

# Venom: The Last Dance

**Venom: The Last Dance** is a 2024 American superhero film written and directed by Kelly Marcel, which features the Marvel Comics character Venom. The sequel to *Venom: Let There Be Carnage* (2021), it is the fifth film in Sony's Spider-Man Universe (SSU) and the third and final film in the *Venom* trilogy. The film stars Tom Hardy as Eddie Brock and Venom, alongside Chiwetel Ejiofor, Juno Temple, Rhys Ifans, Stephen Graham, Peggy Lu, and Alanna Ubach in supporting roles. In the film, Eddie and Venom are on the run from both of their worlds.

Hardy revealed in August 2018 that he was signed on to appear in a third *Venom* film and <u>Sony Pictures</u> began development by December 2021 after the second film was released. Marcel and Hardy were writing the script by June 2022, and Marcel was set to make her <u>directorial debut</u> with the film that October. New cast members, including Ejiofor and Temple, joined in mid-2023 and filming began at the end of June 2023 in Spain. Production was halted the next month due to the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike, and resumed that November after the strike ended. The film was completed by the end of February 2024 and its title was revealed a month later.

Venom: The Last Dance premiered at the Regal Times Square theater in New York City on October 21, 2024, and was released in the United States on October 25. The film received mixed reviews from critics, with criticism aimed at its screenplay while Hardy's performance, the action sequences and visual effects were praised. Despite being the lowest-grossing film in the trilogy, it was still a box office success, grossing \$478.9 million worldwide.

#### Venom: The Last Dance



Theatrical release poster

Rhys Ifans

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Directed by	Kelly Marcel	
Screenplay by	Kelly Marcel	
Story by	Tom Hardy	
	Kelly Marcel	
Based on	Marvel Comics	
Produced by	Avi Arad	
	Matt Tolmach	
	Amy Pascal	
	Kelly Marcel	
	Tom Hardy	
	Hutch Parker	
Starring	Tom Hardy	
	Chiwetel Ejiofor	
	Juno Temple	

# **Plot**

After being transported to <u>Earth-616</u> by <u>Doctor Strange</u>'s spell, <u>Eddie Brock</u> and the <u>Venom symbiote</u> are drunk in a bar in <u>Mexico</u>. As the bartender fills them in about <u>Thanos</u> and the <u>Infinity Stones</u>, they are forced back to their home universe on <u>Earth-688</u>, to the same bar. <u>Still</u> on the run after their recent battle with <u>Carnage</u>, the apparent murder of <u>Patrick Mulligan</u> makes international headlines with <u>Eddie being named</u> the prime suspect, forcing him to set out to <u>New York City</u> and attempt to clear his name, but unbeknownst to them they leave a bit of Venom at the bar.

Unbeknownst to either of them, a creature known as a Xenophage has begun tracking Eddie and Venom. The recent events catch the attention of Rex Strickland, a soldier who oversees Imperium, a government operation at the site of the soon-to-be-decommissioned Area 51 for the capture and study of other symbiotes that have fallen to Earth. Mulligan, revealed to have survived his encounter with Carnage, is captured after being left for dead by another symbiote, who eluded Strickland's soldiers. He is bonded with one of many contained symbiotes and questioned by Imperium researchers Dr. Teddy Paine and Sadie "Christmas" to learn about the symbiotes' purpose on Earth before Strickland is ordered to bring Venom down.

Stephen Graham	
Peggy Lu	
Alanna Ubach	
Fabian Wagner	
Mark Sanger	
Dan Deacon	
Columbia Pictures	
Marvel Entertainment	
Arad Productions	
Matt Tolmach Productions	
Pascal Pictures	
Marcel Hardy Productions	
Hutch Parker Entertainment	
Sony Pictures Releasing	
October 21, 2024 (New York City)	
October 25, 2024 (United States)	
109 minutes <sup>[1]</sup>	
United States	
English	
\$110–120 million <sup>[2][3]</sup>	
\$478.9 million <sup>[2][4]</sup>	

While attaching themselves to the side of an airplane bound for New York City, Eddie and Venom are attacked by the Xenophage tracking them and are forced to drop off into the Nevada desert. Venom explains to Eddie that Xenophages were unleashed into the universe by Knull, the creator of the symbiotes, to retrieve a Codex, which is forged when a symbiote resurrects its host. This can free Knull from the prison the symbiotes trapped him in long ago. Because Venom revived Eddie once before [c], they now carry a Codex, which the Xenophage has tracked to Earth. After being ambushed by Strickland and his team while barely escaping from them and the Xenophage, Eddie meets Martin Moon and his family of traveling hippies and alien enthusiasts who offer him a free ride to Las Vegas on their way to Area 51. Meanwhile, Mulligan's new symbiote informs Strickland of Knull's intentions for the Codex, which can only be destroyed if either Eddie or Venom dies.

Arriving in Las Vegas, Eddie and Venom run into Mrs. Chen at a <u>casino</u> and Venom shares a dance with her before being ambushed by the Xenophage again. Strickland's team arrives, separates Venom from Eddie and takes them to Area 51 where Eddie reunites with Mulligan. Sadie frees Venom, who re-bonds with Eddie after Strickland shoots him. This attracts the Xenophage to the base, and Mulligan is killed in battle. Venom has the other confined symbiotes released, which bond with Sadie

and other hosts to fight off the Xenophage, who has signaled to Knull that the Codex has been found. Knull sends more Xenophages through portals to Earth, overwhelming the symbiotes. Realizing he must sacrifice himself to destroy the Codex and save the universe, Venom merges with the Xenophages, leads them into acid tanks, and bids Eddie farewell before ejecting him as a mortally-wounded Strickland sets off his grenades to destroy them. Teddy bonds with <u>a symbiote</u> to save Sadie from the explosion while Eddie falls unconscious as the base burns.

Eddie later wakes up in a hospital, where a military official informs him that his actions with Venom at Area 51 have earned him an expungement, under the condition of keeping the events that transpired a secret. Arriving in New York City, Eddie gazes at the Statue of Liberty while remembering Venom. In a mid-credits scene, Knull declares that the universe is no longer safe from him now that Venom has fallen. In a post-credits scene, the bartender, who was taken into custody by Strickland shortly after Eddie left for New York, escapes the burned remains of Area 51. Nearby, a black cockroach crawls out of the rubble next to a broken vial that previously contained a sample of the Venom symbiote.

### Cast

- Tom Hardy as Eddie Brock / Venom: An investigative journalist who
  is the host of Venom, an alien <u>symbiote</u> that imbues him with
  super-human abilities.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Chiwetel Ejiofor as General Rex Strickland: A commander for Imperium who is tracking Eddie and trying to capture Venom. [6][7][8]
- Juno Temple as Dr. Theodora "Teddy" Paine: A scientist for Imperium, haunted by the death of her brother from a lightning strike that also paralyzed her left arm. [8]
- Rhys Ifans as Martin Moon: A hippie and an alien enthusiast. [9]
- Stephen Graham as Patrick Mulligan: A former police detective who was infected with a symbiote after encountering Carnage, but is left for dead by it before he is captured by Imperium. Graham also voices an unnamed green symbiote with whom Mulligan bonds. [7][d]
- Peggy Lu as Mrs. Chen: A convenience store owner who befriended Eddie and Venom. [10]
- Clark Backo as Sadie "Christmas": A researcher for Imperium. [11]
- Alanna Ubach as Nova Moon: Martin's wife and fellow hippie.
- Andy Serkis as Knull: The creator of the symbiotes, who seeks Eddie and Venom's codex to free himself. Director Kelly Marcel said about choosing Serkis, who directed Venom: Let There Be Carnage (2021), to play the character: "We knew on Venom 2 that he was going to be this [Knull] character, we should be able to bring the character into this movie."

Additionally, Hala Finley and Dash McCloud portray Martin's children Echo and Leaf Moon, respectively. Cristo Fernández reprises his role as the bartender from the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) film Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021), as well as a version of the character from Venom's universe. Jack Brady portrays Jim, an Imperium security guard who bonds with a



Tom Hardy reprises his role as Eddie Brock and Venom.

brown-colored symbiote, while Jade Nicholson-Lamb portrays Jade Clark, an Imperium lab technician who bonds with a violet-colored symbiote.  $\underline{^{[17][18][19]}}$  Reid Scott, who previously portrayed Dr. Dan Lewis in the first two *Venom* films, returns as the shadowy head of Imperium.  $\underline{^{[16][e]}}$ 

# **Production**

### **Development and pre-production**

Star Tom Hardy stated in August 2018 that he had signed on to star in three *Venom* films. [5] In September 2021, Hardy noted that the producers would have to continue to develop Sony's Spider-Man Universe (SSU) in future films but said they were also interested in crossing over with the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) more. [20] Venom: Let There Be Carnage (2021) director Andy Serkis expressed interest in returning to direct another *Venom* film, [21] and felt there was more to explore with Venom in future films before the character could meet Spider-Man in a future crossover film, [22] including further exploration of the Ravencroft Institute and other potential villains being held there. [21] In October, Tom Holland said he and producer Amy Pascal had discussed him potentially reprising his MCU role as Peter Parker / Spider-Man in future Venom sequels, after he made a cameo appearance in Let There Be Carnage via footage from the MCU film Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021).[23] Neither Holland nor his character appeared in the finished film, despite Adam B. Vary later reporting in December 2024 that, according to one Sony source, The Walt Disney Company never precluded Sony from using Holland for their films, never happening out to a feeling within the studio that audiences wouldn't accept Holland's version of Spider-Man appearing in non-MCU films, especially after the releases of No Way Home and Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness (2022), which established the definitive boundaries of the MCU's multiverse. [24] That December, Pascal said they were in the "planning stages" of *Venom* 3. [25]

Sony Pictures confirmed the film was in development at CinemaCon in April 2022. [26] In June, Hardy revealed that Kelly Marcel was writing the screenplay after previously working on the prior Venom films and that he was co-writing the story with her. [27] Hardy was set to be paid \$20 million for his involvement. [28] Serkis was unable to return as director due to his commitments to Animal Farm, which he had delayed to work on Let There Be Carnage, [29] but ultimately portrayed the character Knull in the film. [14] Marcel signed on in October to make her directorial debut with the film, which was expected to conclude the Venom trilogy. [30] She was also set to produce the film alongside Avi Arad, Matt Tolmach, Pascal, Hutch Parker, and Hardy, [30] all doing so through their respective production companies Arad Productions, Matt Tolmach Productions, Pascal Pictures, Hutch Parker Entertainment, and Hardy Son & Baker. Columbia Pictures also produces in association with Marvel Entertainment. [31] Hardy confirmed in February 2023 that pre-production work had begun. [32] Juno Temple entered negotiations to join the cast in an undisclosed "lead role" in April. [33] The next month, filming was expected to begin in June in London, [34][35] and Chiwetel Ejiofor was cast as Rex Strickland, [6][36] when Temple was confirmed to have been cast. [36] In June, the film was set for release in October 2024. [37]

The film features <u>Knull</u>, the King in Black of the symbiotes who was introduced to the source material in 2018. The filmmakers were always kept aware of the character, but decided they had to lay the foundations for Venom's character and his relationship with Eddie Brock before featuring the Marvel supervillain. As such, they looked for inspiration from the <u>Venom</u> comic books by <u>David Michelinie</u>, <u>Todd McFarlane</u>, <u>Donny Cates</u> and <u>Ryan Stegman</u>, the latter two being Knull's creators, leading Sony to hire them for an advisory relationship and allowing at least Cates to read the screenplay. Cates and Stegman expected monetary compensation for the inclusion of Knull. [38]

# **Filming**

Principal photography began on June 26, 2023, at Los Mateos in Cartagena, Spain, as well as at the Calblanque Regional Park, [39][40] under the working title Orwell. [41] Fabian Wagner serves as the cinematographer after previously serving as an additional cinematographer on Let There Be Carnage. [34] The start of the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike in mid-July 2023 resulted in filming being halted. [42] Later that month, the film was set to release on July 12, 2024. [43] When the actors' strike ended in early November 2023, Sony delayed the film to release on November 8, 2024, filling the November 2024 date that the studio had previously reserved for an untitled Marvel film. Production was preparing to resume at that time. [44] Filming resumed on November 16. [45] In February 2024, Clark Backo joined the cast in an undisclosed role, [11] and Temple said at the end of the month that filming was nearly completed. [46]

### **Post-production**

In March 2024, the film was titled Venom: The Last Dance and its release date was moved forward to October 25, 2024. [47] The first teaser trailer, released in June, confirmed Peggy Lu and Stephen Graham were reprising their respective roles as Mrs. Chen and Patrick Mulligan from prior Venom films, as well as the castings of Rhys Ifans, Alanna Ubach, and Cristo Fernández. [7][10][9] Ifans previously portrayed Curt Connors / Lizard in Sony's The Amazing Spider-Man (2012) and No Way Home, while Fernández appeared in No Way Home as a bartender who interacts with Brock after he is transported to the MCU via the multiverse. Germain Lussier at iog questioned if the appearances of Ifans and Ejiofor, who played Karl Mordo in the MCU, were less concerned about continuity with the MCU and were instead commentary on the multiverse, rather than being connected to their prior roles.[10] Molly Edwards of Total Film was also confused by the reference to the mid-credits scene of No Way Home in the trailer, since the Venom films are set in a separate universe from the MCU.  $\lfloor 48 \rfloor$ John Moffatt and Aharon Bourland serve as the visual effects supervisors while Greg Baxter is the visual effects producer. Visual effects are provided by Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), DNEG, Digital Domain, Rodeo FX, and Territory Studio, while the Third Floor, Inc., Torchlight, and Host provided the previsualization and postvisualization work. [49] Mark Sanger edited the film, which was completed at the Carv Grant Theatre at the Sony Pictures Studios lot in early October 2024. [50]

# Music

By August 2024, Dan Deacon composed the score for the film. [51]

## Release

#### **Theatrical**

*Venom: The Last Dance* held its world premiere at the <u>Regal</u> Times Square theater in New York City on October 21, 2024, [52] and was theatrically released by <u>Sony Pictures Releasing</u> in the United States on October 25, in <u>IMAX</u> and other <u>premium large formats</u> (PLFs). [47] The film was originally expected to be released in October 2024 before it was given a release date of July 12, 2024, when Sony adjusted their release schedule due to the SAG-AFTRA strike. [37][43] After the strike ended, the film's release was delayed to November 8, 2024, [44] before it was moved forward and returned to the October 2024 timeframe. [47]

#### Home media

The film was released on digital download on December 10, 2024, and it was released on <u>DVD</u>, <u>Bluray</u> and <u>4K UHD</u> on January 21, 2025, by Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. [53][54]

Sony signed deals with <u>Netflix</u> and <u>Disney</u> in April 2021 for the rights to their 2022 to 2026 film slate, following the films' theatrical and home media windows. [55][56] Netflix signed for exclusive "pay 1 window" streaming rights, which is typically an 18-month window and included future *Venom* films following *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*. [55] Disney signed for "pay 2 window" rights for the films, which would be streamed on <u>Disney+</u> and <u>Hulu</u> as well as broadcast on Disney's linear television networks. [56][57]

# Reception

#### **Box office**

*Venom: The Last Dance* grossed \$139.8 million in the United States and Canada, and \$339.2 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$478.9 million. [2][4]

In the United States and Canada, *Venom: The Last Dance* was released alongside *Conclave*, and was projected to gross around \$65 million from 4,125 theaters in its opening weekend. [3] The film made \$22 million on its first day, including \$8.5 million from Thursday night previews. [58] It went onto debut to \$51 million, finishing in first but marking the lowest opening of the series. *Deadline Hollywood* attributed the underperformance to the ongoing Yankees–Dodgers World Series and superhero genre fatigue. [59] Nevertheless, the film's international box office gross would help offset its weaker performance at the North American box office. [60] The film then made \$26.1 million in its second weekend (dropping 49% from its first weekend), [61] and \$16.2 million in its third weekend (dropping another 37%), retaining the top spot for three consecutive weeks. [62] *The Last Dance* was finally dethroned in its fourth weekend, making \$7.3 million and finishing second behind newcomer *Red One*. [63]

### **Critical response**

On the <u>review aggregator</u> website <u>Rotten Tomatoes</u>, 40% of 218 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 4.7/10. The website's consensus reads: "The always watchable Tom Hardy injects ample charisma into *Venom: The Last Dance*, but the offering buckles under its convoluted tonal ambitions." Metacritic, which uses a <u>weighted average</u>, assigned the film a score of 41 out of 100, based on 47 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews. Audiences polled by <u>CinemaScore</u> gave the film an average grade of "B—" on an A+ to F scale (the lowest of the trilogy), while those surveyed by <u>PostTrak</u> gave it a 73% overall positive score, with 55% saying they would "definitely recommend" it. 59

Christy Lemire of <u>RogerEbert.com</u> gave the film 1.5 out of 4 stars, writing, "When it leans hard into the inherent absurdity of its wacky, mismatched buddy antics, *Venom: The Last Dance* can be a total blast. Unfortunately, that doesn't happen nearly as often as it should."

[66] The Daily Telegraph's Robbie Collin gave it 1 out of 5 stars, calling it "a yammeringly moronic, teenage-boy-pandering eyesore of the old school, with little to offer any viewer whose age or counting ability exceeds the low 20s." He concluded, "As last dances go, it's the Macarena in film form."

[67] Kevin Maher of The Times also gave it 1 out of 5 stars, saying, "it's hugely dispiriting to watch Hardy sink so low. From the elegant character work of Stuart: A Life Backwards and Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy to a blank-eyed Marvel meathead whose greatest line is: 'We've got to get the codex as far away as possible!' "[68] Alci Rengifo of Entertainment Voice wrote, "Venom as a franchise works as a comic book cousin of Lethal Weapon or any other popular series featuring an entertaining, mismatched duo."

[69] Amy Nicholson of The New York Times said, "Honestly, I'd rather watch Eddie and Venom dicker over pizza toppings than team up for something as banal as saving the planet."

Jake Cole of <u>Slant Magazine</u> gave the film 3 out of 4 stars, writing, "As the film progresses, it consistently escalates the stakes and scale of its action, which doesn't devolve into incomprehensible CG murk as it hurtles toward the climax." <u>The Independent</u>'s Clarisse Loughrey wrote, "It's hard to say how these films will be remembered in the grand scheme of comic book history, but, with *The Last Dance*, we can at least be reminded that sometimes they actually managed to have fun with these things", and gave it 3 out of 5 stars. <u>[72]</u>

#### **Accolades**

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Recipient	Result	Ref.
Saturn Awards	February 2, 2025	Best Science Fiction Film	Venom: The Last Dance	Nominated	[73]
Visual Effects Society Awards	February 11, 2025	Outstanding Effects Simulations in a Photoreal Feature	Xavi Martin Ramirez, Oscar Dahlen, Hedi Namar, Yuri Yang (for "Water, Fire & Symbiote Effects")	Nominated	[74]

### **Future**

Ahead of the film's release in October 2024, Kelly Marcel said that while *The Last Dance* concludes with the story arc of Eddie Brock and Venom, it sets up the character Knull for future appearances within the Sony's Spider-Man Universe (SSU) and is the beginning of the character's story. [38] While the film was intended as the conclusion of the *Venom* trilogy, Hardy expressed interest in reprising his role in the future and having his character crossover with Spider-Man, saying "never say never". [75] In December 2024, TheWrap claimed *Kraven the Hunter* would be the final film in Sony's Spider-Man Universe, [76][77] but *Variety* refuted that claim and said Sony would continue to make films based on Spider-Man characters. [78]

## See also

List of comic-based films directed by women

### **Notes**

- a. As depicted in the mid-credits scene of *Venom: Let There Be Carnage* (2021), this is the main timeline for the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).
- b. Previously depicted in the post-credits scene of <u>Spider-Man: No Way Home</u> (2021), this is the timeline for Sony's Spider-Man Universe (SSU).
- c. As depicted in Venom.
- d. While neither symbiote is named on-screen, the official subtitles of the movie trailer call the green symbiote Toxin. The symbiote that saved Mulligan's life remains unidentified.
- e. The head of Imperium and Dan Lewis are separate characters, despite Reid Scott being credited as "Dr. Dan Lewis" in the film's end credits.

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# **External links**

- Official website (https://venom.movie/)
- Venom: The Last Dance (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt16366836/) at IMDb

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