

Red Alert

► SCI-FACT! The tipping point for the original *Secret Invasion* was 2007's *New Avengers* 32, which ended with Elektra being exposed as a Skrull.



Second Coming

Marvel is bringing back **Secret Invasion** – but who can you trust?



AHEAD OF NEXT year's TV show, the Marvel Universe is enduring a second *Secret Invasion* this month at the hands of writer Ryan North and artist Francesco Mobi - although the shape-changing Skrulls' latest incursion takes a very different form to their first subversive infiltration.

"I thought there was a lot of potential to take the baseline idea of 'What if there was an alien invasion, but invisible, and right under our noses' in a fun new twisty direction," North tells Red

Alert. "And I loved the idea of exploring the space of what a 'secret invasion' could be."

With 2008's original series still fresh in the memory, main protagonists Nick Fury and Maria Hill have learnt lessons from their previous experiences. "They know how poorly it went last time and have taken all the time since then to prepare," he says. "Maria Hill is competency personified, and she's had a lot of time to get ready."

The initial *Secret Invasion* pivoted on characters like Elektra being sensationally exposed as

having long been Skrulls, but don't expect any such shocking developments in this new five-parter. "We haven't put too much weight on the 'character X was a Skrull all along' twist again, because people would see it coming," explains North. "It was great, but we've done that already! Unless me saying right now that we couldn't do it again is itself a misdirect, and secretly setting us up for doing it again? You'll have to read the book to find out, but seriously, while there may be some reveals of that nature, I can

promise they're not what you're expecting, as this is a very twisty story!"

While the 2008 *Secret Invasion*'s tagline was "Who can you trust?", the Brian Michael Bendis-scripted crossover was essentially about paranoia. This time around, North was more interested in the former than the latter. "For 2022, I wanted to tell a story that was less about paranoia and more about trust, which in some ways are two sides of the same coin, but still very different things and not quite the opposites

SCI-FACT!

Bichir was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor for his role in 2011 film *A Better Life*.

of each other," he reasons. "Distrust can slide into paranoia easily, but it's only paranoia if you're wrong about them, and otherwise it's just good planning. So we're meeting a Nick Fury and a Maria Hill who have been betrayed before, who have had to go through that and come out the other side, and now have to figure out not just who they trust, but why as well."

While Fury and Hill are the central protagonists, plenty of other heroes will also show up. "It starts with them investigating Skrull activity in Iowa that might be nothing but could be something very serious," says North. "I can say that over the course of our five issues, things get very big very fast, and we'll definitely see some familiar faces, including some personal favourites of mine, as you can't tell a *Secret Invasion* story without the Avengers!"

North is also taking over scripting Marvel's First Family in November, but don't expect any crossovers, as he completed *Secret Invasion* long before landing his new assignment. "That means that while *Secret Invasion* won't be referencing *Fantastic Four*, it does open the door to *Fantastic Four* picking up some of the threads that began there," he says. "When this miniseries concludes, you might just be seeing a little bit of Maria Hill and Nick Fury in *Fantastic Four*..." SJ

Secret Invasion issue one is out on 3 November.



ACTOR EXCLUSIVE

Making His Mark

Demián Bichir on the new version of *Let The Right One In*



It's a
glamorous
life being a
vampire.



IN THE ORIGINAL *LET The Right One In* movie, the father of child vampire Eli – spoiler alert – kills himself halfway through the film, first by disfiguring himself with acid, then offering his neck to his bloodthirsty daughter and finally falling from a hospital window. We can only presume that won't be the fate of the dad in Showtime's newest reimagining of John Ajvide Lindqvist's cult novel, otherwise we're doubting that Oscar-nominated actor Demián Bichir would have signed up for it. This series is a very different beast to the Swedish original.

"If you adapt a novel into a film there will be lots of different things that will be new to people who read the book," Bichir, who plays Mark in the series, tells Red Alert from his home in Mexico City. "And if you adapt it into a series, the nature of the media demands different stories, different characters, new twists and new cliffhangers. This is a beautiful adaptation of the same story that many people know and love. I mean, some characters will probably die along the way, and then maybe some other new characters will come on board, as well. It's been

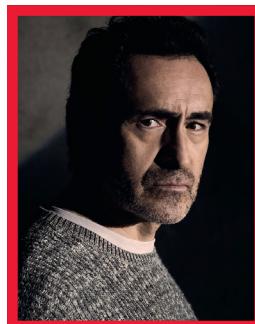
brilliantly made by Andrew Hinderaker, our showrunner. It's a love letter to the original story."

One of the strengths of the 2008 film is its grounded, realist tone. Eschewing the melodrama normally associated with vampire stories, *Let The Right One In* was an almost Ken Loach-like take on the genre. It's something that's carried over into the TV series – and that certainly appealed to Bichir.

"One of the great things about this series is it's so real," the actor enthuses. "It's so well written that it almost makes you forget that it's a fantastic type of genre. It makes you feel that you're watching Ingmar Bergman or Steven Soderbergh."

Of course, it's an intense series thematically speaking, and Bichir's co-lead (singer and actor Madison Taylor Baez) is just 11 years old. How was it filming this dark and disturbing story with someone so young?

"Oh, we have a lot of fun on set – we have to, because if we



go into the dark side of it, then that could be dangerous territory," he says. "I'm glad Madison has taken this very lightly and playfully. She's only 11 and she's very, very smart. Some people

were asking her the other day, 'What have you learned from Demián shooting this series?' and no one asks me what I've learned from working with her. I can tell you, you learn that this is a game we play for a living."

Whether Bichir survives the first 10 episodes we don't know for sure, and the actor is careful about giving away too much as regards plans beyond season one. "The beautiful thing about a series is that it's actually the audience who call the shots," he says. "If people love this series, which I'm sure they will, they will ask for another season, and then for another, and then for another. So this is a beautiful challenge for the creators or writers to keep up with." SJ

Let The Right One In is on Paramount+ now.