

Marc Andreessen on rival venture capitalist Bill Gurley: 'I can't stand him'

Maya Kosoff May 11, 2015, 11:22 PM

3-4 minutes

Marc Andreessen.
Michael Kovac/Getty Images for Vanity Fair

When Marc Andreessen and Ben Horowitz started their VC firm Andreessen Horowitz, they set out to make things better for entrepreneurs.

They saw Benchmark Capital, a boutique VC firm "with no back-office specialists to provide the services they'd craved" as the antithesis of what they were trying to build with a16z.

"We were always the anti-Benchmark," Horowitz says in a *New Yorker* profile. "Our design was to *not* do what they did."

According to Horowitz, a Benchmark partner once asked him in front of his cofounders: "When are you going to get a real C.E.O.?"

Additionally, "Benchmark's best-known venture capitalist, the six-foot-eight Bill Gurley, another outspoken giant with a large Twitter following, advised Horowitz to cut Andreessen and his six-million-dollar investment out of the company," according to *The New Yorker's* profile.

So it comes as no surprise that Marc Andreessen had this to say about Bill Gurley: "I can't stand him. If you've seen 'Seinfeld,' Bill Gurley is my Newman." One CEO described Andreessen and Gurley's relationship as being "like watching Coke and Pepsi go head to head."

From the *New Yorker*:

When I pressed Andreessen on a16z's fund size, he said that even if the basic assumptions haven't changed—even if only fifteen companies a year reach a hundred million dollars in revenue—those companies generate more money now. And, he said, "I'd bet the number of companies that reach that revenue is going up." With a playful smile, he referred to Gurley: "If there's no profit opportunity beyond the first four hundred million, Bill's making the case that everyone who follows Benchmark in a later investment round is a moron. I wouldn't say that."

Like other investors, Bill Gurley has spent a significant amount of time this year talking about the bubble in Silicon Valley's tech sector. At a SXSW keynote, [he warned](#) that Silicon Valley's optimism — the same optimism perpetuated by VC firms like Andreessen Horowitz — could eventually lead to the demise of some of these unicorn companies. "I do think you'll see some dead unicorns this year," he said.