

Sports & Entertainment Beat

Sports & Entertainment Spotlight: Ongoing Strife Between Studios and Talent Continues as Christopher Nolan Ends Nearly Two-Decade-Long Relationship With Warner Bros.

By Joshua Bloomgarden on 9.16.21 | Posted in Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

- *Esteemed filmmaker Christopher Nolan's decision to leave his 19-year-long relationship with Warner Bros. for Universal to make his next film (about Robert Oppenheimer and the creation of an atomic bomb) continues to highlight the strife between studios and talent. Nolan and Warner Bros. had been clashing over ongoing issues, including disagreements over his contract, his entire 2021 slate being released simultaneously on HBO Max during the height of the pandemic, and release plans for "Tenet."*
- *The intersection of music and sports may have reached a fever pitch: Drake will be curating music for 10 of the Monday Night Football games, producing what CEO of Trillernet Mahi de Silva calls "four-quadrant" entertainment (starting with last Monday's Baltimore Ravens-Las Vegas Raiders game), which aims to capture a wider, and sometimes overlapping fan base, to ultimately create a cultural moment that's larger than life.*
- *Apple has announced it has created a new process that can properly identify rights holders of the music used in DJ mixes and will be able to directly pay them.*
- *NIL opportunities for college athletes continue to pick up steam. Marketing and licensing agency The Brandr Group is partnering with Altius Sports Partners to provide student athletes education around their NIL rights and group licensing opportunities in tandem with the athletic departments.*

Endorsement Deals, Sponsorships & Investments

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With U.S. Open Win, Raducanu Could Reach ‘Sponsorship Unicorn’ Status

September 15, 2021 via Sportico – Business (subscription may be required)

This year’s surprise U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu could embody the future of tennis — and enjoy all the financial benefits that could bring. “If she plays her cards right,” and manages to maintain her U.S. Open-level dominance, “Raducanu has commercial potential similar to LeBron James,” said Conrad Wiacek, the head of sports analysis at GlobalData, in a phone interview.

No Surprise: NFL Quarterbacks Making the Most Money By Far

September 10, 2021 via Vegas Inc - All Stories Headlines (Las Vegas, Nevada)

On and off the field, NFL quarterbacks — no surprise here — are making the most money. Even in a year when the salary cap has decreased, the big name passers are getting richer. According to Forbes, the 10 biggest earners will collect about \$418 million in salary, endorsements and other earnings. That’s an increase of 9 percent over 2020.

How This Former Athlete Is Quietly Turning Celebrity Clients Into Million-And-Billion-Dollar Empires

September 10, 2021 via Forbes (subscription may be required)

Financial management can be a challenge, especially for the young and famous. Thaddaeus Koroma had a once-promising future in basketball until a serious injury changed the course of his life. Today, he is the President of a Business Accelerator and Private Investment Empire.

Rapper Yo Gotti Buying Into DC United at \$730 Million Valuation

September 10, 2021 via Sportico – Business (subscription may be required)

Rapper Yo Gotti has reached an agreement to purchase a minority stake in D.C. United, valuing the Major League Soccer club at roughly \$730 million, according to someone familiar with the plans. The hip-hop star, whose real name is Mario Mims, is buying slightly more than 1 percent of the team, according to the person, who was granted anonymity because the details are private.

A Vain Attempt to Justify Selena Gomez’s \$30 Ice Cream Sundae

September 9, 2021 via Texas Monthly

Selena Gomez can sell her fan base on just about anything. Cooking shows. Spanish-language albums. A comedy about upper-crust septuagenarians. Over the past several years, the Grand Prairie singer has endorsed everything from Coca-Cola to milk, Kmart to Coach, and she’s successfully launched obligatory lines of clothing, makeup, and fragrance.

Burger King’s Celebrity Endorsements Will Promote its Natural Rebrand to 38 Percent of U.S. Population That Demand Healthier Foods

September 9, 2021 via GlobalData - All news

Following today’s news that Burger King will release a celebrity endorsed meal range,

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‘Keeping it Real,’ in line with its recent ban on 120 artificial ingredients. Carmen Bryan, Consumer Analyst at GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company, offers her view: “Burger King is hoping to cash in on the immense success that McDonald’s sponsored meals have seen, such as the popular collaboration with global sensation K-pop band BTS. However, Burger King is taking this one step further by utilizing it as an opportunity to spread awareness of the Whopper’s big makeover – the ban on artificial ingredients.

Celebrity-Backed Drinks Become Bestsellers Online

September 9, 2021 via Drinks Business, The - Wine News

Celebrity-backed brands are among the bestselling drinks online, according to North American wine and spirits delivery site Drizly. Lagavulin’s 11-Year-Old Islam Scotch Offerman Edition, made in collaboration with actor Nick Offerman as ranking as the site’s number two bestseller among spirits were launched last quarter, according to Rolling Stone.

Roger Clemens, Nolan Ryan Pitch In Cash as Athletes Fund SPAC Deals

September 9, 2021 via Sportico – Business (subscription may be required)

When special purpose acquisition company Roth CH Acquisition III cobbled together a group of investors to fund a deal to bring public QualTek, a builder of cell phone towers, its list of investors contained many of the usual types of participants, including Craig-Hallum, a brokerage that is one of the SPAC sponsors, and a mutual fund, Wasatch Micro Cap. Joining these mainstays of Wall Street: Nolan Ryan and Roger Clemens, each of whom bought 10,000 shares apiece as part of the P.I.P.E. (private investment in public equity), which is used to raise cash to close proposed SPAC mergers.

Film & TV

Stephen Curry’s Unanimous Media Signs Multiplatform Deal With Comcast NBCUniversal

September 14, 2021 via TheWrap

on behalf of their Unanimous Media, Stephen Curry and Erick Peyton have signed a multiplatform deal with Comcast NBCUniversal. The multiyear agreement will include first-look development deals for Universal Studio Group and scripted and unscripted television projects and another for DreamWorks Animation for kids and family content.

Comcast Faces \$2 Billion U.S. Battle for Premier League Rights

September 14, 2021 via Bloomberg Quint – Stories

Having secured the rights to the Olympics and the National Football League well into the next decade, Comcast Corp. is now turning its attention to another major sports franchise: the

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English Premier League. Comcast's current deal with soccer's EPL expires at the end of the 2021-2022 season, and the bidding for the next contract is about to begin.

How Universal Beat Other Studios to Land Christopher Nolan's New World War II Epic

September 14, 2021 via Variety

Christopher Nolan is making his next movie at Universal, severing the director's nearly two-decade long creative partnership with Warner Bros., the company that has backed many of his biggest blockbusters. Getting to this point has involved months of courtship, clandestine meetings, big promises and a willingness to take a creative leap with one of the boldest, but also most demanding, filmmakers in the business. It also represents a major victory for Universal and its film chief, Donna Langely, who moved aggressively to forge a relationship with "The Dark Knight" director after he grew dissatisfied with Warner Bros.

Music Biz

Sports, Music Tie-Ups at All-Time High as Industries Cast Wide Net

September 15, 2021 via Sportico – Business (subscription may be required)

In recent weeks, Drake "hacked" ESPN's SportsCenter to announce the date of his forthcoming album release, "Certified Lover Boy." Los Angeles Clippers star Kawhi Leonard appeared in the multi-platinum award winning artist's newly released "Way 2 Sexy" video. The Worldwide Leader announced Drake would be curating the music for 10 select Monday Night Football games throughout the 2021 season (starting with last Monday's Baltimore Ravens-Las Vegas Raiders clash).

The Forgettable David Bowie Song That Changed the Music Industry Forever

September 13, 2021 via News Break - Top Stories

If the music industry was going to undergo a tumultuous shift, it might as well have had David Bowie providing the soundtrack. On September 11, 1996, Bowie's "Telling Lies" became the first ever downloadable single by a major artist, arriving on Bowie's website in three different formats, released over three weeks (a traditional single was later released in November).

This Payments and Distribution Platform Used by Frank Ocean and Childish Gambino Is Fighting the Music Industry's 'Starving Artist' Culture

September 12, 2021 via News Break - Top Stories

Music revenue is forecasted to reach \$131 billion by 2030. Even still, many smaller artists struggle to get paid. Stem, a distribution and payments platform used by Frank Ocean and Childish Gambino, is trying to change that. "There's a lack of infrastructure and tools to support

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the modern music industry," Stem's CEO told Insider.

Nickelback Pushes Back Against 'Rockstar' Copyright Infringement Lawsuit Following Dismissal Attempt

September 10, 2021 via Digital Music News

About two weeks back, Nickelback doubled down on its attempt to dismiss a copyright infringement lawsuit centering on "Rockstar." But this far-reaching effort to end the courtroom confrontation doesn't appear to have been successful, for the Alberta-based rock group has now filed a point-by-point refutation of the action.

Apple Music Unveils Program to Pay Rights Holders in DJ Mixes

September 10, 2021 via Variety

Since the advent of streaming services, one of the major problems with DJ mixes has been ensuring that every musical element in those mixes is identified and paid for. Well, Apple Music has unveiled a new process — in cooperation with major and independent labels — whereby it can properly identify and directly pay the rights holders whose music is used within a DJ mix, building on technology from Shazam, which it acquired several years ago.

Spotify Playlist Curators Says 'Copyright Abuse' Is On the Rise — And Spotify Isn't Doing Much About It

September 9, 2021 via Digital Music News

Spotify playlist curators say the platform isn't doing enough to combat bad faith copyright abuse complaints. Curators say playlists are being reported for a variety of reasons, though oversight is lacking and claims aren't properly investigated. Playlists can be reported for a variety of reasons, including sexual, violent, deceptive, or hateful content.

Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)

Decreasing Mania? NFT Trading Volumes Have Started to Decline

September 14, 2021 via CryptoPotato

While NFT trading volumes saw impressive peaks in August, they significantly declined in September. Investors' appetite for trading non-fungible tokens (NFTs) seems to have significantly decreased after the all-time highs recorded in August.

NFT Company Recur reaches \$333M valuation Following Steve Cohen-Backed Fundraiser

September 14, 2021 via CryptoPost

NFT company Recur has seen its valuation swell to \$333 million after concluding a successful

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investment round endorsed by billionaire Steve Cohen's family office. The Series A raised \$50 million, mainly through contributions from the Cohen-backed investment platform Digital, according to a statement.

NFTs have Cathie Wood excited: 'This is how I felt when the internet came about'

September 14, 2021 via Yahoo Finance - Top Stories

Cathie Wood, Founder and CEO of Ark Investment Management, which manages more than \$50 billion in assets, said that she's keeping an eye on the explosive growth of non-fungible tokens, or NFTs, though she doesn't hold any. In the SALT conference held by alternative-asset manager SkyBridge on Monday, September 13, Wood talked about her favor for Async Art, an NFT platform that allows users to buy pixels for digital artworks and create layers on them.

SkyBridge Capital Launches A New Platform For NFT Art, Collectibles And Experiences

September 13, 2021 via Yahoo Finance - Top Stories

SkyBridge Capital and SALT founder Anthony Scaramucci announced the launch of Flatter, a first-of-its-kind company combining NFTs, or non-fungible tokens, with exclusive experiences and sought-after collectibles to create a new level of utility for this emerging market.

Karl Lagerfeld Latest Luxury Brand to Launch NFTs

September 13, 2021 via Charged Retail

Karl Lagerfeld has become the latest luxury fashion brand to enter the world of NFTs as it launches new digital figurines. To mark what would have been the late designer's birthday, the fashion retailer has today released two limited-edition 3D avatars in his image on digital fashion platform The Dematerialised.

Hip Hop Star Ja Rule Discusses the Growing NFT Space and Crypto — 'I Like the Fact That Bitcoin Is Decentralized'

September 11, 2021 via Bitcoin

The NFT industry has exploded in 2021 as millions of dollars worth of cryptocurrencies continue to be traded for these blockchain collectibles every single day. This week, Bitcoin.com News chatted with the popular American rapper Ja Rule about NFTs as he has partnered with James Cropcho and Robert Testagrossa to build a marketplace called flipkick.io.

Anthony Hopkins Releases Thriller for NFT Movie 'Zero Contact'

September 11, 2021 via Cryptopolitan

"Thriller for Zero Contact," Anthony Hopkins' science fiction movie to be distributed as a Non-Fungible Token (NFT) on Vuele platform has been released.

Kings of Leon Become First Band to Have NFT Played in Space

September 11, 2021 via Sentinel Assam

Rock band Kings of Leon's new single 'Time in Disguise' is making history as the first music

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NFT to be played in space. On September 15, 'Inspiration4' will make history as the first all-civilian mission to orbit the earth, as a crew member will include the first-ever minted NFT song to be played in space.

Matt Levine's Money Stuff: Fungible Slices of Non-Fungible Token

September 10, 2021 via Bloomberg Law - News Top Stories (subscription may be required)

Which 20 percent of a picture of a dog? We talked yesterday about some people who bought an online pointer to a digital picture of a dog (a non-fungible token, or NFT) for \$4 million and, a few months later, “fractionalized” it into 16,969,696,969 tokens and sold 20 percent of them for \$45 million, giving the picture of a dog a total market value of about \$225 million.

Rebecca Minkoff's Spring Capsule and NFTs Could Change the Way We Shop for Fashion

September 10, 2021 via Forbes – Business (subscription may be required)

Rebecca Minkoff is taking a trip to the Metaverse for fashion week, becoming among the first female designers to create NFTs, those controversial works minted on the blockchain and surrounded by a hype bubble.

Right of Publicity

Unhappy Accidents: the Bob Ross Saga and IP Rights Explained

September 13, 2021 via Bloomberg Law - News Top Stories

At the root of the scandal and drama in a Netflix documentary about painter Bob Ross is an intellectual property fight revolving around the nature and proper management of assets like publicity rights.

Jay-Z's Right-of-Publicity Claims Survive Photographer's Motion to Dismiss

September 10, 2021 via Reuters - Legal News

Photographer Jonathan Mannion, who took the photo of rapper Jay-Z that appears on the cover of his debut album "Reasonable Doubt", lost his bid to escape Jay-Z's claims in Los Angeles federal court that he has been misusing the rapper's image to sell merchandise.

The Brandr Group Brings Altius On Board as College Group Licensing Grows

September 13, 2021 via Sportico – Business (subscription may be required)

Marketing and licensing agency The Brandr Group has tapped Altius Sports Partners as its official education provider for college athletes on an NIL hot topic: group licensing. Altius, an NIL education and advisory consultancy, will facilitate in-person sessions for athletes at schools where The Brandr Group has established group licensing relationships.