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the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

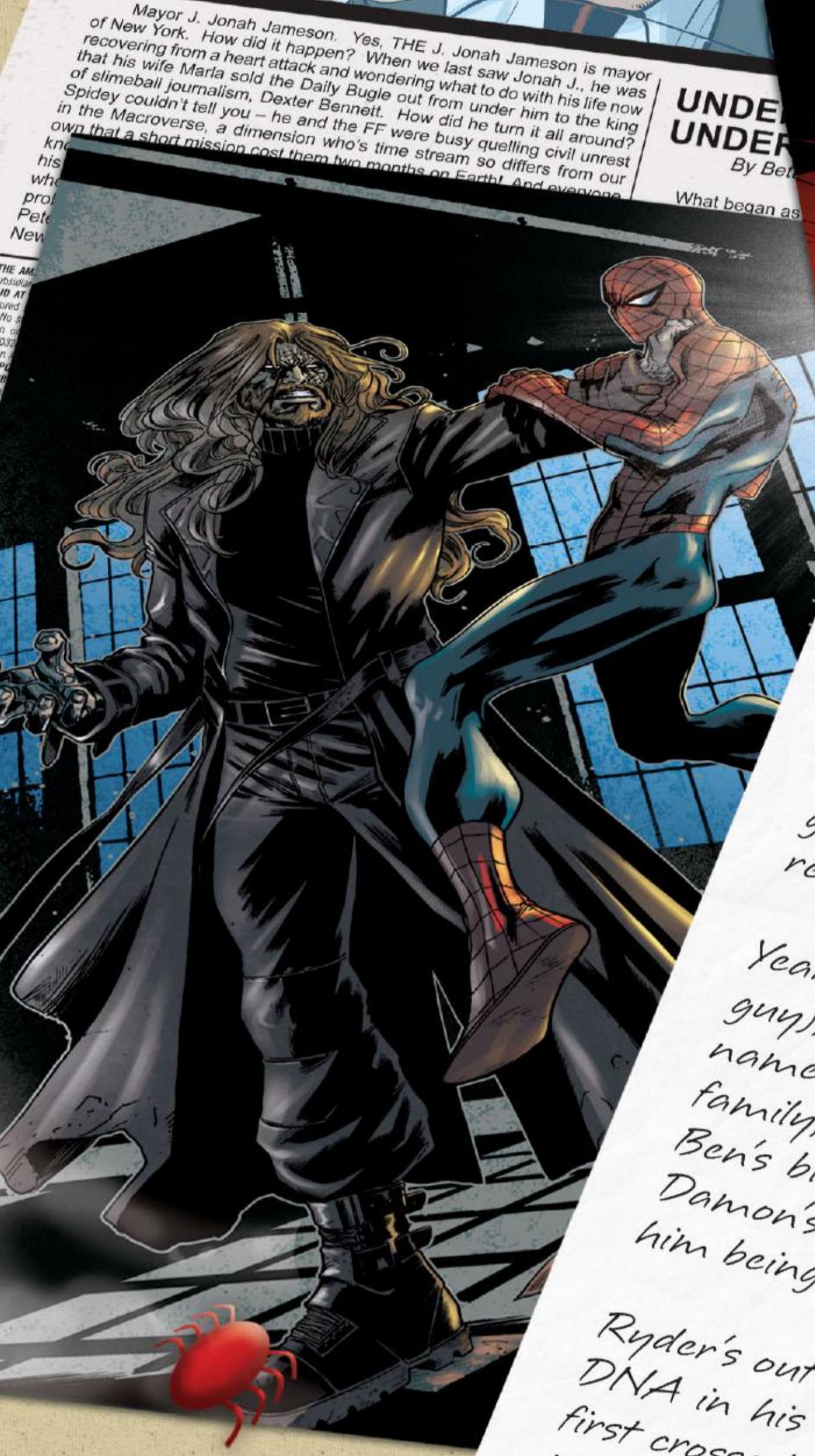
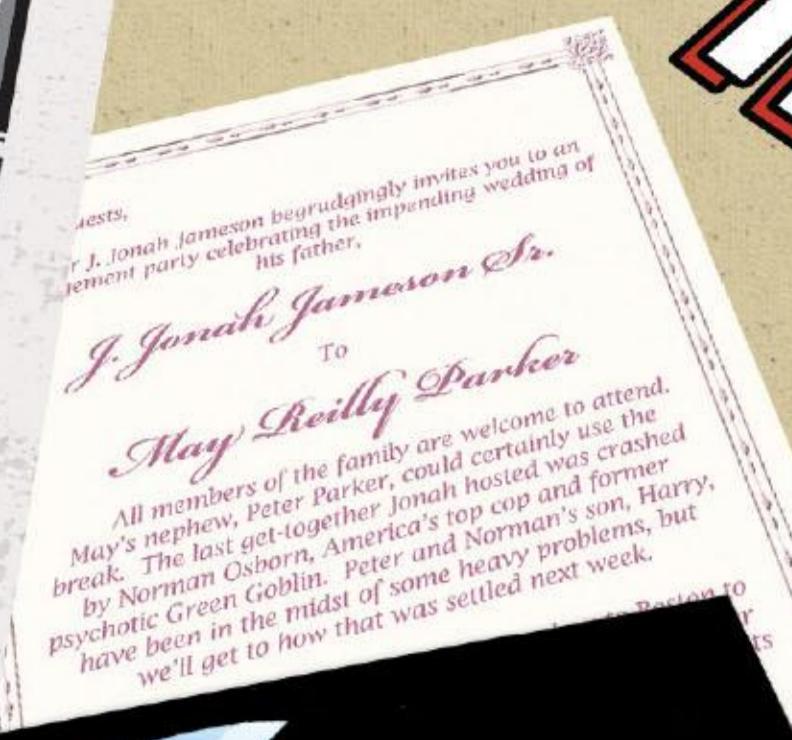


417

GUGGENHEIM
CHECCHETTO
ROSS
MAGYAR
D'AURIA

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the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN



PETER PARKER'S P.O.V.

So that hairy dude holding me by the throat? His name's Kaine. He's one of my clones. Yeah, that's right, I've got more than one clone. You'd think they'd be useful, but no, mine always seem to try to get me killed. Name's Parker. Peter Parker. And I really despise anyone who looks exactly like me.

Years ago, my other clone, Ben Reilly (not the hairy guy), was working as a lab assistant for a biogeneticist named Damon Ryder. Ryder claims Ben killed his family, but the Ben I knew was a hero. Ryder's out for Ben's blood, but Ben's been dead for some time. And Damon's not really inclined to believe my story about him being a clone.

Ryder's out of his mind. He's got some sort of Dinosaur DNA in his system and goes by the name Raptor. We first crossed paths at my Aunt May's engagement party in Boston. Nearly killed me and May's whole Reilly family (who thankfully survived to mooch off my Aunt's house, taking in my broke pal, Harry Osborn).

Ryder came to Front Line's offices to publicly confront me, but Ben Urich called the cops on him. Still, people are getting suspicious. I tracked down Ryder's base of operations...and that's where I found my buddy, Kaine.

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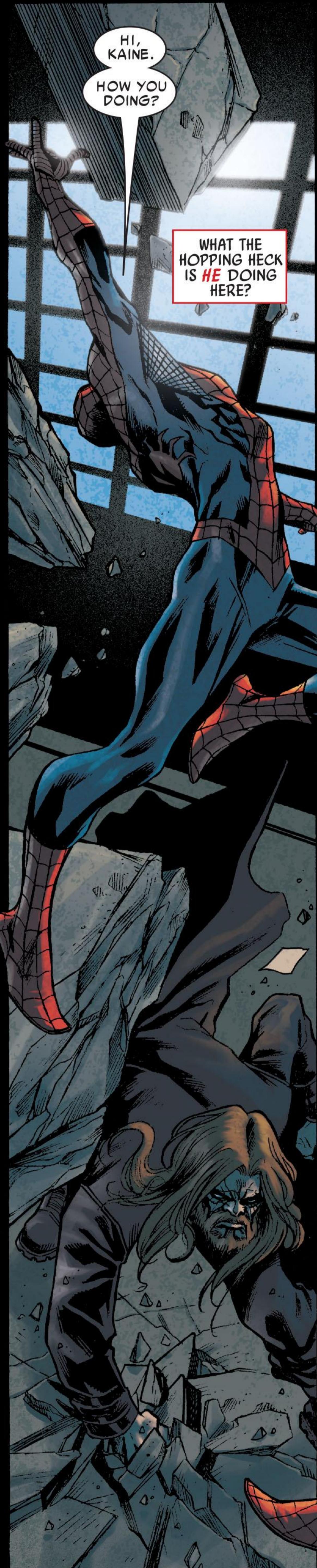


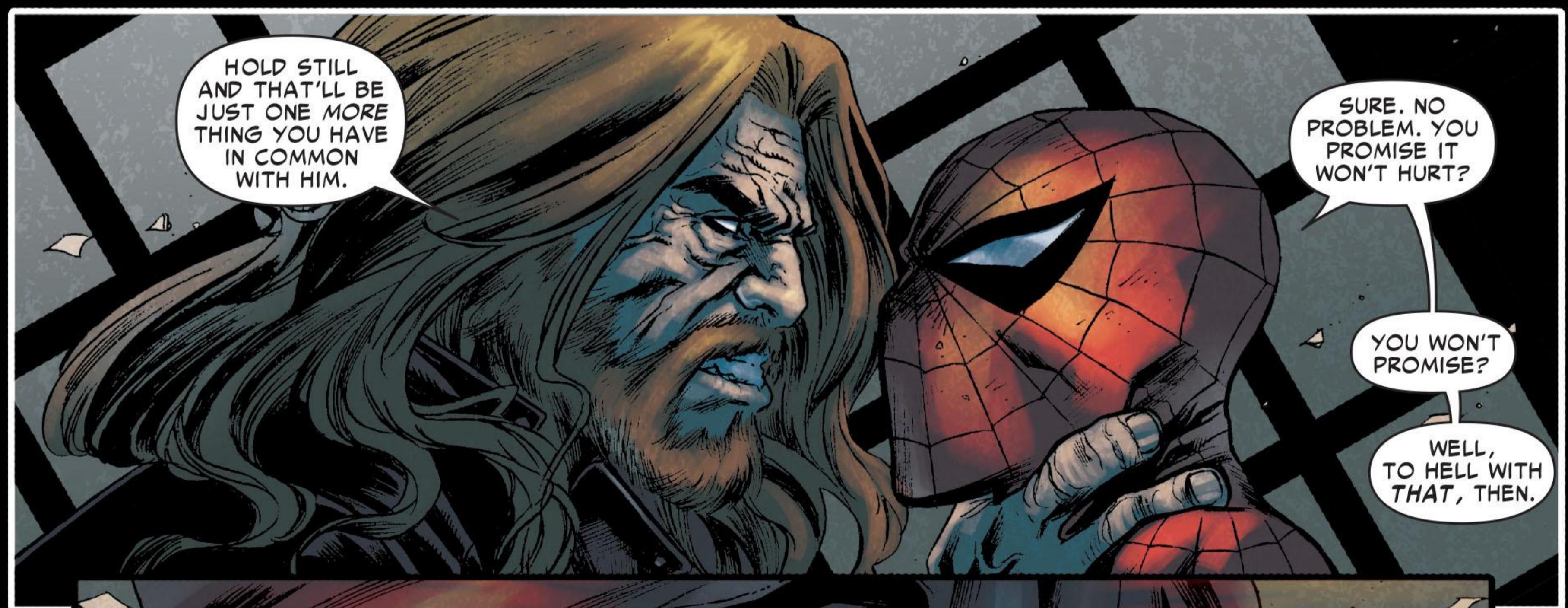
ONCE UPON
A TIME...

THERE WAS
A BOY WHO GOT
SPIDER POWERS.

AND THERE WAS ALSO
A MAD SCIENTIST
WHO WANTED TO
CLONE THE BOY.

THE FIRST ATTEMPT
DIDN'T GO TOO WELL
AND THE RESULT
BECAME THE MONSTER
OF THIS LITTLE FAIRY TALE.





NOT EXACTLY THE REUNION I WAS HOPING FOR, KAIN. MAKES ME SAD.

JUST HELP ME OUT WITH SOMETHING: WHAT BRINGS A MURDEROUS PSYCHO LIKE YOU BACK?

I'M BETTING IT'S NOT A COINCIDENCE YOU COME BACK INTO MY LIFE THE SAME TIME DAMON RYDER SHOWS UP WITH A MAD ON FOR BEN REILLY.

I'M NOT "BACK IN YOUR LIFE." I'M HERE FOR RYDER.

SO YOU CAN OFFER HIM MEMBERSHIP IN THE "WE WANT TO KILL BEN REILLY EVEN THOUGH HE'S ALREADY DEAD" FAN CLUB?

YEAH, WELL I NEED A VIDEO MUSIC AWARD, BUT YOU DON'T SEE ME ATTACKING TAYLOR SWIFT.

WHICH REMINDS ME... IF I DON'T TAKE DOWN KANYE... WHO WILL?!

MY BODY... IT'S BREAKING DOWN. I'M DYING, ONE CELL AT A TIME.

AND THIS HAS TO DO WHAT WITH RYDER?

HE CAN STOP IT.

NOT A COINCIDENCE? CLEARLY SPIDER-MAN IS NOT FAMILIAR WITH GUGGENHEIM'S WRITING.
--WACKER

SLOTT YOU, STEVE. I'M QUITTING THIS BOOK AFTER NEXT ISSUE.
--GUGGENHEIM

"HE CAN
SAVE MY
LIFE."

Then.

CARE
TO REPEAT
THAT,
REILLY?

HAPPY
TO. WHAT
ARE YOU DOING,
EXPERIMENTING
ON YOURSELF?

ACTUALLY,
LET ME REPHRASE
THAT: WHAT
ARE YOU DOING,
INJECTING YOURSELF
WITH ENGINEERED
DINOSAUR
DNA?

ARE YOU
TRYING TO KILL
YOURSELF?!

NO.
THAT'S TOO
BAD, RYDER,
'CAUSE YOU'RE
DOING A DAMN
GOOD
IMPRESSION
OF IT.

DO I
LOOK DEAD
TO YOU,
BEN?

WE DON'T
KNOW WHAT
THAT GENETIC
MONSOON'S DOING
TO YOUR
BODY--

I DO.

INCREASED
ENERGY.
HEIGHTENED
SENSES.
ENHANCED
STRENGTH--

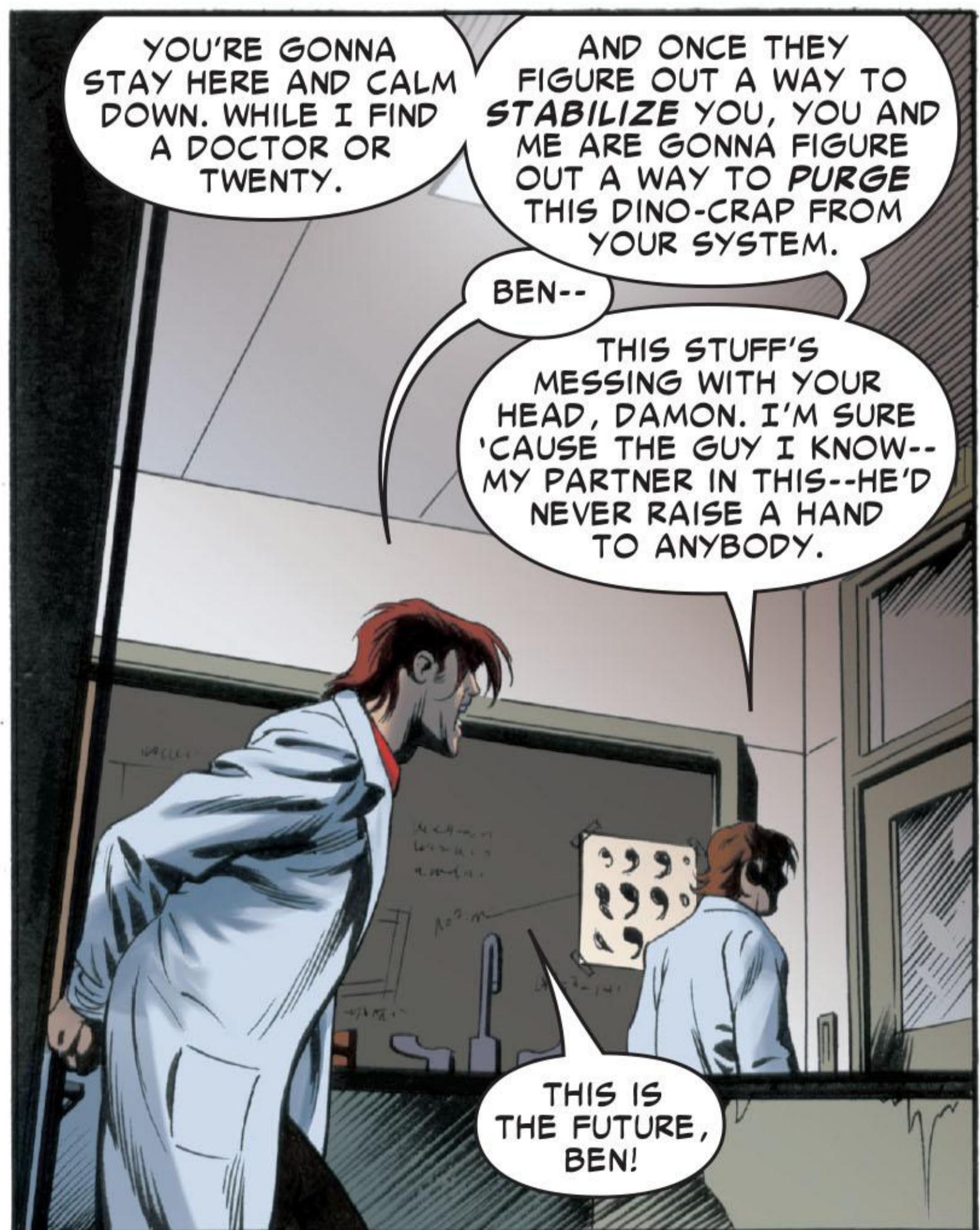
DAMON--

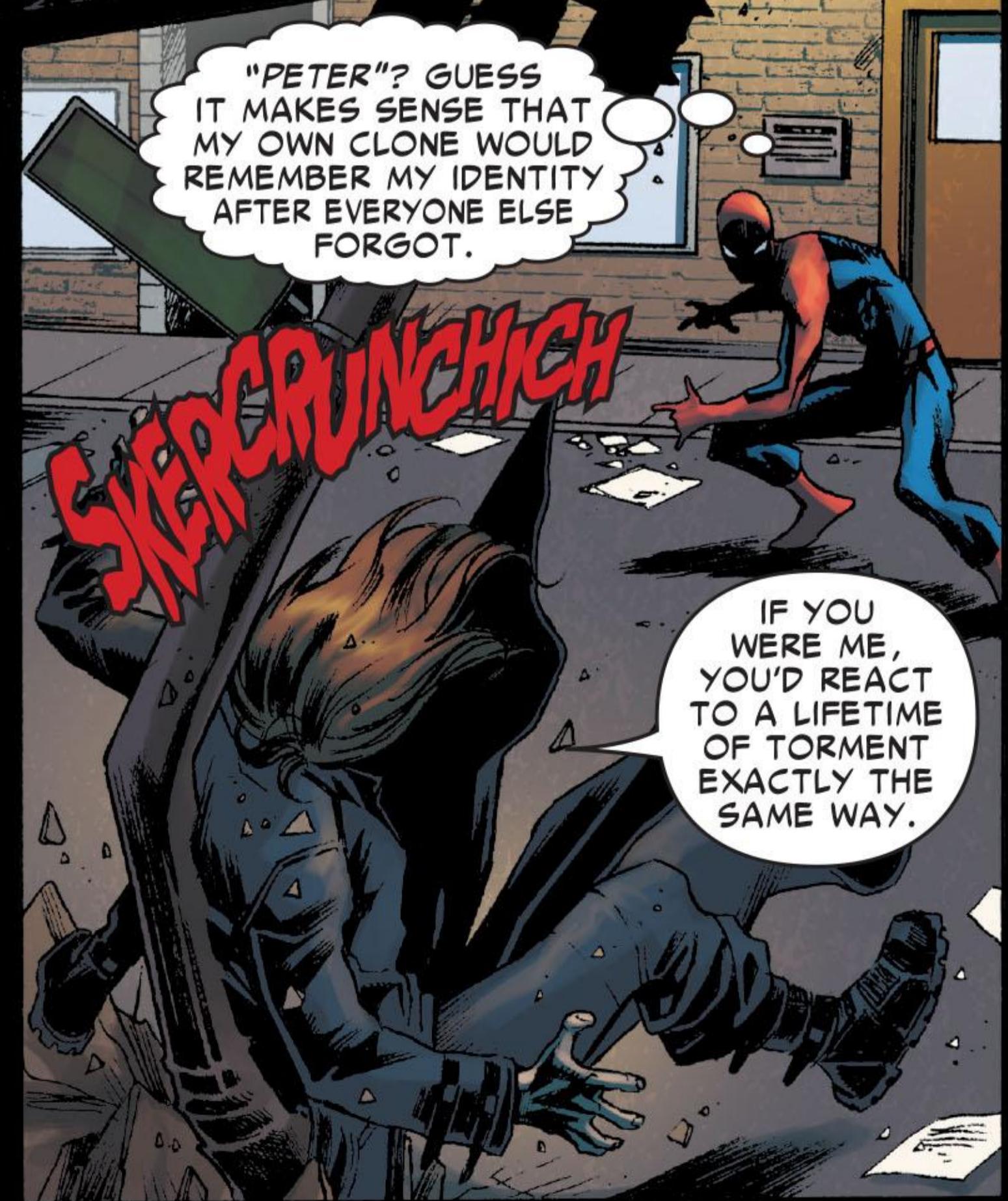
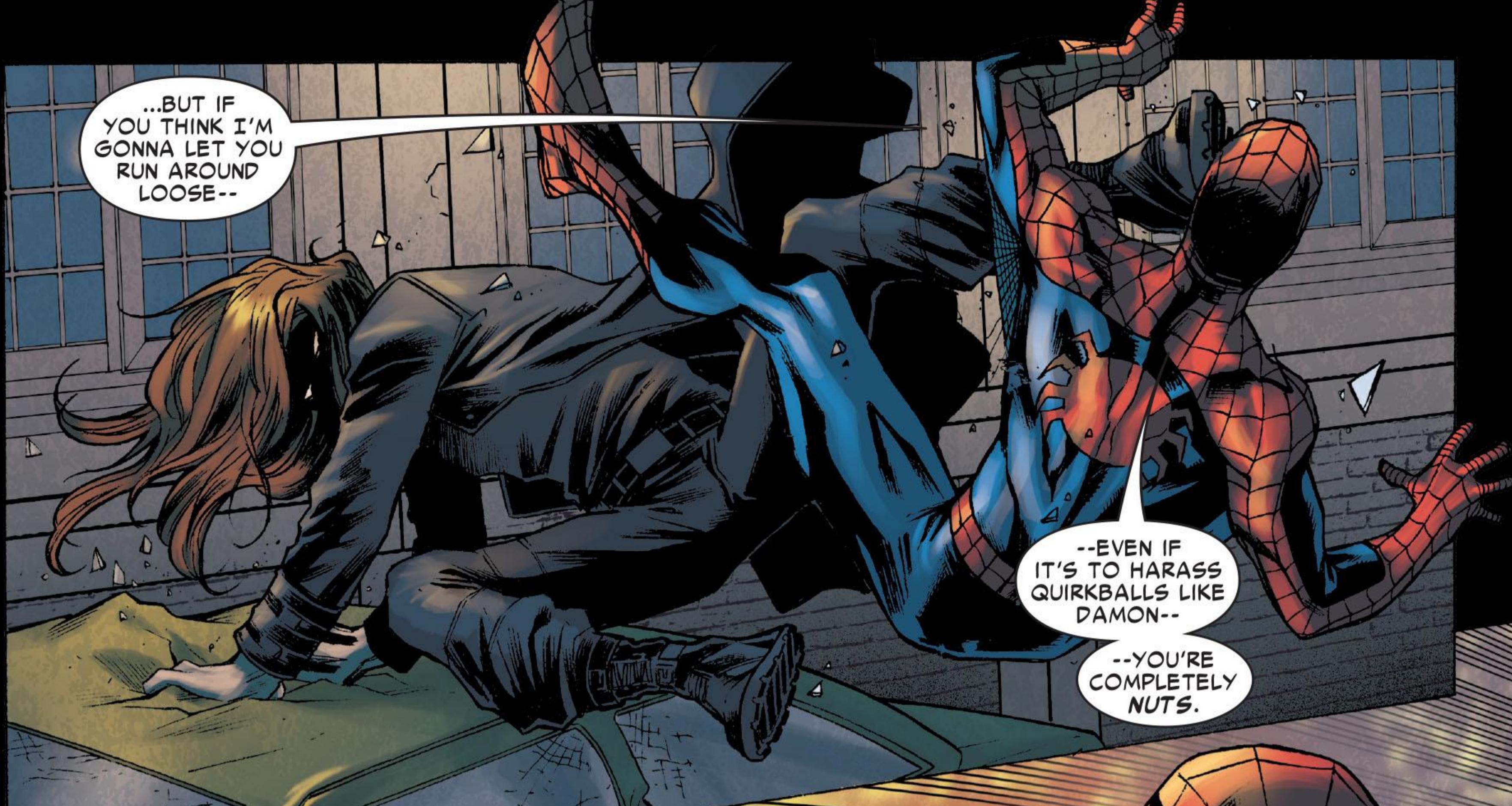
THIS ISN'T A
RESEARCH PROJECT
ANYMORE, BEN. THIS
IS NO LONGER SOME
QUIXOTIC ATTEMPT TO
PROVE A DINOSAUR/MAN
HYBRID'S THE
MISSING LINK.

THIS HAS
MEDICAL
APPLICATION. MILITARY
APPLICATION. THIS IS
PHARMACEUTICALS
FOR THE TWENTY-
FIRST CENTURY
AND BEYOND.

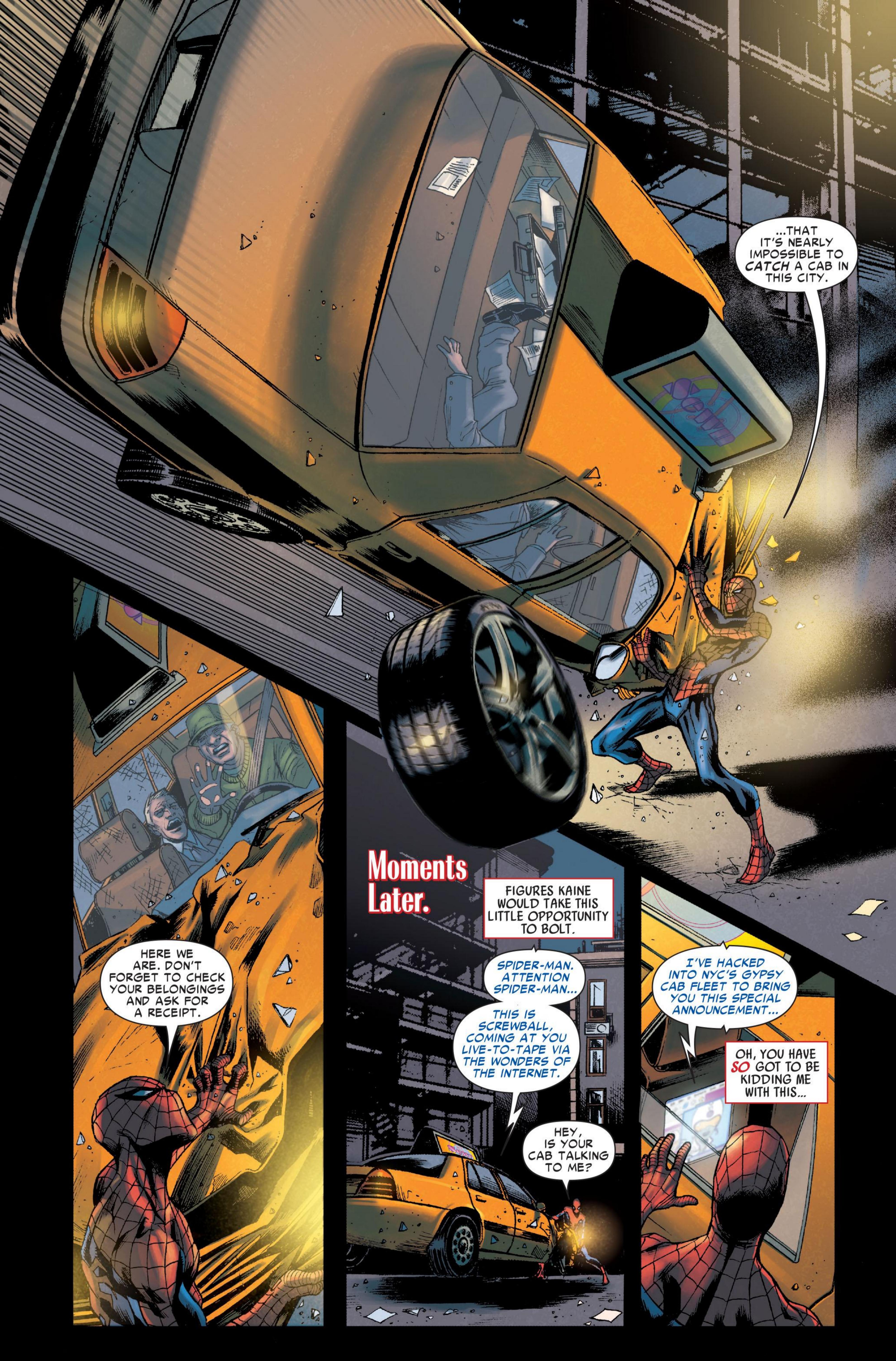
THIS IS
TWO TRILLION
DOLLARS A
YEAR--

THIS IS
YOU OUT OF
CONTROL,
DAMON!









...THAT
IT'S NEARLY
IMPOSSIBLE
TO CATCH A CAB IN
THIS CITY.



Moments Later.

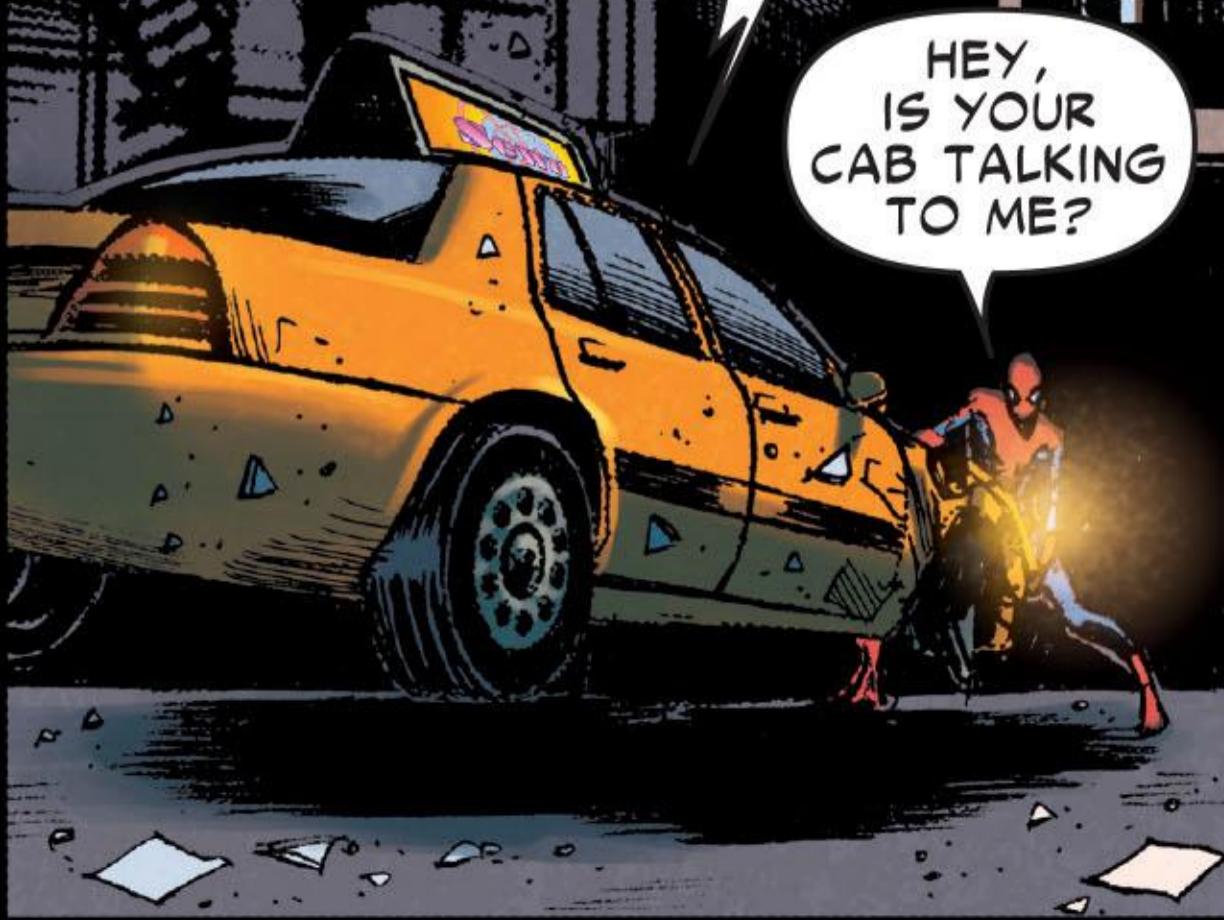
FIGURES KAINES
WOULD TAKE THIS
LITTLE OPPORTUNITY
TO BOLT.

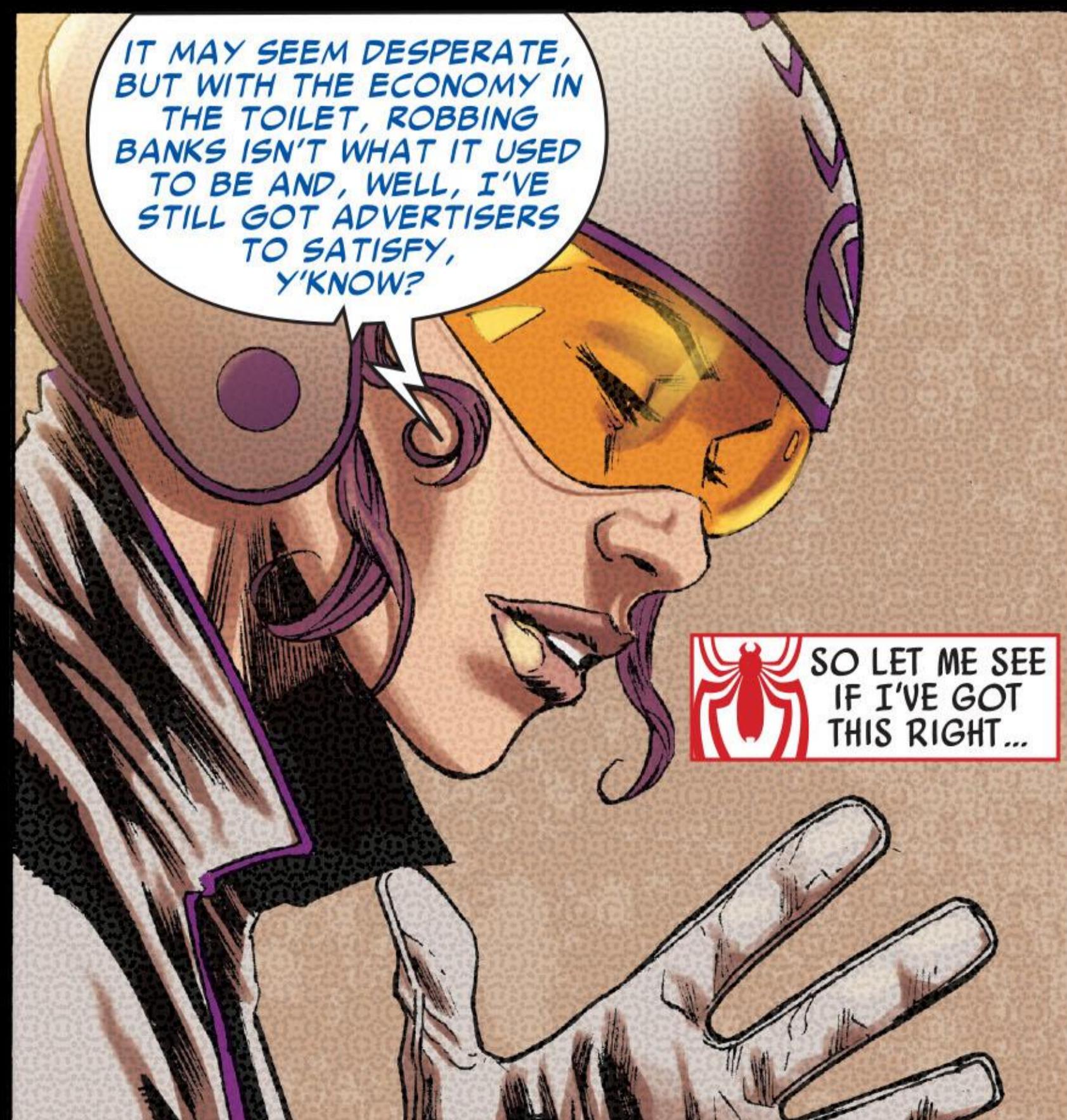
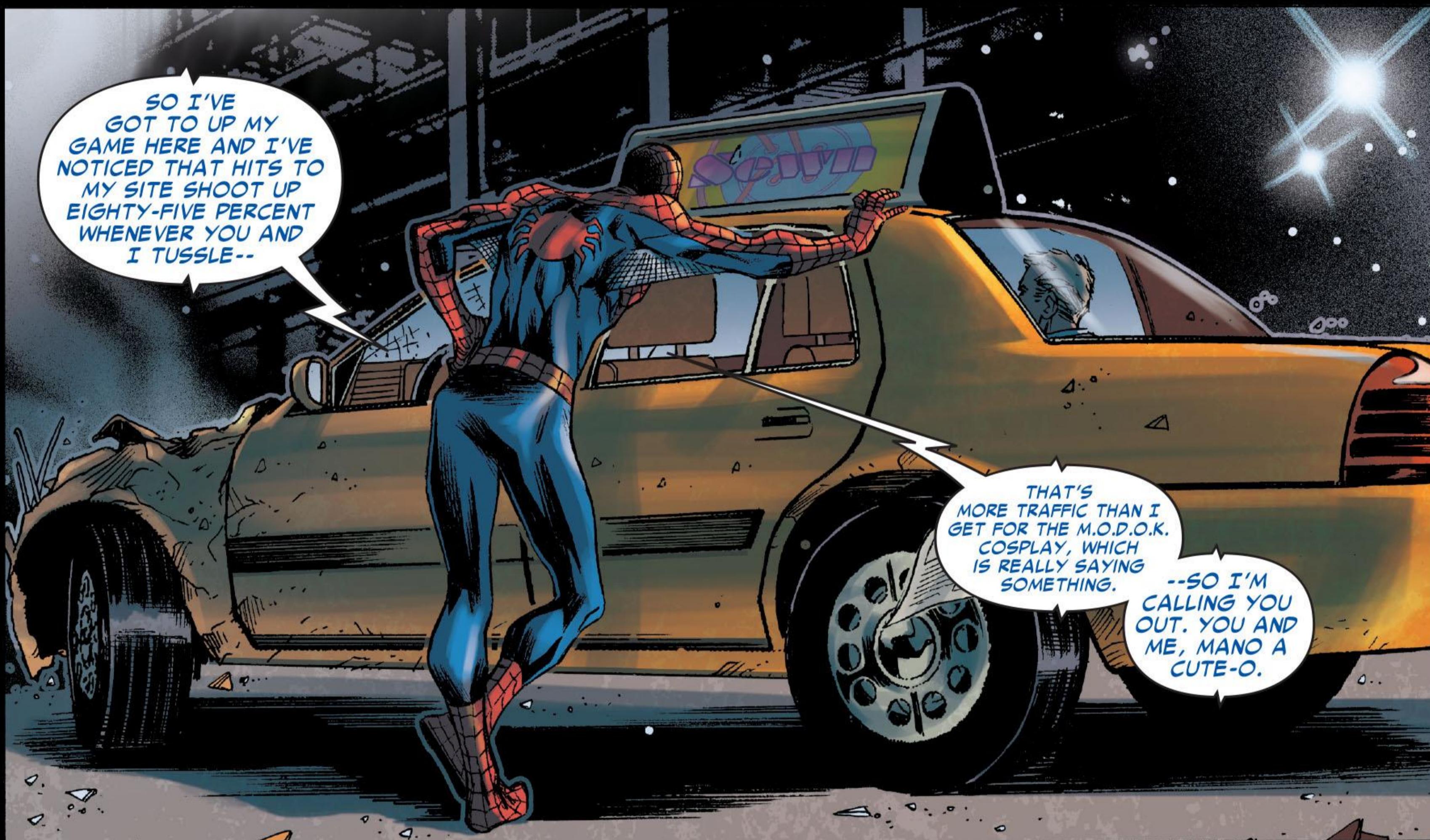
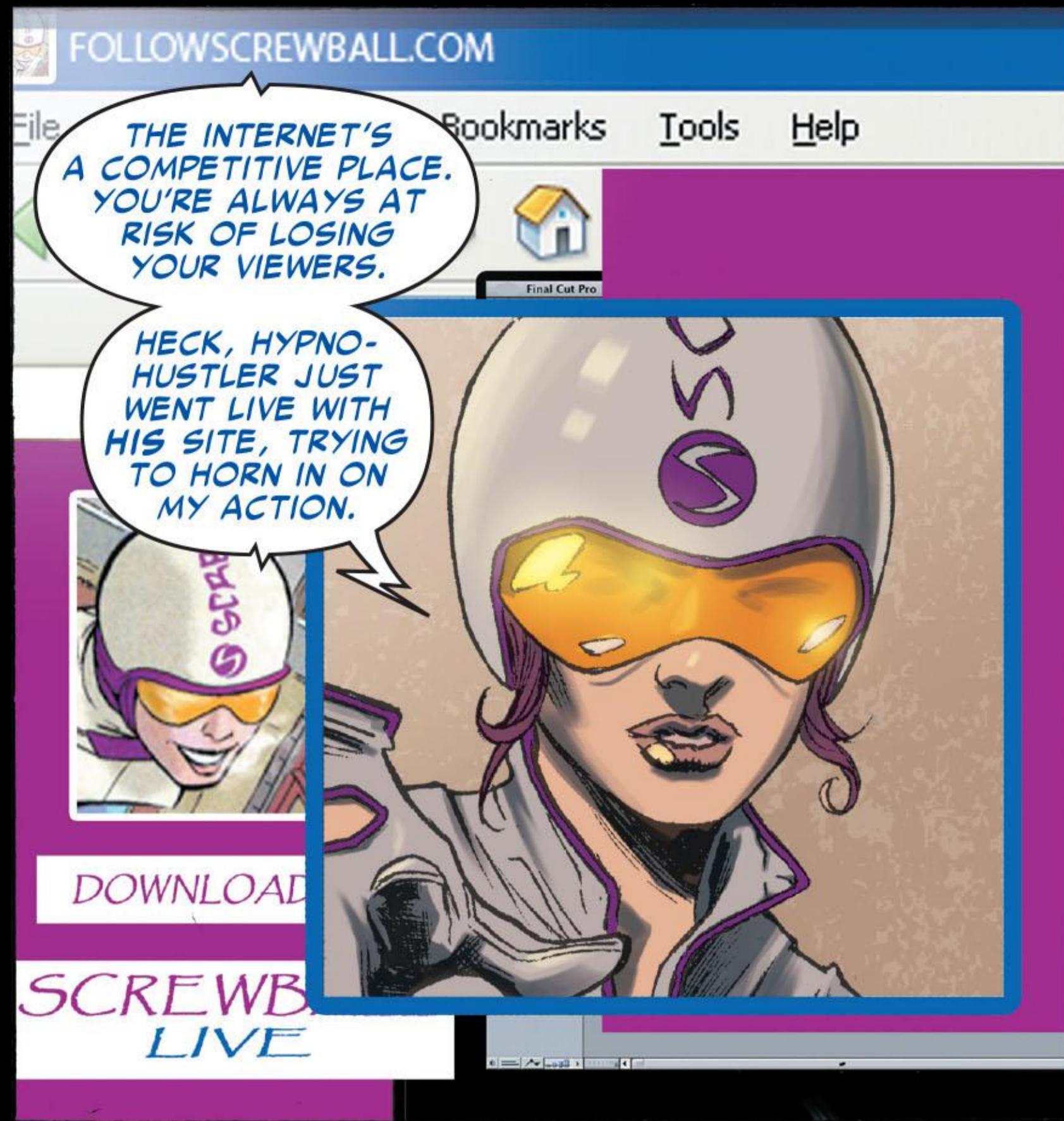
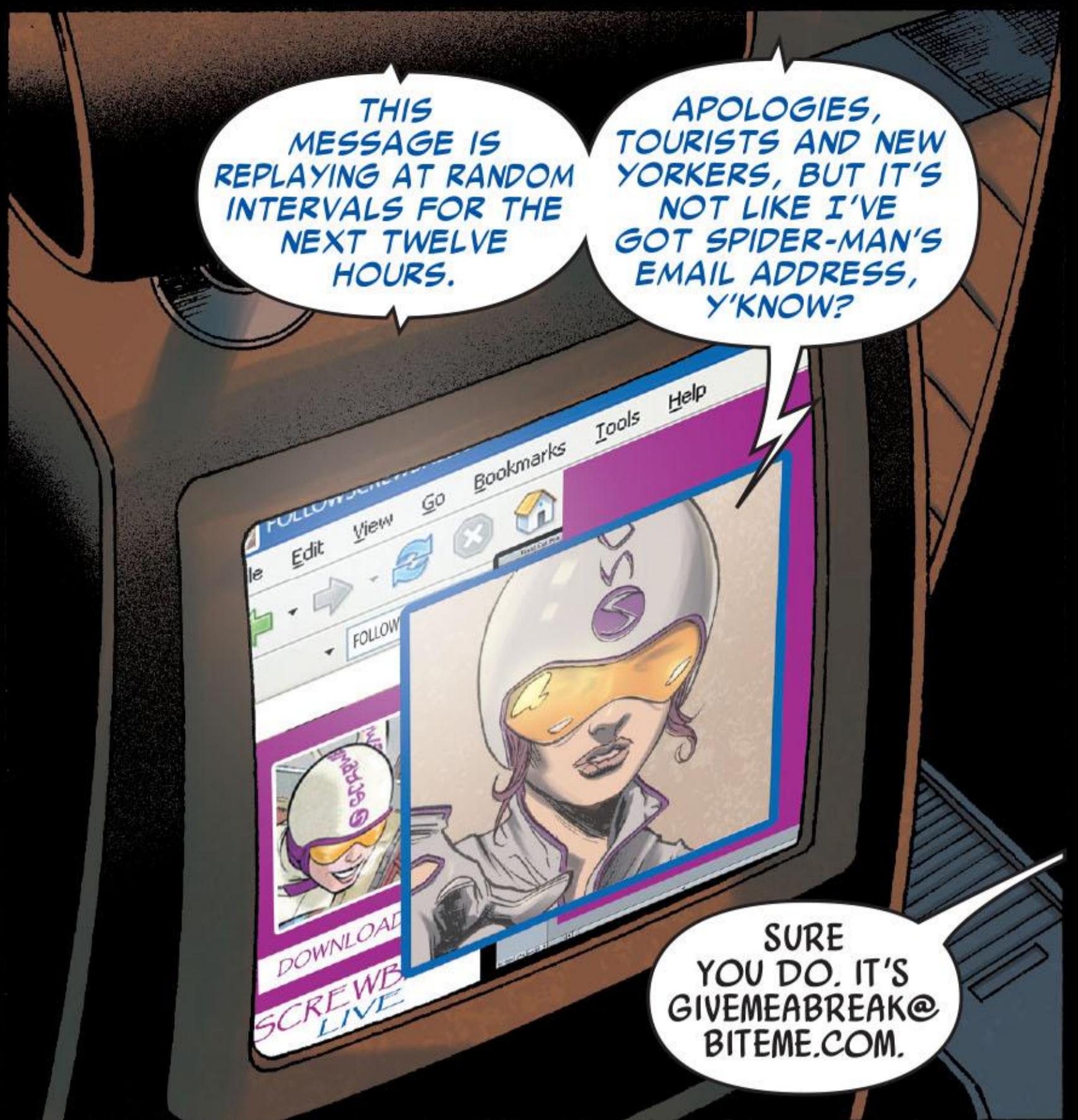
SPIDER-MAN.
ATTENTION
SPIDER-MAN...

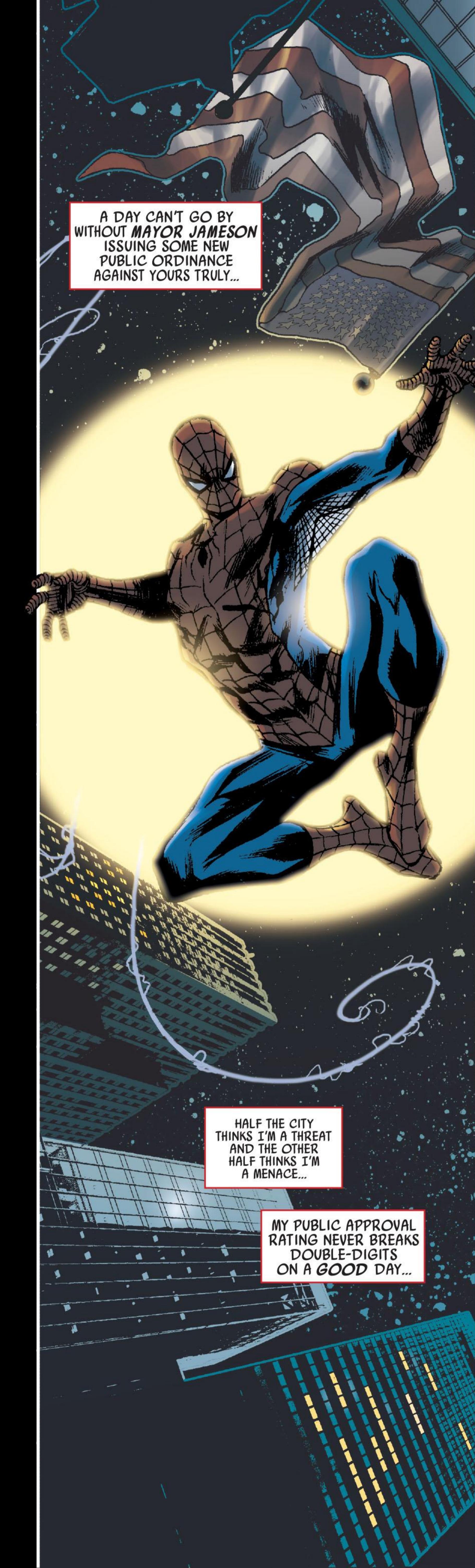
THIS IS
SCREWBALL,
COMING AT YOU
LIVE-TO-TAPE VIA
THE WONDERS OF
THE INTERNET.

I'VE HACKED
INTO NYC'S GYPSY
CAB FLEET TO BRING
YOU THIS SPECIAL
ANNOUNCEMENT...

OH, YOU HAVE
SO GOT TO BE
KIDDING ME
WITH THIS...





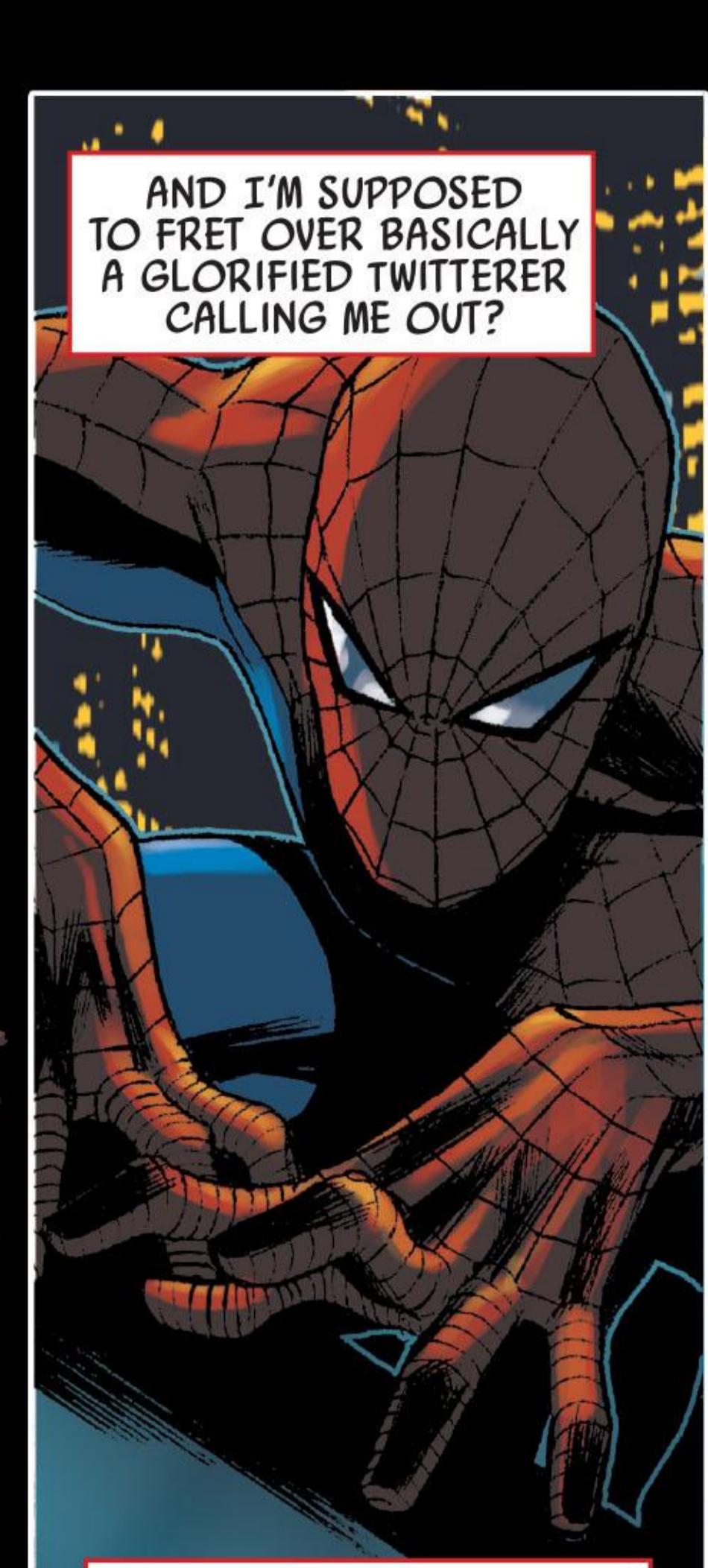


A DAY CAN'T GO BY WITHOUT MAYOR JAMESON ISSUING SOME NEW PUBLIC ORDINANCE AGAINST YOURS TRULY...

AND I'M SUPPOSED TO FRET OVER BASICALLY A GLORIFIED TWITTERER CALLING ME OUT?

LESS CLOSED, OF COURSE, IS KAIN. THE CLONE DANGER IS IN THE WIND, OF COURSE.

AND DAMON NEVER BOthered to come back to his secret lab/ whatnot. Equally of course.



NOW I KNOW WHY SHE CALLS HERSELF "SCREWBALL." CASE CLOSED.

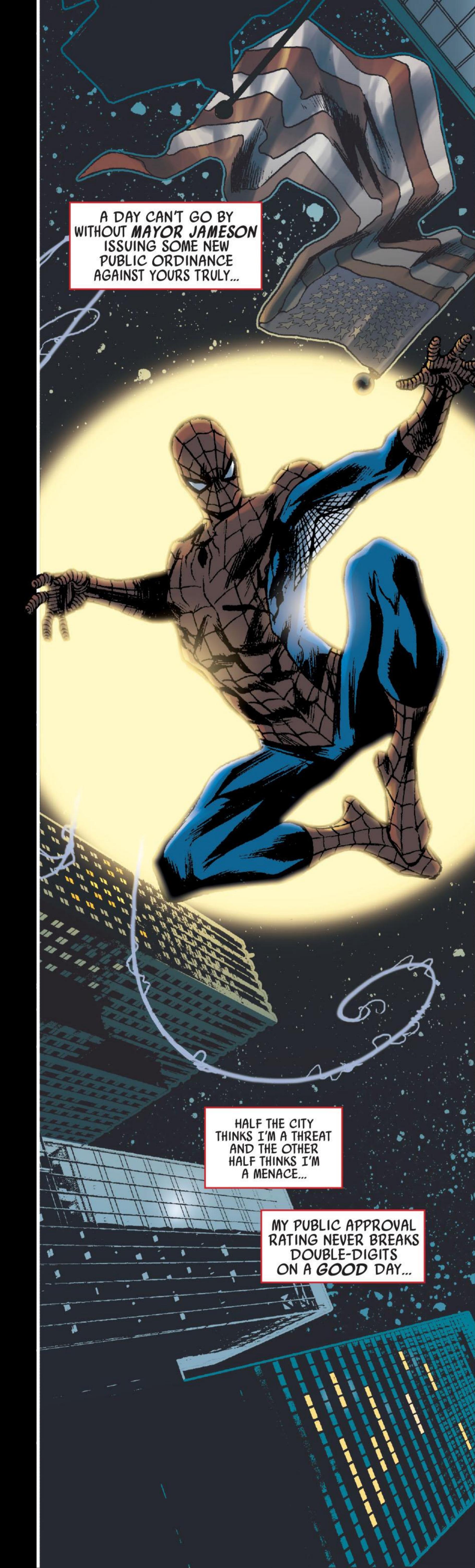


WHICH BEGS THE QUESTION: EXACTLY WHERE IS-HE--?



HEY, I'M HOME. PLEASE WARN ME IF YOU'RE GOING TO HIT--

WHAT'S THIS?



HALF THE CITY THINKS I'M A THREAT AND THE OTHER HALF THINKS I'M A MENACE...

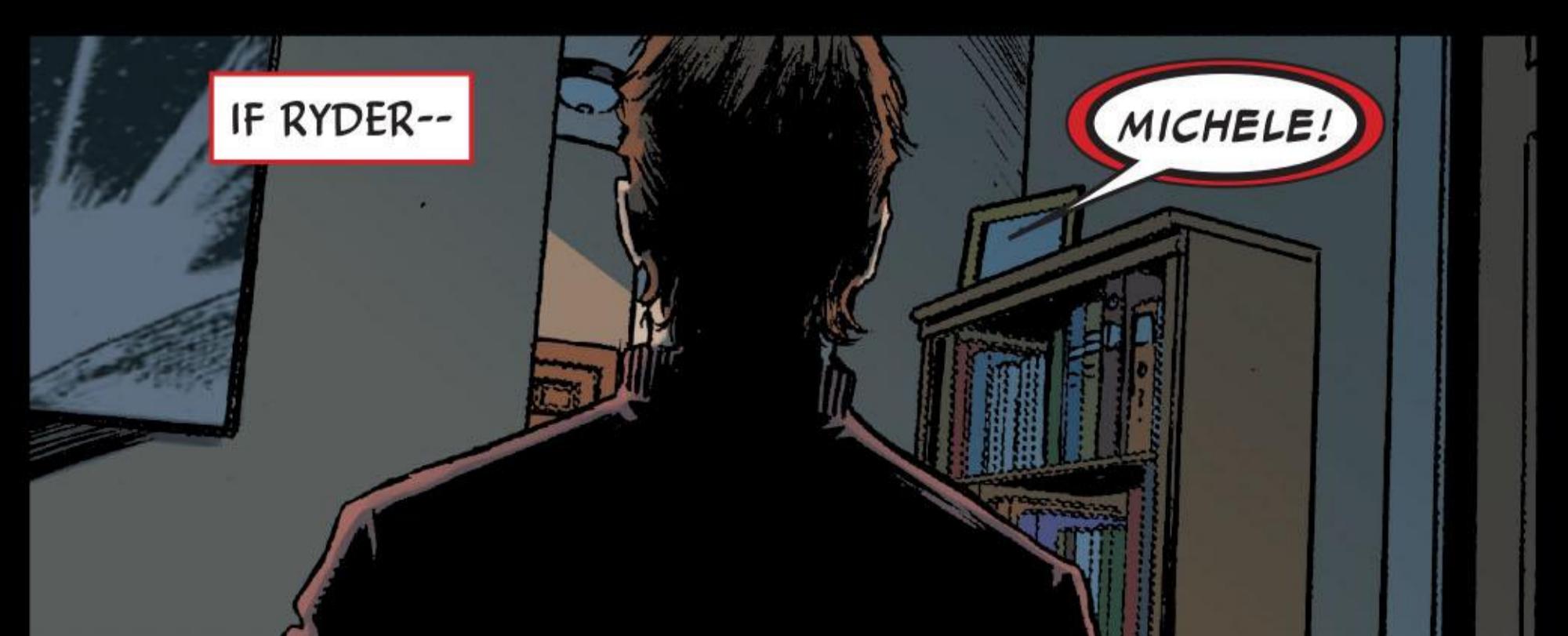
MY PUBLIC APPROVAL RATING NEVER BREAKS DOUBLE-DIGITS ON A GOOD DAY...



THE PORTLAND NEWS. THIS IS THE SAME--THIS IS THE SAME ARTICLE RYDER WAS WAVING AROUND THE FRONT LINE OFFICES--

MICHELE!

LAST ISH.
--WACKER

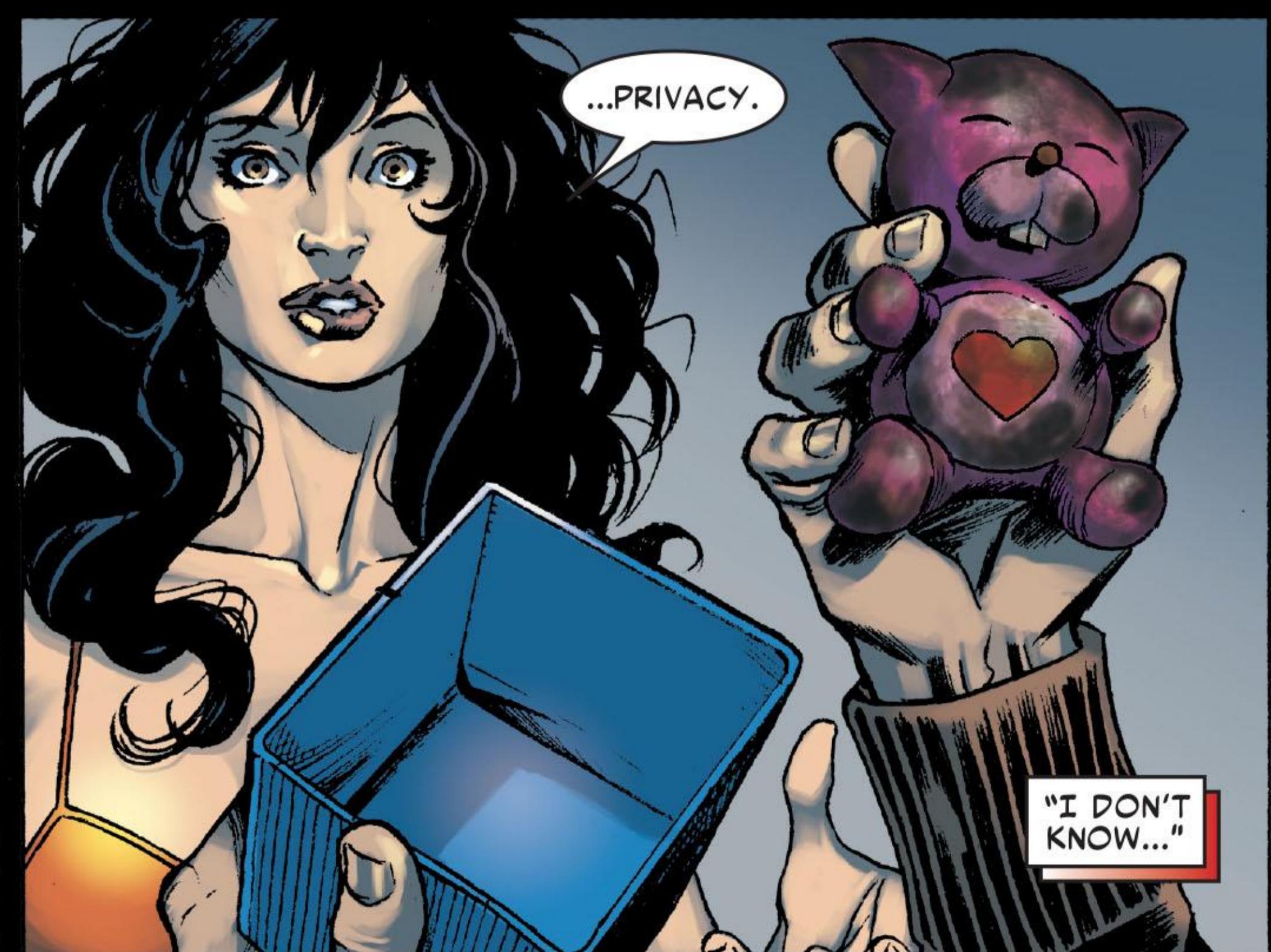


IF RYDER--

MICHELE!







Then.

NO ONE'S EVER INJECTED THEMSELVES WITH DINO DNA, AS FAR AS I'M AWARE--

UNLESS YOU COUNT STEGRON-- AND IF YOU SAW HOW THAT TURNED OUT, YOU'D KNOW WHY I WAS WORRIED.

HAS HE SHOWN ANY SIGNS OF INFECTION, OF SICKNESS--

JUST MOOD SWINGS-- WELL, THAT COULD BE A SIGN OF SOME INFECTIONS.

BUT GENETIC MANIPULATION WOULDN'T PRESENT AS AN INFECTION.

THEN WHAT DO YOU NEED ME FOR?

TO SEDATE HIM.

ONCE HE'S CALMED DOWN, WE'LL NEED TO CHECK HIM FOR--

SO, MISTER REILLY...

...WHERE IS HE?

"WHERE DID HE GO, MICHELE?"





Then.

I DON'T
WANT TO BOTHER
YOU AND THE KIDS,
LAURA, BUT IS
DAMON HOME?

YES,
HE'S--



WOA--
WHAT'S THE
RUSH?

SORRY, I
NEED TO SEE
HIM. WHERE
IS HE?



WHERE DO
YOU THINK?

IN HIS STUDY. HE SAID HE WASN'T
FEELING WELL. I TRIED TO GET
HIM TO LIE DOWN, BUT HE SAID
HE HAD WORK TO DO--

OKAY--

BEN,
YOU'RE
FRIGHTENING
ME--

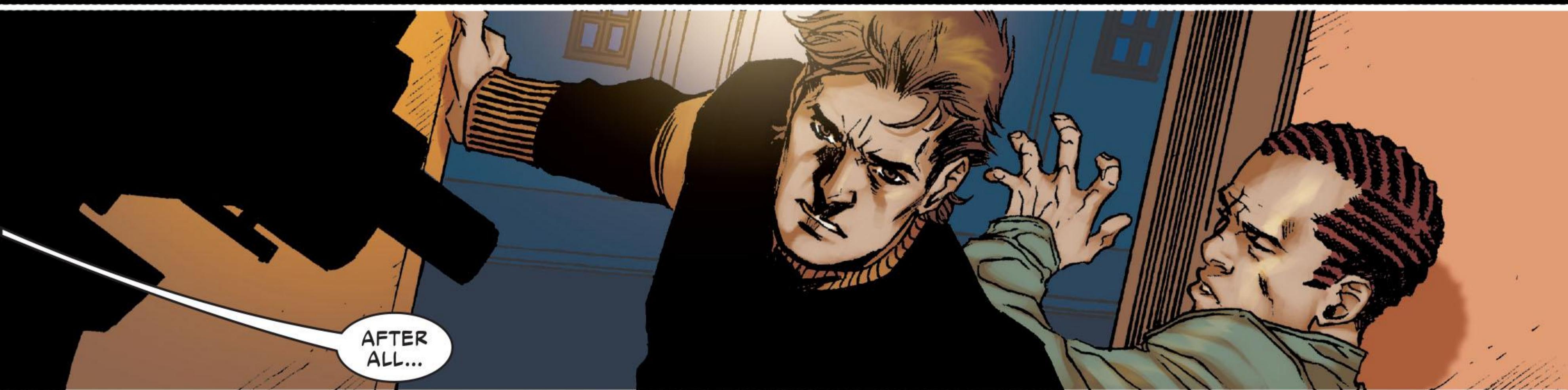


SORRY.
EVERYTHING'S FINE.
I JUST NEED TO TALK
TO DAMON ABOUT...
SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED
IN THE LAB TODAY.

EVERYTHING'S
FINE.



Now.



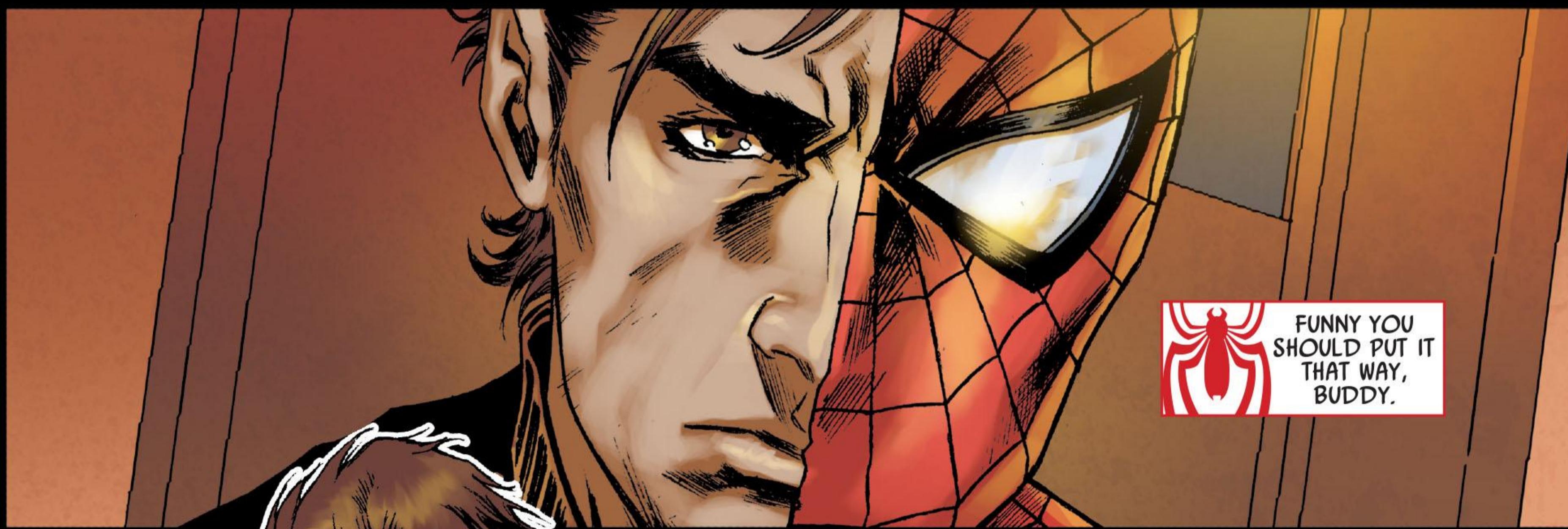


...HE'S
THE GUEST OF
HONOR.

"DAMON..."

Then.





the AMAZING SPIDER-MAIL

The letters keep rolling in on ASM #600, so let's get to it.

Dear Spider-Mail

Cracked open ASM #600 and I gotta say I loved it! First off, a tip of the hat to Mark Waid. "My Brother's Son" knew how to tug at the heart strings, good job Waid!

Loved the art throughout the book (and those covers never meant to see the light of day? HILARIOUS!) and Slott powered through all those pages with an amazing wit that's classic Spidey. "Last Legs" was genius.

Why hasn't Parker been on a real date since the start of BND? Seriously, if readers had to survive the imagery of the pruny two-backed beast, we should be rewarded with SOMETHING. It's not like there's a shortage of characters, between Norah, Carlie and even Michele Gonzales, I'm sure Petey can at least get a short dinner comically interrupted by Shocker. Look forward to answers.

Mikie Acevedo
Chicago, IL

I am appalled that you would call 599's letter column "the last letter column in an issue of ASM whose issue number begins with a 5."

Let me tell you, sir, that I have faith that this series will one day make it to a starting digit of 5 again. Apparently you don't have the faith that I do in our beloved wall-crawler. Clearly you won't be around due to your lack of faith, but I'll write back to congratulate the team in charge of issue #5000 in about 122 years (assuming you continue to publish 3 per month).

Steve Clinton.
Mathematics Instructor
Roseville High School

An excellent point, Steve. The students at Roseville high school are clearly in good – if excessively picayune – hands.

However you are clearly unaware of the many decades of work on the MarketingDepartonium FictoNominals which hypothesize a radical departure from current numbering theoretics.

Simply put, in the future (if current Gregorian Calenderical models hold steady), numericals such as your "5" will be replaced in such a manner as to make every issue a single unit representative.

In other words, in 122 years every issue will be a number 1. (I can hear Jeph Loeb's accountant dancing from here).

This issue and the excellent "American Son" storyline has set me up to keep ASM on my pull list for a long time.

I have just one question: The joke made by Spider-Man when he was in the Fantasticar with Johnny where he says, "Wahhh they had to call me in, remember?" is that in the spirit of Artie Lange?

Scott Dahl
Via e-mail

Baba Booey.

Dear Spidey-makers,

I noticed a letter in the back of your book from a fellow named "Moe" and I have to agree that the lettering on the last few issues have been stellar, though every time I REALLY liked them, I noticed Chris Eliopoulos' name was listed in the credits.

He's AWESOMESAUCE! Much better than that Caramagna slouch. Is that the same guy who writes Lockjaw and the Pet Avengers? That is awesome as well. So please pass along my congratulations to Mr. Eliopoulos. In conclusion, Caramagna is overrated and Eliopoulos is the bestest in the whole wide world.

Sincerely,
Bliss Stupidopoulos

P.S. Boo, St. Louis Cardinals.

Thanks, Bliss. It's been hard keeping Chris employed with his recent jail time and his inability to spell his last name, but it's always a pleasure to help out doddering misanthropics when I can. (You too, Brevoort!)

Oh and no, the letterer who writes *Lockjaw and the Pet Avengers* is really Todd Klein working under a pen name. Hope that helps.

PS: Hope you don't mind I took the liberty of fixing the myriad grammatical errors and wiping the mashed chicken pudding off your letter (how'd you get pudding on an e-mail? Now THAT'S sloppy). Go Cards!

Hi All,

2009 has been a big year. In March, I visited Spidey's turf, NYC for the first time, on July 1 my son (and future Spidey fan) Elias was born. and now I have waited until ASM #600 to send in my first letter.

Like many I had been eagerly anticipating ASM #600. However, on the Saturday before the issue was to be released my family, including our 3 week old son was evacuated from our home due to a series of wild fires burning here in Kelowna.

Being evacuated with a newborn is a trying experience. We were evacuated for five days. It was emotional and exhausting. On the day that we were able to return home, I made a point of stopping into my local comic shop to pick up my copy of ASM #600 and I wanted to say thank you.

That night, after sleeping only a handful of hours in the previous week, I flipped through ASM #600. I've been collecting Amazing Spider-Man comics since I was a kid and over the years I have stopped at times but something has always drawn me back. I, like many, was confused and at times unhappy with the new direction of Spidey with BRAND NEW DAY and a few other storylines. I am one of the perhaps few that appreciated the marriage of Pete and MJ and was scratching my head when you wiped it clean. So as a wearily read ASM #600, a smile broke out as on the last page Mary Jane Watson was back. This is why I wanted to thank you. The Amazing Spider-Man is once again "amazing."

You were able to take me away from the trials of my own life helping forget

about the terrible week that my family had experienced. I hope that Pete and MJ get back together, for that is something that is simply meant to be. I hope that you print this letter so that I can show it to my son as I introduce him to the Amazing Spider-Man. Congratulations on 600 amazing issues. Thank you for the great stories over the years.

Jody Nimetz
Kelowna, BC, Canada

Very sorry about your bad week, Jody. I know firsthand the stress of bringing home a newborn and can't imagine what a rough time it must have been for your family. The boy sounds like he's in good hands though and the Spidey-office sends the Nimetzes its very best. (Well I do anyway, Brennan reminds me that he raised his seven kids in his backyard, giving them agility training by having them dodge lawn darts and bowling pins 12 hours a day. Wow, the things a 44-year-old assistant editor can teach you about raising a child.)



Speaking of "Temperate" Tom Brennan, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade watchers can see the toupee'd one himself on TV this year as one of the handlers of the newly revamped Spider-Man balloon. Check your listings and find him. I'll try and post a picture here too afterwards.

I make light of Brennan a lot on this page...and in the office....and at home... and in my car....and with strangers... but this guy is all over New York doing exciting things on a daily basis, using the city as a treasure trove of events and collecting brand new experiences.

Amidst all he does, I don't know how he finds time to make my lunch, sit in with Letterman's band on the non-slide trombone and also run the Virtual Calligraphy lettering studio on top of all that. It's pretty inspiring and I'm glad to have him here.



The Spidey-Office also heard from: Harlie O'Neal; Ryan Pike from Calgary; Oliver Villar; Alex Walason; Skyland Fisher; Dylan Riley; Jeffrey Hart Peterson (Sorry you hate the Osborn hair. I think it's incredibly distinctive); Jason Jackson (who wants a Spidey Omnibus starting with issue #546—anyone else?); Francesco Vanagolli; Ken McFarlane; Lex Thompson; Marcelino Padrón Palau; Kevin Nichols Davis; David Strickhouser; Jesus Feliciano, and Rodrigo Cano.



See you in a couple weeks for the conclusion of "Who Was Ben Reilly"!

Viva Templar!
Simperin' Steve
10/1/09 – Give 'em hell, Grandpa Clarence.