# Jesse Armstrong’s Mountainhead skewers tech oligarchs but misses a broader critique



Jesse Armstrong’s latest venture, *Mountainhead*, emerges as a darkly comedic exploration of the elite mentality among America’s tech oligarchs, set against the backdrop of a luxurious Utah megalodge. This feature-length film, which some critics describe as a “horribly addictive” extension of the *Succession* universe, seems to diverge from its predecessor in both cast and narrative focus. However, it sadly neglects to offer a more balanced perspective, drifting into the realm of all-male psychodramas while missing a critical voice amid its examination of the excesses of wealth.

The film features four primary characters—driven and affluent tech leaders—gathering for what can only be called a male-bonding retreat, rife with poker games and banter that sourly escalates to discussions about global crises and moral apathy. Venis, portrayed by Cory Michael Smith, channels a modern-day Elon Musk, unveiling radical AI tools that wreak havoc even as they hide from the chaos they’ve created. Meanwhile, Steve Carell’s Randall, grappling with a cancer diagnosis, embodies the desperation that often lurks beneath the surface of privilege. The film’s dialogue brims with sharp one-liners and clever retorts, yet the critiques often feel muted, especially against the backdrop of current political failures.

Armstrong’s choice of setting—a $59 million mansion—serves as an apt metaphor for the isolation and delusion pervasive among the ultra-wealthy. This backdrop draws parallels not only to modern-day influencers but also to historical figures of unchecked power, suggesting that these men share a mindset disturbingly at odds with the pressing issues faced by the majority. “Once one Palestinian kid sees some really bananas content from one Israeli kid – it’s all over!” one character claims, encapsulating the reckless hubris that Armstrong appears eager to critique, yet fails to connect with real-world accountability.

While the film may lack some of the dramatic complexity and character depth that defined *Succession*, Armstrong’s satire attempts to pose urgent moral questions that resonate in today’s technological and sociopolitical climate. Yet, as viewers witness the fallout from crises instigated by unchecked technological advances, the consequences feel more like a bitter joke than a call for a reckoning. The resolution, though, feels perfunctory—an unsettling reminder that, in the world of the super-rich, personal crises rarely translate into transformative political action.

The film’s focus on relentless humor and existential musings about wealth and power dynamics often overshadows genuine character development. Nevertheless, the layers of sarcasm and biting wit keep the narrative engaging, even as they mask the unsettling darkness creeping on the edges. Armstrong himself has cited a creative impulse tied to a growing anxiety about the expanding reach of tech leaders into both politics and everyday life, making the film’s concerns utterly relevant as society grapples with the ramifications of such power in the hands of a privileged few.

As *Mountainhead* approaches its HBO premiere, it becomes evident that the film isn't merely a reflection on its characters’ lives but an incisive commentary on privilege's toxic effects in contemporary society. This exploration of moral ambiguity within tech culture is bound to captivate viewers, yet it may leave them questioning whether today’s elite can ever truly recognize the consequences of their unchecked authority and privilege.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2025/may/23/mountainhead-review-tech-bros-face-off-in-jesse-armstrongs-post-succession-uber-wealth-satire> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2025/may/23/mountainhead-review-tech-bros-face-off-in-jesse-armstrongs-post-succession-uber-wealth-satire> - Jesse Armstrong's 'Mountainhead' is a satirical chamber piece set in a luxurious Utah megalodge, featuring four American tech plutocrats. The film delves into the deranged mindset of the uber-wealthy, drawing parallels to ancient Rome, and is noted for its sharp, zinger-laden script. The all-male cast's dynamic is intentionally oppressive, highlighting the film's critique of wealth and power. While it may lack the dramatic depth of Armstrong's previous work, it effectively portrays the nature of modern overlords.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/49afd5e6-0da7-4164-960d-541b87200fd2> - Jesse Armstrong discusses his directorial debut, 'Mountainhead,' a satirical film about tech oligarchs. Filmed in a $59 million Utah mansion, the movie stars Jason Schwartzman, Steve Carell, Cory Michael Smith, and Ramy Youssef. The plot centers on four CEOs navigating a global AI crisis during their annual poker retreat. Armstrong conceived the film rapidly, motivated by both creative urgency and anxiety about directing. 'Mountainhead' satirizes tech leaders’ overreach into politics and culture, drawing parallels to real-world events, such as Musk’s political interventions.
4. <https://www.upi.com/Entertainment_News/Movies/2025/04/04/Jesse-Armstrongs-Mountainhead-set-for-May-31-premiere-on-HBO/6081743796481/> - 'Mountainhead,' written and directed by 'Succession' creator Jesse Armstrong, is set to premiere on HBO on May 31. The film stars Steve Carell, Jason Schwartzman, Cory Michael Smith, and Ramy Youssef as billionaire friends gathering amid an international crisis. Principal photography took place in Park City, Utah, and the film will be available to stream on Max at the same time as its HBO airing.
5. <https://www.upi.com/Entertainment_News/Movies/2025/04/22/mountainhead-teaser-trailer-carell-youssef/2571745350971/> - A teaser trailer for 'Mountainhead' has been released, featuring Steve Carell and Ramy Youssef as tech CEOs who gather at a luxury mountain retreat amid global crises. The trailer shows the group receiving a call from the U.S. president, highlighting the film's satirical take on tech billionaires' influence. The film, written and directed by Jesse Armstrong, premieres on May 31 on Max.
6. <https://www.citymagazine.si/en/hbos-jeva-satire-mountainhead-tech-billionaires-on-snowmobiles-while-the-world-burns/> - HBO's 'Mountainhead' is a satirical film featuring Steve Carell, Jason Schwartzman, Cory Michael Smith, and Ramy Youssef as tech billionaires meeting amid a global crisis. The film employs non-linear editing and postmodern narrative techniques to depict the isolation of the elite. Armstrong's portrayal of moral complexity in characters adds depth to the film, which is set to premiere on HBO and NOW on June 1.
7. <https://www.filmofilia.com/mountainhead-trailer-billionaires-world-collapse-203433/> - The teaser for 'Mountainhead' presents a satirical take on tech billionaires during a global crisis. The film stars Steve Carell, Jason Schwartzman, Cory Michael Smith, and Ramy Youssef as CEOs who retreat to a luxury mountain lodge as markets implode. The trailer juxtaposes their opulent lifestyle with news footage of riots, highlighting the film's critique of wealth and power. Directed by Jesse Armstrong, 'Mountainhead' premieres on Max on May 31, 2025.