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the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN



THE DB! FOR EVERY BRAND NEWS DAY!



SPIDER-MAN NO MORE? WITH NO SIGN OF THE WEB-HEAD THESE PAST TWO MONTHS AND J. JONAH JAMESON'S SUDDEN ASCENT TO POWER, DB SOURCES BELIEVE HE MAY HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN MAKING THE HERO DISAPPEAR. IS OUR NEW MAYOR A MURDERER? MORE ON PAGE Y46!

APRIL 22, 2009

WEDNESDAY

IT'S JONAH!



Mayor J. Jonah Jameson. Yes, THE J. Jonah Jameson is mayor of New York. How did it happen? When we last saw Jonah J., he was recovering from a heart attack and wondering what to do with his life now that his wife Marla sold the Daily Bugle out from under him to the king of slimeball journalism, Dexter Bennett. How did he turn it all around? Spidey couldn't tell you — he and the FF were busy quelling civil unrest in the Macroverse, a dimension who's time stream so differs from our own that a short mission cost them two months on Earth! And everyone knows two months in the life of Peter Parker, ANYTHING can change — his rent, his love life, even his circle of friends, a base slightly expanded when Peter begrudgingly unmasked to the Fantastic Four. But the big problem remains clear — J. Jonah Jameson, former Stalin-esque boss to Peter Parker and archenemy to Spider-Man, is now Chief Executive of New York City. It's time for Pete to make his next move.

UNDERWORLD UNDER SIEGE!

By Betty Brant

What began as a few seemingly unrelated gangland murders have escalated to a full-fledged spree, as crime organizations across the city have seen their numbers depleted by ruthless and indiscriminate means. The attacks, at first thought to be coincidental animal slayings, have formed a pattern all too obvious to NYPD sources. "Whatever this thing is — it ain't human, but it's clearly got a strategy." Said one NYPD officer, speaking on condition of anonymity. The creature leaves little of his victims behind, and although...

(more on page A11)

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DEROUR

ON THE WAY TO
THE OUTBACK

-SIGH-

Move To
Sunny
TRINIDAD
ENJOY
THE
ISLAND!

n
hia

299

Eclipse
The Outback

Come Live
In The
Outback

IT'S A
PHI



PHILADEL
SEASON

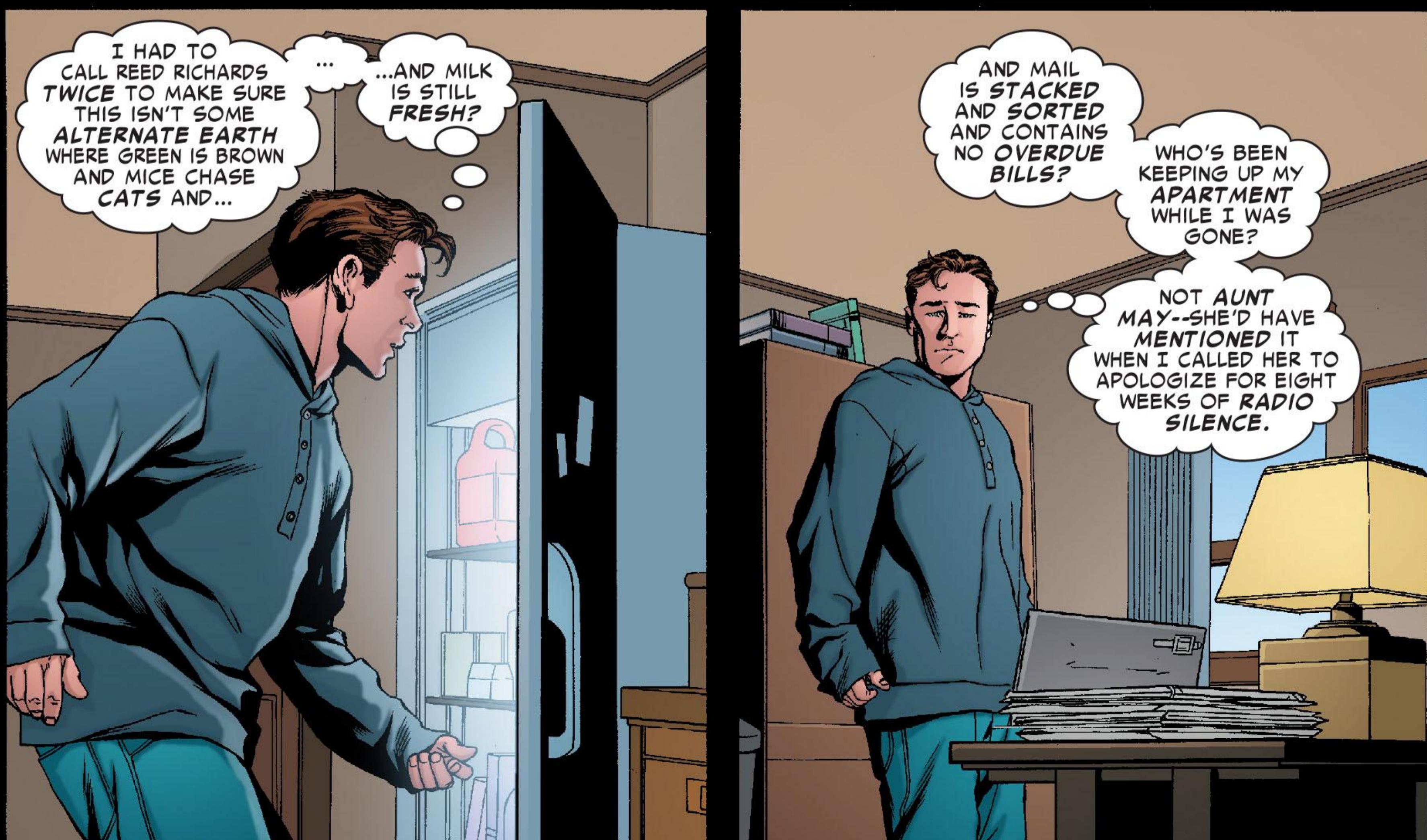
X-SERS

REEF

Alfa
TRAVEL
AVERIA

Where Life Is Good.
By Royal Decree.





24/
7

MARK
WAID
WRITER

ANDY
LANNING
INKS

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BOX
COLORS

MIKE
MCKONE
PENCILS

VC'S JOE
CARAMAGNA
LETTERS

TOM
BRENNAN
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GALE, SLOTT, GUGGENHEIM,
WAID & KELLY - WEB-HEADS

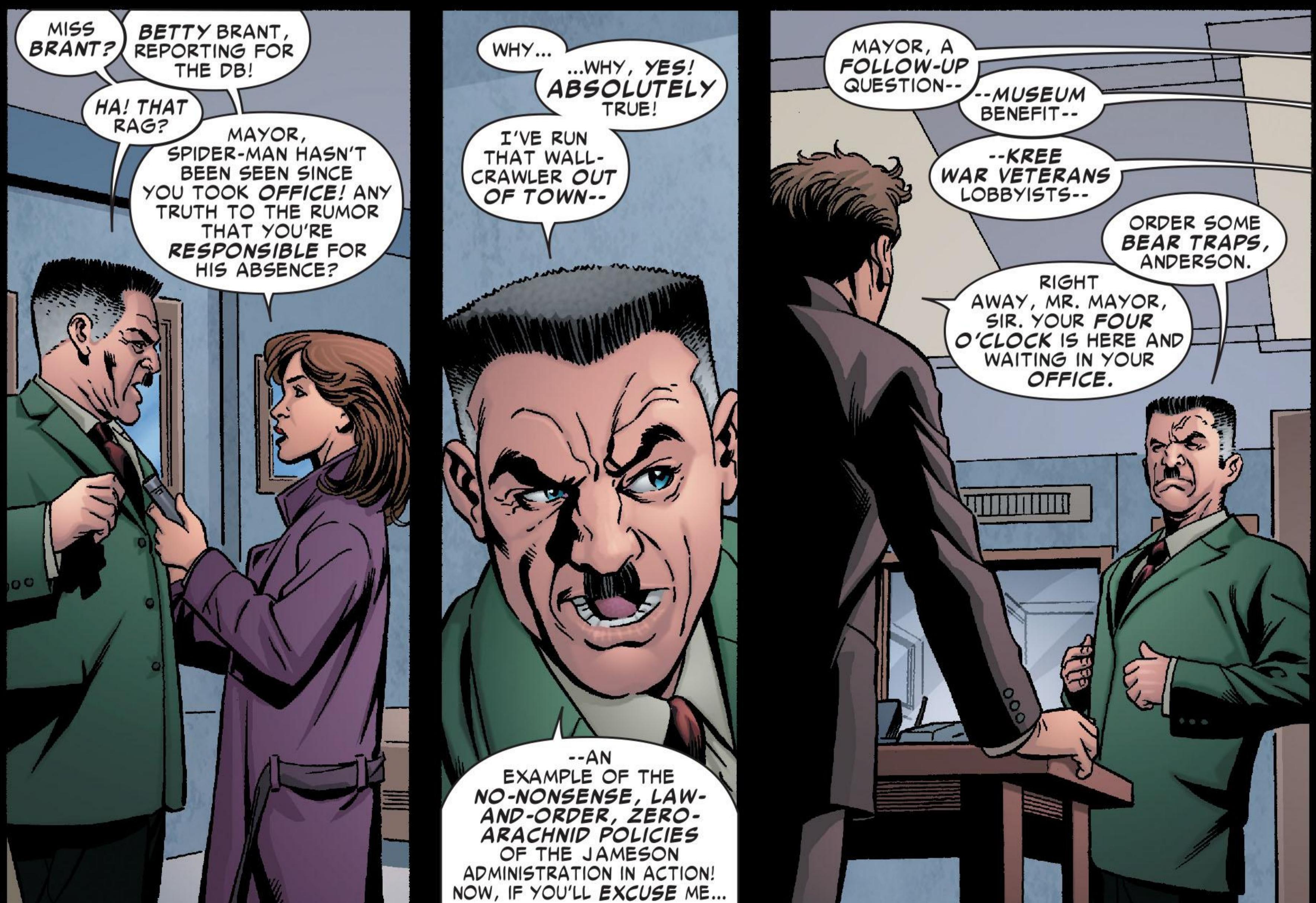


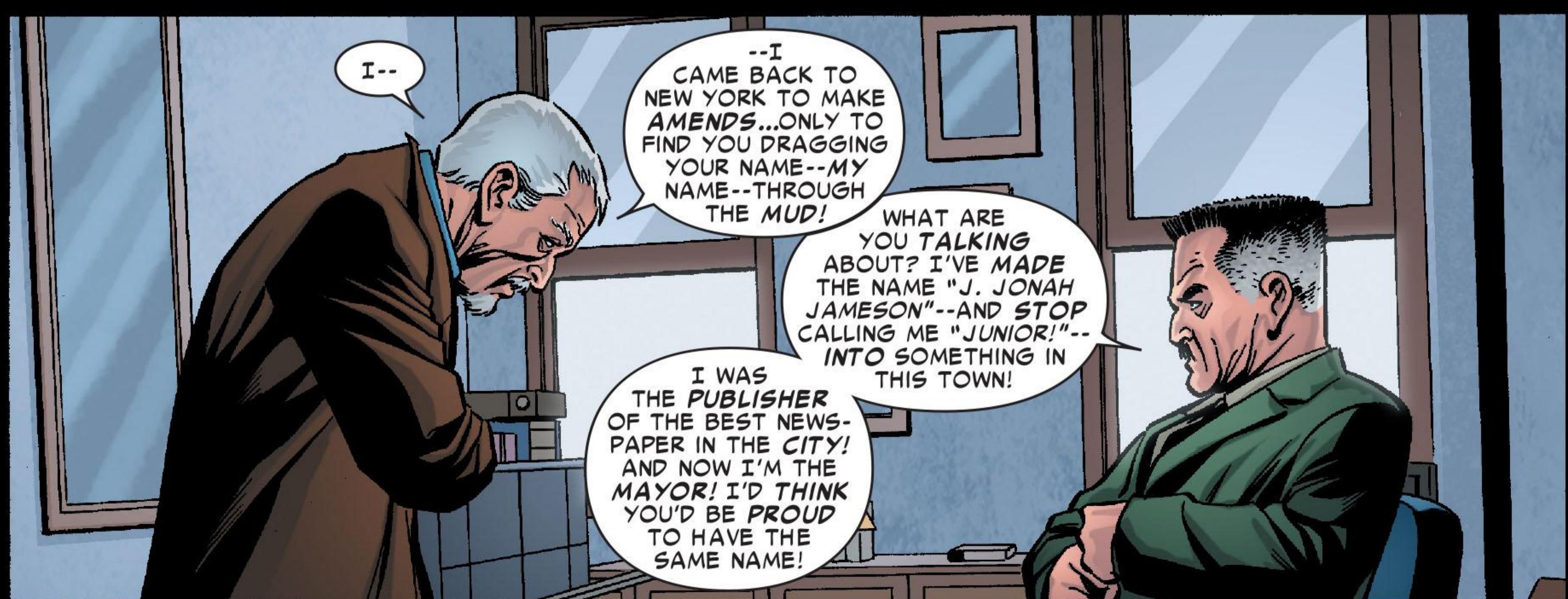
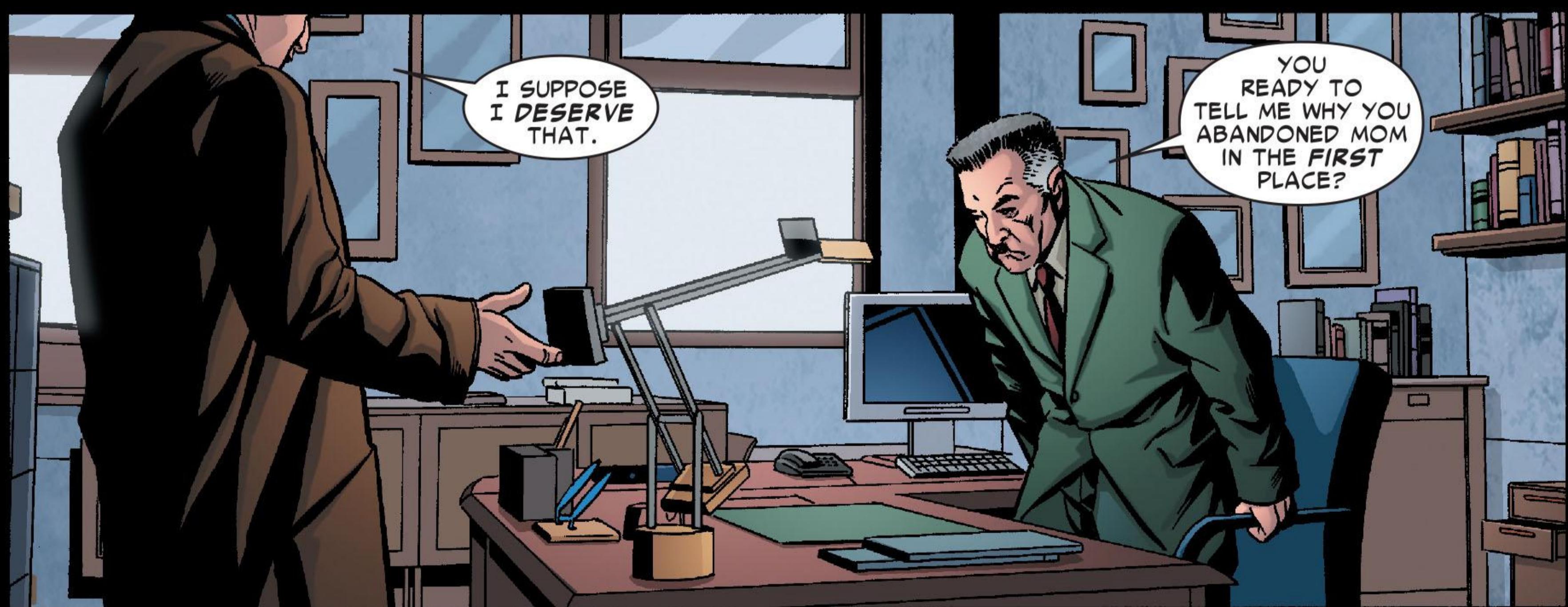


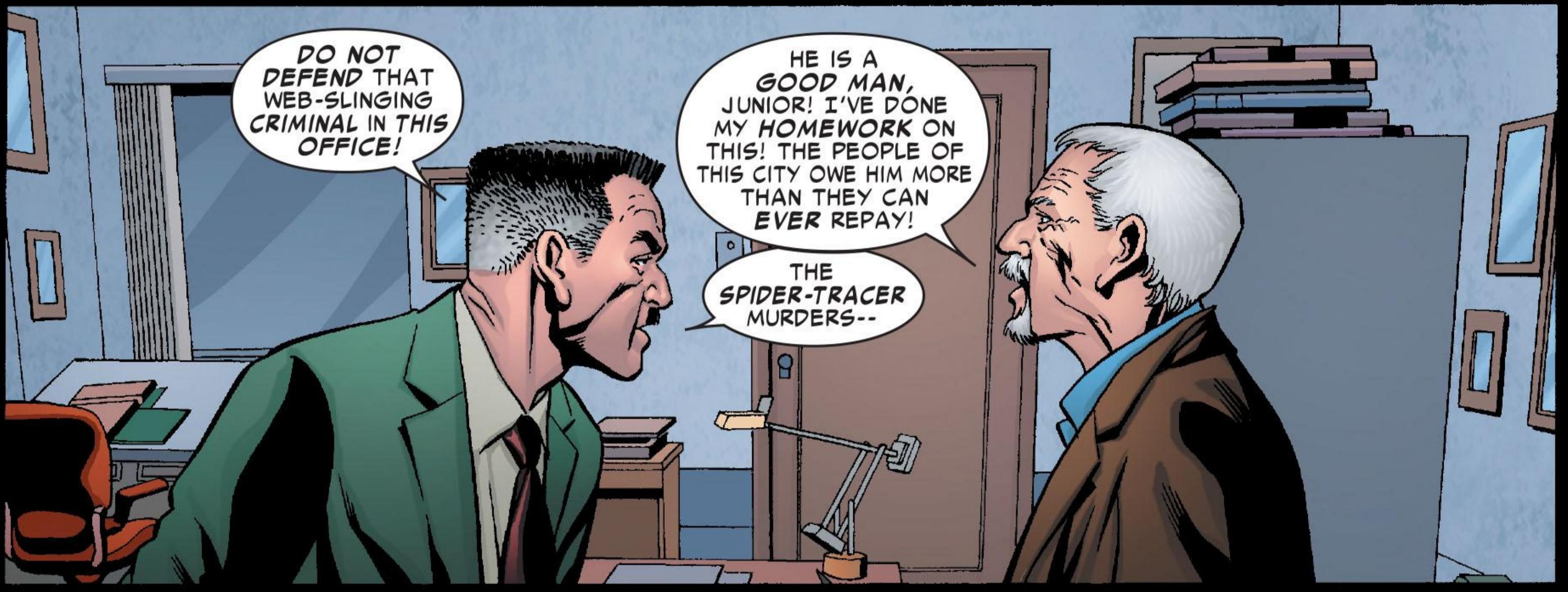
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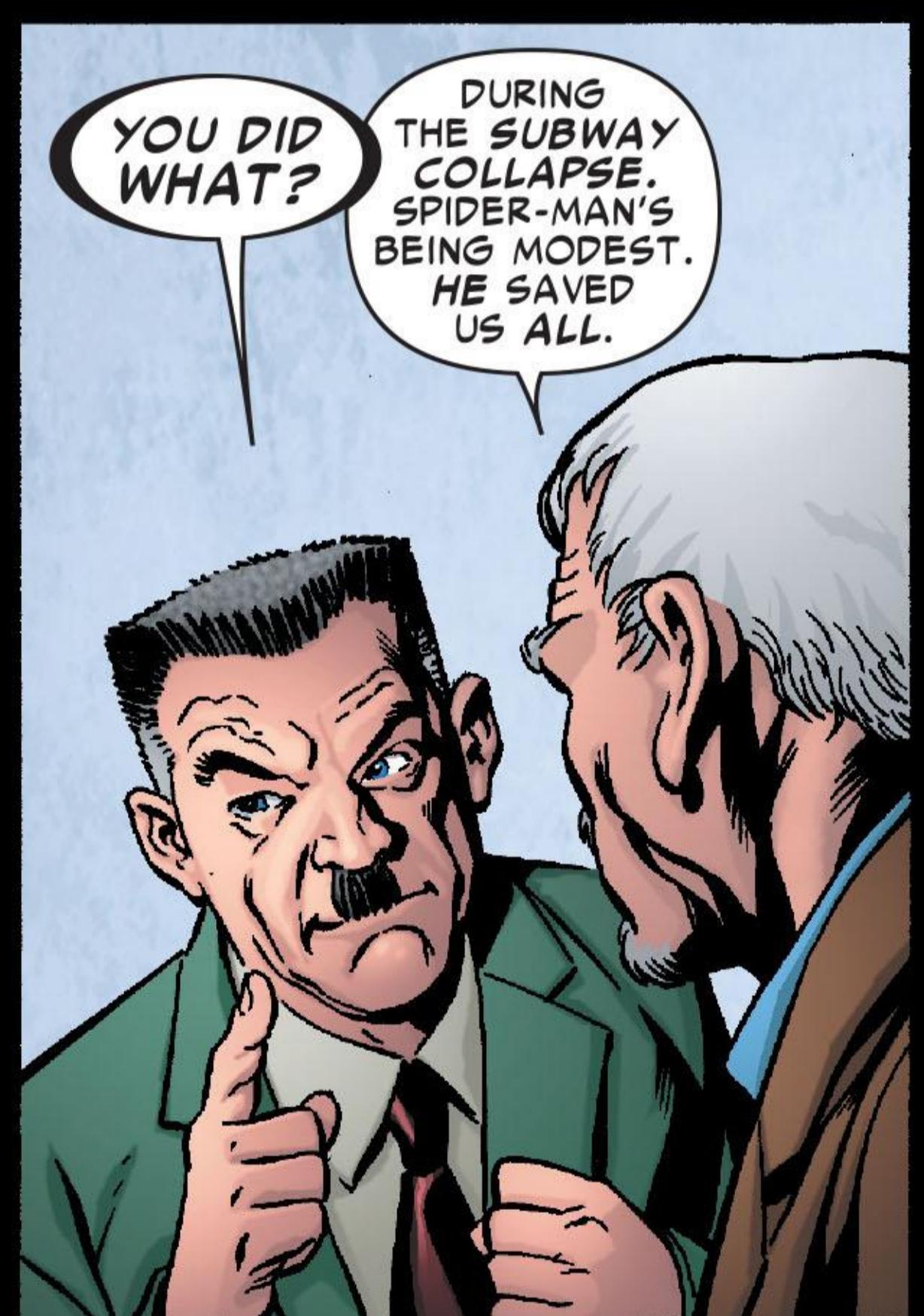
...HOW
DO ORDINARY
FOLKS GET AROUND
IN NEW YORK
TRAFFIC?

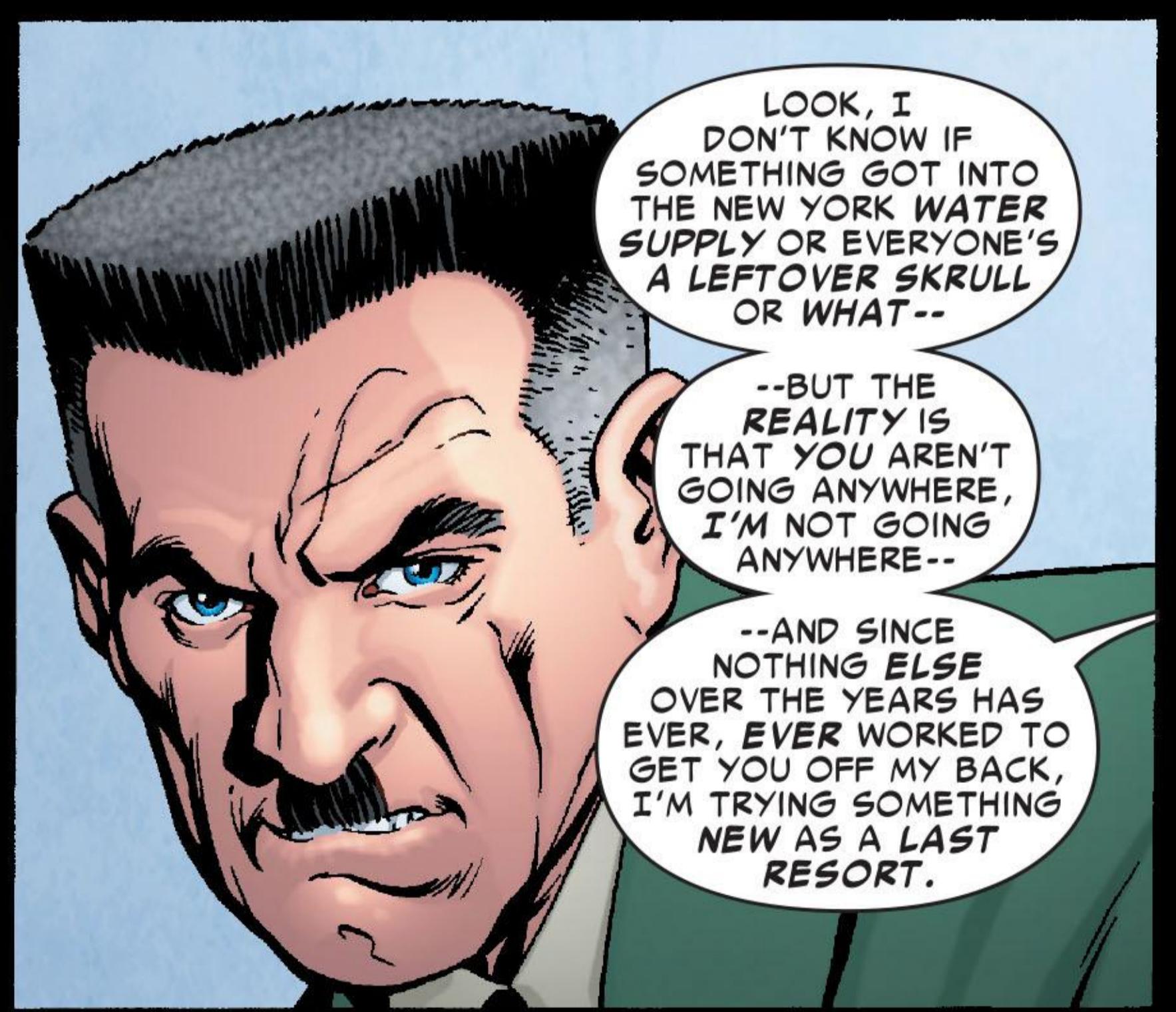
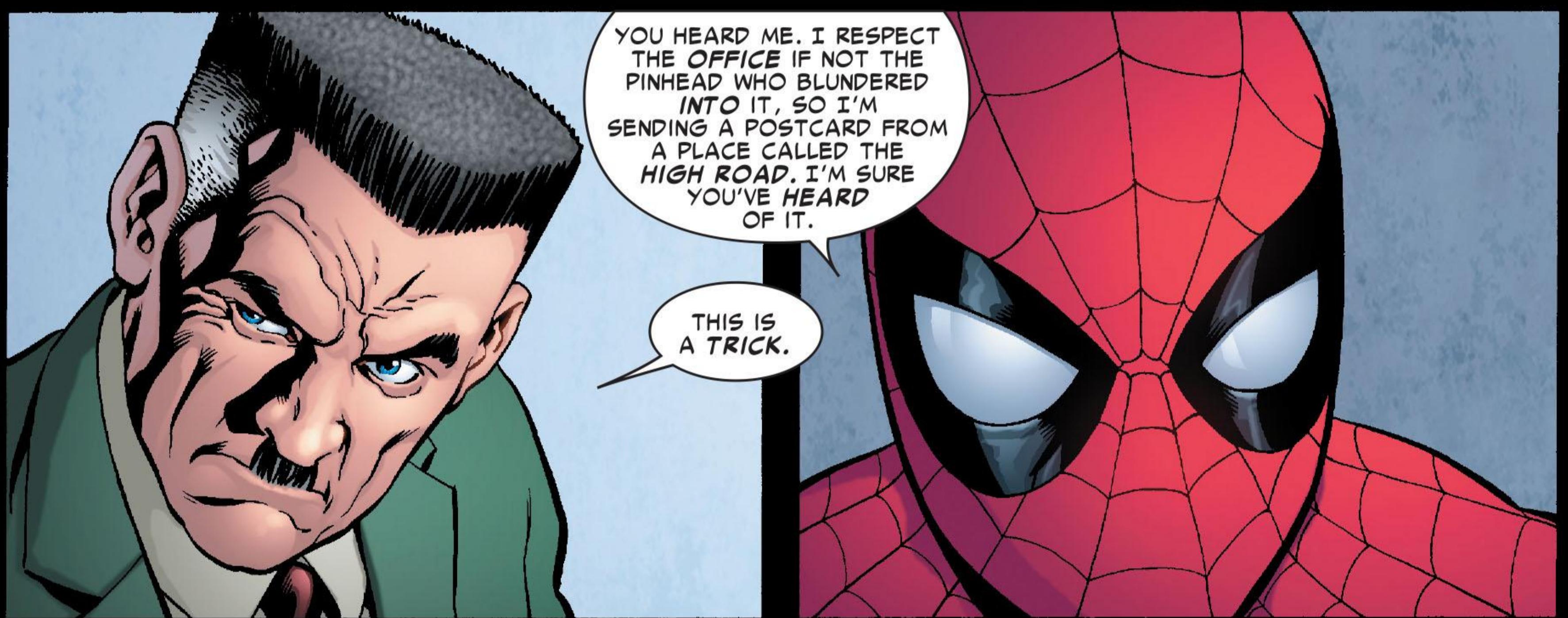
City Hall.

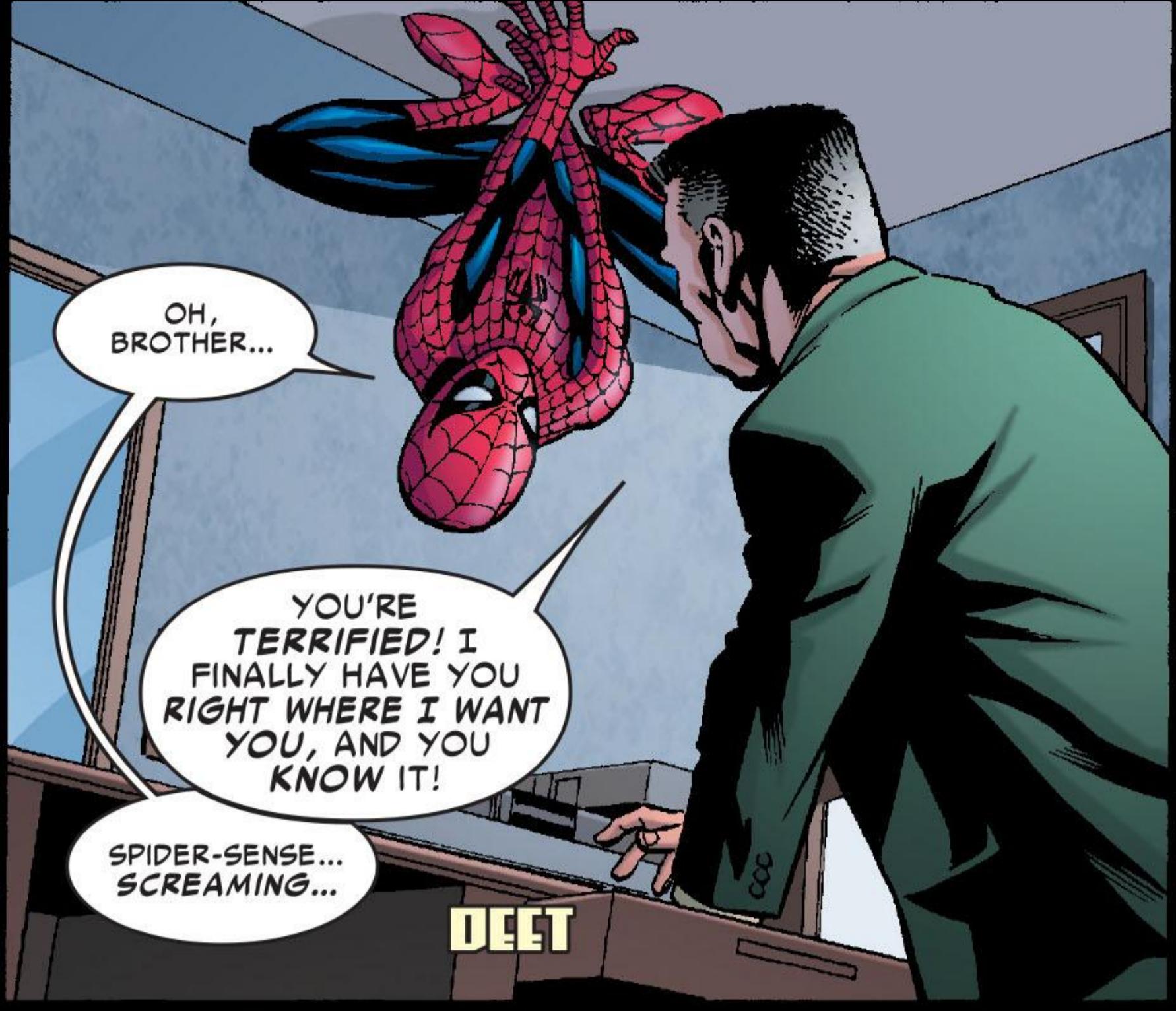














WELL...
NOW WHAT?



IT'S NEVER
BEEN LIKE THIS.
I'M USED TO BRICKBATS,
I'M EVEN USED
TO BEING WANTED
BY THE LAW OR
THE FEDS...

...BUT BEING
HOUNDED AND
HUNTED 24/7 BY A
GUY WHO'S CRAZY
ENOUGH TO IMPOSE A
TAX ON BABIES'
PACIFIERS TO
BUY BULLETS...
WOW.

EVERY
DAY I'M AT
LARGE, IT'S ONLY
GONNA MAKE
JONAH
ANGRIER...

SLEEPY'S
The Mattress Professionals®

...HEH...

...IN FACT,
IT'LL DRIVE HIM
NUTS. HAVING
SPIDER-MAN IN HIS
FACE MORNING, NOON
AND NIGHT WOULD
ABSOLUTELY MAKE
JONAH LOSE HIS
MIND!

Y'KNOW,
IT'S NOT LIKE
PETER PARKER HASN'T
BEEN OFF THE GRID FOR
WEEKS ALREADY AND
DOESN'T SEEM TO BE
MISSSED--WHAT'S A FEW
MORE DAYS?

LOOK
OUT, BIG APPLE!
AS OF THIS
MOMENT--

--YOUR
FRIENDLY
NEIGHBORHOOD
SPIDER-MAN IS
ON SWING-
SHIFT!





THE DB

BRENNAN DENIES ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT more

ONLINE EDITION

SPIDER-MAN THWARTS ARMED ATTACK

The New York Ghost

ONLINE

LAST UPDATE 5:52 PM

SPIDEY: UPTOWN, DOWNTOWN, CROSSTOWN

HOME
METRO
SPORTS
CONTACT

FRONT LINE ONLINE

SPIDEY TO THE RESCUE

HOME
METRO
SPORTS
CONTACT
ADVERTISE WITH US

FRONT LINE ONLINE

MAYOR REDOUBLES "ANTI-SPIDER INITIATIVE" VOWS TO "ERADICATE MENACE"

THE DB

BRENNAN STILL DENIES ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT more

ONLINE EDITION

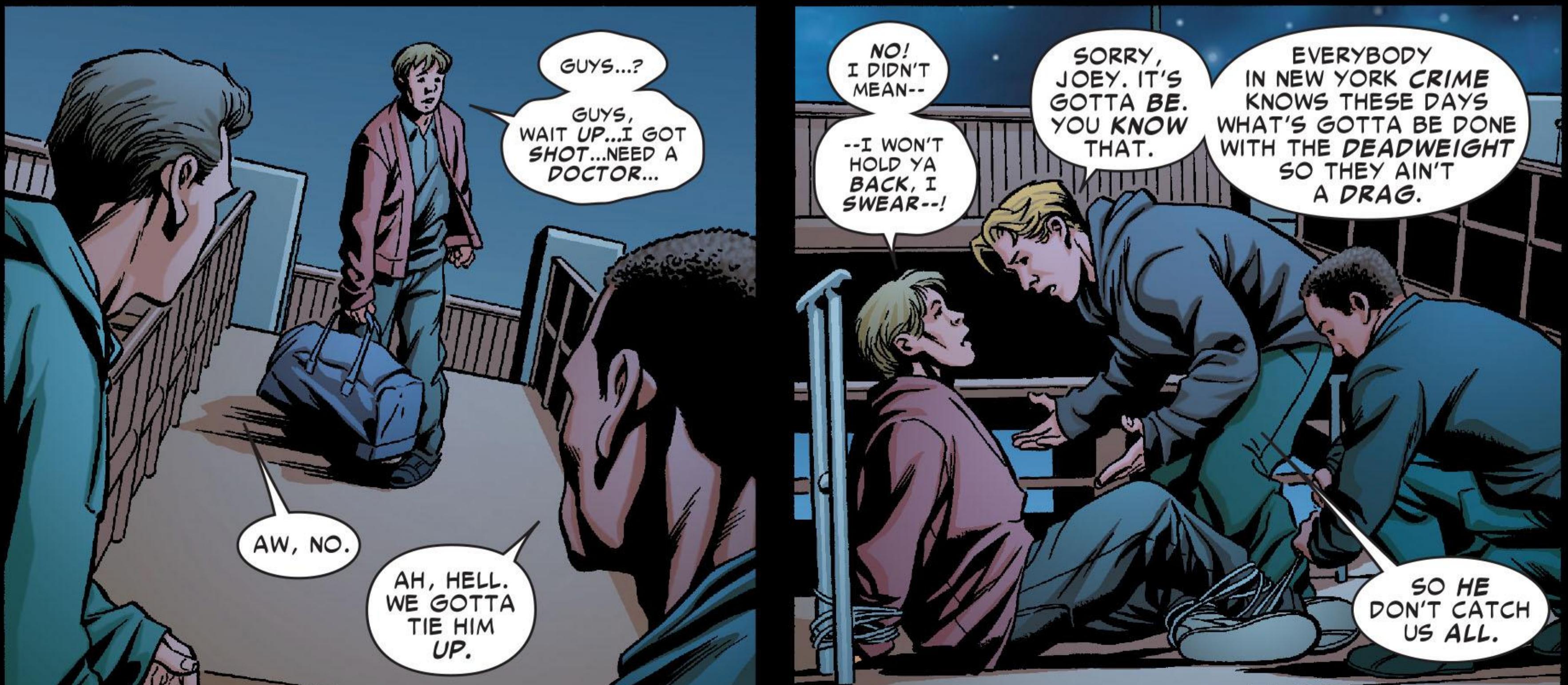
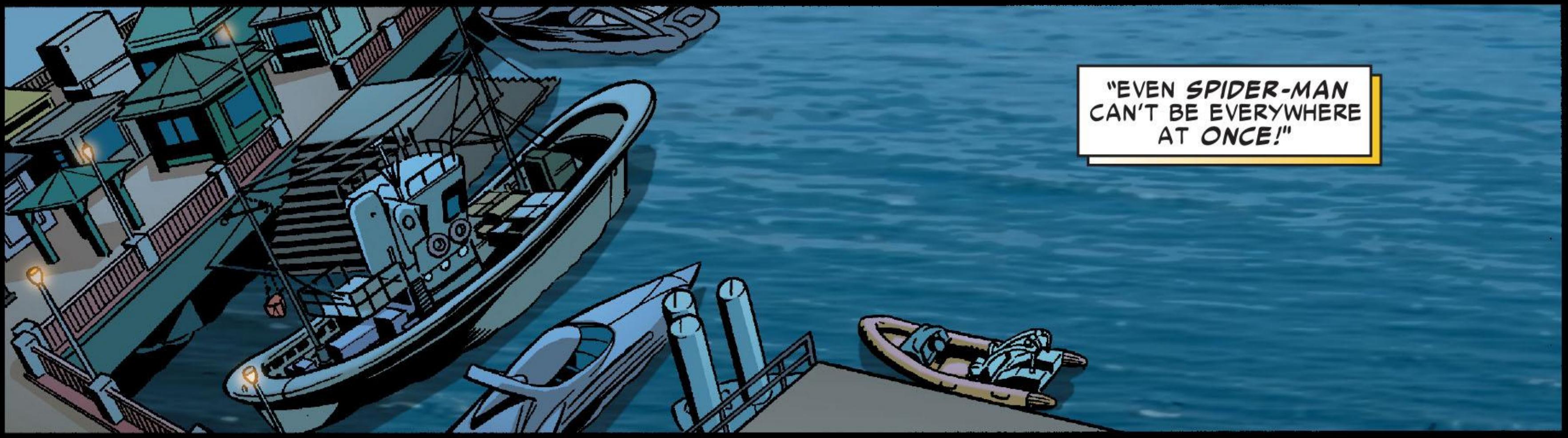
SPIDER-MAN STOPS LAB MELTDOWN

HOME
METRO
SPORTS
CONTACT

FRONT LINE ONLINE

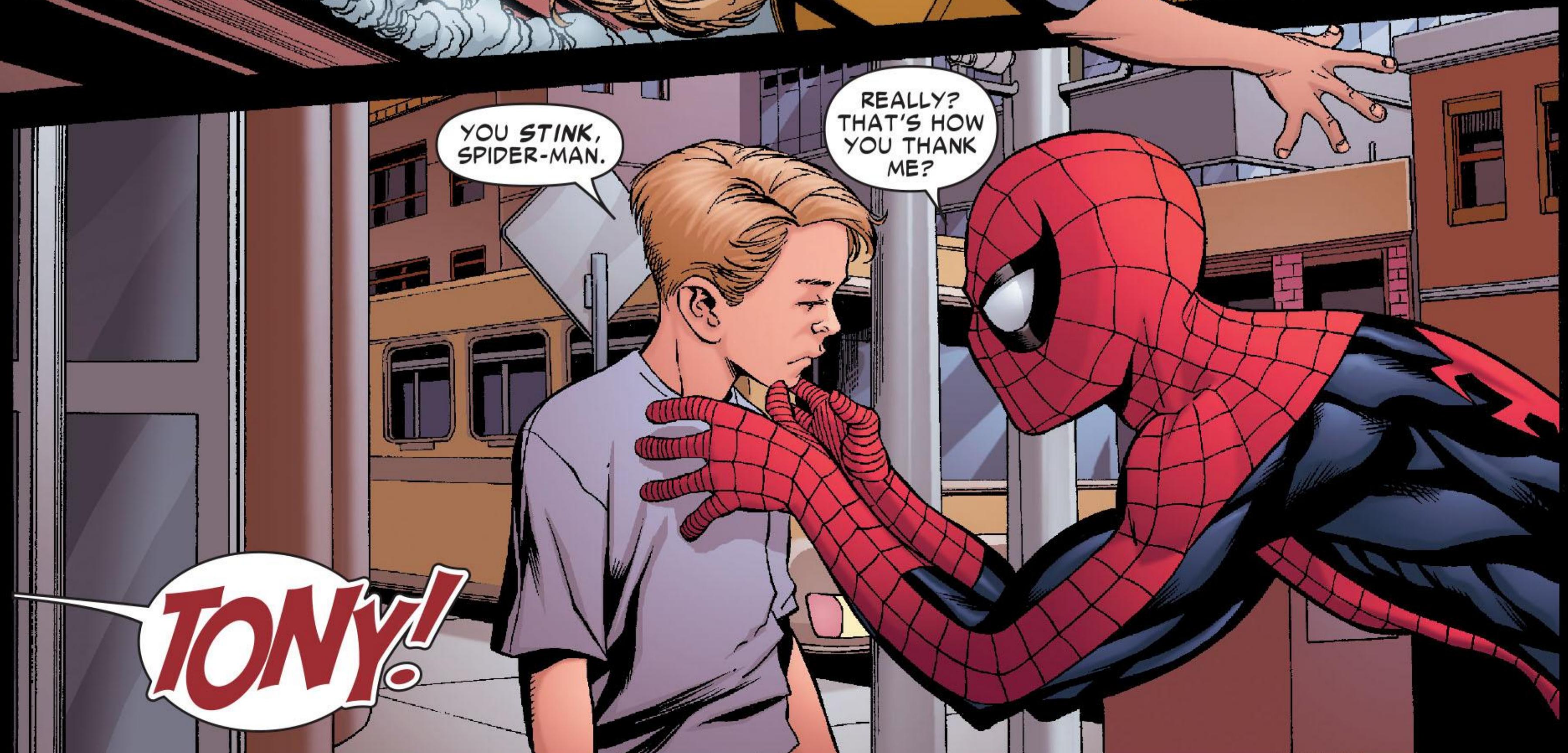
SPIDER, SPIDER EVERYWHERE

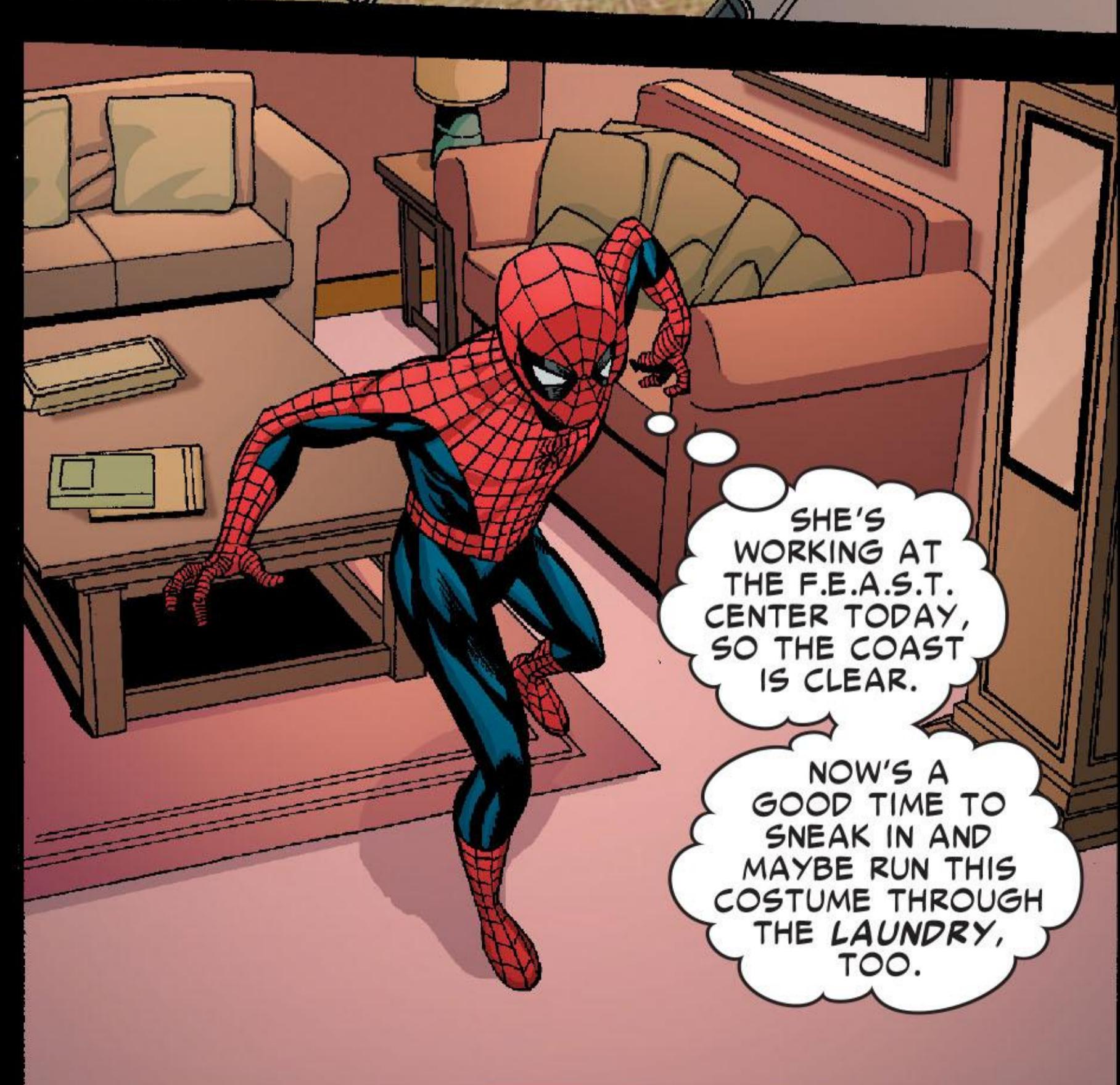
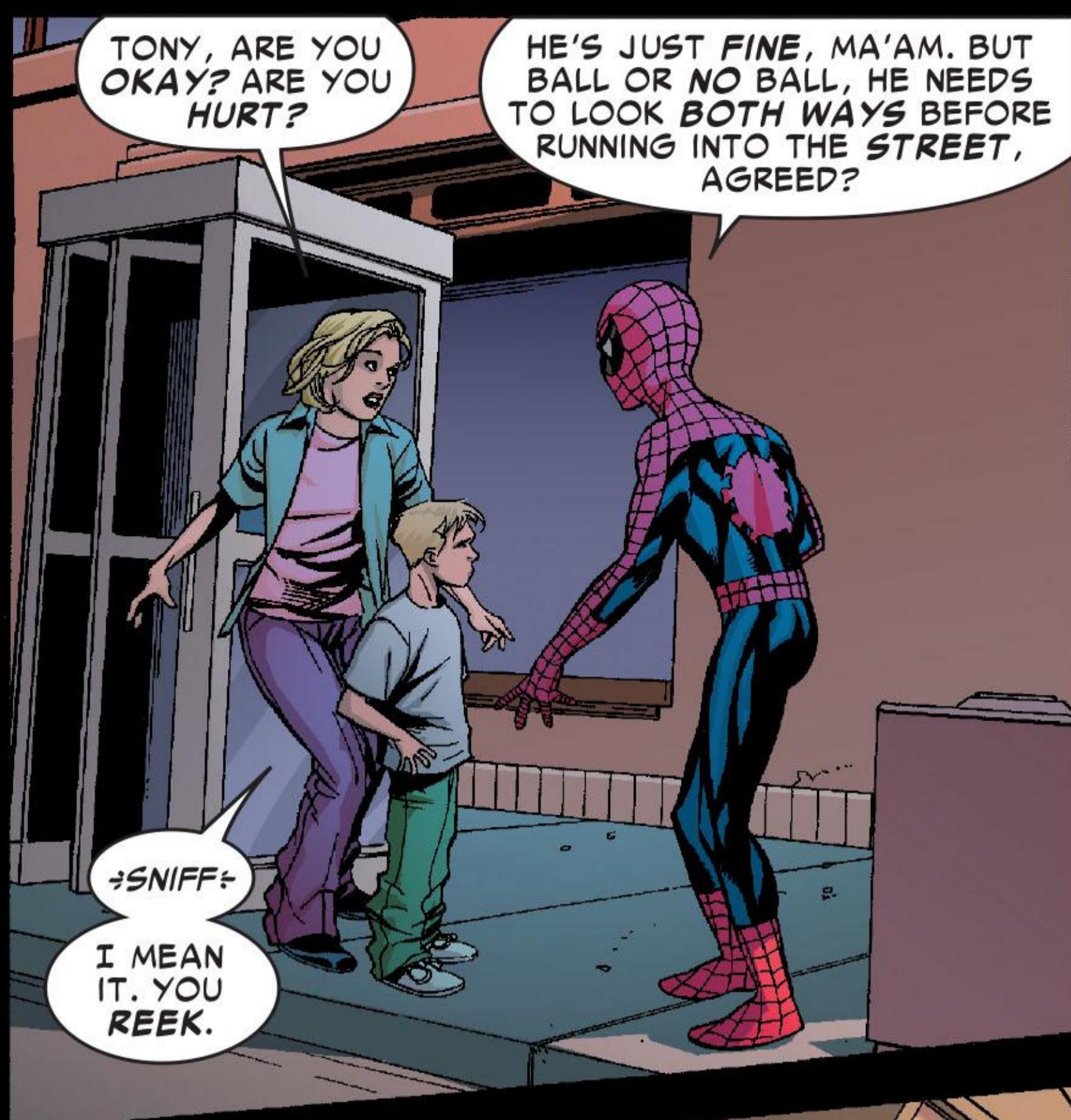






Astoria,
Queens







PETER!

 To Be Continued...

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAIL



Send e-mail to

SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM (please
mark as OKAY TO PRINT)

This time out, I want to get to a letter I've been holding onto for the last few months. It's a pretty critical look at what has proven to be our most talked about issue of 2008, #574 and the return of Flash Thompson from Iraq.

[Please note: As with all our letter columns, minor editing was done to the letter in a handful of places due to harsh language or to make a sentence clearer. The author's intent was unchanged.]

Dear Marvel,

I should preface this by saying that I haven't got anything against Marc Guggenheim...quite the contrary, in fact. Marc's one of the more pleasant additions to the Marvel writers pool in the last couple of years. I enjoyed his work on WOLVERINE. I thought his BLADE was superb and was sad to see it go so quickly. His work on AMAZING SPIDER-MAN is also pretty good considering this is, in my opinion, not among the finest books Marvel makes these days (I should also add that Spider-Man is by far my favorite character ever). I also like Marc's work outside Marvel and think his Resurrection is pretty good. I always look forward to seeing his name on the cover. So, this is NOT meant to be an attack on him.

But, reading ASM #584 and seeing how characters make passing references to thousands of American soldiers dying in two Asian countries to preserve democracy just felt so cynical that I had to stop right there. Actually, due to the JRJr's art I was subconsciously thinking the issue was written by Slott so after seeing this particular piece of dialogue, I flipped back to the front page and sure enough, there was Guggenheim's name on it.

I usually don't throw tantrums about comic books. I am 37 and I work for the International Red Cross. I realize there are far more serious matters to be upset about. But seeing this reference to Iraq and Afghanistan and the US engagement in these two countries only reminded me how super-mad I was about ASM #574. Alright, alright (or indeed "all right, all right"), I realize it is a patriotic thing to make comics like this, but I write in hope that someone out there will realize how offensive these comics come out for the rest of the world.

Now, I am certainly not going to tell you how to make comics. I have never written, edited or published a comic book and I certainly am not going to teach Marvel how to do it. What I can do is stop reading ASM when it gets so irritating that I can't bear it any more. The moment hasn't come yet and I hope it never will. So I am not going to tell you how to make

a book, instead, I hope Guggenheim gets to read this message because, as I said, I like the guy's work and enjoy his comics and would like him to stop tickling me off with this extremely one-dimensional take on geopolitics that keeps popping up in his work on ASM.

So: if you are going to keep at this than at least try and make it less superficial. Thousands of men and women fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan to preserve democracy? Sure, right after they invaded two countries with excuses barely better than 'Satan made me do it' and forcefully put puppet regimes in place. Free elections in such a climate just don't taste so well, you know. And, sure I know...believe me I know...that regimes that were toppled in these two countries were pretty evil, but you know, let's not pretend this is such a simple issue as "dying to preserve democracy." Guggenheim: please speak to some Iraqis first (I did), then go back to writing about topics like this, it will be much harder, but you may end up making better points.

Also, regarding ASM #574: I know it is difficult to make any kind of a profound geopolitical analysis and definitive statement in barely two dozen pages but that comic is simply shameful. Sure, I have seen your American readers getting themselves worked-up with patriotic inspiration over it and I guess it's a job well done, but seriously, does no one realize how ugly and offensive this issue was? How (dare I say it) racist it was? Hey, I know, you've probably never been called racist before (much less by a Serb, eh?) but believe me, I have lived through four dirty wars in the last 18 years and I know racist discourse when I see it (much because Milosevic's regime I lived under used it. A lot.): blonde, handsome Aryan Americans who are just trying to make the neighborhoods of Middle Eastern cities free of those evil-looking, brown skinned, pain-loving, narcotics-popping insurgents. Who just happen to be DEFENDING THEIR HOME CITIES against an invasion from another continent. Does not anyone see the bitter, bitter irony at work here?

And, far...and I mean it...FAR be it from me that I think any kind of modern geopolitical subtext in Marvel comics should be rejected. The whole Secret Invasion schtick, the post 9/11 paranoid story about people who are among us, look like us, eat, sleep and watch NFL like us, but are NOT like us and are actually religious fanatics who despise our way of life and want to take everything over while telling us we're destroying the world: that's actually cool with me because, for all his sins, Bendis at least takes it to a slightly more abstract level. Guggenheim

just drops the comic book symbolism and probably thinks he's making a proper statement by dragging what he sees as the "real world" into ASM by the scruff of the neck, and it looks clumsy, arrogant, racist and quite frankly beneath what I expect to see in Marvel comics when it comes to messages.

Marvel (and super hero comics in general) are great when they deliver idealistic messages using idealized circumstances and idealized characters. This is why I love Captain America even though I have been at the business end of American cruise missiles some ten years ago. But when you replace idealized circumstances and idealized characters and replace them with (your) "reality," then it becomes really ugly, shallow and offensive.

Just think about it, please. I love Guggenheim's work. I want it to be better.

Thanks for listening,

Uroš Smiljani
Via e-mail

I admit this letter was a tough one to read, but after it arrived, I corresponded briefly with the writer telling him a couple of my thoughts on the matter and letting him know I'd like to possibly run this missive since it was a unique point of view amidst the many kind responses we received about the issue. I also asked him if he was sure he wanted to brand the people working on the book as "racist." His response:

Stephen,

Considering that working on ASM that comes out three times a month (not to mention one shots and specials) must be hellishly hectic, taking time to reply to me personally was totally unexpected and very much appreciated. It's things like these that almost give me back some of that love for humanity...

Anyway, don't worry I know perfectly well how it is to be called ugly names to your face even when you feel it's undeserved – being a Serb I have to live with the knowledge that my people committed some horrible atrocities/ crimes against humanity in the last two decades, all punctuated with Srebrenica massacre that was finally defined by the International Crime Tribunal as an act of genocide. Considering that us Serbs have spent the last 60 years lamenting the genocidal acts committed against us, this is bitterly ironic and of course many, many of my fellow Serbs refuse to accept this as truth claiming it's all part of the international conspiracy against our people.

(continued next pg.)

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAIL



PAGE 2

So, I am not throwing the word "racist" around lightly, but I am not claiming Guggenheim, you or anyone working on ASM is a card-carrying member of KKK or anything similar. If I claim I found racist overtones in ASM, I am only saying this is cultural insensitivity, built into the way of life (for better or for worse) that you simply do not recognize until someone from the other side points it out (and even then you certainly don't feel like you want to admit it)...Hell, the number of times I myself have been humbled by someone pointing out my own merry nationalist/ racist/ chauvinist etc. behavior...

Also, being a decades-long reader of Spider-Man, I am perfectly aware that this is far from being the worst example of cultural insensitivity in history. Apologies for typing more than it is polite.

Anyway, I am honored you would want to print my letter in ASM and I apologize for the fact that it will take too much space in it. And, no I don't think I will be adding more to it as it is too long the way it is. It would be lovely if you'd ask Brennan politely (or whoever else's job it is) to fix my spelling mistakes. Other than that, let it stand as it is. It will be unpopular – that much is sure and I know most readers will feel unjustly assaulted which of course was not my intention as I am sure most of them are nice people, but that's the risk of talking about such topics.

Thank you once again for listening and I think this just cemented my love for Spider-Man even more. Keep it up.

Uroš Smiljani
Via e-mail

Next I passed both letters onto Marc Guggenheim for his response. Knowing Marc as I do, both personally and professionally, I guessed that his first response wouldn't be to take a defensive posture...

Uroš,

Thank you for your polite and articulate letters. More importantly, thank you for taking the time and making the effort to write them.

To begin, I think it might surprise you to learn that I lean very far to the left of the American political spectrum. I opposed the invasion of Iraq and believe that the offensive in Afghanistan was poorly handled. I don't feel that either engagement was undertaken with the goal of establishing democracy in either region.

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However, the "they're fighting for our rights" political spin that you took offense to Boomerang espousing is a common refrain one hears in America and, thus, it struck me as realistic to have someone voice it in the context of a discussion about an election. Just as I don't condone every action taken by every character I write – particularly the super-villains – I don't condone every political statement they make, either.

As for Issue #574, all I can say is that that issue was meticulously researched and I endeavored to show the actions of both Iraqis and Americans as realistically as possible. There wasn't an opportunity to tell the story from the Iraqi perspective, however. That wasn't the point of that particular issue. Nor was there an opportunity to voice my personal view that while I support American troops 100%, I don't believe their lives are being lost in a just or well-planned war. As a writer, sometimes all you get to do is tell the story being told.

Marc Guggenheim
Los Angeles

Thanks to both Marc and Uroš for their thoughts on this. It really was fascinating to me to hear a very different point of view on a topic close to the hearts of everyone in all countries.

I'm curious to hear what you folks in Spidey-land think (though I'd like to avoid the name-calling that often goes with these kinds of discussion). I'm particularly curious to hear from our many foreign readers about your feelings on Flash Thompson in particular and the way we presented his story. Was it too far in one direction? Did you want more? Less?

It certainly isn't easy to swallow being called a racist and, as Uroš concedes, that certainly wasn't on our minds as we worked on the issue. However, there are billions of different experiences in this world and I, for one, have barely even scratched the surface of my own. I can't pretend to see through someone else's eyes. For me at least, this was an interesting discussion.



JEEZ LOUISE!!! All this deep thinkin' from a Spidey comic! What's next? Slott does long division? Waid dissects a frog? Romita Jr. learns to read?

No way, ya Spidey-lovin' simpletons! We're back in a fortnight with more low-rent action that ain't gonna tax your brain cells...just your pocketbooks.

So save your 24 bits (478 bits Canadian!) and join Pete, Aunt May and J. Jonah Sr. next time for an ecoCOMIC Stimulus Package (Wordplay!) we just had to call:

AMAZING ADULT FANTASY!

or
Trapped in a Bed They NEVER MADE!

or
Aunt May: Girl Gone Mild
or

Looking at that last page just made me realize how close I am to Aunt May's age...AHHHHHHHHH!

Brennan, tell me how young I look and get me out of here!!

Viva Templar!
Simperin' Steve
3/31/09-AHHHHHHHHHHHH

Cover by Joe Quesada, Danny Miki and Richard Isanove

NEXT:



24/7
CONTINUES!