



HULK BRUCE BANNER

FIRST APPEARANCE:
The Incredible Hulk [2008]

Dr. Bruce Banner was a bioscience professor at Culver University in Virginia working on a gamma radiation resistance project. However, Banner was unaware he was actually participating in a sub-project of Gen. Thaddeus “Thunderbolt” Ross’ U.S. Army infantry weapons development program focused on biotech force enhancement, a venture similar to the WWII-era Super-Soldier project. Banner worked with Gen. Ross’ daughter, fellow Harvard graduate and scientist Dr. Elizabeth “Betty” Ross, with whom Banner was also romantically involved. Banner was so confident in his research that he tested it on himself, unwittingly transforming himself into a super-strong green creature that destroyed the Culver University laboratory and left both Dr. Ross and Gen. Ross injured. As Dr. Ross recovered, Banner went into hiding, becoming a fugitive as Gen. Ross hunted him in hopes of weaponizing the creature.

Banner evaded capture for five years, continuing his research and exploring botany as a possible

source of a cure for his condition. Eventually settling in Rio de Janeiro’s Rocinha Favela, Brazil and working at the Pingo Doce soda bottling factory, Banner began studying Brazilian martial arts, learning various breath-control techniques, and using a metronome to stifle his anger and resulting transformations. Through an encrypted satellite link, Banner communicated with Dr. Samuel Sterns,

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a cell biologist at Grayburn College in New York City, under the aliases Mr. Green (Banner) and Mr. Blue (Sterns). Sterns recommended serums derived from various plants as possible methods of counteracting the radiation, but every attempt failed. Needing more data, Sterns convinced Banner to send him a blood sample, which Sterns secretly mass-produced, believing Banner’s blood could be a cure for countless afflictions.

While working at the factory, Banner cut himself performing routine repairs. He was unaware a drop of blood fell into a soda bottle that was later shipped to the U.S., where a Milwaukee man drank it and became ill with gamma radiation poisoning. Gen. Ross and the military tracked the soda to Brazil where career military operative Emil Blonsky and a black-ops team located Banner. Banner fled to the factory, which was closed for the night, but was also pursued by co-workers who disliked him; when they caught Banner and assaulted him, Banner transformed and retaliated. The black-ops team surrounded the factory and attacked, but their weaponry proved ineffective against the green monster, who easily decimated their ranks and hurled a forklift at Blonsky before escaping. Gen. Ross subsequently seized Banner’s equipment and learned of his interactions with Mr. Blue.

Banner secretly traveled to the U.S. and arrived at Culver University 17 days later, where he observed Dr. Ross from afar and learned she was now dating a psychotherapist

named Leonard. Banner received help from friend and restaurateur Stanley, who gave him pizzas to use in bribing university security and a student to allow him computer access to search for his original gamma pulse research data, which Mr. Blue believed he could use to cure Banner. However, Banner discovered his data had been removed from the university records. He returned to Stanley's restaurant only for Dr. Ross to see him when she stopped in for a late dinner. Banner tried to flee, but Dr. Ross found him and insisted he let her help. At her home, Ross gave Banner a thumb drive containing his data, which she had been secretly hiding for five years.

Banner and Dr. Ross were unaware that Leonard, fearing for Dr. Ross' safety, had called Gen. Ross and notified him Banner was at the university. While leaving town, Banner saw Gen. Ross' forces approaching and fled, swallowing the thumb drive to keep it out of the general's hands. When Banner saw Dr. Ross being roughly restrained by Gen. Ross' soldiers, he became angry and transformed. The soldiers attacked the creature, but they were soundly defeated. Now enhanced by Gen. Ross' biotech force serum, Blonsky directly attacked the creature and led him into the blast range of two powerful Stark Industries sonic cannons. Though stunned by the attack, the creature heard Dr. Ross' screams for her father to stop the assault and rallied, destroying both cannons. Against Gen. Ross' orders, Blonsky challenged the creature again and was nearly killed when the creature kicked him. Amidst the confusion, Dr. Ross approached the creature and calmed him. When a gunship opened fire, the creature shielded Dr. Ross with his body and hurled a piece of metal at it, causing it to crash; the creature protected Dr. Ross from the



DR. ROBERT BRUCE BANNER SUFFERS

from Multiple Personality Disorder due to the traumatic murder of his mother at the hands of Banner's alcoholic father when Banner was a child. Graduating with a doctorate in nuclear physics from the California Institute of Technology, Banner worked at the U.S. Defense Department nuclear research facility's Los Diablos Missile Base in New Mexico under Gen. Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross and fell in love with Ross' daughter, Betty. Banner designed the highly radioactive gamma bomb and during its first test, teenager Rick Jones infiltrated the restricted site on a dare. Banner saved Jones but not before the bomb detonated, irradiating Banner with gamma particles, which caused him to transform into the monstrous, simple-minded grey Hulk at night, eventually becoming a green version whenever angry. His periodic rampages often resulted in a negative portrayal to the world, and Hulk was frequently pursued by Gen. Ross and authorities despite being a founding member of the heroic Avengers, repelling alien invasions and subterranean conquerors, and defeating numerous super-criminal endeavors. In modern times, while working for S.H.I.E.L.D., Banner was shot twice in the head; Tony Stark's Extremis biogenetic human genome improvement technology was implanted in his brain to repair the damage. The infusion of Extremis brought out a hyper-intelligent "Doc Green" persona. Both individually and alongside the Avengers, Banner strives to control his Hulk personas and use his power to benefit and protect the world.

FIRST APPEARANCE:
THE INCREDIBLE HULK #1 (1962)



conflagration and fled with her unconscious form. When an eyewitness, student Jim Wilson, was interviewed by the local news about the battle, he dubbed the creature the "Hulk."

The Hulk and Dr. Ross took refuge in the Smoky Mountain National

Forest until Banner regained human form. Short on money, Dr. Ross sold her deceased mother's necklace for cash. Using an unsecure computer connection at a gas station, Banner sent Sterns his original data, inadvertently alerting defense agency S.H.I.E.L.D. and the military, who were monitoring

was actually a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent. On Fury's order, Black Widow administered lithium dioxide to Stark, which briefly abated the symptoms of palladium poisoning caused by the Arc Reactor.

Returning to Stark Industries with her cover intact, Romanoff attended Hammer Industries' weapons presentation at the Stark Expo with her new CEO Potts, where Hammer Industries' war drones and an armored Rhodes, both remote-controlled by Vanko, attacked Iron Man. After forcing Hammer Industries CEO Justin Hammer to reveal Vanko's involvement, Romanoff and Hogan broke into Hammer Industries to stop Vanko, but he escaped. Romanoff hacked Vanko's computers, restored Rhodes' armor controls, and remotely provided tactical support to Iron Man in his battle with Vanko. Later, Black Widow's assessment of Stark reported his compulsive behavior, self-destructive tendencies, and textbook narcissism; she recommended Iron Man — but not Stark — for the Avengers Initiative. Elsewhere, Fury and Black Widow discussed recruiting Rhodes into the Avengers Initiative. 🌟



IN THE COMICS

NATALIA ROMANOVA ("NATASHA ROMANOFF"), BORN IN THE U.S.S.R. in the late 1920s, was raised by Ivan Petrovitch. During WWII, Natalia was placed in a Soviet assassin training facility; when she escaped, Ivan went AWOL, and the two became mercenaries. In 1956, the Winter Soldier — a brainwashed Bucky Barnes — offered the pair a modified Soviet Super-Soldier serum that would extend their lifespans if they returned to the U.S.S.R.; since Ivan was injured, Natalia agreed. Enrolled in the Red Room Academy, Natalia was extensively trained and educated; her memories were altered to strengthen her loyalty to the U.S.S.R. and enhance her cover stories while on missions. Years later Natalia was retired, her memories of espionage erased and she was married to Soviet test pilot Alexi Shostakov, but when Alexi seemingly died, Natalia demanded to become a spy. With Ivan as her handler, Natalia became known as "Black Widow" because she seduced and killed her targets.

Taking an espionage job against Stark Industries, Black Widow romanced Tony Stark but was ultimately discovered. Seeking revenge against Iron Man, Black Widow recruited Hawkeye, skilled archer Clint Barton, to assist her in sabotaging Stark Industries. After several failed attempts, Black Widow was eventually recruited into S.H.I.E.L.D. by Nick Fury, who put her skills to good use and she once went undercover as teacher "Nancy Rushman." In the ensuing years, Black Widow regained her memories, partnered with crime fighter Daredevil (Matt Murdock), helped formed the Champions of Los Angeles super-team, and joined the Avengers, even leading them for a time. Black Widow continues to work with S.H.I.E.L.D. and the Avengers to protect the world.

FIRST APPEARANCE: *TALES OF SUSPENSE* #52 (1964)



WRIST-MOUNTED WEAPONS

BLACK WIDOW NATASHA ROMANOFF

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Iron Man 2* (2010)

S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent Black Widow (Natasha Romanoff) was tasked with infiltrating Stark Industries to assess Tony Stark's viability for the Avengers Initiative. Given the cover identity "Natalie Rushman," Black Widow was hired as a notary by Bambi Arbogast for Stark Industries' Legal Department. When S.H.I.E.L.D. learned the Arc Reactor in Stark's chest was killing him, Black Widow drugged a co-worker, Samantha Carlisle, and took her place to get closer to Tony Stark. Delivering documents to Stark's home to finalize Pepper Potts' promotion to Stark Industries CEO, "Natalie" made an impression on Stark when she easily pinned Stark's chauffeur Happy Hogan during a

sparring session; Stark promoted "Rushman" to his personal assistant. Accompanying Stark to the Monaco Historic Grand Prix, "Rushman" facilitated Stark's schedule and witnessed Iron Man's battle with the terrorist Ivan Vanko, subsequently dealing with the press for Potts. When Stark asked "Rushman" how she'd spend her last birthday, to gather more information for his personality profile, she provocatively replied she'd do "whatever she wanted." Stark subsequently started a drunken, armored brawl with his friend Lt. Col. James Rhodes at Stark's birthday party. When S.H.I.E.L.D. Director Nick Fury later confronted Stark over his recent impulsive actions, Stark was shocked to learn that "Rushman"

FACT SHEET

- ▶ BLACK WIDOW SPEAKS SEVERAL LANGUAGES, INCLUDING ENGLISH, FRENCH, ITALIAN, RUSSIAN, AND LATIN.
- ▶ BLACK WIDOW'S S.H.I.E.L.D. DUTIES INCLUDE WORK AS A FIELD AGENT AGAINST ENEMY COMBATANTS AND AS A SHADOW AGENT FOR INFILTRATION MISSIONS.
- ▶ BLACK WIDOW'S S.H.I.E.L.D. WEAPONS INCLUDE SHOCK DISCS, SMOKE DISCS, A GARROTE, PEPPER SPRAY, A WALTHER PPK/S .380 ACP PISTOL, AND SPECIALIZED BRACELETS.
- ▶ WHEN BLACK WIDOW AND "HAPPY" HOGAN STORM HAMMER INDUSTRIES, BLACK WIDOW SUBDUED TWELVE GUARDS IN THE SAME TIME IT TOOK HOGAN TO DEFEAT ONE.