

Morbius (film)

Morbius is a 2022 American superhero film based on the [Marvel Comics](#) character of the same name, produced by [Columbia Pictures](#) in association with [Marvel](#), [Arad Productions](#), and [Matt Tolmach Productions](#), and distributed by [Sony Pictures Releasing](#). It is the third film in [Sony's Spider-Man Universe](#) (SSU). Directed by [Daniel Espinosa](#) and written by the writing team of [Matt Sazama](#) and [Burk Sharpless](#), the film stars [Jared Leto](#) as Dr. Michael Morbius, alongside [Matt Smith](#), [Adria Arjona](#), [Jared Harris](#), [Al Madrigal](#), and [Tyrese Gibson](#). In the film, Michael and his surrogate brother Milo (Smith) become [living vampires](#) after curing themselves of a rare blood disease.

There were previously two notable attempts to adapt the character of Michael into a cinematic form since 1998, those being a role in the *Blade* franchise as an antagonist and having a solo film produced by [Artisan Entertainment](#), neither of which ever came to fruition. After announcing plans for a new [shared universe](#) of films inspired by [Spider-Man](#) related characters beginning with *Venom* (2018), Sony began developing a film based on Michael. Sazama and Sharpless had written a script by November 2017, and Leto and Espinosa officially joined in June 2018. Work on the film began at the end of the year with further casting, ahead of production starting in London in February 2019. Filming was confirmed to have been completed by June 2019, with reshoots happening in Los Angeles the following February. [Jon Ekstrand](#) was hired to compose the film's score.

Morbius premiered at the [Plaza Carso](#) in [Mexico City](#) on March 10, 2022 and was theatrically released in the United States on April 1, after being delayed several times from an initial July 2020 date, primarily due to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). The film was a critical and commercial failure, receiving criticism for the writing, visual effects, and [post-credits scenes](#), although Smith's performance received some praise; the film also grossed only \$167.5 million worldwide. It became the subject of [Internet memes](#) mocking its reception and quality; the popularity of said memes led Sony to re-release the film in theaters the following June, to another

Morbius



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Daniel Espinosa
Written by	Matt Sazama Burk Sharpless
Based on	Marvel Comics
Produced by	Avi Arad Matt Tolmach Lucas Foster
Starring	Jared Leto Matt Smith Adria Arjona Jared Harris Al Madrigal Tyrese Gibson
Cinematography	Oliver Wood
Edited by	Pietro Scalia ^[1]
Music by	Jon Ekstrand
Production companies	Columbia Pictures

commercial failure. It later received five Golden Raspberry Awards nominations, including Worst Picture, and ended up winning Worst Actor for Leto and Worst Supporting Actress for Arjona.

Plot

At a hospital in Greece, 10-year-old Michael Morbius welcomes his surrogate brother Lucien, whom he renames Milo; they bond over their shared blood illness and desire to be "normal". Seeing Michael's potential, their adoptive father and hospital director Nicholas arranges for Michael to attend medical school in New York while he focuses on caring for Milo.

25 years later, Michael publicly declines a Nobel Prize for his work with artificial blood. His colleague Martine Bancroft discovers he has secretly captured dozens of vampire bats from Costa Rica in the hope of splicing their genes with his own to cure his condition. Michael receives funding from Milo to outfit a private mercenary vessel in international waters with his equipment. While the cure works, it transforms Michael into a vampire who kills and drains the crew of their blood after they attack him out of fear. Once his bloodlust subsides and he regains his senses, a horrified Michael erases all CCTV footage of his experiment before contacting authorities and jumping overboard.

Michael returns to New York and discovers he now has superhuman strength, speed, and echolocation, with his vampire bats treating him as one of their own. To control his bloodlust, he subsists on his artificial blood as it gradually ceases to satisfy his needs. FBI agents Simon Stroud and Al Rodriguez investigate Michael's victims and deduce his involvement. Milo learns that Michael is cured but becomes furious when Michael refuses to cure him as well. While checking on a hospitalized Martine, Michael finds a dead nurse, drained of her blood. Believing he was responsible, he attempts to escape before being arrested by Stroud. In prison, he is visited by Milo and realizes Milo took his cure and killed the nurse. Michael escapes to confront him. An unrepentant Milo urges Michael to embrace his powers as he has. Unwilling to hurt his brother, Michael flees.

Michael meets Martine, acquires a new lab, and develops an antibody against vampirism to stop Milo; he also plans to use it on himself. Stroud and Rodriguez find footage of one of Milo's attacks and, believing Michael's vampirism to be spreading, release it to the media. Nicholas recognizes Milo and pleads with him to stop. Angered by Nicholas' perceived preference for Michael, Milo mortally wounds him; Michael arrives too late to save him while Milo also mortally wounds Martine. Martine dies in Michael's arms, forcing him to drink her blood. Michael summons an army of bats to restrain Milo and inject the antibody. Milo dies and Michael flies off with the bats, mourning his loved ones and embracing his identity as a vampire. Unbeknownst to him, Martine is resurrected, having ingested a drop of Michael's blood as he fed on her.

	<u>Marvel</u> <u>Entertainment</u> Arad Productions Matt Tolmach Productions
Distributed by	<u>Sony Pictures</u> <u>Releasing</u>
Release dates	March 10, 2022 (<u>Plaza Carso</u>) April 1, 2022 (United States)
Running time	104 minutes ^[2]
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$75–83 million ^[3]
Box office	\$167.5 million ^[4] ^[5]

In two mid-credits scenes, Adrian Toomes is transported to Michael's universe from his own.^[a] Surmising that Spider-Man is somehow responsible, Toomes approaches the fugitive Michael and suggests that they form a team.^[b]

Cast

- Jared Leto as Dr. Michael Morbius:
A scientist suffering from a rare blood disease whose attempts to cure himself afflict him with a form of transgenic vampirism,^{[7][8]} gaining all of the superhuman abilities but none of the superstitious weaknesses associated with vampires. Leto was drawn to the character's struggle with his disease and the moral implications of a hero who has a thirst for blood.^[9] He found the role surprisingly challenging since it was less character-driven than his prior performances and closer to his real-life personality, not requiring his well-known method acting approach.^[10] Charlie Shotwell portrays a young Michael.^[11]
- Matt Smith as Lucien / Milo Morbius:
Michael's surrogate brother, a wealthy man originally named Lucien and nicknamed by Michael (due to sharing a bed with many previous boys named Milo), who suffers from the same rare blood disease as he does.^[12] When Milo gains the same abilities as Michael, he embraces his identity as a vampire whole-heartedly.^[13] Smith was originally announced to play comic book character Loxias Crown / Hunger, but this was later changed to a significantly different character based on Michael himself.^[14] After turning down other superhero film roles, Smith joined the film due to Daniel Espinosa's involvement and encouragement from his former *Doctor Who* castmate Karen Gillan, who portrays Nebula in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).^[15] Espinosa encouraged Smith to give a bold, villainous performance.^[14] Joseph Esson portrays a young Milo.^[16]
- Adria Arjona as Dr. Martine Bancroft: A scientist and Michael's colleague.^{[17][18]} Arjona said the character was "the smart one in the room" and took inspiration from politician and activist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.^[19]
- Jared Harris as Dr. Emil Nicholas: A mentor and father figure for Michael and Milo who runs a facility that looks after people with incurable illnesses.^[20]
- Al Madrigal as Al Rodriguez: An FBI agent hunting Michael, and Stroud's partner.^[21]
- Tyrese Gibson as Simon Stroud:
An FBI agent hunting Michael, and Rodriguez's partner.^{[22][21]} Gibson noted that the character is white in the comic books, and the producers "made him black" to cast Gibson. While Gibson described Stroud as a "superhero" with a "hi-tech weapons-grade arm" in the film, all scenes featuring this arm were cut.^[23] Gibson signed a three-picture deal when he joined the film.^[24]

Corey Johnson portrays mercenary Mr. Fox,^[25] while Michael Keaton makes a cameo appearance in the mid-credits scenes as Adrian Toomes / Vulture, reprising his role from the MCU film *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017).^[26] J. K. Simmons filmed a cameo reprising his role as J. Jonah Jameson, but his scenes were cut.^[27]

Production

Development

Artisan Entertainment announced a deal with Marvel Entertainment in May 2000 to co-produce, finance, and distribute several films based on Marvel Comics characters, including Morbius, the Living Vampire.^[28] Previously, the character was set to appear in *Blade* (1998), portrayed by director Stephen Norrington in a cameo appearance ahead of a larger role in a sequel. However, the character was cut from the first film and not introduced in *Blade II* (2002) after Norrington chose not to return for that film.^[29] In May 2017, Sony announced plans for a new shared universe featuring Spider-Man-related properties beginning with *Venom* in October 2018;^[30] this was later titled "Sony's Spider-Man Universe".^[31] In July, *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) director Jon Watts expressed interest in featuring Morbius and Blade in the then untitled *Spider-Man: Far From Home* (2019), believing that the character's dark tone could work well within the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).^[32] That November, Matt Sazama and Burk Sharpless submitted a script to Sony for a *Morbius* film, after a "secret development process" at the studio.^[33] Jared Leto became "loosely attached" to star in the title role, but would not commit to the film until he was happy with its direction; Leto asked to personally meet with several director candidates.^[34]

By the end of April 2018, Sony had approached Antoine Fuqua about potentially directing the film. He expressed interest in taking on the project, and said that if he was to make a film in the superhero genre he would want to make it "something that's closer to what I get excited about."^[35] He ultimately chose not to take on the project.^[34] Other directors that Sony approached about the film included F. Gary Gray, who considered directing the film but ultimately turned down the role,^[36] and Daniel Espinosa, who previously directed the film *Life* (2017) for the studio.^[34] In May, while on tour in Germany with his band Thirty Seconds to Mars, Leto met with Espinosa to talk about the film,^[34] and the pair were both confirmed for the project at the end of June. Avi Arad, Matt Tolmach, and Lucas Foster were producing,^[8] and filming was expected to begin by the end of 2018. Sony was expected to fit the film into its already-set Marvel release slate shortly.^[34]



Jared Leto stars in the role of Morbius. Director Daniel Espinosa joined the film after meeting with Leto while he was on tour with his band Thirty Seconds to Mars.

Pre-production

By the end of September, Sony was intending for production on the film to take place in Atlanta, Georgia—where *Spider-Man: Homecoming* and *Venom* were previously produced—but had still not set a release date for the film.^{[37][38]} Screen Rant's Cooper Hood opined that Sony was likely waiting to see the response to *Venom* in early October, with Arad confirming at that time that there was excitement at Sony to produce *Morbius*, especially due to the story of a "healer that becomes a killer, and how do you deal with [that?]"^[38] Tolmach said the project was "very far along" at that stage and they were now planning to begin filming in early 2019,^{[39][40]} with the intention that *Morbius* would be the second film released as part of Sony's shared universe after *Venom*.^[39] He added that Leto was bringing the same "intensity" to the film that he had brought to playing the Joker in *Suicide Squad* (2016).^[41] By November, box office analysts believed that *Venom* had been successful enough for Sony to move ahead with other films like *Morbius*,^[42] and at the end of that month the studio dated an untitled Marvel film that was believed to be *Morbius* for a July 10, 2020, release.^[43] Adria Arjona entered negotiations to portray the

film's female lead, Martine Bancroft, in December;^[17] her involvement was confirmed a month later when Sony pushed the release date to July 31,^[18] and Matt Smith also joined the cast in an undisclosed role.^{[44][45]} Art Marcum and Matt Holloway made uncredited contributions to the film's script.^{[46][47]}

Filming

Principal photography began during the last week of February 2019 in London,^{[48][49]} under the working title *Plasma*.^[50] Oliver Wood served as cinematographer for the film, which would be the last he would do so before his death in February 2023.^[51] With the start of filming, Jared Harris and Tyrese Gibson joined the cast as Michael's mentor and an FBI agent hunting Michael, respectively.^{[22][52][53]} Smith was reported to be portraying the villainous Loxias Crown / Hunger,^[22] though he was later revealed to be playing an original character named Milo who is similar to Loxias Crown.^[14] Harris was revealed to be portraying Dr. Nicholas, a mentor and father figure to both Michael and Milo.^[20] In March, filming took place in Manchester's Northern Quarter, doubling for New York City.^[54] A month later, Gibson revealed that he was portraying Simon Stroud, and that Al Madrigal had been cast as his partner, Alberto Rodriguez.^[21] At the end of the month, Justin Haythe was believed to have contributed to the film's script.^[55] Filming was scheduled to take 12 weeks,^{[15][48]} and *Venom* producer Amy Pascal said in June that production had "just wrapped" on the project.^[56] Production also occurred at Pinewood Studios.^[57]

Post-production

In September 2019, Sony announced a new agreement with Disney that extended a previous deal to have Marvel Studios and its president Kevin Feige produce a sequel to *Far From Home*, keeping Spider-Man in Marvel's shared universe, the Marvel Cinematic Universe. As part of the new agreement, Feige stated that moving forward the MCU's Spider-Man would be able to "cross cinematic universes" and appear in Sony's own shared universe as well.^[58] This interaction was said to be "a 'call and answer' between the two franchises as they acknowledge details between the two in what would loosely be described as a shared detailed universe".^[59] The film's first trailer, released in January 2020, includes a brief appearance by Michael Keaton, reprising his role as Adrian Toomes / Vulture from the coproduced Marvel Studios film *Spider-Man: Homecoming*.^{[26][60]} Some of Keaton's scenes had to be reshot when the events depicted in *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) did not properly coincide with *Morbius*.^[61] Keaton admitted that he was hastily informed over the reason for his character appearing in *Morbius*, adding that "even they couldn't quite explain it."^[62] Certain moments, such as Michael walking past a graffiti painting of Spider-Man, were added in the film without Espinosa's knowledge, only to be removed in the final film.^[63]

Reshoots for the film began in Los Angeles by early February 2020,^[64] and were finished a month later when film productions around the United States were halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.^[65] At the end of March, the film's release date was pushed back to March 19, 2021, due to the pandemic closing theaters around the world.^[66] In January 2021, the film was delayed again, first to October 8, 2021, and then to January 21, 2022, when *No Time to Die* was moved to the October 2021 date.^[67] At the end of January, Leto revealed that additional reshoots were taking place in mid-February.^[68] The film's release was moved back another week at the end of April 2021, moving to January 28, 2022.^[67] At the start of January 2022, the film was delayed to April 1, 2022, due to the box office success of *Spider-Man: No Way Home* which Sony hoped would continue throughout early 2022.^[69] Later that month, Corey Johnson was revealed to have a role in the film.^[25] In March, visual effects supervisor Matthew E. Butler revealed that

motion capture technology had been used for Leto to portray Michael's vampiric form.^[70] Espinosa cited *Pokémon* as an influence on the portrayal of Michael's powers, specifically singling out the series's use of light and color to depict the title creatures' attacks and abilities.^[71]

Music

By October 2019, Jon Ekstrand was set to compose the score for *Morbius* after doing the same for Espinosa's previous films.^[72] Ekstrand's score was released digitally by Madison Gate Records on April 8, 2022.^[73]

Marketing

The teaser trailer for the film was released on January 13, 2020.^[9] Julia Alexander at *The Verge* described the premise of the film as presented by the trailer as "ridiculous",^[74] while Matt Goldberg of *Collider* felt it looked "silly" and also noted that the film looked very similar to *Venom*, which he acknowledged was commercially successful.^[75] Scott Mendelson, writing for *Forbes*, agreed with the comparison to *Venom* which he felt was a good move by Sony due to the success of their last few *Spider-Man* films, but cautioned that Leto may not have the same box office draw for general audiences that Tom Hardy gave to *Venom*.^[76] Much of the discussion surrounding the trailer centered on the revelation of Keaton's role and the visual reference to Spider-Man, which led to questions about the film's relationship with the *Spider-Man* films and the wider Marvel Cinematic Universe.^{[9][77][74][75]} A second trailer was released on November 2, 2021, and led to further confusion and speculation about the film's connections to other franchises. Fans and commentators noted that the trailer, in addition to the *Venom* films, also references Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* trilogy, Marc Webb's *The Amazing Spider-Man* films, and the MCU *Spider-Man* films despite all three franchises being set in different fictional universes.^{[78][79][80][81]} Prior to the film's theatrical release, Espinosa clarified that *Morbius* is set in the same universe as the SSU *Venom* films.^[6]

In March 2022, Sony used their *The Daily Bugle* promotional TikTok account, previously used for *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, to market *Morbius*; the videos feature Nicque Marina reporting on events relative to the film.^[82]

Release

Theatrical

Morbius had its world premiere at the Plaza Carso in Mexico City on March 10, 2022,^{[83][84]} and was released in the United States on April 1, 2022, in IMAX and other premium large formats.^[69] It was originally set for release on July 10, 2020,^{[18][43]} before moving three weeks later to July 31.^[18] The film was then delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, firstly to March 19, 2021,^[66] then to October 8, 2021, and to January 21, 2022, before moving a week later to January 28.^[67] It was then delayed again to the April 2022 date.^[69] Sony chose not to release the film in Russia due to the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine.^[85]

The negative reception toward the film generated an ironic meme culture surrounding it with "praise", which led Sony to re-release it into 1,000 theaters on June 3, 2022.^[86] This re-release also performed poorly, making just \$280,000 over the weekend.^{[87][88]}

Home media

Sony signed deals with Netflix and Disney in April 2021 for the U.S. streaming and TV rights to their 2022 to 2026 film slate, following the films' theatrical and home media windows.^{[89][90]} Netflix signed for exclusive "first pay window" streaming rights, which is typically an 18 month window and included future Marvel films in Sony's Spider-Man Universe.^[89] *Morbius* began streaming on Netflix starting September 7, 2022.^[91] Disney signed for "pay 2 window" rights for the films, which would be streamed on Disney+ and Hulu as well as broadcast on Disney's linear television networks.^{[90][92]} *Morbius* was released on digital download on May 17, 2022, and was released on Blu-ray, DVD, and 4K Ultra HD on June 14 by Sony Pictures Home Entertainment.^[93]

Reception

Box office

Morbius grossed \$73.9 million in the United States and Canada, and \$93.6 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$167.5 million.^{[5][4]}

In the U.S. and Canada, *Morbius* was projected to gross around \$33 million from 4,268 theaters in its opening weekend, with some industry tracking going as high as \$40–50 million.^[94] The film earned \$17.3 million on its first day, including \$5.7 million from Thursday preview screenings.^{[3][95]} It went on to debut to \$39 million, finishing first at the box office.^{[3][96]} In its second weekend of release in the U.S. and Canada, the film grossed \$10.2 million and finished second behind *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*,^[97] while experiencing a drop of 74%, the second-worst of all time for a superhero movie, behind only *Steel* (1997), and the worst of any tentpole superhero movie.^[98] It fell to sixth place at the box office in its third weekend, grossing \$4.7 million (a drop of 54%),^[99] and dropped to ninth place in its fourth weekend with \$2.3 million (a drop of 51%).^[100] The film earned \$1.5 million in its fifth weekend, finishing tenth.^[101] *Morbius* dropped out of the box office top ten in its sixth weekend.^[102] The film's "re-release" in theaters during its tenth weekend made \$310,665 from 1,037 screens during its first three days.^[103]

Outside the U.S. and Canada, the film earned \$44.9 million from 62 international markets in its opening weekend, including \$2.5 million from IMAX screens.^[104] It added \$15 million in its second weekend for a drop of 62%.^[105] It added \$6.7 million in the third weekend,^[106] \$3.3 million in its fourth,^[107] and \$1.6 million in its fifth.^[108]

On June 3, 2022, Sony announced the film would return to 1,000 theaters weeks after its initial theatrical and digital release. This was largely attributed to the film's influx in attention from Internet memes in the weeks prior.^[109] This decision was also met with criticism from various outlets, which speculated that the release was because Sony was unaware that the Internet trend was not due to legitimate popular admiration towards the film.^{[110][111]} Upon its re-release the film performed very poorly, making only \$85,000 on the day it was released, with many outlets claiming the film bombed for a second time.^{[112][113]} After a dismal

\$300,000 weekend performance in its re-release—a \$289 per-theater average—Sony pulled the film entirely from theaters; it was the 14th highest-grossing film domestically for its short re-release period.^{[114][5]}

Critical response

On Rotten Tomatoes, the film has an approval rating of 15% based on 284 reviews, with an average rating of 3.8/10. The website's critics consensus reads, "Cursed with uninspired effects, rote performances, and a borderline nonsensical story, this dreary mess is a vein *[sic]* attempt to make *Morbius* happen."^[115] It ranks as the 18th worst-reviewed superhero movie on the site.^[116] Metacritic assigned the film a weighted average score of 35 out of 100 based on 55 critics, indicating "generally unfavorable reviews".^[117] Indo-Asian News Service described the film as having been "utterly ravaged" by critics,^[118] and *Variety* reported reception as being "comically bad".^[119] Jonathon Crump of *Manchester Evening News* reported that early reviews to the film are mixed at best, although he noted that some critics "praised the acting in the film, including Leto's performance".^[120] *Variety*'s Ellise Shafer also said while the reviews were negative overall, Smith "did receive some praise for his performance".^[121] Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "C+" on an A+ to F scale, while those at PostTrak gave it a 62% positive score (with an average 2.5 out of 5 stars), with 47% saying they would definitely recommend it.^[3] The C+ score is the second-worst of any Marvel adaptation, ahead of only *Fantastic Four* (2015).^[122]

Reviewing the film for *Collider*, Emma Kiely felt that the "central problem of *Morbius* is a lazy and uninspiring script" and added that "no weight or depth is given to any character." She also noted that there is "little humor" in the film and "when it tries to make a tongue-in-cheek joke, it fails miserably."^[123] Barry Hertz of *The Globe and Mail* panned the film, saying it "is charmless, incoherent, ugly and so aggressively stupid that it defies any attempt to shove it into the desperate 'guilty pleasure' box."^[124] Wendy Ide of *The Observer* gave the film 1 out of 5 stars, calling it an "incoherent, vampire-themed Marvel offcut."^[125] Hannah Strong of *Little White Lies* also gave the film 1 out of 5 stars, describing it as "soulless, tedious filmmaking".^[126] Richard Roeper of the *Chicago Sun-Times* awarded the film 2 out of 4 stars, saying: "It looks like *Morbius* might soon cross paths with Spider-Man in one universe or another, but that would be a big step up for him, because his introductory vehicle feels more like a just-average 1990s vampire movie."^[127] Mick LaSalle of the *San Francisco Chronicle* awarded the film a 3 out of 4 and called the film "briskly riveting" and a "perfect antidote to bloated *The Batman*".^[128] Chris Bumbray of *JoBlo.com* gave the film a 6 out of 10 and called it "a decent enough start for the latest addition to the *Sony Spider-Man Universe*" while also praising the cinematography and "horror aspects" of the plot.^[129]

Leah Greenblatt of *Entertainment Weekly* gave the film a B grade, saying that Leto "hits the right notes of fear and longing in a surprisingly restrained performance".^[130] Stephanie Zacharek of *Time* commended Leto's performance writing that it has a "quietly vibrating vulnerability".^[131] *The Hollywood Reporter*'s David Rooney said the film "only intermittently matches the intensity" of Leto's performance and wrote: "It's just a shame this opening salvo takes itself too seriously to have much fun with the mayhem, despite the potential in Smith's devilish turn for amusing interplay between the antagonists."^[132] Matt Donato of *IGN*, who awarded the film a 5 out of 10, praised Smith's performance for providing a "colorfulness the film desperately needs", saying that his "flamboyance and spirit is the antithesis to Leto's drearily dour genius, which is a purposeful but inefficient comparison", and unfavorably compared Leto's solemn performance to Tom Hardy's "campy" performance in the *Venom* films.^[133]

The post-credits scenes also came under heavy scrutiny and became a joke in the eyes of the general public due to the failed fan service, confusing and incoherent explanation, and dialogue.^[134] Kate Erbland of *IndieWire* stated, "This is confusing stuff, and the appearance of Keaton in a pair of [mid-credits] scenes does little to help the sense that *Morbius* is mostly incoherent, or at least very at odds with whatever it's trying to say."^[135] Julia Glassman of *The Mary Sue* found the overall reveal weak, stating, "I'm beginning to wonder if Sony just... doesn't quite *get* the point of [mid-credits] scenes."^[136] *Time Out*'s Cathy Brennan felt that the film's "attempts" to "court an audience by dangling a potential connection" to the MCU's Spider-Man is "the worst kind of unearned fan service in a film this lacklustre."^[137]

Accolades

At the 43rd Golden Raspberry Awards, *Morbius* received nominations for Worst Picture, Worst Director, and Worst Screenplay; and won Worst Actor and Worst Supporting Actress.^[138]

Internet memes

Due to its lackluster box office performance and dour critical reception, *Morbius* inspired various Internet memes.^[139] *Polygon* wrote that the film became "a kind of collective internet hate watch",^[140] with fans sharing meme shitposts which ironically praised it.^[c] Following its release, the hashtag #MorbiusSweep, which jokingly claimed *Morbius* was the most financially and critically successful film of all time, began trending.^[145] Claims included the film becoming the first to sell over a trillion tickets,^[146] the first to make over a "morbillion" dollars,^[147] receiving an impossible 203% or higher approval rating (and similarly-impossible 142% or higher audience rating) from Rotten Tomatoes,^[148] and an edited screenshot of the Wikipedia page covering the highest-grossing films, with *Morbius* supposedly having earned \$352.9 trillion.^[142] Another example made the claim that Martin Scorsese, who had previously declared that superhero films were not cinema, had changed his mind after seeing the film; this fake quote was shared on Instagram by *Morbius* actor Tyrese Gibson and later deleted, which journalists attributed to Gibson believing it was genuine.^[149]

The film received a resurgence in Internet memes following its release to video on demand, with many involving the fake catchphrase "it's Morbin' time",^{[150][151][152]} a play on the *Power Rangers* catchphrase "it's Morphin' time".^{[153][154]} Users on the film's official Discord server call themselves "Morbheads",^[146] and users engaged in "Morbin'" on various Discord servers by distributing pirated copies.^[155] A large number of channels on the live-streaming service Twitch began illegally hosting the entire film on repeat,^{[152][156]} one channel, Morbius247, was banned after acquiring thousands of followers.^[157] *Morbius* piracy spread to other platforms, including Twitter, where the entire film was posted in a series of 52 two-minute long videos, compressed into a 30-second long video, and the entire script copy-and-pasted into individual tweets.^{[158][159]} On Tumblr, the entire film was compressed into a minuscule GIF file and widely spread.^[140] Additionally, viral fake news posts claiming that a *Morbius* sequel had been greenlit as a result of the Internet memes spread on Twitter,^{[160][161]} leading "*Morbius 2*" to trend on the website,^{[162][163]} in addition to the phrase "it's Morbin' time" trending on Twitter for a week.^[164]

Leto, in response to the memes, tweeted "What time is it?" and a 19-second video where he was "caught" reading a script titled *Morbius 2: It's Morbin' Time* "written" by himself under the pseudonym Bartholomew Cubbins.^{[165][166]} Following the financial failure of the re-release, a petition was started on [Change.org](#) to put the film back in theaters for a third time with the claim that "we were all busy that weekend".^[167]

Future

In January 2021, Leto said there was potential for Michael to appear alongside the character Blade in a future project, with Mahershala Ali cast in that role for the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).^[168] That December, in discussing the introduction of the multiverse in *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021), Leto said there was potential for further crossovers with his character in future films.^[169] Tom Holland expressed interest in seeing his version of Spider-Man from the MCU fighting Michael in the future,^[170] while producers Kevin Feige and Amy Pascal confirmed interest in a potential film starring both Leto and Ali.^[171] In March 2022, Leto also expressed interest in a future film featuring Michael appearing alongside Venom, portrayed by Tom Hardy.^[172] During CinemaCon 2022, Sony announced numerous Marvel projects. Some outlets noted that while *Venom: The Last Dance* (2024) and *Spider-Man: Beyond the Spider-Verse* were announced, there was no announcement for a *Morbius* sequel, leaving the character's future in question.^{[173][174]}

Notes

- a. Toomes is transported from the Marvel Cinematic Universe to Sony's Spider-Man Universe due to the events of the film *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021).^[6]
- b. Identified off-screen as the Sinister Six^[6]
- c. Attributed to multiple sources: ^{[139][141][142][143][144]}

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 - Morbius* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5108870/>) at *IMDb*
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