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Nostalgia critic controversy 2019

When internet culture was still evolving, amazing channel was one of the places to go for pop culture criticism. He celebrated the nerds of being a fan, and yet was one of the pioneers of a detached state of analyzing these characteristics while praising them at the time. YouTube had a lot of problems with copyright content and you couldn't fight it that well, and it was a lot harder to go out there and provide for it, so we were in blip.tv, and it wasn't a really good place to look for videos, said Allison Pragler, a critic known as Obscuros Lupe who specializes in Z-quality movies and has sometimes appeared on the Awesome channel. Blip.tv, a video platform created to help producers of independent web series promote their content, was simply not ideal for helping fans discover content creators who shared their interests. This is where an amazing channel fits in. Founded in 2008 by Mike Michaud, Mike Ellis and Beregav Dernamarjo, who became known as the Guy with The Glasses (TGWTG) until 2014 because his star - resulting in his main draw - was a comedian named Doug Walker, whose punctured alter ego The Nostalgia Critic used a Lonnie Tunes-style comic style to assess whether beloved nostalgic films and TV shows were truly as wonderful as millennials. In the years that followed, the Awesome channel seemed to embody some of the biggest issues of the modern generation — substandard working conditions, paying for content versus providing it as exposure, and even claims that seem all too familiar in the #MeToo. As the nostalgia critic became more popular, TGWTG invited other talented visitors online to join their platform, turning it into one of the most popular content aggregators on the Internet. Walker found a smart angle to use for a character, at least in terms of putting himself in dialogue with his cultural zeitgeist, and he filled the role perfectly. By the time he changed his name to the Awesome channel in 2014, the nickname seemed a perfect fit to describe a place where any nerd could find visitors for their favorite (or most hated) movies, TV shows, video games, comic books, songs and other pop culture features. In the process, he turned dozens of nerdy millennials —people armed with nothing more than a webcam, an Internet connection, and lots of opinions—into small celebrities. We were all stars by each other, Kahlan Saucedo (MarzGurl) told Salon. Not just by Doug or by James Rolfe [an angry video game geek] being there in the room with us, but with each other. We loved being with each other. And that was the best thing about being with an amazing channel in their whole: the other producers. Excellent location, great staff, good breakfast however, starting at the end of last year and continuing the first few weeks of April, the reputation of amazing gorge took a big hit and very public. YouTube made it easier for content creators to create Without Channel Awesome, while many of its leading content creators have opened up about the site management not creating a welcoming work environment for them. These complaints, described in a 73-page Google Doc that contained negative accounts of more than a dozen former employees, describe an organizational culture that can best be described as toxic and unfeetly. He chose management — as a whole, from Jesus, Walker, and his brother Rob — to offenses ranging from poor communication and managerial incompetence to being dismissive and bullying content creators. And when amazing channel management published a public letter accusing its former donors of being liars with vindictive intentions, their main achievement was to get #changethechannel to start the trend on Twitter, exacerbating their PR nightmare. Among the more notable allegations: Pragler claimed that Awesome Channel's management was aware of a sexual harassment problem by former corporate officer Mike Ellis, and produced content that nurtured groupies and forced them to have sex, but failed to act for years. She also described a horrific incident in which Michaud made her cry in the bathroom after aggressively scolding her for using mid-cylinder ads (which was then necessary for her to make a living from her job), with Doug Walker promising to address the issue and then Michaud's side. Holly Brown, a former on-site executive, says she was asked to work every day of the year, and was unexpectedly fired a day after undergoing surgery without being given a reason and was pressured (at risk of losing her compensation) to sign a contract that prevented her from working in the industry for three years. She later described their actions as ruining her career for years. Then there was the management team's reluctance to take a strong stand against the harassment and bullying of female donors during Gamergate. I would definitely use the word 'cowardice', Lindsay Ellis (Chick Nostalgia) said. He [Mike Michaud] was afraid to alienate some of the audience so they were so eager, in the era of 2014, to ignore what was happening because they saw it as bad business. He was pretty insistent that no one talk about it or talk about what was going on because he saw it as bad for business because it would alienate a pretty good part of their audience. Describing the same thing, Pragler told Salon that although she was lucky enough not to accept misogynynability toxicity like some of the other female donors, when it came to protecting female donors when things happened like this, they could make a statement about it. They couldn't hire people who supported Gamergate, which is something they did. Because they didn't want to make a political stand on it, I guess, what they were. Was that they didn't care or support it. It would have been very easy to just make a statement and draw the line somewhere, and they didn't. As Ellis pointed out, the way they look at approaching the atmosphere of misogyny is like bashing bad actors like flies instead of the way you nurture online communities. And part of it is speaking out against toxicity online, because otherwise you're a partner. At Google Doc, Alice described that she and her fellow contributor Luis Lobogue (Linkara) had pressed to commit rape for one of the site's croissant specials, despite their objections. These annual crossover specials — essentially a multi-hour miniseries in which the site's many stars will appear together in tongue-in-cheek comic adventures (filled with pop culture references, of course) — have also been isolated in the document, with complaints that people worked under substandard conditions, faced technical insanity and were not paid. The latter issue - which was not paid - was a recurring theme on Google Doc. Time and again, contributors have talked about different ways in which amazing channel management doesn't pay them, from implementing seemingly arbitrary rules that cut their income to insisting that their videos appear on the site are their main form of compensation because they've received exposure. Amazing channel management even made decisions that hurt the bottom line of the other creators without intending to, such as when Walker decided to step down as his nostalgia critic (a decision he later reversed) without informing many of them in advance. Which raises another recurring Google Doc theme - Channel Awesome's donor sense that if you weren't part of the management team's inner circle, communications range from poor to nonexistent. Communication was a problem and we admitted it for sure. And I think a business for over 10 years, we made mistakes, said Doug Walker to salon. We definitely did it. And it's something we're always looking to get better and we're always looking to grow up and with the people we work indoors with in the studio, I mean, I still haven't heard any complaints. And they're always talking about how much fun filming is there and we haven't heard anything bad yet, so hopefully that means we're getting better. Walker's story of current working conditions on a staggering channel was reinforced by ongoing employees who spoke to Salon. I think it's important to remember that there are always multiple perspectives for every story, for every experience, said Malcolm Ray, who plays several characters as a nostalgia critic's dealer, to the living room. And it's not to disqualify anyone else's experience, because the only perspectives we have are ours. And I have to say that things in this document don't reflect the current atmosphere or the current work environment I have working with the nostalgia critic team and an amazing channel. It's always been... Professional, very fun, very easy to walk. And coming from the SAG player [screen players] — I'm

part of SAG. I worked in the industry — it's one of the smoothest managed projects I've ever been on. It's actually a cake walk compared to other professional systems I've been to. I love these guys so much, added Tamara Chambers, who also plays a number of characters as a walker dealr. They're some of my best friends now. I love them. They're great guys. This sense of family that all the video critics featured in the amazing channel were close friends in real life, was baked into the brand of the site. That's why the annual Croissant special, as well as the frequent croissant videos between different visitors to the site, were so popular. They reinforced the idea that the Awesome channel was more than a sterile search engine, but instead there was a warm and welcoming community unlike those fans would develop with their real-life friends when they were being tested in pop culture products. Their biggest asset as a brand was that kind of community focus and it made the viewer feel like it was your friends and you'd talk about geeky things you'd talk about with your friends, Ellis said. Other contributors told the same story: how they were drawn to TGWTG/Gorge channel not only because it would give them a bigger audience, but because the brand was associated with a sense of community, one that they strooped to be a part of. And most agreed that with the part of the management team, this community was very real and quite rewarding. In many ways we were very much family. I'd say it was known to have cliques and there were kind of different levels of producers, but it was very kind of a family environment that we had, Holly Brown said. Alice had a similar diagnosis. It [the sense of family] was pretty real. I think it was more like a show for the walkers and I didn't just say that because of the controversy. They've kind of looked after themselves and they'll tell you that. They didn't really - while they were obviously friends with the likes of Brad Jones [the cinema snob] and Louis Lobaug - they didn't really engage at a member level outside of business collaboration. She added: But for everyone it was quite real. In the end, that sense of family wasn't enough to get content creators to ignore their financial needs. Despite blip.tv, YouTube has made it easier for online visitors to monetize their work and fend off frivolous claims of copyright infringement by their audit subjects. This, combined with Patreon's growth as a place where internet visitors can receive donations to continue their work, has made creators less dependent on the Awesome channel — and therefore less likely to tolerate the behavior they would tolerate when economic conditions have made them more vulnerable. We were all brought in in 2008 and 2009 when the economy collapsed, Alice. I just got fired from my only job. It was just a desperate place to be and I think the fact that brought us to this time of despair, this millennium Hanoi of 'we have no future', made people much more connected to that idea, sticking with that brand and staying true to that brand. She added: And over the years it changed to 'we need to improve this brand', and then eventually when we realised it would never get better, people left one by one. Now that An Amazing Channel has lost all its original donors - now that the family has left their parents' home and decided to keep in touch with each other unsupervised by their alleged patriarchy - what lessons can be learned from the story of an amazing channel? I feel like -- if the management of an amazing channel nurtured us better, it would have done wonders for them as well. Saucedo said. It would have benefited both parties, both producers and management. If we had access to everything we needed, which is mostly just communication, really, that we didn't have, then if we had access to that communication and if other kinds of partnerships and relationships were built for us, if we were properly circulating all over the site and on social networks, it wouldn't just have to be Doug Walker's show. You don't just have to rely on one personality. Pragler offered a few sober words of warning to aspiring internet stars like her - be careful who you trust. If you're creating content and you're trying to join, besides, MCN [multichannel network] or aggregate site or whatever - if there are contracts involved, make sure you read them and you understand them, Pragler said. If you feel there's a bit of disrespect - it's really hard to tell someone to just disconnect because other people have other financial situations - but if someone treats you like that, don't stay because you feel like you have to be loyal to them, because often the company isn't your girlfriend. This is one important aspect of the Awesome channel's legacy, and it serves as a cautionary story to consider, whether you're siding with management or producers who have left en masse: millennials, and a generation raised in an economic climate where they feel their voices are not being heard or underestimated, will not be quietly abused. Because Fergler, Sausado, Ellis, Brown and many others have spoken out against what they consider poor treatment, they set a precedent that could be pretty ragged if it becomes a trend. They send a message to others in their industry that when employers fail to treat their employees decently — disobeying the basic principles of the oldest moral clichés, the Golden Rule — they risk more than losing some trouble-making employees here and there. They It was eventually publicly named, even completely shamed, resulting in potentially devastating negative publicity. If more workers do this, perhaps one day we'll see a climate where employers who might not naturally treat their employees well will do so because they have legitimate concerns about how they will be considered by the public if they don't. But the legacy of Amazing Channel should not only be limited to controversies over how it treated many of its employees. By taking so many obscure people and giving them audiences rated in the thousands rather than thousands, they have helped develop a new type of media, for which they deserve considerable credit. The dozens of visitors whose work was featured on the site not only generated traditional video reviews, the kind of work in which what could have been a written essay was instead told directly to the camera. They developed a bright new art form, a hybrid that combines in-depth pop culture reviews with skins that used comic characters, running jokes, a visual punchy in the reality basement and a casual personal story to make their interpretation entertaining. As their brands evolved, they also created their own characters - sometimes real, sometimes fictional, usually a little of both - that turned them into familiar public figures. This combination of traditional cultural criticism with performance art is reminiscent of the Mysterious Science Theatre 3000, but it has taken this style in a completely different direction. While past critics in MST3K mode have generally tried to focus on being funny, contributors to an amazing channel — as well as many websites that have been inspired by them in the years since — aim to entertain and offer the kind of cultural insights one might expect from traditional critics like Roger Ebert, Gene Siskel and Richard Roper. Indeed, they were often better at being better off than their print-based, TV-based ancestors, from having the flexibility of the online format allowed contributors to create a balance between direct criticism and Zanian comedy that simply wasn't possible in the pre-Internet era. That's why, in the end, it wasn't just the individual artists who became prominent because of an amazing channel that profited from the heritage of this site. Anyone who appreciates good art criticism, and good art, should be grateful that an incredibly entertaining new kind of review was able to be popular because of an amazing channel platform. For this reason I can write that fans of anime should check out MarzGurl, and fans of cheap movies should watch videos of Obscurus Lupa, and pop culture consumers with an academic curve should follow Lindsay Ellis (who no longer goes by sobriquet nostalgia chick). And, of course, there's Doug Walker, who still plays the nostalgia critic on an amazing channel and still tries to make people laugh. I think it's something where people come to the site again to like Stay away from their problems and laugh and joke and so on, Walker told The Living Room. It can be done with a large community, it can be done with a small community, it can be done with a fan community, it can be done with professionals, it can be done by people who start. I mean, we don't get into it for money. I started doing it in my parents' basement. I started out as someone who wasn't professional. And I think creativity like that and the need to make people laugh and feel better can come from anywhere.

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