

Streaming the whole world

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The phrase – ‘Netflix and Chill’ has become deeply ingrained in our modern-day lexicon well enough that the phrase harkens to chilling with friends/family, giving time to oneself, or just eking out some moments of leisurely closure with loved ones amidst busy schedules. Netflix remains the go-to place for serialized content of all genres making it the perfect gateway destination for watching films, series, and documentaries from all around the world. This was something rather impossible for many of us as we relied on the power of internet downloads to watch them. Fast forward, Netflix has gotten traction here and so have the streaming wars.

Before it was Netflix vs Hulu, vs Amazon Prime, vs Disney +, it was simply Netflix vs the World in its scope and breadth in an epic David vs Goliath showdown. The documentary released this year, “Netflix



vs the World” charts the beginning of an obscure startup which started as a DVD rental service provider to a corporate behemoth that in today’s every awards season scoops up its fair share of laurels for both English and non-English language films.

Featuring interviews with several ex-employees of the company as its visionary co-founders, Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph, as well as those of its onetime rival Blockbuster that over the years has been reduced from a multinational entertainment service provider to a bankrupt sole store in Oregon. The film offers animation to display pivotal moments, misgivings, mistakes, and celebrations of the former staff as the small start-up begins to galvanize support for its initial DVD rental schemes.

Offering funny and rather perplexing

insights into the world of marketing and investments undertaken by small firms, the film charts the initial shots taken by the company all the way from its framing of the name to its mistakes in DVD packaging to even producing the testimony of the infamous Bill Clinton-Monica Lewinsky case and then mistakenly shipping tonnes of Chinese pornography to its nation-wide subscriber base. Lucky for us, they immediately apologized for their latter debacle.

One of the heart-wrenching scenes in the film is not on Netflix’s bumpy struggles, but on its erstwhile rival, Blockbuster, which despite being ahead of its competitor failed to make the right decision at the right time in the right place due to internal struggles from within. Going from a multinational entertainment rental service with stores

filled with film merchandises into complete obscurity as DVDs had become obsolete in the age of stream, we see the sad and tragic demise of a company not being able to keep in touch with the dynamism of the internet. The film highlights the best and worst decisions taken by both the firms without seeming overly biased although it is clear from the title and what we see around us that the winner is Netflix.

Hollywood has certainly changed and that’s what makes the film a worthwhile watch to understand the constant flux of change happening in the entertainment industry at large and the pitfalls which lay ahead of it. With Blockbuster long gone, and multiple new streaming services gearing up for the new frontier of the streaming wars, it is yet to be seen who wins the upcoming war.

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