the horror and humor DNA in both 2018's *Aquaman* and 2019's *Shazam* from James Wan and David F. Sandberg respectively. Sometimes, you have to let the storytellers take the lead. *Man of Steel* challenged me to look at Superman differently. *Batman v. Superman* showed me to look at what human nature does when we are confronted with something more powerful than ourselves. It also showed me what a person can become when they give in to the demons of their past. There's a way back for them through sacrifice. Yes, it was bleaker, but knowing how he wanted to tell the story – there was going to be light in the darkness.

Do I think that fans will break down the hallowed doors of Disney studio and demand the Lord and Miller version of 2018's *Solo*? No. It'd be kind of cool to see one day. Are we going to see people frothing at the mouth for Joel Schumacher's [directors cut](#) of 1995's *Batman Forever*? Nope. Sorry. Then again, a plot point where Bruce Wayne loses his memory and has to war with the demons of his past sounds interesting.

There's this inherent fascination with what a director's original vision was when things go wrong. For many different reasons, it gets lost in translation. Clashes with a studio. Editing. Different outlooks from screenplay writers and producers. There are so many reasons. Take a look at 1992's *Alien 3* and the many rewrites that happened there. Director David Fincher was [openly angry](#) about what was changed by the studio. The assembly cut that would follow would try to

rectify this. There is also precedent for this within the superhero movie world. The Richard Donner cut of *Superman II* would resurface almost 30 years later after the initial release.

Is there something to be said about the abundance of toxicity in fanbases concerning types of movies? Absolutely. As movie fans, we have to understand that while going to the cinema is a very passionate and personal experience, not everyone will share our views. It's one thing to have hashtags and to write articles expounding upon that passion. It's another thing to engage in targeted harassment to other fans, directors, or actors and actresses. Not everyone is going to agree with our perspectives and we have to be ok with that. We have to all do a better job in discussing things and leave it at that. That's down to the most versed comic book fan to the most advanced cinephile. When directors are able these larger than life characters onto the big screen, we all win.

Let's keep this in perspective – HBO Max is looking to get as many subscriptions as they can. We are amidst a streaming service arms race. Money and numbers are always going to be king. I don't think this is a concession or mixed message by them – nor will it set a standard for other studios. I sincerely doubt that we are going to get a 'Trevorrow Cut' of *Rise of Skywalker* down the road. This is a one time instance that makes things right. While we may not see Zack Snyder's full vision, it gives both Snyder and fans proper closure. This is him putting a tumultuous period in his life to rest.

If some fans look at this as a major win – that's ok, too. Just in the same way as fans went into a raucous cheer to see the 'Cap, on your left' scene in 2019's *Avengers Endgame*. We are within a crazy world right now that is grasping as every happiness straw it can within a pandemic. Let the Snyder Cut fans get this one. You don't even have to watch it in 2021 – but, c'mon. You know you will.

Murjani Rawls

<http://murjanirawls.com>

Journalist, Self-published author of five books, podcast host of The War Report and The Deadscreen Podcast, and photographer since 2014, Murjani "MJ" Rawls has been stretching his capabilities of his creativity and passions, Rawls has as a portfolio spanning through many mediums including music, television, movies, and more. Operating out of the New York area, Rawls has photographed over 200+ artists spanning many genres, written over 700 articles ranging displaying his passionate aspirations to keep evolving as his years in media continue.



