

HBO Max's \$90 million Batgirl movie is headed to the vault

About a week ago, industry observers noticed that Comic-Con 2022 came and went without any mention of *Batgirl*, the Warner Bros. film shot over the winter and apparently due for release in 2023. Today, the *New York Post*, *The Wrap*, and other entertainment outlets report that despite being in the final stages of post-production, Warner Bros. and DC Films have decided not to release the movie on any platform or in theaters.

The list of American unreleased films on Wikipedia is not a long one, and the flicks on it usually have a reason for being there – see the 1994 *Fantastic Four* effort or Netflix's shelved *Bill Cosby 77* project. The *Post* says this film will join them due to new Warner Bros. Discovery executive David Zaslav and new Warner Bros. head Michael De Luca seeking to cut costs and focus on movies made for theaters instead of straight-to-streaming. *Batgirl* was directed by Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah (*Bad Boys for Life*) and stars Leslie Grace (*In the Heights*) in the title role.

The *Post* quoted one source saying that after poor receptions from test audiences, Warner Bros. thought the movie “is going to be irredeemable.” Clearly, those test audiences never saw *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*.

DC Films president Walter Hamada laid out the previous strategy in early 2020, taking on Disney's Marvel Cinematic Universe with two of its own: the DC Extended Universe (DCEU) and the DC Films multiverse. The idea was to release up to four movies in theaters every year, with another one or two slotted as HBO Max exclusives. Not long after that, the

COVID-19 pandemic swept the globe and upended the planned release schedule.

When HBO Max launched one of its biggest promised offerings was DC films, including a director's cut of Zack Snyder's *Justice League*. Recently, *Rolling Stone* reported that the hype for "Snyder cut" was largely led by bots and inauthentic accounts. That might make a campaign to save *Batgirl* a little more tricky.

<https://www.theverge.com/2022/8/2/23288198/batgirl-warner-bros-release-canceled-streaming-theatrical>