

In the end, *Better Call Saul* ended with black and white reconciliation: lifeless and buried in a grave under a secret superlab; incarcerated after a final sacrifice for love; relocated in Florida, hoping palm trees and pro bono work leads to peace.

Despite these resolutions, the options for expanding the show's world are endless.

Although the show's creators, Vince Gillian and Peter Gould, said it might be a minute, they haven't ruled out more New Mexican-based crime content.

The universe could continue to detail characters like *Ed Galbraith (Robert Forster)*, *Flynn White (RJ Mitte)*, or even a look at how Tuco Salamanca and Skinny Pete got along in Los Lunas Prison. Backstory questions still exist abroad with other major characters like Gustavo Fring, Lydia Todarte-Quayle, and Lalo Salamanca.

Dead, alive, or incarcerated some characters still have secrets to tell.

New Mexico Spinoffs

Agent Flynn

LOGLINE: Rookie DEA agent, Walter Jr. infiltrates the cartel undercover in an attempt to atone for his father's drug empire.

Walter Jr. and his father's tumultuous relationship was best emphasized through flip-flopping names—Walter Jr. and Flynn. Throughout most of the show, Walt Jr. continually appears closer to his uncle Hank Shrader (*Dean Norris*). The conflict seemingly ended at the end of *Breaking Bad*, when Walter declined to confront Jr. one last time outside of his school while Walter was still on the run. The audience was left to speculate how Flynn subsequently handles the public arrest of his father and generally how the White family moves on from the infamy. And, what about the money? The slice of the \$9.72 million of drug money Walter coerces Gretchen and Elliott Schwartz to transfer via irrevocable trust to the family after Waters death.

There's the obvious like-father-like-son spinoff possibility. But let's explore Flynn's life on a path inspired by uncle—Hank Shrader—attempting to compensate for the crimes of his father.

The Black Book

LOGLINE: An anthology series exploring the seedy lives of the criminals listed in Dr. Caldera's infamous Black Book—fixers, smugglers, assassins, and corrupt officials—each playing a small but vital role in sustaining a ruthless cartel empire.

Both *Breaking Bad* and *Better Call Saul* made clear that behind the normalcy of routine Albuquerque life operated a dark network of drug distributors, arms dealers, and hitmen.

Some of these characters were introduced through pseudo-veterinarian Dr. Caldera's blackbook, which Saul purchases to further his contacts. Most of the contacts are unknown to the audience through both shows, but could be strung together—George Jung and Marty Bird-types—intermixing their double-lives through a series of vignettes.

Ed Galbraith

LOGLINE: A struggling door-to-door salesman, Ed Galbraith, partners with a mysterious investor to open his own appliance store—only to discover the deal may cost him far more than he bargained for.

A known contact from a loose-leaf business card in the black book introduced audiences to Ed Galbraith (*Robert Forster*) the vacuum-repair specialist who owns Great Quality Vacuum. On the surface Ed's a legitimate business man running a dinky service in a dying industry. But it's all a front for his clandestine disappearing business, where for \$125,000, criminals can start afresh with a new identity avoiding any impending heat.

Little to no background exists on Ed, except in his regimented demeanor and detail to executing the vanishing plans. Perhaps his resources and abilities allude to a past in law enforcement, or perhaps he was once a recipient of the services he now provides.

Lawson

LOGLINE: After Lawson is denied coverage for an experimental drug that treats PTSD, the Iraq War veteran turns to the only trade he knows—guns and ammunition—to pay for the treatment that might save his life.

A backstory of the veteran arms dealer, Lawson (Jim Beaver), spotlights the background of the criminal world in Albuquerque. Lawson admits his own mysterious background, claiming he's serviced the Albuquerque's underworld for "30 years plus". His longevity in arms dealing affords a glimpse on how crime crescendoed in the city, while Walter White was finishing his teaching degree.

Lawson could even detail the aftermath in Albuquerque post *Breaking Bad*. The days after this period are explored through Jesse Pinkman's (Aaron Paul) perspective in *El Camino* as well as a few flashback scenes in *Better Call Saul*. But what happens to the underworld once Walter White, Don Eladio and Gus are all dead? Lawson knows.

Los Lunas

LOGLINE: A Skinny Pete narrative; a mockumentary drama on the prison population in Albuquerque's Los Lunas Prison, detailing the Cartel influences from beyond the prison's walls.

Set in the arid desert of Valencia County, Los Lunas prison was a setting seldom used by the show's creators, but was the component that linked Walter to the Salamanca drug trade.

In Season 1 of *Breaking Bad*, Skinny Pete introduces Jesse Pinkman to Tuco Salamanca, who Skinny boasts as his former cellmate in Los Lunas prison. Although Skinny plays their relationship off as amicable, during the distribution deal with Jesse, Tuco's disregard for any sentiment with Skinny questions the relationship the two had in prison.

The prison was lightly touched in *Better Call Saul* through updates relayed to Hector Salamanca (Mark Margolis) on his nephew's incarceration. In one of those messages, Lalo Salamanca assures Don Hector that Tuco will be released from prison in eleven months, indicating he or the cartel had some type of pull in the prison ranks.

International Spinoffs

The Chicken Man

LOGLINE: Long before his empire in Breaking Bad, a young Gustavo Fring navigates the violent cartel world of South America, carefully building the power and reputation that will make him untouchable.

The drug-dealing mastermind mockingly named "The Chicken Man" was the featured antagonist in both shows and perhaps the most mysterious. So mysterious, neither the DEA nor his own bodyguard Mike, were able to dig up any record of him, indicating that even his real name was a mystery. Audiences could surmise Gus was in the military sometime before the drug game, as Hector sometimes referred to him as "big Generalissimo".

But in the late 80s, Gus first made his way into the cartel collaborating on cocaine distribution. Then in an attempt to better legitimize his standing, he founded Los Pollos Hermanos fast food restaurant, attempting to ease up distribution logistics, which eventually solidified the cartel's respect for him, something previously missing because Gus was South American. But how did Gus find his way into the drug game in the first place?

In one flashback, audiences were introduced to Gus's romantic partner Max Arciniega, who originally co-founded Los Pollos and was the chemistry-genius behind all of Gus's formulas. Max was killed in front of Gus as punishment for Gus's brazen move to force a meeting with the cartel by selling drugs to men on their territory without their consent. This event was pinned as the reason for Gus's entrenched rage and later vengeance. But a man willing to dupe the cartel for a meeting, must've developed that nerve long before.

And where did the manipulation come from? His ability to garner the trust from those with the most power was impressive. He was even able to manipulate authority outside of the cartel, earning the DEA's trust with monetary donations to their charitable events and good-faith acting when Agent Shrader was shot and sent to the hospital. It was his toothpaste smile and perfect syntax mixed with true Machiavellian intentions that made Gus so compelling. A temperament that can only be nurtured, not natured.

The Southern Branch

LOGLINE: A historical crime saga following a young Hector Salamanca as he forges the brutal Salamanca dynasty, aligning with Don Eladio and expanding their cartel empire from Mexico into the United States.

Operating out of Mexico, the cartel poses a variety of shady characters deserving consideration for a spinoff. Specifically, the Salamanca family for an explanation on how its members were bred into becoming cold-blooded hitmen or jovial sociopaths. Don Hector's character in *Breaking Bad* and *Better Call Saul* sat in a wheelchair, but flashbacks hint at a man once full of ruthless power, cruelty, and cigar smoke. Like in Season 3, when a flashback showed Don Hector teaching his nephews Marco Salamanca (*Luis Moncada*) and Leonel Salamanca a lesson that "family is all", by drowning Leonel in an ice bucket after Marco wished him dead. That was in 1989, when Don Hector was regarded as the most brutal boss in the cartel.

That explains the brutality of his nephews, but how it happened is still a mystery. The show could then delve into the young lives of "The Cousins", Marco and Leonel, and how they were nurtured through the Cartel to become the organizations go-to hitmen. And what's with the silence? Seldom did either character speak in *Breaking Bad* or *Better Call Saul*, a deviation from the flashback with their uncle when the two seemed to still be youthful, or at least audible.

Finally the series could showcase Eduardo "Lalo" Salamanca (*Daniel Moncada*), also known in *Better Call Saul* as Don Eduardo. Lalo was different. Although he was raised by his uncle like the rest of his cousins, he operated under a guise of charm and charisma, duping almost anyone who questioned his legitimacy. His actions were calculated, not emotional, going as far as hiding out in a sewer for three days to catch his rival Gus, overstepping his place in the cartel. The facade Lalo was able to sustain throughout his character development implied a rigid but impressive youth. And even though Lalo only appeared in about two seasons of *Better Call Saul*, he was one of the only characters whose impact lingered even when he wasn't on screen. A type of influence that deserves context.

Quayle

LOGLINE: Single mother, Lydia Rodarte-Quayle climbs the corporate ladder while secretly building the white-collar infrastructure of a cartel empire, balancing ambition, paranoia, and motherhood as her world unravels closer and closer to chaos.

Lydia Todarte-Quayle (*Laura Fraser*) was the tightly-wound Madrigal Electromotive executive, first introduced as Gustavo Fring's plug for barrels of methylamine. After Fring's death, she continued her distribution to Walter White's newly-found operation, and later to Jack Welker's gang, after Walter was forced into hiding.

Lydia's background and her initial connection to Gus is still unknown. Aside from her daughter, German fluency, and affection for Stevia, little is known about Lydia's personal life or background. There was something about Lydia's unnerving temperament and covert ability to play both sides of a conflict that makes her a compelling character for a spinoff. How does a business executive from Houston possess the gall to order an eleven-man hit list, while also honing the resolve to calmly coax a DEA agent into feeding her investigation details? In both instances Lydia was either handcuffed at gunpoint or backstabbing former personnel for security. A narrative on her duality and her only redeeming quality, motherhood, could provide a softer glimpse for the female anti-hero.

While Peter Gould has hinted that Kim Wexler (*Rhea Seehorn*) could lead the next spinoff, the franchise's future may be broad enough to follow several stories at once. Given the many unanswered questions surrounding the world of *Better Call Saul*, Vince Gilligan still has plenty of narrative ground to cover.