

MARVEL COMICS

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PG 43  
484



# *the* AMAZING SPIDER-MAN



SEPT



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STRACZYNSKI  
ROMITA JR  
HANNA

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I haven't decided yet. Main thing I have to do right now is figure out some way to apologize to my lady.

Funny how much time we all spend doing that.

Hey! You! No running in the hall! So what'd you do?

Well, it's... you see, we're separated and I was supposed to meet her when she came into town, but --

You stood her up?

"Not exactly... I mean, I was there, I just... she didn't see me, that's all."

MJ? It's me, I'm here, I love you.

Then it's not your fault, is it?

No. Yes. It's... complicated.

Yeah, well, when it comes to relationships, what isn't?

So how about you? Gonna get away for a while?

You kidding? On a teacher's salary? I figure I'll find something to do during the break to earn a few bucks.

STAN LEE  
presents:

# COLD ARMS

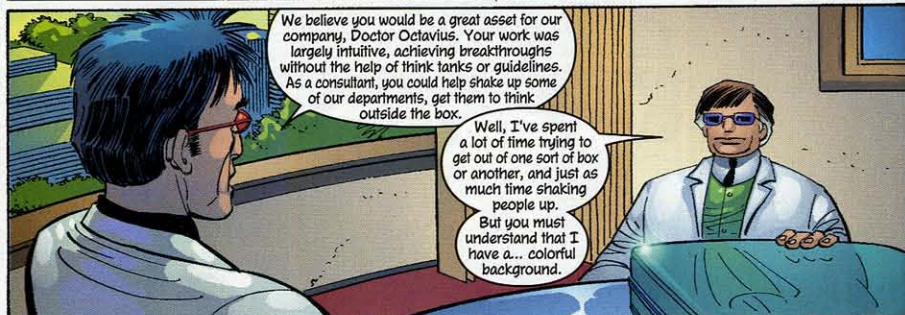
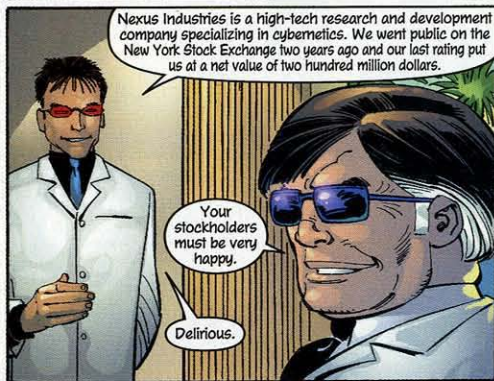
J. MICHAEL  
STRACZYNSKI  
words  
JOHN ROMITA Jr.  
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SCOTT HANNA  
inks  
DAN KEMP  
colors  
RS & COMICRAFT'S  
JIMMY B!  
letters

"We all  
gotta make  
a living,  
y'know?"

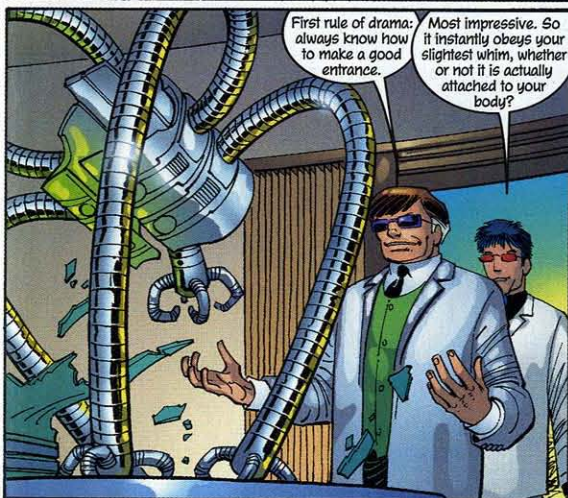
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Thank you, gentlemen, you can go now.

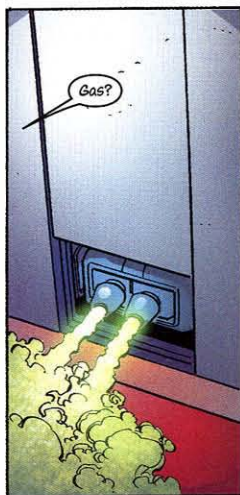


Tell the temp agency your services are no longer required.



Hssssss

Eh...?



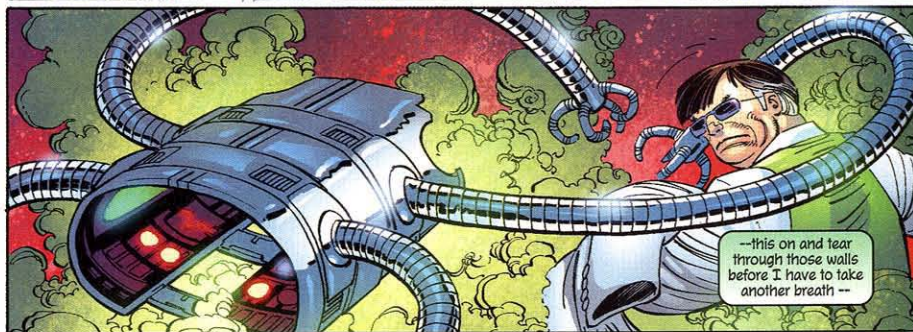
Gas?



Who do you think you're dealing with here?



If I can't get --



--this on and tear through those walls before I have to take another breath --

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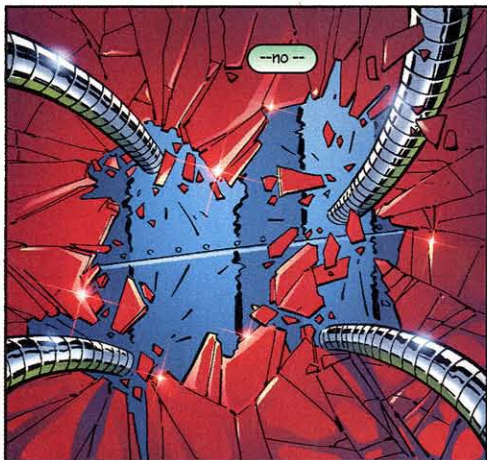
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EVERY night

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when you're DONE with it.

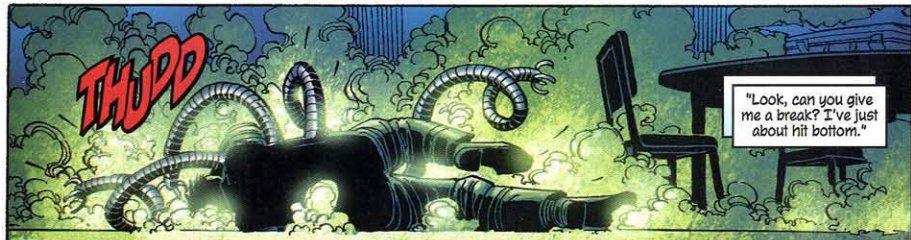


Yeah, you're a good guy, but we know you've got that  
other side, too. Just like SweetTARTS, the candy with  
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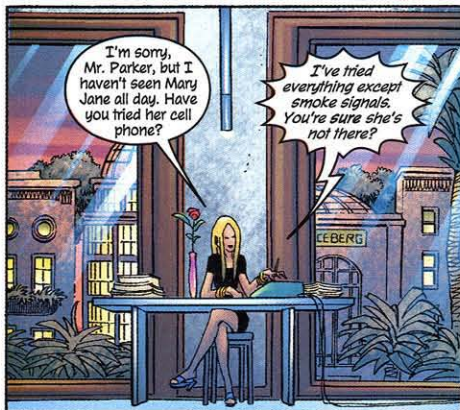
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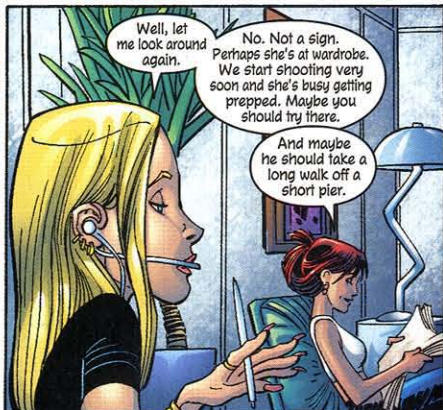


"Look, can you give me a break? I've just about hit bottom."



I'm sorry, Mr. Parker, but I haven't seen Mary Jane all day. Have you tried her cell phone?

I've tried everything except smoke signals. You're sure she's not there?



Well, let me look around again.

No. Not a sign. Perhaps she's at wardrobe. We start shooting very soon and she's busy getting prepped. Maybe you should try there.

And maybe he should take a long walk off a short pier.



Can you give me the number for wardrobe?

I'm sorry but I can't give out that kind of information.

But you said --

I'm sorry, but I have to go now --

Can you at least give her a message for me?



Just... tell her that I'm sorry, and I love her, and I have a good -- a really, really good explanation -- for what happened, and --

--just... have her call me, okay?

I'll pass along the message, Mr. Parker.



He said --

He said he loves me and he has a very good explanation for standing me up, right?

Yup.



Yeah, well, if the first was true, he wouldn't need the second, now would he?

I'll call him back. Eventually.

"Funny, isn't it, how some things never come out quite the way you planned...?"



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You came here five days ago hoping to be hired as a consultant. And a consultant you've been... just not in quite the way you had in mind.

Five... Days?

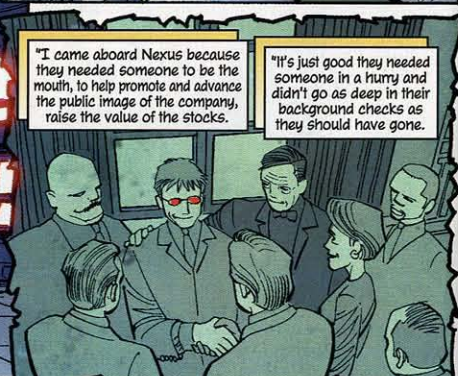
Actually, I thought it would take a lot longer to get the job done. But you hire the right people, you get the job done fast.

I'm just glad I won't be here when they try to cash the checks.



I don't... understand...

Of course not. Your mind is still cloudy from the drugs. And the news hasn't hit the networks yet. But since it'll come out any time now... no reason not to give you a preview.



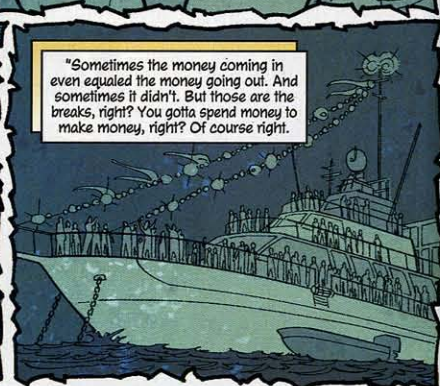
"I came aboard Nexus because they needed someone to be the mouth, to help promote and advance the public image of the company, raise the value of the stocks.

"It's just good they needed someone in a hurry and didn't go as deep in their background checks as they should have gone.



"Thing is, nobody wants to give you money if they think you actually need it. Guys with flash only give money to guys with even more flash, because they know they'll get it back, with interest.

"So I made sure we had all the flash-and-dazzle anybody could ask for.



"Sometimes the money coming in even equaled the money going out. And sometimes it didn't. But those are the breaks, right? You gotta spend money to make money, right? Of course right.



"What did come in, went back out in acquisitions of other businesses. I even set up some dummy subsidiaries and financed them from inside the company, counting their assets as revenue to make the company look bigger and stronger on the stock market.

"And it worked.

"At least on paper.

"For a while.



"But all good things come to an end. When a bunch of debts came due, and we had to cover for a fall-off in productivity, the figures didn't add up.

"That's when the CEO found out what had been going on... and who he'd hired.

"Convictions for fraud. Forgery. Extortion. Racketeering. Not to mention assault and battery and a bunch of other charges, all under another name.

"But c'mon, who in this big wide world *doesn't* have something to hide, right?"

"It's not like I was a murderer or anything.

"At least... not before that night.

"I figured if he found out what happened, more would follow. So I had to act fast. With the CEO now on an unexpected... vacation... I looked for ways to grab whatever I could.

"Unfortunately the money was gone, the property was locked up in escrow, and the only product we had was theoretical research, and I can't exactly put that in my pocket and walk out the front door. I never understood half that stuff anyway."

So I had to figure out what I really wanted. And you know what it is?

To be free, to make my own way so that nobody could ever stop me. And that's when I thought of you. And those extraordinary mechanisms of yours.

I got my teams working on the problem of creating something similar. They worked independently, nobody knowing what the others were doing, nobody but me with the whole picture. They could get the basics but not the whole cerebral interface... thing.



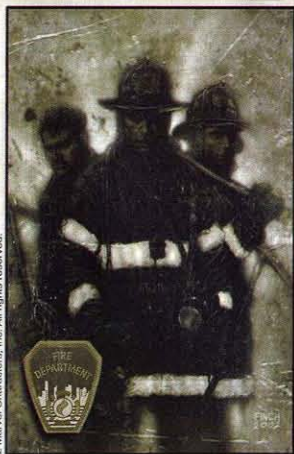




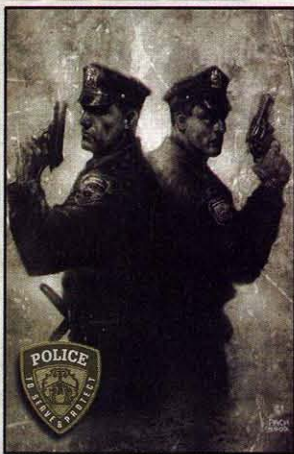
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# THE CALL OF DUTY



The Brotherhood



The Precinct



The Wagon

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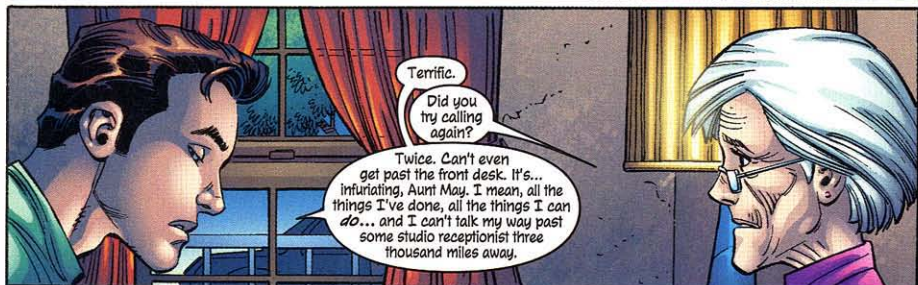
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Yeah...  
yeah, she  
is.

It says here that she starts  
shooting in a movie this week in Los  
Angeles. Isn't that wonderful?



Terrific.

Did you  
try calling  
again?

Twice. Can't even  
get past the front desk. It's...  
infuriating, Aunt May. I mean, all the  
things I've done, all the things I can  
*do*... and I can't talk my way past  
some studio receptionist three  
thousand miles away.



I know I could get through to her, make  
her understand, if I could just see her in  
person, for five minutes. That was always  
how it was with us. She'd get mad, or I'd get  
mad, but as soon as we saw each other,  
none of it mattered anymore.

So why  
don't you go to her?  
She's in California,  
she's not in another  
country.

Though there  
*are* times it's  
hard to tell the  
difference...



I can't, May. I  
promised you we'd  
do something fun  
during the break, and  
I can't just up and  
leave you.



You know,  
I've never actually  
*seen* anyone make  
a movie before.



"Will that be one  
business-class ticket  
to Los Angeles or two,  
Mr. Parker?"



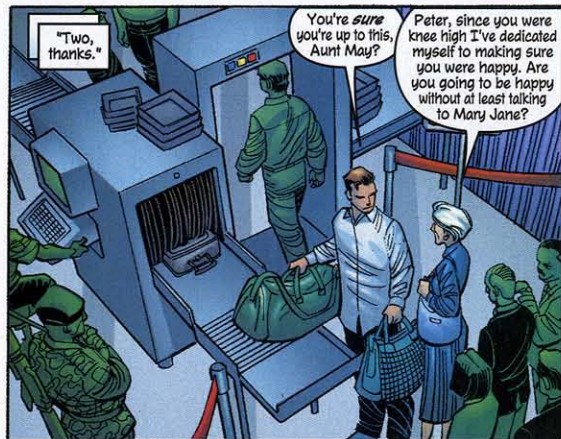
# FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE

# REIGN OF FIRE

IN THEATRES JULY 12

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"Two, thanks."

You're *sure* you're up to this, Aunt May?

Peter, since you were knee high I've dedicated myself to making sure you were happy. Are you going to be happy without at least talking to Mary Jane?



No.

Then there we are.

I know, I just --



--I just worry, that's all.

Can you step over here, sir?



Is there a problem?

Just spread your arms, sir.



I can open that for you --

Please don't move, sir.



Long-johns.

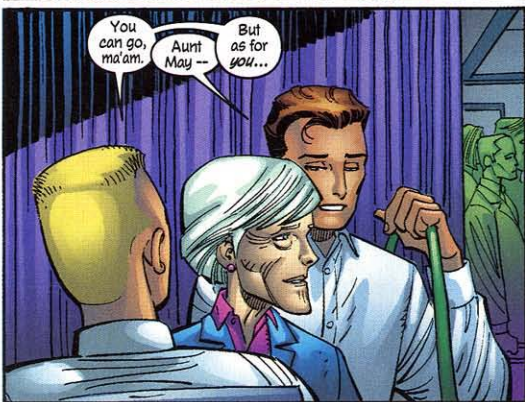
I get chills.

Ever since he was a little boy.











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It's now...  
it's now... or  
it's never...





It's been nearly 24 hours... it's now or I suffocate...

Concentrate, Octavius, Concentrate.



I won't die a fool's death. I never tell anyone my true weaknesses. Solid steel can't fully block the link between me and mine... but it *can* slow us down. Make things harder. The drugs don't help.

I can do this.



I can do this.

Come to me.



Come to me. Come to me.



Come to me.



Come to me.



Come to me.



**Let the squashing begin!**

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"A witty blast of media criticism disguised as a garish spin-off of the X-Men." -*The New York Times Book Review*

# X-STATIX



**Peter Milligan & Mike Allred**

July 2002

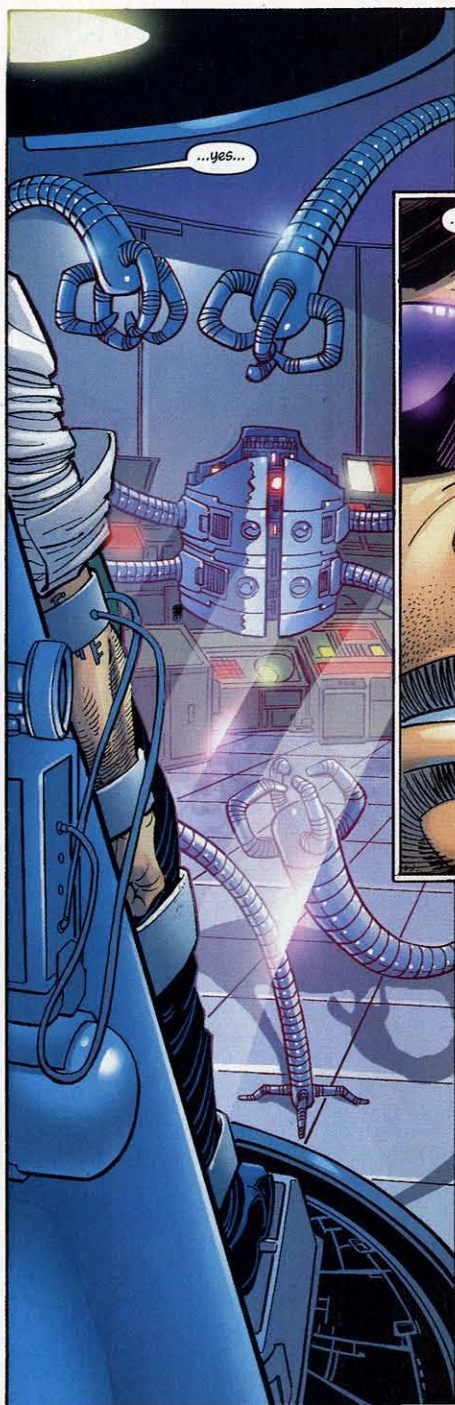
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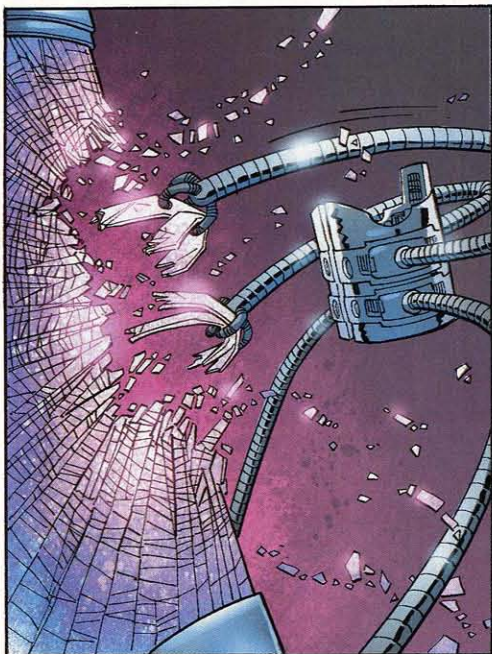
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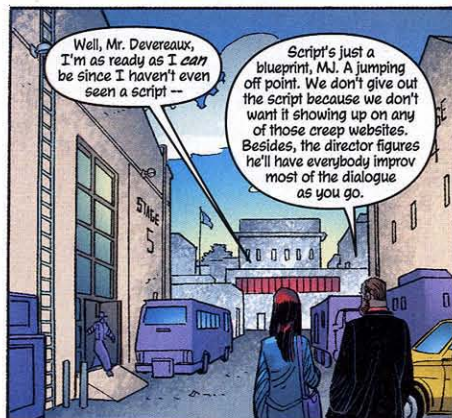












Well, Mr. Devereaux, I'm as ready as I *can* be since I haven't even seen a script --

Script's just a blueprint, M.J. A jumping off point. We don't give out the script because we don't want it showing up on any of those creep websites. Besides, the director figures he'll have everybody improv most of the dialogue as you go.



But... you're the producer; how do you keep the story intact if everybody's making it up as they go?

*SHORT!*  
Lady, you really think people go to movies for the *story*? It's spectacle, M.J., it's all about spectacle.



Okay, I guess, so what's my part in this... spectacle? All I got in the breakdown was the character's name, age, and that she looks good in lingerie.

You're playing Cynthia LaVenus, the love interest for our protagonist --

--well, until you get killed in act two, sending him into a killing rage that only ends when he meets girlfriend number two in act three.



And the protagonist is...?

Rick Turk, you may have seen him in that indie flick *Hell Hath Some Nerve*. Great kid, a little slow on the uptake, but --

No, I mean, what's his character?

Oh. That.



You're gonna love this... I mean, you're really gonna love this.

Uh-huh... so who's --



You're playing the love interest of a super hero. How about that, huh?

I mean, I know it's kind of a stretch, but --

No... no, it's all right, I'm sure I can... get into the part somehow.



As long as you can get into the lingerie, babe, that's all anybody cares about. See you in wardrobe.

I'll be bringing some friends, if that's okay... just check you out a bit... man, I love making movies...







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