The Force won’t be with them: David Benioff and D.B. Weiss exit Star Wars

Enlarge / David Benioff and D.B. Weiss have opted to focus on their lucrative development deal with Netflix.

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Former *Game of Thrones* showrunners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss will no longer be developing the next Star Wars film trilogy for LucasFilm, Deadline Hollywood reports. Instead, they’ll be focusing on developing new films and series for Netflix, part of a lucrative nine-figure deal they signed in August with the streaming giant.

“We love Star Wars,” Benioff and Weiss told Deadline Hollywood. “When George Lucas built it, he built us, too. Getting to talk about Star Wars with him and the current Star Wars team was the thrill of a lifetime, and we will always be indebted to the saga that changed everything. There are only so many hours in the day, and we felt we could not do justice to both Star Wars and our Netflix projects. So we are regretfully stepping away.”

Benioff and Weiss signed onto Star Wars back in February 2018, before the much-maligned (by fans) final season of *Game of Thrones* aired on HBO earlier this year. They had been developing a series called *Confederates* for HBO, a fictionalized alternative history of the US where the South

won the Civil War and slavery remained legal. The series was tabled, ostensibly due to scheduling conflicts rather than in response to an online outcry over the controversial premise. Then came the backlash against the *GoT* finale, even sparking an online petition with 1.75 million signatories calling for a remake. (As we noted in our review of the finale, that's not how any of this works.)

The duo has kept a fairly low public profile since then before igniting a fresh controversy with a panel appearance over the weekend at the Austin Film Festival. The men adopted a self-deprecating stance that didn't land well with the audience, joking about their lack of experience and marveling that George R.R. Martin entrusted his life's work into their hands as they pretty much learned the ropes on the job. So the news that Benioff and Weiss are no longer involved with *Star Wars* might be seen as good news by many.

It does kind of throw a fork in the works for Lucasfilm's long-range plans for the franchise. Currently, *The Mandalorian* debuts on the new Disney+ streaming service November 12, and *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*—the final installment in the most recent trilogy that concludes the long-running "Skywalker saga"—hits theaters December 20. The Benioff and Weiss project was intended to launch the next stage of the Star Wars cinematic saga, slated for 2022.

Full plate

Fortunately, Lucasfilm still has plenty of other projects in the works, most notably a Star Wars spinoff series featuring Obi-Wan Kenobi, with Ewan McGregor reprising his role as the iconic character. It was announced at Disney's annual D23 Expo in August, along with another Star Wars spinoff ("Untitled Spy Series") for Disney+ featuring *Rogue One*'s Cassian (Diego Luna) and his best droid buddy, K2 (Alan Tudyk).

It sounds like Lucasfilm President Kathleen Kennedy isn't

closing the door entirely on having the duo in the Star Wars fold at some point in the future, however. “David Benioff and Dan Weiss are incredible storytellers,” she told Deadline Hollywood. “We hope to include them in the journey forward when they are able to step away from their busy schedule to focus on Star Wars.”

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