

'Venom' director's Hollywood path began when he saw 'Batman' as a teenager

Notes & Cues:	Article: <p>Filmmaker Ruben Fleischer realizes a boyhood hope today, with the official opening of his first comic-book movie, "Venom, " Sony's \$100 million attempt to build out its Spider-Man cinematic universe. The film, which reaped an impressive \$10 million from Thursday-night screenings, is expected to gross more than \$55 million in its domestic debut, potentially setting an October record.</p> <p>It was in 1989, while at Georgetown Day, that Fleischer was moved by one of the year's biggest movies. "What really got me was Tim Burton's 'Batman, " says the "Gangster Squad" director. "I was in high school, and I remember seeing the posters with the Batman symbol all over town. I was intrigued."</p> <p>"Venom" - about an alien symbiote that brings costly superpowers to its host, the down-on-his-luck journalist Eddie Brock (Tom Hardy) - would allow Fleischer to tap so many of his influences.</p> <p>Fleischer says "Venom" nods to buddy comedies like "48 Hours" and "Midnight Run, " as Eddie wages an ongoing, amusing war of words with his parasite.</p> <p>Yet this dark body-takeover comedy within a superhero adventure pays direct homage to a film in a similar narrative vein: 1981's "An American Werewolf in London." "For me, that was the biggest influence in my movie, " says Fleischer.</p> <p>And central to "Venom, " the director says, is how to mine the host-parasite relationship for black humor. "They forge a real friendship, and, ultimately, they decide to work together through that journey, " he says. "They go on and learn to like each other."</p>
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