

Going Through the Motions

A Spider-Man Script

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PAGE ONE

Panel 1

It is nighttime in New York City, thirty feet above the streets, in a part of town where classic storefronts and walk-up apartments give way to industrial buildings and warehouses. It is raining in a steady summer downpour, and Spider-Man is swinging AWAY from the residential/storefront section and TOWARDS the factory section.

1 Spider-Man (THINKING): This is stupid. I've done my good deed for the night -- I really should just GO HOME.

Panel 2

Just ahead is a large, five-story brick building that looks like an old factory. It is, in fact, a dairy, and painted in ten-foot-high letters, the words "HENDERSON DAIRY" lets the reader know this. A happy cow stands on either side of the lettering. Spider-Man is headed for the wall, about to take a load off.

2 Spider-Man (THINKING): I'm still upset, but I'm sure MARY JANE is, too. SAL is right -- I need to stop just going through the mo...

Panel 3

Spider-Man is swinging past the side of the building, right in the middle of the graphic -- we can see most of the word "DAIRY" just to drive the point home. The classic squiggles show his SPIDER-SENSE going off.

3 Spider-Man: Oh, GREAT. Can't I catch a break? This is the second time TONIGHT.

PAGE TWO**Panel 1**

Earlier that night; twilight. Different part of town - the residential/retail part mentioned above. It is NOT raining. Spider-Man is swinging down a street, towards the camera.

1 Caption: The first time.

2 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Seriously, though, where does she GET OFF?! It's not like I can just QUIT being SPIDER-MAN.

3 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Okay, well I COULD. It's just that I CAN'T. I mean, SURE, I...

Panel 2

Arching up in a big swing, putting some muscle behind it, driven by frustration.

4 SFX: AAAAAAAA!

5 Spider-Man (BURST): WOMEN!

Panel 3

Lands from his swing on top of an art gallery. A three-story structure with a darkened first-level storefront, second- and third-story windows. Light comes out of the windows, suggesting a big open space lit from within.

6 Spider-Man: I just can't believe we're fighting AGAIN. I just wish I knew what to do. I can't THINK STRAIGHT...

Panel 4

A big drop of water hits him on the head as a few others fall nearby, accompanied by the sound of thunder.

7 SFX: RUUUMBLE

8 Spider-Man: Ah, great. RAIN is what I needed to make my night comp...

Panel 5

Spider-Man-sense goes off big time.

7 Spider-Man: Uh oh. Looks like the pity party will have to wait. I better check this out.

PAGE THREE**Panel 1**

From inside the gallery. Paintings, sculptures, etc. Dominating the room is a sculpture named "Archimedes' Lever". An oversized oil drum lies on its side. Resting on it in seesaw fashion is a long plane -- the lever -- made of stone. One end of the plane is up, and the other down; the downside flattens and spreads out, like a spatula, and appears to penetrate the floorboards of the gallery. Those boards have their ends lying on top of the lever, looking all the world as if a giant paint scraper is just starting to peel them up, but they are actually part of the sculpture, lying on top of the actual gallery floor. Graffiti is spray-painted all over the lever -- buzz words such as "Capitalism," "War," "Poverty," "Desperation," and "Global Warming," along with the phrase, "What's your fulcrum flavor?" A sign with the name of the exhibit is in plain view.

Four men dressed in street clothes are removing paintings from the walls. A night watchman, SAL, stands by watching them work with an expression of wry amusement. He is easily the oldest of the bunch with his gray hair poking down under his uniform hat, but his eyes are bright and sharp. Think Dick Van Dyke's character in NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM but about twenty years younger. On the floor are special wooden boxes for transporting the art. In the background, near a high window, we see the silhouette of Spider-Man's head and shoulders, upside down, peering in from the outside.

1 Thug 1: Are these paintings worth much?

2 Night Watchman Sal: Eh, what do I know from art? But, your boss was willing to pay to have them nabbed, so they must be worth SOMETHING.

3 Thug 2: Why don't you stop running your mouth and give us a hand?

4 Sal: I WOULD give you a hand, but frankly you need work on your delivery. And you were a little PITCHY.

Panel 2

Outside from behind Spider-Man's head. Over his shoulders we can see into the gallery. Thug 2 is pointing threateningly at Sal, who has taken a step back and has his hands up in a "hey, easy, there" gesture.

5 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Okay, genius, what's going on? Art theft, or just some late-night schlubs doing their jobs?

6 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Even if it IS a heist, why would it set off my SPIDER-SENSE if there was no DANGER...

Panel 3

Back inside, a fifth thug joins the rest -- big, ugly, and brandishing an Uzi, just LOOKING for a chance to use it. At this point, some of the thugs have their jackets open or have turned for us to see shoulder holsters and guns tucked into waistbands. Ironically, the only person without a gun is Sal, the watchman. Sal is still grinning a bit, having turned away from Thug 2, who has turned back to work but still looks angry.

7 Boss: YOU. GUARD. Quit distracting my men. I paid you to look the other way, so LOOK the OTHER WAY and stop SLOWING US DOWN.

8 Sal: Hey, no problem.

Panel 4

Spider-Man is now leaping up towards the rooftop.

9 Spider-Man: Well, THAT settles the matter. Unless teamsters have started carrying UZIS it's safe to say this is a robbery.

10 Spider-Man: Now to find a way inside...

PAGE FOUR**Panel 1**

Sal has his arms up in a big stretch, yawning and looking the other way as the thugs continue to box up art. The boss man can't seem to put down the Uzi, holding it up to his shoulder and looking at his watch. Thug 2 is still complaining about Sal to Thug 1. The positioning of everyone: Thug 1, 2 bent over in the foreground to the left. Sal is midground to the right. Boss is midground center. Thug 3, 4 roughly between Boss and Sal in background, near center sculpture of Archimedes Lever, but not beyond it.

1 Thug 2: Smart mouth. Should teach him a LESSON.

2 Thug 1: Dude. He's oldern' my DAD. Leave him alone.

3 SFX: YAAAWN

Panel 2

Same panel. Two strands of webbing reach in from off panel and are stuck to the floor on either side of the Boss, one lower than the other. Everyone is in the same position except they have turned their heads to look at the webbing and are expressing puzzlement or shock. Sal is in the oddest position as his arms are still up, back arched, but he has twisted his torso and turned his head to see.

4 SFX: THWIP!

5 SFX: THWIP!

Panel 3

Same panel. The thugs are in the same positions, but they have turned their heads off panel to the source of the webbing. Sal and the Boss have both turned around to do the same thing. Sal looks excited; he LOVES Spider-Man.

Panel 4

From the thugs POV we see Spider-Man standing on the floor, slightly crouched, the lines of webbing reaching back to his web-shooters, his arms out, wrists bent backwards, fingers splayed, frozen in the web-firing position, completely still.

6 Spider-Man(THOUGHT): I -- I MISSED!

7 Spider-Man(THOUGHT): HOW DID I MISS?!

8 Spider-Man: Uh, hey, fellas. I don't suppose you'd just want to GIVE UP, would you?

Panel 5

Same panel as 1, 2, and 3. The thugs are dropping the paintings and pulling hardware. The Boss has lowered his Uzi and already opened fire. Sal looks REALLY freaked out now. His arms are back up, his knees bent, eyes wide, looking at the Boss, waving his hands to get attention. Thug 2, however, is not looking at Spider-Man. He is looking at Sal, and his evil grin does not bode well for the night watchman.

9 SFX: BRRRRRIP!

10 Boss (BURST): GETHIM!!

11 Sal (BURST): NOOO!!

12 Sal (BURST): What, are you all CRAZY?!

Panel 6

The spot where Spider-Man was standing. He is mostly off panel now, just his feet and lower legs showing him leaping away. The bullets from the Uzi rip through the air where he was standing.

13 Spider-Man (OFF PANEL): Yeah, I guess that was too much to ask.

PAGE FIVE**Panel 1**

WORM'S-EYE VIEW - PANORAMIC. Spider-Man is flipping overhead, sailing across the interior of the gallery, firing web balls. Two thugs already have their guns webbed to their hands, and another blast of webbing is headed towards another thug and the boss, who are tracking him with their guns. Everyone has a handgun except for the Boss, who still holds his Uzi. Thug 2 is the only one not firing. He has his gun up at his shoulder as if he is in a movie and is stalking up to Sal. Sal is still trying to get them to stop shooting, one hand up towards the Boss, the other dropping towards his belt, where he keeps his stun baton.

1 SFX: BRRRIP!

2 SFX: BLAM! BLAM!

3 Boss: C'mon c'mon C'MON GETHIM!

4 Spider-Man: I'm starting to feel like a clay pigeon.

5 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): I can't believe I missed, he wasn't even MOVING. I need to up my game, get FOCUSED...

6 Sal (BURST): Stop! You can't shoot SPIDER-MAN!

Panel 2

Thug 2 has caught up to Sal and grabbed him by his lapel with his free hand, pulling him in close. He is going for intimidation here, more interested in payback than just flat-out killing Sal. He wants to scare him. Sal, however, is still worried about Spider-Man. This is a tight shot, the two with their faces close together; Sal is looking away, towards the action.

7 SFX: BRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRING!

8 Boss (OFF PANEL, BURST): GREAT! WHO SHOT THE ALARM?!

9 Thug 2: HEY. You should be worrying about YOURSELF, you old PUKE!

Panel 3

Pull back enough to show that Sal has twisted and, with his right hand, driven the business end of his stun baton into Thug 2's gut. The Thug is convulsing backwards, the gun falling from a spasmodic hand. Sal is all business, now.

8 SFX: ZZZZT!

9 Sal: Get offa me, kid.

Panel 4

Now Thugs 1, 3 and 4, along with Boss, all have their guns webbed to their hands. They are in mid-run, rushing across the gallery to where Spider-Man has landed, feet apart, low crouch, arms out and ready to receive. Sal is running up behind them, STILL trying to

reason with them. In between them, off to the right side, is the barrel of the Archimedes' Lever sculpture -- the thugs are going to run right across the flat, faux flooring...

10 Boss: He's onna ground now. GET'M, BOYS!

11 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Are they REALLY going to rush me? Right across THAT section of floor?

12 Spider-Man(THOUGHT): And I thought I needed to focus!

13 Sal: C'mon, you idiots, you can't take Spider-Man in a fight!

Panel 5

Spider-Man shoots webbing to his left, in the direction of the sculpture, but on his side of it, striking the floor off panel. He is leaping in the air as he does this, and the whole gang slows, stopping right on the flat, spatula-and-flooring end of the lever...

14 Spider-Man: You should listen to the nice aiding-and-abetting night guard!

PAGE SIX**SPLASH PAGE With Insert**

Show Spider-Man in an arc. His webbing is an anchor, swinging him through the air as he pulls against it, turning his body into a foot-first dive right on to the “up end” of the lever, now driven down onto the floor. He is like the hammer hitting the lever of a carnival game strength-tester, and the men are the puck. The other end has shot up, and all five of the other men have gone FLYING OFF in different directions, some low, some high. Sal went high and back, holding on to his uniform hat with both hands. All five of them are showing shock and fright. They are bent at the waist or arched at the back, limbs splayed or bent as they try to either scramble for purchase or curl up to protect themselves. I see this as a real Jack Kirby moment.

1 Thug 3: AAAAA!

2 Thug 4: Woaaaa!

3 SFX: CRACK!

4 Spider-Man (BURST): STEP right up! TEST your strength! HIT the bell! WIN a prize!

Panel 1 (Insert)

Close on Spider-Man, looking up, arms and hands up, firing off multiple splurts of webbing.

5 SFX: Thwip! Thwip!

6 Spider-Man: I have to say, that was VERY satisfying! We can't have you splattered all over these nice paintings, though, can we?

7 SFX: Thwip! Thwip! Thwip!

Panel 2 (Insert)

Two thugs are webbed in a corner pile, about five feet off the ground.

7 SFX: Splurt!

Panel 3 (Insert)

Boss is webbed spread-eagled sideways against a big column. Past the column, another thug is webbed to the wall, higher up.

7 SFX: Splurt! Splurt!

Panel 4 (Inset)

Thug 2, still on the ground and holding his tasered gut, covered in a web.

8 SFX: Splurt!

PAGE SEVEN**Panel 1**

We see Sal. Until otherwise noted, he is upside down, but the panel should be drawn to make it look as if he is right-side up, though he is slightly crouched. Behind him is a painting of the sun, and floating above the surface of the sun, along the outer edges, are girl scouts wearing asbestos fire suits (the kinds that cover the entire body and use face shields). This is a spoof on a classic Girl Scouts graphic showing the earth with a circle of girl scouts holding hands and encircling the planet. As the sun doesn't have "up and down" features, and the circle of hand-holding girl scouts goes all the way around, this will help with the illusion, as it looks the same right-side up or upside down. Sal's hat is still on, so there is no flyaway hair to give away the secret. This is a close shot, and Sal has both hands on his face.

1 Spider-Man (OFF PANEL): Hey. Buddy.

Panel 2

From Sal's POV. We see his hands as he has opened his eyes and spread his fingers, through which we see Spider-Man right in front of him, staring at him.

2 Spider-Man: I want to talk to you.

Panel 3

From the side we see Spider-Man standing in front of Sal, hands on hips. We see them only from the waist up, so we can't tell that Spider-Man is standing on the ceiling and that Sal's legs are webbed to the ceiling. Sal's hands come away from his face, which lights up at seeing Spider-Man there.

3 Sal: SPIDER-MAN!

4 Spider-Man: Yeah, uh-- hi. You know, for a guy caught stealing with a gang of armed thugs, you seem really happy to see me.

Panel 4

Sal actually looks a little shocked, as if he can't imagine Spider-Man doubting him, but he doesn't stop grinning. He has grabbed Spider-Man's hand in both of his and is giving him a firm, enthusiastic handshake.

5 Sal: Salvatore Grabowski -- call me SAL. It's an honor to meet you! Of COURSE I'm happy to see you! You're an honest-ta-goodness SUPERHERO!

6 Sal: Hey, listen, I'm sorry 'bout these guys and their guns -- bunch of idiots...

7 Spider-Man: About that. I wanted to thank you for trying to stop them. It's not often ANYONE steps up to swing on my side, much less one of the guys I'm busting.

Panel 5

Sal looks as if he won the lottery.

8 Sal: Spider-Man, thanking ME. Wait till MRS. Grabowski hears bout THIS!

9 Sal: You're WELCOME, of course. Can't have a hero like you shot by the likes of THEM.

Panel 6

Spider-Man scratches his head while Sal grins.

10 Spider-Man: See, that's where you lose me. Aren't YOU part of THEM? I mean, you WERE just helping them steal from this place.

11 Sal: Oh, well, TECHNICALLY I guess so. I mean, they slip me some green to look the other way, I get fired, I move on to the next thing. It ain't exactly RIGHT, I KNOW...

PAGE EIGHT**Panel 1**

Later. Standing on top of the dairy factory, rain pouring hard around him. In front of him is a skylight, with faint light shining up into the night. Spider-Man reaches for the skylight.

1 Caption (Sal): But they don't GET it. You're out there pounding away on the BIG NASTIES like the GOBLIN or RHINO -- without you around these parts those clowns would have us all dead or hiding. Regular cops can't stop THOSE guys, but YOU CAN.

Panel 2

Spider-Man is lifting the skylight at the top of the factory, crouched down and looking in.

2 Caption (Sal): And you do.

3 Spider-Man: Why am I doing this? Evil cows? Psychotic cheesemakers? MJ is going to start worrying...

4 Spider-Man: I need to have my head examined.

Panel 5

Looking up at Spider-Man crawling directly through the skylight and onto the ceiling, the moonlight showing his legs, his upper body all but invisible in the contrasting darkness.

5 Caption (Spider-Man): Hmm.

6 Caption (Spider-Man): You sound pretty -- WISE...

7 Caption (Sal): It's the GRAY HAIR.

8 Caption (Spider-Man): ...So, uh--you're married, Sal?

Panel 6

Change of angles, following Spider-Man as he navigates down the wall. In the foreground we see a nest of pipes that lead downward and upward, but also zigzag and angle horizontally, forming a warren.

9 Caption (Sal): Thirty YEARS, SAME woman.

10 Caption (Sal): I mean that in a nice way.

PAGE NINE**Panel 1**

Closer in on Spider-Man, crawling down the wall, about even with the flat area of the pipes, looking around.

1 Caption (Sal): You have a reason for asking, or are you just MAKING CONVERSATION? You got GIRL trouble, Spider-Man?

Panel 2

Back at the warehouse, Spider-Man raises his hands in protest.

2 Spider-Man: NO! Well -- no, not ME. A FRIEND of mine, though, does.

3 Sal: A friend that's not you. Got it. So, I've got some time, what's the trouble?

4 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Hunh. Should I? Why not?

5 Spider-Man: Well, my buddy's been married for a few years now to a gorgeous woman -- a model, no less. She's smart and sassy and a bit wild -- they are very much in love...

Panel 3

Sal looking sage, Spider-Man looking at Sal as if he's a little off.

5 Sal: I get it -- she's a saint with a little SINNER mixed in.

6 Spider-Man: Oh -kay, sure let's go with that.

7 Spider-Man: Anyway, SHE'S not the problem, not really. It's my friend's JOB - - it's very dangerous, keeps him out late, sometimes. Kind of a lot. And she's always worried about him, of course. And now he's feeling the PRESSURE, you know, to stop doing what he's doing...

PAGE TEN**Panel 1**

Back at the Dairy, Spider-Man jumps across a chasm to the nest of pipes. In the foreground, the silhouette profile of an Octodrone -- a football-sized ball of metal with a camera/eye and four Doctor Octopus-like legs -- can be seen looking up - it's spotted him.

1 Caption (Sal): This DANGEROUS JOB your pal has.

2 Caption (Spider-Man): Right.

3 Caption (Sal): What, is he a cop or something?

4 Caption (Spider-Man): NO. Not in any sort of -- crime busting -- capacity. It's just DANGEROUS. Like, you know...

Panel 2

Close on the Octodrone -- a red light near the eye has come on and it has started to climb sideways -- crablike -- up the wall towards where Spider-Man went, still facing him.

5 Caption (Sal): Like those guys on the boats with the crabs. On that show -- what's it called...

6 Caption (Sal): ...DEADLIEST CATCH.

Panel 3

Back at the warehouse. Spider-Man points at Sal, agreeing with him.

7 Spider-Man: YES! Like those guys.

8 Spider-Man: And the thing is, he can't just NOT do his job, you know?

Panel 4

Close on Sal, seriously into the conversation.

9 Sal: No, I get it. There's just some things a guy's gotta do.

10 Spider-Man (OFF PANEL): Not that the CRABS would mind if this guy quit. The CRABS would have some sort of -- CRAB PARTY.

11 Sal: You can quit saying crabs.

12 Spider-Man (OFF PANEL): Sorry.

PAGE ELEVEN**Panel 1**

Spider-Man is crawling along a horizontal expanse of pipe, with another above him, forming a crawlspace, and he is coming up to an opening. Ahead of him we see light coming from down below... he is getting close. His Spider-Man-sense is starting to buzz as well.

1 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): I could be at home right now instead of saving the world from the dangers of UNPASTEURIZED MILK.

Panel 2

Comes to the end and looks down -- sees the vats used to make cheese as well as DOCTOR OCTOPUS. Doc is using his metal arms to pour a liquid into each of two vats. His real arms hold a tablet PC as he taps in data. Around him are various units of machinery and control panels -- the inside of a dairy. Off to one side is a large glass cube on a stand. A stripe of metal runs up both sides and across the top, in the middle of each pane of glass. Inside the box is a metal rod ending in a curved cup (like an athletic supporter), and sitting on the cup is a twelve inch diameter wheel of white cheese -- although the fact that it is cheese shouldn't be TOO obvious. Eight wires stick out from the metal stripe on the INSIDE of the box and over near the cheese wheel, ready to pierce its sides. Also inside the box is a fine mist - the bacteria floating, ready to find their way into the cheese.

2 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): GREAT. Doc Ock! It IS a PSYCHOTIC CHEESEMAKER!

3 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Can't make out what he is doing -- wait! I can use my camera...

Panel 3

Show Spider-Man lifting the camera to face; a flat digital camera that could fit in his belt.

4 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): ... and I might be able to see what kind of camembert Doc is cooking.

Panel 4

From the camera POV, zoomed in. We see the reticule of the camera, hear the tiny whirr. We see the tablet PC, with a graph showing BACTERIA contaminant levels. The words "Penicillium roqueforti" and "Penicillium glaucum" figure in the charts. Barely visible in a small font, the words "Intruder Alert" are flashing.

5 Spider-Man (THOUGHT) (OFF PANEL): What cheese goes best with CALAMARI?

Panel 5

Close on Spider-Man looking through the camera. Over his shoulder we see the Octodrone has arrived.

6 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): No, wait, that's SQUID...

PAGE TWELVE**Panel 1**

Back at the warehouse. Sal is looking a touch flushed as he opines, and Spider-Man listens intently.

1 Sal: Look, you and me, we're GUYS. Guys are different than GALS, and not just in the obvious ways.

2 Sal: Guys look at takin' the direct approach to problems. Its easier t' pound on something sometimes than to talk about its FEELINGS. Not that Mrs. Grabowski isn't afraid to throw a SHOE now and then when she gets a little crazy.

3 Sal: I'm sayin that in a NICE way, mind.

4 Spider-Man: Sure.

Panel 2

Spider-Man is giving Sal the finger-gun-point as Sal continues his lecture.

5 Sal: See, Mrs. Graboswki, and yer pal's wife, they FEEL things. They don't THINK about things. Not right off, see?

6 Spider-Man: Right -- and yet we let them VOTE? What's THAT all about?

7 Sal: Har har. I MEAN it. I'm not sayin' they don't think AT ALL, just they feel FIRST, and sometimes they start ACTING on those feelings before they start THINKING, and then things get all...

Panel 3

Dairy. The arms are reaching for Spider-Man. We see his Spider-Man-sense going OFF.

8 Caption (Spider-Man): Tense?

9 Caption (Sal): TENSE. Yeah.

10 Caption (Spider-Man): Okay, I hear what you are saying. That doesn't change what's HAPPENING, though. My friend WANTS to make his wife HAPPY -- he wants this more than ANYTHING -- but at the same time, he can't stop...

Panel 4

Spider-Man rolls to the side and webs down the length of his body, snaring the Octodrone.

11 Caption (Spider-Man): ... fishing for crabs.

PAGE THIRTEEN**Panel 1**

Close on Spider-Man as he webs up the drone. His Spider-Man-sense is still going off...

1 Caption (Spider-Man): And the kicker is she doesn't WANT him to stop. She KNOWS how important it is to him and everybody...

2 Caption (Spider-Man): ...who -- eats crab...

Panel 2

We are looking from outside the crawlspace he is in. He is still lying on his side, arms down where he was aiming at the drone. In the foreground, we see the white lab coat and blocky form -- and bowl cut -- that is the back of Doc Ock, who has risen up on his mechanical legs to investigate. Over his shoulder, we see Spider-Man, who has just turned his face forward and noticed that his cover is blown.

3 Spider-Man: Hey, Doc! Funny story...

Panel 3

Big panel, angled so we are looking at both Doc Ock and Spider-Man from the side. We can see their faces. Dock has one metal arm pulled back in a wicked arc, ready to strike, while two are supporting him and one has grabbed the pipes under Spider-Man, whose spider-sense is going ballistic.

4 Doc Ock(BURST): WHY!?

5 Doc Ock(BURST): Why are YOU HERE?! Why won't you LEAVE ME...

Panel 4

Spider-Man rolls to the other side JUST as Doc Ock's arm SHOOTS past him, INCHES away, smashing into the drone.

6 Ock (BURST): ALONE!!

7 Spider-Man: Whoops! Close one!

8 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): TOO close! Gotta get out of these PIPES...

9 Caption (Spider-Man): She doesn't know what to do, either. She's frightened for him, but...

PAGE FOURTEEN**Panel 1**

Another big panel. Same as above (PAGE THIRTEEN, Panel 3). Doc Ock is in the same position, relatively, but he is pulling back the arm he struck out with. Spider-Man is hitching a ride with a short strand of webbing. He is holding his arms close to his chest, hands gripping the webbing, his body straight as he is being yanked out at high speed.

10 Caption (Spider-Man): ...she doesn't want him to stop being WHO HE IS.

11 Spider-Man (BURST): YEEEEEEEE- HAAA!!!!

12 Doc Ock (BURST): RRRRRRR!!! YOU INSUFERABLE LITTLE SH...

Panel 2

Spider-Man has used the momentum of the pull to his advantage. He has come free of the piping and pulled himself into a tight swing, his body jackknifing, his feet forward, slamming into Doc's midsection, cutting him off in mid-expletive.

13 Spider-Man: NOW, now, Doc, you'll hurt my feelings!

Panel 3

Doc's arms go on the attack, defending him. He is curled up in a near-fetal position, holding his injured gut. One arm is off panel above, apparently holding on to something, as the other three fly at Spider-Man, who is twisted in a uniquely Spider-Man-like fashion to avoid them. He is bent over backwards and twisted, legs split, one arm up and firing a strand of webbing to set up his next move, the other arm down and out behind his head. His head is also bent back, chin out, as one arm narrowly misses it. The other two arms crisscross him, one above his torso (and between the legs) and the other below.

14 Doc (Struggling for breath, weak): How -- how did you find me?

15 Spider-Man: Here we go with the arms again!

16 Spider-Man: To be honest, Doc -- and I didn't want to SAY anything, but...

Panel 4

Doc is recovering quickly. He has two arms on the ground. The arm that was up and off panel is doubling down on itself as Spider-Man swings by, upside down, over Doc's head. Their faces pass within a foot of each other, the Doc looking up, jaw grinding, teeth bared, Spider-Man featureless in his mask as he SAILS by overhead. Doc's fourth arm is trailing behind Spider-Man, trying to catch him. One REAL arm is up, fist balled.

17 Spider-Man: ...it's your BREATH.

PAGE FIFTEEN**Panel 1**

Warehouse. Sal is checking his watch. By this point, his face has gotten red. Spider-Man notices him checking the watch.

1 Spider-Man: The cops ARE taking their time, aren't they? At least that alarm stopped.

2 Sal: Yeah. You know, you don't HAVE to stick around...

3 Spider-Man: Ha! Right. That's okay, REALLY.

Panel 2

Sal resumes his advice, one hand up, palm up, the other crossing his body and holding his elbow -- a very Ed Sullivan-like pose.

4 Sal: What your pal needs to do is PICK HIS BATTLES. This advice, by the way, applies to just about everything, and ESPECIALLY when dealing with women.

5 Sal: Look -- if he's doing everything he can, and SHE'S doing everything SHE can, and they BOTH are stuck in this situation, then the only thing that CAN be done is to accept it. But it makes it easier for HER to accept if she knows he's not out risking his neck when he doesn't HAVE to. And it ought to make HIM feel better that there is SOMETHING he can do to at least not make things worse.

Panel 3

Close on Sal's face.

6 Sal: Like I said, guys wanna DO something when there's trouble. Just worrying about it and going on and doing the same things with no hope of change -- well that'd drive just about anybody CRAZY.

Panel 4

At the Dairy. Big panel - Doc, standing on top of machinery with real feet, has two arms webbed together. He is ripping the webbing from them with a third arm while a fourth takes a swing at Spider-Man, who is flipping by and firing web balls at him. Doc's mouth is open with an inarticulate roar. His hair is messed up, a string or two of saliva connect the top of his open mouth to the bottom, and his tongue is prominent. His feet are wide apart, and both of his arms are up and back, fists clenched, in a classic power stance. In other words...he looks crazy.

7 SFX: RRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!

8 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Geeze, he's really LOSING IT.

PAGE SIXTEEN**Panel 1**

Inside Peter and MJ's apartment; the living room. Peter, head bowed, dressed in his Spider-Man suit, holds his mask in one fist, his arms crossed, the other fist up and supporting his forehead, which is creased, brows knitted. MJ stands in the background, arms folded, staring off in the distance with a cold, blank look on her face.

1 Caption: Much earlier.

2 Peter (THOUGHT): I think I'm going to LOSE IT.

3 Peter (THOUGHT): This is the third time this week this has happened. WHY does she keep DOING this?

Panel 2

MJ, still staring off in the distance, speaks up. Peter looks up, his fist dropping down in front of his mouth.

4 MJ: I think you should just go. You obviously WANT to go on patrol, so just GO.

Panel 3

Peter has his arms down and pointed away from his body, one hand open, the other still holding the mask. His body language is unconsciously hostile.

5 Peter: That's NOT FAIR, MJ. It's INDEFENSIBLE to say I want to go on patrol. I DO want to, but that doesn't mean I don't want to stay here with you MORE.

6 MJ: Well it obviously DOES or we wouldn't be HAVING this argument. AGAIN.

Panel 4

A few moments later; outside, Spider-Man is up as high as he can swing, putting some real anger into it. The sun is setting in the background.

7 Caption (Peter): You know what? FINE. You want to be that way, I'll GO. I'll be back LATER.

PAGE SEVENTEEN**Panel 1**

Close on Spider-Man as he wrestles with his problems in his own style -- webslinging the stress away.

1 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): I feel sick. Why can't I just NOT FIGHT with my wife? If only I was BETTER at talking to her, stopping myself before I say the WRONG THING...

2 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): STILL. She isn't being FAIR. It drives me up the wall when she does this. It's not like I don't LOVE her, and I do things for her all the time -- why does she act like I don't care?

Panel 2

Pulling himself up, on the upper end of a swing, body straight as a spear, arms tight and high, about to let go of the web, legs nearly vertical and pointing at the darkening sky.

3 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): ARRGH! I wish there was someone I could TALK TO about this. I can't talk to anyone who knows me as SPIDER-MAN without telling them about MJ, and I can't talk to anyone who knows me as PETER PARKER without giving details about my life as SPIDER-MAN.

Panel 3

WAY up high, dropping through the last rays of sunlight, knees up at chest height but spread out, arms out, fingers spread and palms down, Spider-Man searches for his next web-anchor point.

4 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Give me the LIZARD to work out my mad on, or put a CHEMISTRY PROBLEM in front of me and let me THINK IT THROUGH -- heck, give me a TRICKY PHOTO COMPOSITION to shoot. I can HANDLE those things -- MJ, on the other hand...

5 Spider-Man: Sigh.

Panel 4

A far-away shot, down a street. We see Spider-Man has anchored another web and is a classic downswing pose, legs crossed at ankles, body long and straight, arms over his head holding on to the web, which is anchored in the mid-ground off the top of the panel. In the foreground, we see the art gallery -- in a second he will end up at PANEL 1 on PAGE 2. The front door is open and Sal is standing in the doorway, looking furtively up and down the street, letting in Thug 1 and Thug 3. Any passerby wouldn't see a robbery going on, just a few fellows entering a building by the front door.

6 Sal: In you go, boys, in you go.

PAGE EIGHTEEN**Panel 1**

Back to the Sal-advises-Spider-Man timeline. BIRD'S-EYE VIEW looking down at the front door, where a Cop holds the door open and two more are entering -- like a moment after PANEL 4 above, but different players. The cops that have walked in are looking up and pointing.

1 Spider-Man (OFF PANEL): Welp, looks like your ride is here.

Panel 2

Back to Sal and Spider-Man. Sal is REALLY red-faced now, with all the blood rushing to his head. His hat falls UP (remember the POV is right-side up) and away from his head, his short hair pointing up. Spider-Man is waving UP (really down) and looking at the cops.

2 Sal: Oh thank goodness. I really need to get down from here before I have an aneurism.

Panel 3

Pull back a little and flip the POV. A cop stands on the gallery floor craning his neck to look up. Now we see that Sal and Spider-Man are upside down. Sal is holding his head, belatedly grabbing for his hat, which is at the cop's feet, and Spider-Man is craning his neck looking down.

3 Cop: Hey, WEBHEAD. This your mess?

4 Spider-Man: Uhm, you're welcome?

Panel 4

A few moments later, the thugs are lined up and being led out the front door by the cops. All of them have their hands webbed behind their back except Sal, who holds his hands out, wrists together, as a cop handcuffs him.

5 Spider-Man: Well, Sal, I wish we could have met under different circumstances. You know, ones where you aren't being a crook.

6 Sal: Ha! So do I, Spider-Man.

7 Sal: You take care of yourself, and your lady, too.

Panel 5

Sal looks over his shoulder as he is being guided out of the door by the cop. He is smiling, really tickled pink that he got to give advice to his hero.

8 Sal: Just remember to stop GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS! Be deliberate!

9 Sal: See you around!

PAGE NINETEEN**SPLASH PAGE**

A classic Spider-Man splash page. We see Doc Ock, suspended from the ground on two legs walking forward, his body slanted a bit in that classic tilt that says Doctor Octopus. One gloved fist is up and shaking at Spider-Man, a bit of webbing stuck to his face and elsewhere in the room. His other two arms are slashing and thrusting as we see four Spider-Man images, one the “present” and the other aftereffects, showing how he is dancing around and avoiding the flailing, deadly arms of Doctor Octopus. In his last position, clinging to a wall, we see above him one of the Octodrones dropping, arms out, ready to clamp on to his back. His spider-sense is tingling. Each of the thoughts below are spread out among the images of Spider-Man.

1 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): I’m getting TIRED. That fight with MJ has me rattled, and that bit with Sal and the art gallery didn’t help.

2 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): I need to be in top form to take on a BIG NASTY like Ock.

3 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Why am I even doing this again?

4 Doc Ock: BLAST it, you AGGRAVATING ARACHNID! I’m going to CRUSH YOU!

5 Spider-Man: Hey, Doc, I think you need to work on your BEDSIDE MANNER!

6 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Ugh. Even my JOKES are tired.

PAGE TWENTY**Panel 1**

Spider-Man has flipped up from his spot where he was crouching on the wall and smashed the Octodrone against the wall above him with his foot. Unfortunately, one of Doc Ock's arms, pincers open and read to grab, is now inches away from Spider-Man's ankle.

1 Spider-Man: Whoops! Nearly GOT me there, little guy.

Panel 2

Ock his gloating as he SLINGS Spider-Man across the room, gripping his foot with a mechanical arm, SMASHING him in a vat where milk is being stirred in an emulsification process. The vat cracks open when hit by Spider-Man's back, with chunky, steaming milk and curds spurting out around him.

2 Doc Ock (BURST): GOT YOU!

3 SFX: CRACK!

4 Spider-Man (BURST): UHNNN!

Panel 3

Doc lets go of Spider-Man, his arms retracting; he looks shocked at the damage, standing on his own feet, his hands coming up to his head. Spider-Man lays limp, spent, hot chunky milk covering his uniform. He has one hand up, wrist back, hand open, looking at the pile of white goo he finds there.

5 Spider-Man: OHhhh gross.

6 Spider-Man: PLEASE tell me this is COW milk.

7 Doc Ock: Noooo! My CERULEOCTO!

Panel 4

Close on Spider-Man as two of Doc's metal arms grab the front of his shirt.

8 Spider-Man: Would it help if I said I was s...

Panel 5

Ock is now where Spider-Man was, two of his arms off panel where he just tossed Spider-Man, the other two wrenching the vat back into shape, saving as much of the liquid as he can.

9 Spider-Man (OFF PANEL, BURST): ...oOOORRRYYY!

10 Doc Ock: I MIGHT be able to salvage this batch.

11 Doc Ock: Bloody spider.

PAGE TWENTY ONE**Panel 1**

A few minutes later. Spider-Man and Doctor Octopus are standing in a clear section of the dairy floor. Doc has his arms folded, has face set and stern but not manic; his arms are performing various tasks, such as punching figures on a control panel, two are quick-welding the vat and one is lifting up a plate of cheese from a countertop. Spider-Man has one hand on the back of his head, the other on his hip.

1 Caption: Five awkward minutes later.

2 Spider-Man: So-- you actually ARE making cheese. Not, say, anthrax IN cheese. Just plain-old cheese.

3 Doc Ock: HA. I would expect cheese to you is something you find in INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED SINGLES, Spider-Man, but most of the civilized world enjoys a VAST CORNUCOPIA of the delicacy.

4 Doc Ock: I have been perfecting my OWN CHEESE for months now. I am only amazed you haven't blundered in and ruined things for me -- as is your WONT -- LONG AGO.

Panel 2

Close on Spider-Man, who is being shown a plate of cheese held by a mechanical arm. On the plate, in the center, is a wheel of cheese (about eight inches) that looks something like BLUE CHEESE. The blue veining forms a circle in the center, and radiating out in a curving spiral are EIGHT VIENS, running from the circle to the outer edges. It isn't perfect, clean white with perfect, clean blue lines like a graphic. The lines are there and obvious, but there is a sprinkling of blue molding here and there throughout the cheese. Arranged around this wheel are thick sections cut from a similar wheel, small napkins and tiny forks used to spear and eat the cheese sections. Spider-Man is reaching for a piece of cheese with his fingers.

5 Doc Ock (OFF PANEL): THIS, Spider-Man, is Ceruleocto -- BLUE OCTOPUS -- and it is to be my entry in this year's WORLD CHEESE AWARDS. I INSIST that you try it. The LEAST you could do after your TRESPASS.

6 Doc Ock (MUTTERING, OFF PANEL): PLAIN OLD CHEESE, indeed.

7 Spider-Man: Hey, this actually smells GOOD.

Panel 3

Spider-Man is holding a half-eaten piece of cheese, his mask up over his nose, his mouth chewing away, a bit of a smile. Doc is looking mollified, putting the cheese tray down.

8 Spider-Man: This IS good. Wow, Doc. Pretty amazing.

9 Doc Ock: Thank you.

10 Spider-Man: So -- mph -- so if you were just here making cheese, and if you just rented the space like you say -- why attack me?

Panel 4

Doc has brought his tablet PC back in front of him, defensively fiddling with it while he answers. Spider-Man is pulling his mask back in place.

11 Doc Ock: You are the intruder here, Spider-Man. Although I suppose I could have -- ASKED -- what you wanted, but we have a long HISTORY, as you know. I suppose I was acting on reflex -- just...

Panel 5

Close on Spider-Man who, even through the mask, shows that the next words Doc utters strike a chord in him.

12 Doc Ock (OFF PANEL): ...GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS.

PAGE TWENTY TWO**Panel 1**

Spider-Man is climbing out through the skylight, placing his camera back in his belt. The rain has stopped.

1 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): I can't believe it. DOCTOR OCTOPUS, CHEESEMAKER.

2 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): I guess everybody needs a HOBBY.

Panel 2

Spider-Man lifts his arm and fires an anchor webline in preparation of swinging away.

3 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): I suppose I could have called him on his story. Demanded to see his RENTAL AGREEMENT. Taken SAMPLES of his ingredients. Stolen his RECIPIE...

4 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Sigh.

Panel 3

Jumping off the roof, both hands on his webline, starting his down-swing.

5 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): What's the POINT, though? Far as I know he isn't committing any CRIME, and HASN'T since he was last RELEASED. I'll keep TABS on him here, just to be on the safe side, but that's all I can....

6 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): ...NO. That's all I'm GOING to do. I'm CHOOSING to pick my battles, here, and going toe-to-toe with Ock over his CHEESE isn't worth turning Mary Jane into a WIDOW over.

Panel 4

From behind, we see Spider-Man swinging up and into the night, on his way home.

7 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): What I CHOOSE to do is go home to my wife and talk to her about the REAL ISSUES that we are struggling with -- TOGETHER.

8 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): Blue Octopus. HA!

9 Spider-Man (THOUGHT): It WAS good, though...

-Fini-