# Mountainhead skewers tech moguls amid AI chaos in Jesse Armstrong’s sharp new satire



In a biting exploration of contemporary tech culture, "Mountainhead" emerges as a crucial satirical work, deftly crafted by Jesse Armstrong, the mind behind the critically acclaimed "Succession." Set against the backdrop of a lavish winter retreat in Utah, the film interweaves the lives of four tech moguls — including the morally ambiguous character Venis, played by Cory Michael Smith — grappling with the havoc wrought by an AI tool they unwittingly unleashed. The chaos, reminiscent of today's rampant misinformation and social media dilemmas, underscores the perils of unchecked ambition and moral vacuity pervasive among the tech elite.

As violence and disorder escalate globally, these billionaires retreat into a cocoon of privilege, revealing their malformed alliances and self-serving antics. Armstrong’s keenly observed script, imbued with dark humour, deftly critiques the ego-driven culture of technology revolutionaries. In an interview with The Atlantic, he stated that the film reflects on "the unintended consequences of releasing an AI tool," thereby drawing immediate parallels to real-world tech giants and their often ill-considered innovations. The film, which premieres on May 31 on HBO Max in the U.S. and a day later on Sky and NOW in the UK, promises to hold a mirror to the moral dilemmas created by modern technology.

"Mountainhead," described in reviews as a "sharp satire," features an ensemble cast that includes Steve Carell and Jason Schwartzman, with Armstrong's trademark incisive dialogue exposing the megalomania and dysfunction of its characters. Critics note that beneath the humour lies a poignant examination of toxic masculinity and the ruthless capitalism that drives these characters to compete with one another ruthlessly, often prioritising profit over ethics.

This timely critique mirrors a growing concern within society as social media platforms continue to influence narratives at remarkable scales. The digital landscape becomes a character of its own within the film, underlying Armstrong's commentary on the shifting power dynamics between traditional and social media. As he pointed out in an interview, the influence of social networks now outweighs that of newspapers, revealing a profound transformation in the way narratives are constructed and consumed.

Complementing this dark satire is "Dept. Q," a Netflix series that dives into the haunting depths of the human psyche, led by Matthew Goode as Edinburgh detective Carl Morck. The show explores a gritty, atmospheric narrative revolving around a cold-case unit tasked with revisiting unresolved mysteries. While it adheres to some of the tropes familiar in detective dramas, the series adeptly tackles themes of institutional dysfunction and moral ambiguity, opening up discussions that resonate well beyond its genre.

Creators Scott Frank and his team reveal a nuanced portrayal of complex characters, wrestling with their personal demons while delving into the intricacies of human relationships. The high-stakes investigation into the disappearance of a significant figure echoes the broader societal implications of accountability and justice, allowing the audience to ponder the morality of the systems designed to protect them.

Alongside these two standout features are other noteworthy films like "Fountain of Youth," “Bad Shabbos,” and “The New Boy,” each introducing diverse narratives that range from comedies to explorations of faith and identity. "Fountain of Youth" stands out for its audacious premise, while "Bad Shabbos" cleverly navigates familial dysfunction within a dark comedic context. “The New Boy” offers a powerful critique of indoctrination and heritage, encapsulating the rich tapestry of storytelling available to audiences this season.

As the film and television landscape continues to evolve, works like "Mountainhead" and "Dept. Q" herald a wave of innovative storytelling that tackles pressing contemporary issues, challenging viewers to reflect on the world around them. In a media environment saturated with sensationalism and misinformation, these narratives provide both entertainment and a necessary lens through which we can examine the complexities of ambition, ethical responsibility, and the human condition.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.mercurynews.com/2025/05/30/what-to-watch-mountainhead-gives-tech-bros-the-drubbing-they-deserve/), [[2]](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2025/05/mountainhead-jesse-armstrong-interview/682981/?utm_source=apple_news), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/e0bbbaf7-9f70-44cf-9bbf-077152d605a5)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2025/05/mountainhead-jesse-armstrong-interview/682981/?utm_source=apple_news), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/459598d1-f52e-4a19-9be1-67f7d4bdcce9), [[5]](https://time.com/7286990/dept-q-review-netflix/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://www.cadenaser.com/nacional/2025/05/28/jesse-armstrong-el-creador-de-succession-vuelve-a-la-carga-me-interesa-el-poder-y-ahora-las-redes-sociales-tienen-mas-que-los-periodicos-cadena-ser/), [[7]](https://apnews.com/article/ecb1a9fa4bf1ab5a13615e27b1c8f69b)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mercurynews.com/2025/05/30/what-to-watch-mountainhead-gives-tech-bros-the-drubbing-they-deserve/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2025/05/mountainhead-jesse-armstrong-interview/682981/?utm_source=apple_news> - In an interview with The Atlantic, Jesse Armstrong, creator of HBO's 'Succession', discusses his latest project, 'Mountainhead'. The film is a satirical exploration of the tech elite's influence on global affairs, set in a lavish Utah mansion. It portrays a group of tech billionaires grappling with the unintended consequences of releasing an AI tool during a snowy poker retreat. Armstrong draws parallels to real-world tech moguls and highlights themes of unchecked ambition and moral vacuity. The film premieres on HBO and Max on May 31, 2025.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/e0bbbaf7-9f70-44cf-9bbf-077152d605a5> - The Financial Times reviews 'Mountainhead', a film directed by Jesse Armstrong, known for 'Succession'. Set in a lavish Utah retreat, the film focuses on four tech elites during a potential global collapse driven by AI and social media chaos. The narrative delves into their megalomania and dysfunctional dynamics under Armstrong’s incisive dialogue. The film critiques ego-driven tech culture with humour and incisiveness, parodying figures shaping the future. It premieres on HBO and Max in the U.S. on May 31, and on Sky and NOW in the UK from June 1.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/459598d1-f52e-4a19-9be1-67f7d4bdcce9> - The Financial Times reviews 'Dept. Q', a Netflix crime thriller starring Matthew Goode as DCI Carl Morck, an abrasive and emotionally scarred Edinburgh detective assigned to reopen cold cases. The show, created by Scott Frank, is an adaptation of popular Nordic noir novels and features a gloomy, atmospheric tone. The central case involves the disappearance of high-profile lawyer Merritt Lingard. While the show offers intrigue and methodical detective work, it suffers from a cluttered narrative overloaded with character backstories and subplots.
5. <https://time.com/7286990/dept-q-review-netflix/> - Time magazine reviews Netflix’s 'Dept. Q', created by Scott Frank. The crime drama follows Carl Morck, a guilt-ridden Edinburgh detective leading a cold-case unit comprised of misfits. The show delves into character backstories and relationships, hinting at deeper themes such as institutional dysfunction and moral ambiguity. While not as thematically rich as 'The Queen’s Gambit', 'Dept. Q' sets up potential for a compelling long-running procedural driven by nuanced performances and layered storytelling.
6. <https://www.cadenaser.com/nacional/2025/05/28/jesse-armstrong-el-creador-de-succession-vuelve-a-la-carga-me-interesa-el-poder-y-ahora-las-redes-sociales-tienen-mas-que-los-periodicos-cadena-ser/> - In an interview with Cadena SER, Jesse Armstrong, creator of the acclaimed series 'Succession', discusses his return with the satire 'Mountainhead'. The film focuses on the power and technocapitalism of tech leaders, highlighting the influence of social media over traditional media. Armstrong addresses the power of social networks, their influence on public narrative, and the dangers of misinformation. The film, starring Steve Carell and Jason Schwartzman, also critiques a new form of toxic masculinity and ruthless capitalism.
7. <https://apnews.com/article/ecb1a9fa4bf1ab5a13615e27b1c8f69b> - The Associated Press reviews 'Mountainhead', a made-for-HBO movie directed and written by 'Succession' creator Jesse Armstrong. The film offers a sharp satire of tech billionaires and the hubris of digital utopianism. Set entirely within a mountain estate named after Ayn Rand's 'The Fountainhead', the film gathers four tech moguls for a poker weekend amidst a global crisis triggered by AI deepfakes spreading through Venis’ massive social media platform, Traam. The narrative explores their megalomania, detachment from reality, and dysfunctional dynamics under Armstrong’s incisive, quotable dialogue.