

## REVIEW

# 'Depp V. Heard': Docuseries offers nothing new on Hollywood saga

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"Depp V. Heard," a new three-part docuseries on Netflix by Emma Cooper, profiles the legal battle that actors Johnny Depp and Amber Heard fought in 2022. He sued her for an opinion piece she wrote in *The Washington Post* in which she described herself as a survivor of domestic abuse, though she never referred specifically to Depp.

The defamation case was held in a Virginia court and went on for six weeks. The proceedings are available on public platforms, so the docuseries has little new to offer, but Cooper has brilliantly placed



'Depp V. Heard' is now streaming on Netflix. Supplied

the testimonies of both actors side by side for easy comparison of their versions of the story. We see the reactions and responses with marvelous lucidity and they help us understand how the case wove its way through to its conclusion.

The vicious way social media

toyed with the couple's testimony made headlines at the time, so much so that it was dubbed a "trial by TikTok." The documentary touches on this, as well as the clear favor Depp carried with fans around the world during the court case.

The docuseries is essentially a

curated mix of courtroom footage, video and audio evidence, old press junket interviews with Depp and Heard, news reports and a heaping of YouTube and TikTok clips, alongside running commentary from fans, amateur reporters, legal commentators and podcast hosts. These are presented in a chronological pattern but there is little in the way of freshly contributed voices who have benefited from hindsight, just the same information and views that were disseminated to the public throughout the trial. Comments and analysis could have enriched the series. I found it a bit dull, a bit monotonous and the

court arguments felt a tad tedious after a while.

There was also very little visible effort made to understand or explain Virginia defamation law and the eventual outcome of the case, which saw the jury award Depp \$10 million in compensatory damages and \$5 million in punitive damages from Heard. Nor was there any real mention or exploration of a previous libel case in the UK that was inextricably linked to the court proceedings in Virginia. All in all, "Depp V. Heard" is just a rehashing of what we already knew — presented, perhaps, for a new audience who did not watch the trial in real time.