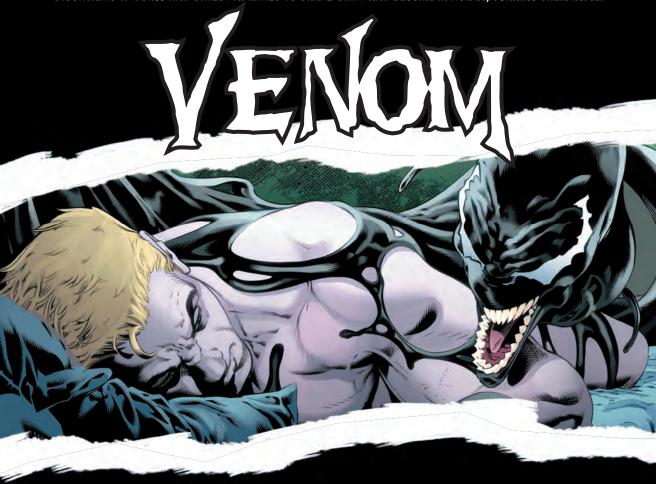


YEARS AGO, PETER PARKER (A.K.A. THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN) ACCIDENTALLY BONDED WITH AN ALIEN BEING CALLED A SYMBIOTE. WHEN PETER REALIZED THE COSTUME WAS ACTUALLY AN AGGRESSIVE LIVING ORGANISM, HE REJECTED IT. BUT DURING THEIR TIME TOGETHER, THE SYMBIOTE HAD ACCESS TO SPIDER-MAN'S GENETIC CODE AND NOW GRANTS WHOMEVER IT BONDS WITH SKILLS SIMILAR TO HIS: WALL-CRAWLING, THE POWER TO GENERATE BIOORGANIC WEBBING AND UNIQUE ABILITIES TO SHAPE-SHIFT AND BECOME INVISIBLE, TURNING THEM INTO...



EDDIE BROCK AND THE VENOM SYMBIOTE HAVE BEEN REUNITED, BUT BOTH OF THEM HAVE CHANGED SINCE THEY LAST WERE TOGETHER. VENOM STILL WANTS TO BE A HERO BUT HAS FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO CONTAIN ITS MORE VIOLENT IMPULSES. IT HAS EVEN GONE SO FAR AS TO ATTACK PEOPLE IT PERCEIVES AS A THREAT WHILE EDDIE HAS BEEN SLEEPING. ONE OF VENOM'S VICTIMS WAS THE PRIEST OF THE CHURCH WHERE EDDIE AND VENOM FIRST BONDED...

SKIN DEEP

MIKE Costa s

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"TONIGHT! ON THE LATE EDITION. A SPECIAL REPORT, PROFILING HERMAN SCHULTZ, THE SHOCKER.



"FROM HIGH SCHOOL DROPOLIT TO ENGINEERING GENIUS. FROM INFAMOLIS SAFE-CRACKER TO THE MOST INCARCERATED SUPER VILLAIN OF ALL TIME.



"THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF A MASKED CRIMINAL. WITH RARE INTERVIEWS WITH SEVERAL OF HIS GREATEST FOES."



"YEAH, HE KNOCKED OVER AN ARMORED CAR--LIKE, LITERALLY KNOCKED IT OVER--BUT THEN HE WAS TRIPPING OVER EVERTHING THAT SPILLED OUT ON THE STREET AND I JUST PUNCHED HIM IN THE HEAD.

"WAIT...ARE YOU GUYS SERIOUSLY DOING A NEWS REPORT ON THE SHOCKER?"



"THIS WAS A COMMON SENTIMENT. AND, INDEED, WHEN COMPARED TO THE MORE **HORRIFYING** CREATURES THAT THE AVENGERS AND THEIR ILK HAVE FACED, THE SHOCKER CAN SEEM A LITTLE...LIGHTWEIGHT."





"SO, HERMAN, ALL THIS TALENT AND KNOW-HOW, AND YOU COULDN'T GET A LEGITIMATE CAREER?"

"YOU MAKE IT SOUND SO **EASY.** LOOK, NOBODY **SETS OUT** TO BE A BAD GUY."



"BUT COULDN'T YOU HAVE **SOLD** YOUR INVENTIONS INSTEAD OF TURNING THEM INTO AIR-VIBRATION GAUNTLETS AND USING THEM TO ATTACK BANK VAULTS?

YOU LIKELY WOULD BE MORE WEALTHY AND NOT IN PRISON."

"LOOK...I KNOW THAT **SOUNDS**REASONABLE BUT...IT'S NOT THAT **SIMPLE!**I DID A STINT IN JUVIE, YOU GOT ANY IDEA
HOW **HARD** IT IS TO LAND A GIG IN THIS
CITY WITH A REC--"

