

## Fox Goes 'Incognito' For New Twist On Superhero Genre

By MIKE FLEMING | Thursday April 29, 2010 @ 6:53pm EDT



**EXCLUSIVE:** Just when it seems we've seen every possible manifestation of superhero movie, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox has found an innovation. How about a supervillain who tries to survive in the witness protection program after he rats out his boss?

The studio has acquired screen rights to *Incognito*, a graphic novel series written by Ed Brubaker and illustrated by Sean Phillips. Robert Schenkkan, the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright of *The Kentucky Cycle*, will write the screenplay. Peter Chernin and his Chernin Entertainment will produce with Circle of Confusion's David Engel.

The protagonist is Zack Overkill, a ruthless villain who is powered by super strength. He is caught and rats out his boss, The Black Death. He goes into witness protection. He's given a drug to dull his powers and takes a normal guy job as delivering the mail. By the time he discovers that messing with certain drugs restores his power, he has developed something of a conscience. He becomes a vigilante and soon, his exploits become known to The Black Death, who is out for revenge.

Brubaker is an accomplished comics writer for Marvel whose recent works include *Captain America*—his installment, *The Death of Captain America* made global headlines—as well as *Daredevil* and others. Brubaker's graphic novel *Sleeper* is being developed at Warner Bros as a potential Tom Cruise vehicle, and he wanted to find a completely different twist on the superhero genre.



"He's not your typical villain and I was trying to blend the trappings of pulp, comic and noir genres," Brubaker told me. "Zack was raised to be his world's equivalent of a supervillain. We've all seen the story of a good person who goes undercover and gets corrupted. This is a bad person forced to live among regular people, and how he's affected by that. He once ran around with a mask, but now he's got the fake name and the fake job. My goal was to have you rooting for him as he grows a conscience."

Schenkkan most recently wrote *Anabasis*, the period epic drama which will be directed by *District 13* helmer Patrick Allesandrin.