

PITCHING A  
**MARTIAN MANHUNTER** DCEU FILM  
SCRIPT

INTRO:

What's up guys! Welcome to another episode in my DCEU Rewrite Series! Today we're talking about a film that is currently *NOT* on the DCEU's roster of films that are stuck in development hell at Warner Bros. *BUT* is a film that I still think deserves to be made...and that is a solo film about one of the Justice League's most underrated heroes...the Martian Manhunter!

As a quick disclaimer before I jump into the rest of this pitch, this video is part of a larger series here on my channel where I'm rewriting the entire DCEU as if it were being helmed by a single creative vision instead of constantly being pulled this way and that way by multiple filmmakers with contradicting visions like the early films of the DCEU. So while this Martian Manhunter pitch is 100% fictitious and there are currently no plans for a *Martian Manhunter* film within the DCEU, I think this pitch could *absolutely* and realistically be adapted into the current DCEU as it stands right now and it would require little to no modification on the part of the studios.

So not only am I going to be pitching an origin story for the Martian Manhunter in the DCEU, but I'm also going to be proposing one or two potential sequels that could follow up this origin story and create something of an unofficial trilogy for J'onnn J'onzz.

FIRST FILM:

So the basic premise for this first *Martian Manhunter* film would be to write it as a noir crime movie set in the 1950's. I like the idea of Martian Manhunter being a creepy and emo kind of superhero, and that kind of moodiness fits in well with the noir genre. The plot can revolve around J'onnn J'onzz – under the disguise of deceased human detective John Jones – unraveling a mysterious scheme centered around survivors from the war on Mars coming to Earth and secretly trying to conquer our planet through a seemingly innocent baby that J'onnn rescues from a military research facility. The two films that I want to draw inspiration from will be 1941's *The Maltese Falcon* and 1987's *The Hidden*.

I know this is probably a hot take, but I think it would be really awesome if this film was able to hire a well-known suspense author to write the script. Somebody who's really proficient in the genre like Dan Brown, David Baldacci, John Grisham, James Patterson or somebody else along those lines. These are guys who are responsible for

books like *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels & Demons*, *A Time to Kill*, *The Fallen*, and *Alex Cross*. Realistically, I know it would probably be impossible to convince these guys to sacrifice their creative freedom as novelists to write a screenplay for an overcontrolling Hollywood studio. But nevertheless, I think recruiting suspense and thriller authors is still a really neat idea even though it would most likely never happen.

Anyways, I like the idea of this film starting out in the present day, so chronologically speaking, it would take place after the first *Justice League* film. So for the first scene in this movie, Martian Manhunter is having a rooftop conversation with Batman in the middle of the night and when questioned about his past, Martian Manhunter divulges his origins to the Dark Knight. From there, the rest of the film could be presented to us in a flashback as J'onn recounts his adventures as a detective in the 50's.

Here's the backstory I want to give J'onn J'onzz that will be revealed to the audience piece by piece throughout the first film.

#### BACKSTORY:

Back on Mars (which the Martians referred to as "Ma'alecan'andra"), there were two different civilizations on the red planet: the scholarly philosophers and scientists known as the Green Martians, and the savage conquerors and warlords known as the White Martians. J'onn J'onzz was a Green Martian security guard of the great library, with a wife named M'yri'ah and a daughter named K'hym, whereas J'onn's twin brother Malefic was what their people referred to as a Red Martian. The Red Martians belonged to a religious cult known as the Blood Priests where they used the blood of volunteer donors to infuse their bodies with ancient magic, turning their skin from green to red and giving them their Red Martian label. Both J'onn and Malefic lived relatively fulfilling lives before the civil war broke out between the Green and White Martians. Like all the males in the Green Martian race, J'onn and his twin brother Malefic were drafted to fight as soldiers, and J'onn volunteered to join an experimental super soldier program to help his people gain an edge over the physically superior White Martians. Not all of the candidates survived the risky and untested experiments, which utilized a dangerous combination of Martian science and blood magic. Malefic and his blood cult of Red Martian priests performed the experiments on the Green Martian volunteers. Not to mention, several Martian warriors had to sacrifice themselves and allow their essence to be absorbed by the super soldier candidates in order for the candidate to become a superhero. Only J'onn emerged as the successful living candidate, whereas the rest of the candidates died during the transfusion.

J'onn became the champion of the Green Martian army as he now possessed powers no other Martian could dare match. Thanks to his genetic modifications, J'onn

could now fly, phase through solid objects, possessed super strength and could shapeshift into anyone or anything he had come into contact with before. This made him the perfect spy and saboteur. J'onn quickly became a beacon of hope and strength for his people. His status as a war hero grew to the point that his people appointed him as their official military leader. The tide of the civil war shifted over to the Green Martians and thanks to the efforts of J'onn, victory was within their grasp.

Desperate, the leaders of the White Martian race – known as the Hyperclan – sought to even the playing field by concocting a telepathic virus. This virus – later known as H'ronmeer's Curse – only effected Green Martians and was passed through telepathic communication. Unaware of how this disease spread, the Green Martians unknowingly contaminated each other as they telepathically called out to one another as the virus' effects began to consume them. The virus attacked the Green Martians from the inside out and once they contracted the Curse, they would become mentally overwhelmed to the point of bursting into blue flames and being burned alive. Thus, the Martian Holocaust came to be, and the White Martians fulfilled their vision of conquering Mars. After losing his wife and daughter to the virus, J'onn took the remaining Green Martian survivors – including Malefic and a handful of his blood priests – and shepherded them to Earth in 1952 to hide out as fugitives. Now what's left of the Green Martians live among us, disguising themselves as humans until the day comes where they may be able to return home.

Now, J'onn lives in the small town of Middleton, Colorado as an African American detective by the name of John Jones. His commanding officer Commissioner Harding, pairs John up with Diane Meade, one of the department's first female detectives. The two become an oddball couple within the Middleton Police Department, and J'onn does his best to get along with the humans despite his gloomy anti-social behavior.

#### CALL TO ADVENTURE:

The plot will be kicked off by John when he begins investigating a string of disturbing murders and Diane is assigned to the case alongside him. The common thread between all of the murder victims is that they're secretly Green Martians. Someone is quietly hunting down John's people, and this becomes a personal vendetta for him, but he tries to keep these details about the case from Diane. The investigation brings them to a military research facility that is supposed to be abandoned but is in fact fully operational. Without clearance, John and Diane agree that they are in way over their heads and return home. But later that night, John returns to the facility alone, unaware that he is being followed by the suspicious Diane.

Using his phasing abilities, John infiltrates the compound and finds laboratories filled with advanced Dieselpunk technology. Kinda like the movie *The Shape of Water*, the entire facility is dedicated to researching one subject. This creature is none other than a baby White Martian, incubating within a gestation pod that is way too advanced to have been designed by humans. The technology is Martian. John ambushes one of the scientists and begins reading his mind to gain the answers he needs, but he is interrupted by the alarm going off. The compound is placed on lockdown after Diane is exposed as a trespasser. Abandoning his human disguise, Martian Manhunter steals the Infant and uses his powers to save Diane and flee the compound.

Back at his apartment, John prepares to use telepathy to wipe Diane's memory of that night, but she convinces John to leave her mind intact so that she can help him with this case. John informs Diane that The Infant was artificially bred by the Hyperclan to be a weapon of mass destruction that they planned on using to conquer Earth. Apparently, conquering Mars wasn't enough for them and they're now looking to expand their reach and establish an intergalactic empire. But John still has more questions that need to be answered. So he keeps The Infant with him and Diane as they continue on with their investigation. I think it'll be a fun little Easter Egg to include a cameo of Martian Manhunter's furry little alien pet from the comics called Zook. I think Zook can be one of the subjects at the same facility as The Infant and when all of the chaos is going down with John Jones' escape, Zook can get accidentally freed from his containment cell and he hitches a ride with our heroes as they fly back to John's apartment.

I want The Infant to be a MacGuffin similar to the falcon statue that was used in *The Maltese Falcon*, with the main conflict of the film being about all of the different parties who are trying to get their hands on The Infant. Perhaps at one point, the Martian Manhunter can hoodwink the antagonists by shape shifting into The Infant and allowing himself to be taken by the oblivious enemies while Diane spirits the real Infant to safety. Somewhere in the film I want it to be revealed that Malefic and his blood priests are the ones responsible for the murders of the Green Martian fugitives and that Malefic was the true creator of the H'ronmeer's Curse virus that almost wiped out his entire people. The Red Martians had been secret allies of the White Martians for years prior to their exodus to Earth.

Something that I think will be super cool to see is John shape shift into a bunch of different creatures from Mars whenever he gets in fights with the other Red Martians. In the comics, John transforms into a bunch of different Martian wildlife such as flesh-eating horses, Pralah beasts, Sho'keepers, manta monsters, chotta, Martian dragons and bloodworms. John's transforming powers can come to him naturally, but the blood priests have to use spells to change their skins and seeing all these different

otherworldly beasts do battle throughout the forest or inside ammunition factories at night I think would be an awesome set piece. Like Vortigern from *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword*, I think it would be a nice contrast to the hero's power set to have a villain who possesses a regular form and then a battle form. When it comes to a fight between him and his brother, Malefic can drink a potion that turns him into a more demonic and monstrous version of himself, thereby granting him the ability to go toe-to-toe against his brother John. Not to mention it would be cool to have Halloween take place during the story and when people see Martian Manhunter in his natural form, he'll get all kinds of compliments on his costume, asking if it was made professionally by Hollywood makeup effects artists. I'm not sure if it's possible to include this idea organically into the film or not but seeing as how at the time that the Martian Civil War is occurring, Abin Sur is the designated Green Lantern for Mars and Earth. I'm not sure if there's a natural way to include an interaction between Abin Sur and the Martians that doesn't include forcing Abin Sur into a story that he really doesn't fit into. But if you guys have any ideas, let me know in the comment section down below.

I don't know how we're going to do it but we gotta find a way to fit in there one of John Jones' quirkiest personality traits. His obsession for Chocos – the DC equivalent of Oreos. Even when he's depressed, Chocos seem to be the easiest way to cheer Martian Manhunter up. Something else I would like to do is have some of Martian Manhunter and Diane's leads for the investigation be characters from *Martian Manhunter* comics like the mafia boss Cleat Groves and Malefic's Blood Priests can be made up of Martian characters from the comics like Cay'an, B'rindarn, Se'mel, H'ildam and T'haldic. This team of Red Martian Blood Priests can fulfill a villainous version of the Five-Man Band archetype known as the Five-Bad Band. The Blood Priests can be a really fun bunch of henchmen because they can be like the Knights of Ren in that they all have specific weapons and spells and outfit designs that make them unique from the rest of their comrades. I also really like the idea of giving this film a Lovecraftian horror feel to it and having the spells that the Red Martians cast be very occult-inspired and the Martian monsters that they transform into like the Pralah-beasts and the Sho'keer can resemble creatures from Cthulhu mythology like Shoggoths and Atlach-Nacha.

By the end of the movie, I want John to thwart the invasion on Earth and send his treacherous brother Malefic – the sole surviving Red Martian – fleeing back to Mars to seek sanctuary with the Hyperclan. By the third act, the rest of the Green Martian fugitives will have been executed by their red counterparts, leaving John as the last of his kind. In the climax of the film, John will fake his death just like how he does in the comics. Disguised as a pigeon, John will observe his funeral from a distance and finds himself unable to watch Diane mourn for him, so he approaches her in her apartment later that night and reveals his secret to her. John tells Diane that he feels obligated to protect The Infant and ensure that she never grows up to fulfill her duty as a White

Martian weapon of mass destruction. John hopes that he can raise The Infant to be the redeemer and savior of the White Martians. From that point on, the Martian Manhunter will assume a new human identity but will continue to visit Diane occasionally. The Infant will grow up to become Martian Manhunter's sidekick Miss Martian also known as Megan Morse. Eventually, Diane passes away from old age and it becomes the Martians' turn to attend her funeral. Now, the current body that J'onn inhabits is called Calvin Swanwick, and all these years on Earth have taught John much about humanity and he's been able to secure himself a position within America's government as the Secretary of Defense.

#### EPILOGUE:

For the final scene in the movie, we'll cut back to the present where Martian Manhunter and Batman are standing on the rooftop. After hearing his story, Batman will bond with Martian Manhunter over their mutual experiences. Both heroes emotionally suffer daily from the loss of their families, and they cope with that loss through detective work and bringing justice to those who deserve it. J'onn will even compliment Batman on his investigative skills, telling the Dark Knight that he admires his efficiency but would like to one day have a friendly competition and see who the World's Greatest Detective truly is.

Batman: "Try working in Gotham. You'll get plenty of opportunities to challenge me for the title...the criminals never sleep there".

Martian Manhunter: "It would appear we are the same, you and I. Joined in suffering...doomed to forever be avengers...haunted by our grief".

The meeting will end with Batman and Martian Manhunter shaking each other's hands in respect and referring to each other by their first names.

Batman: "Goodbye...John", says Batman.

Martian Manhunter: "Farewell, my friend...and don't worry Bruce, your secret is safe with me".

#### THEMES:

J'onn's character arc can revolve around him finding hope and in that hope, a new reason to keep on fighting. It's through his relationship with Diane and his adopting of The Infant that J'onn finds a new reason to live. Ever since the Martian Holocaust, J'onn hasn't been living. He's been surviving. But he's not living. Happiness, love, and hope

are all distant memories for J'onn that become harder to remember year after year. Because suicide is born out of a place of hopelessness. And this story will be about J'onn regaining his hope and finding a new purpose that is more meaningful than just being a mere detective. He gets to have another shot at having a family. He gets to have a second chance at being a father. That is what gives J'onn hope...and this is why I think Martian Manhunter is such an awesome superhero. Like how *Fat Thor* in *Avengers Endgame* gave a voice of encouragement to people suffering depression and failure, Martian Manhunter can do the same thing, and even take it a step further and give a voice of encouragement to people suffering from suicidal tendencies.

I think the DCEU version of Martian Manhunter should be somebody who suffers from clinical depression, loneliness, and maybe even has suicidal tendencies due to the trauma he's experienced on Mars. J'onn's depression can be the source of his cynicism and his constant melancholy. This can be why the Martian Manhunter is always seen with his head down, brooding. J'onn was able to overcome his survivor's guilt from the Martian Holocaust, but he's still burdened by a deep sadness that seems like it will never go away nor leave him alone. Seeing how this film takes place in the 50's, I think it would be a great opportunity to have J'onn encounter a Jewish Auschwitz survivor from WWII. Perhaps the Auschwitz survivor is a potential lead for the case John is working on, and he originally seeks out the Jewish man for investigative reasons, but he ends up leaving the meeting with a lot more emotional help than John anticipated. It can be through their deep and philosophical conversation together as both widows and Holocaust survivors that J'onn is able to understand himself a bit better and learn how to have hope again. It can be incredibly powerful and heartwarming to see the Jewish man inspire Martian Manhunter to keep on fighting the good fight and to not give up on himself. To remind him that just because he's depressed and hurt, that doesn't make him a failure. I imagine the man asking John if he can give him a hug at the end of their conversation, and when John agrees, he finds himself giving in and crying into the stranger's shoulder.

## SECOND AND THIRD FILMS:

For the second and third *Martian Manhunter* films, I'd want to adapt them off of the New 52 *Martian Manhunter* comics *The Epiphany* and *The Red Rising* by Rob Williams. Both of those comics are an excellent and dramatic case study on the character of Martian Manhunter and what he represents. The kind of deconstruction that takes place in these comics provides great material for a movie sequel. The premise of those two comics that I mentioned revolves around the planet Mars no longer being able to sustain life after being ravaged by war. The Hyperclan and Malefic work together to try to restore Mars by sacrificing Earth in a ritual known as *The Epiphany*, and John Jones is the key to it all. In order to prevent their plan from

coming to fruition, Martian Manhunter separates himself into five different people, each of them being a manifestation of one aspect of his personality. The comics are about the five different Martian Manhunters finding each other and working together to stop the Epiphany from happening. Malefic returns as a recurring villain and the Hyperclan make an appearance as well. The end of the arc sees Martian Manhunter finally come to terms with the fact that he is the last of his kind and getting the closure that he needs to move on with his life in peace.

I know the New 52 comics get a lot of hate because they got so many things wrong with the characters, but Martian Manhunter is one of the few characters that I think was actually done well and received the love and care his character deserved. So if you guys haven't checked out those comics that I mentioned before and if you want to learn more about the Martian Manhunter, I highly recommend you go check those books out because that is some quality storytelling right there.

#### OUTRO:

And that concludes my pitch for the Martian Manhunter movies in *my* version of the DCEU! Like I mentioned before, this concept not only works within my fan-made version of the DCEU, but I think it can even still work today in the *real* DCEU. Especially since the studio has taken a more anthological approach to its cinematic universe than before. If you guys liked this pitch and want to see more awesome videos from this channel, then go ahead and subscribe, so that you can get notified when I post a new video. Let me know what you all think of this pitch so far and if you guys believe that Martian Manhunter deserves more love than he's currently receiving. Let me know what you all think, and I will catch you guys next time...