

Hidden Remote



MOVIES

Ben Schwartz talks about new Paramount film Sonic The Hedgehog



by Victoria Davis 1 week ago

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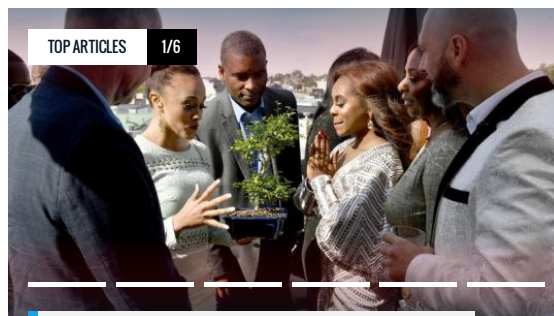


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Actor and comedian Ben Schwartz lends his voice to play the lead role of Sonic in *Sonic The Hedgehog*. Hidden Remote sat down with the star to talk about the movie, his love of comics, and plan to take over the world of blue characters.

Primetime Emmy award-winning actor and director Ben Schwartz is probably most widely known for his role as the ridiculously comical and crazy Jean-Ralphio in *Parks and Recreation*. But it's lesser known that this Bronx-born star has built a larger chunk of his career away from the cameras and inside the sound booth, now lending his voice to the lead role of Sonic in Paramount's *Sonic the Hedgehog*.

From *Bob's Burgers* and *Robot Chicken* to *DuckTales* and *Rise of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, Schwartz has been a voice actor for about a dozen productions. But his next role as one of Sega's most famous video game characters, Sonic, is the first time the actor will be playing a starring voice role in a major box-office release. The trailer for the film alone received 31 million views on YouTube.



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Despite the film having **some setbacks** in the design of the fast and furry blue character, Schwartz says he is ecstatic about *Sonic the Hedgehog's* release into theaters next year.

Hidden Remote had the chance to talk with Schwartz about his excitement for the film during his visit in Austin, Texas to do a runway show with Dos Equis' Towel Jacket, or as he calls it, "a jacket that looks luxurious, made out of a towel...and costs so much money that surely they won't sell out."

Schwartz, now a towel fashion trend-setter as well as an Emmy-award winning actor, shared with us his deep-rooted love for childhood video games, cartoons and all things Jim Carrey, as well as his "master plan" to take over the world of blue cartoon characters.

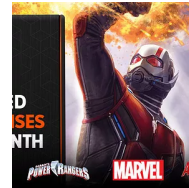


Hidden Remote: So Ben, I know that you are in Austin for the towel jacket, but I would love to talk to you about the film that's just been getting all the buzz on the internet right now, *Sonic The Hedgehog*.

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Ben Schwartz: *Sonic The Hedgehog!* Coming out in [February]. I play the voice of Sonic.

Hidden Remote: How did you end up landing that role?

Schwartz: I got that job because, at the very beginning when they were going to shop the movie around, they did a test of it and they said, "Just for the test, is it possible for you to do the voice?" And I said, "I'd love to, I'm a huge video game nerd." So I did it and then they liked it so much that they kept me for the real movie and I got to do the table reads and I got to help punch up some stuff and it's been really exciting.

The Sonic design is under construction, but the movie itself is so fun and Jim Carrey is so good in it, as is James Marsden and Tika Sumpter. I think it's going to be really good.

Hidden Remote: I know you were primarily doing voice acting, obviously, but I'm assuming you got to work with a lot of these people. What was it like to get to work with people like Jim

Carrey?

Schwartz: Well, listen. Your assumption is very smart, but primarily incorrect. I did get to go to set once or twice but then, for me, I go into a booth and I watch the footage; and Sonic isn't really there yet, he's just like a stick figure drawing or a doll or something like that, and then I do my stuff after.

But I got to go to set before hand and meet Jim Carrey who is an idol of mine. You know, I'm a comedian who grew up in the 90s. Ace Ventura and all those movies are like the biggest thing to me. So the idea that I got to meet him and him be so kind to me...He's so funny in [*Sonic the Hedgehog*] and you feel hints of that old-school Carrey in it too, which is great. Well, I love all of his stuff.



Hidden Remote: That's so cool. And this is not the first time that you've done voice acting. You were also Skidmark in *Turbo* and recently Dewey in *DuckTales*. What do you enjoy so much about voice acting and what made this particular voice acting experience unique for you?

Schwartz: That sounds like an incredible question, and not that you just read it out of a paper. It felt like that came from the heart.

Hidden Remote: It did! It really did.

Schwartz: Good. For me and voice acting, I grew up on animation. I grew up on *DuckTales*. I grew up on *Tiny Toons*. I grew up on all that stuff, the Disney afternoons, so I always wanted to get into that world, and same with video games. So, it's always been a thing I love to do. Also, you get to be your wackiest, craziest self.

I'm also trying to dominate the market on blue characters. I've got Leonardo in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, Dewey in *DuckTales*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, I played Skidmark in *Turbo*...anything that's blue I'm trying to jump after. So watch out Mega Man! Or every smurf!

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Hidden Remote: Does blue resonate with you particularly well?

Schwartz: Blue's my favorite color.

Hidden Remote: That's perfect then. And you're in an industry that you love, doing voice acting for blue characters.

Schwartz: Yeah, what else do I need?

Hidden Remote: Just a fanny pack and towel jacket.

Schwartz: That's exactly right! All I need is my blue characters, a fanny pack, and a jacket that is literally made out of a towel that they've put some red lining on to make it look extra classy.



Hidden Remote: That's perfect. You actually segwayed me into my next question perfectly. Because you starred as Leonardo in Disney XD's revival of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*—which recently wrapped up its first season—what is it like getting to play characters like Dewey and Sonic and Leonardo, all these characters that we grew up with as kids?

Schwartz: It's amazing because when I was growing up we would all go to the Bronx and go to my friend David Fernandez' house and we would all watch these things together. It was a thing we'd do after school. So the idea that maybe kids are doing that or maybe people like me and who have had kids are watching it as a family, it's amazing.

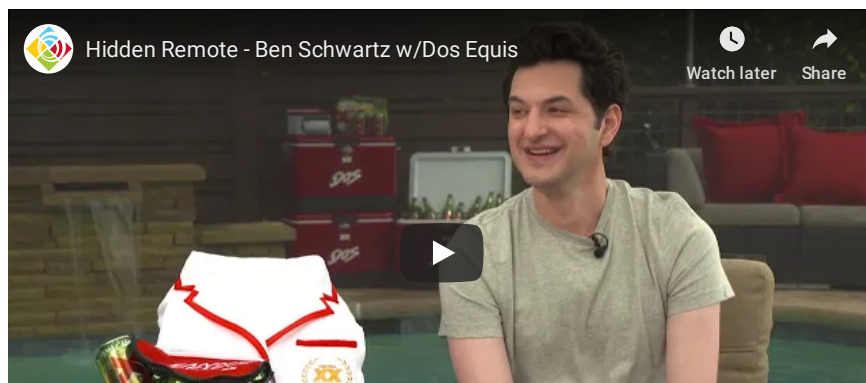
That stuff is half the reason I love doing this. The idea that the experience I had as a kid maybe could be something similar to a geeky kid growing up now and loving this stuff...it's really something I love.



Hidden Remote: And you are a major cartoon, video game person. Did you use a lot of that love to channel the character of Sonic? What are you most looking forward to with this movie and other people seeing it?

Ben Schwartz: What I used was the first couple games and stuff like that. The idea of what it is, like this young kid that's super excited and really wants to get after it and do all these things... using that energy from Sonic to push into the film.

I'm excited for people with the movie to see, first of all, the idea of what [*Sonic the Hedgehog*] looks like in movie form, like this big-budget fun thing. And to see Jim Carrey play Dr. Robotnik is going to be incredible.





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Sonic the Hedgehog was originally scheduled to releases into theaters in November, but production has been pushed back to February 14. Are you looking forward to the film? What other video game characters would you like to see get a movie of their own? Comment below!

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Could *Brightburn* be the start of a supervillain cinematic universe?



by Rachel Roth 1 week ago

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*There's a chance the horror film **Brightburn** is actually the first in a series of supervillain origin stories creating a new cinematic universe.*

One of the popular topics of discussion floating around the movie world right now is the supervillain horror film, *Brightburn*. Released on May 24, the film has gathered a lot of attention

for being a non-superhero superhero story produced by a newly redeemed James Gunn that hints at yet another cinematic universe, one where only the antagonists prevail.

The film, starring Elizabeth Banks and Jackson A. Dunn as the cutest little supervillain ever, puts a dark twist on the superhero origin story, that may not be the best movie ever made, but is certainly an intriguing horror flick filled with a surprising amount of stomach-churning gore. It has a 57% on Rotten Tomatoes with an audience score currently sitting at 69%, making it a fairly average film with the potential of developing a decent sized cult following.

Laid out like a typical origin story, *Brightburn* takes the well-known story of Superman and asks the question, "what if he wasn't here to save us?" Superman has always been a symbol of truth, justice, and the American way and his incredible powers made him seem almost God-like to the helpless people of Metropolis City.

Recently superhero films, especially ones made by Zach Snyder, have gone in a darker direction in an attempt to humanize their characters by portraying them as lonely individuals who could easily be led down a dark path if driven by strong enough forces.

In such cases, those heroes might go rogue and cause more harm than good. A lot of damage happens when a good guy has a bad day, so what might happen if these all-powerful individuals weren't heroes at all.

Remember what **Bat-fleck** said in *Batman v Superman*? "He has the power to wipe out the entire human race and if we believe that there is even a 1% chance that he is our enemy, we have to take it as an absolute certainty."

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Yeah, well, *Brightburn* basically takes that one sentence and creates a whole movie out of it. The film's ending leaves open the perfect opportunity for more *Brightburn* movies to come and paves the way for the creation of an Injustice League.



It's the age of cinematic universes and anthology films. Following the success of the MCU, multiple film franchises have been busy in building their own connected universes including *The Conjuring* series, the *Fast and Furious* series, and now **Blumhouse Productions** has shown interest in connecting the *Happy Death Day* movies to a larger world.

Film series set in one universe is actually a genius concept because a line of never-ending recycled sequels numbered 1, 2 and 3 eventually gets old, but non-connected sequels offer a fresh plot with familiarity. An opportunity to richen a series that gives multiple characters a chance in the spotlight instead of pinpointing all the focus on one overused lead.

Warning, spoilers ahead. The ending of *Brightburn* seemed perfect for a character like Brandon Breyer, wrapping the film up in a nice evil bow leaving little Brandon to carry on his mission to “take the world”. However, there was a surprise mid-credit scene at the end that teased multiple sequels and even connected *Brightburn* to another James Gunn film released in 2010.



In the mid-credits' scene, Michael Rooker appears in a shock cameo as an Alex Jones-like conspiracy theorist named The Big T, warning people against the superpowered presence known as “Brightburn” and then starts ranting about other metahumans roaming the world.

Behind him are photographs of these supposed beings, one of which is a man underwater that Big T describes as a “half-man, half-sea creature”. He then mentions a supernatural woman who chokes victims with a rope and shows a drawing of a witch-like woman holding a lasso.

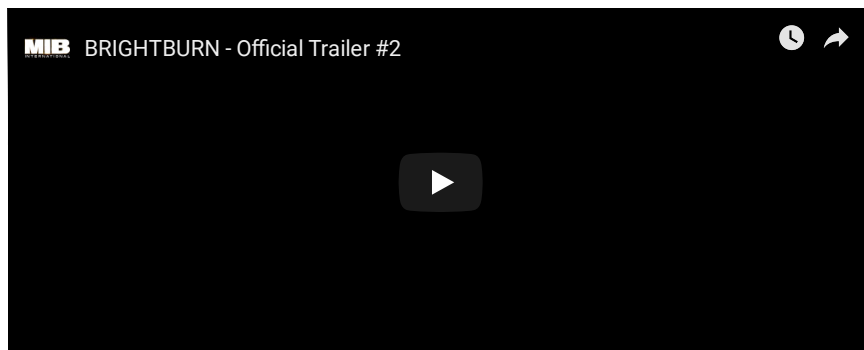
These are obviously references to the dark versions of Aquaman and Wonder Woman, and I didn't get too good of a look at the other pictures but I'm pretty sure I saw a Spider-Man look-alike up there too.



Among all these photos carrying the same conspiracy energy as the photos of Bigfoot and Nessie, is another costumed villain who closely resembles the Crimson Bolt, a character played by Rainn Wilson in James Gunn's 2010 film *Super*. The alternate Arthur Curry and Diana Prince are unknown but Crimson Bolt has his own movie.

Does this mean *Super* and *Brightburn* exist in the same universe? Is *Brightburn* actually a sequel to *Super*?

The two films are drastically different, with *Super* being a silly black comedy where a short-order cook without any superpowers takes on the persona, “Crimson Bolt”, to fight crime. The character has no superpowers, so if he and Brandon ever faced off in the future the fight would probably last about three seconds.



Personally, I love the idea of a dark villain film series, a fun change from the overwhelming number of superheroes taking over the world. Villains in films have always been burdened with colorless character development. They sort of appeared out of nowhere with plans to take over the world only to be thoroughly defeated before the two-hour runtime was up. Maybe it's time for villains to get their own fleshed out backstories, give the audience a new perspective as they watch good versus evil.

I know a lot of Superman megafans are complaining about this movie but once they realize it's okay to like both then maybe they can all calm down and enjoy it for what it is, a horror movie with potential.

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Brightburn is currently playing in theaters nationwide, it is rated R for horror violence, bloody images, and language.

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