

MARVEL

11

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WYSAQUETTM



**MAKER'S
MARK**
Part 1 of 2



She can be anything you want her to be...
except predictable.

Stan Lee presents...

Mystique

MAKER'S MARK Part One of Two

PREVIOUSLY

Born with the ability to look and sound like anyone, the shapeshifting Mystique is a former pro-mutant freedom fighter, wanted by nearly every government in the world for alleged crimes against humanity. In exchange for protection from her countless enemies, Mystique reluctantly agrees to work for Professor Charles Xavier, telepathic leader of the X-Men, a group of mutants sworn to protect a world that fears and hates them. But instead of being invited to join this team, Mystique is asked to participate in politically sensitive operations as a *secret* agent, an operative who can't be traced back to Xavier in the event of her capture or death.

Assisting Xavier with his underground spy network is Forge, a mutant inventor who once had a personal relationship with Mystique. Able to build whatever mechanical device he imagines, Forge can also repair just about anything.

But can he fix Mystique...?



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MYSTIQUE
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Shapeshifter



FORGE
Mutant Inventor

⊗ BROOKLYN, NEW YORK
11:01 P.M. [EST]



⊗ BROOKLYN, NEW YORK
TWO HOURS EARLIER









A statewide Amber Alert warning has been issued by police for a 12-year-old boy allegedly abducted at gunpoint by his estranged stepfather.

Spencer Bronson was reportedly taken from his mother's apartment in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn less than two hours ago.



We're only a couple of blocks from there. Maybe we can do something.

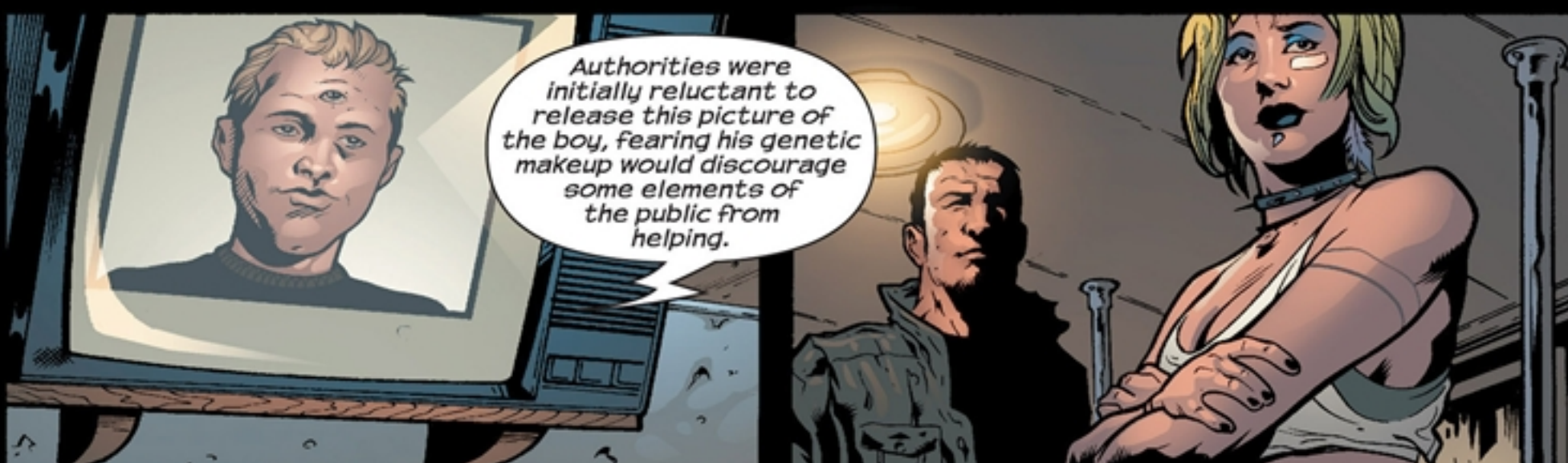
Sorry, do-gooder. I'm off-duty tonight.



Raven, this kid is in danger!

I handle global crises, not missing children. Besides, I only take orders from Professor Xavier, not his glorified grease monkey. So you can--

This is the first time in the brief history of the Amber Alert system that the warning has been used in search of an openly mutant child.



Authorities were initially reluctant to release this picture of the boy, fearing his genetic makeup would discourage some elements of the public from helping.



This is why I don't watch television.

⊗ 9:22 P.M. [EST]



Can't we just call Xavier?

Tell him to use his mutant-finding contraption to pinpoint this brat?

The Professor isn't at the mansion tonight, Mystique. And even if he were, Cerebra isn't always one hundred percent accurate.

If we're going to find Spencer, we'll have to do it the old-fashioned way.

What, you going to use your "Cheyenne tracking skills"?

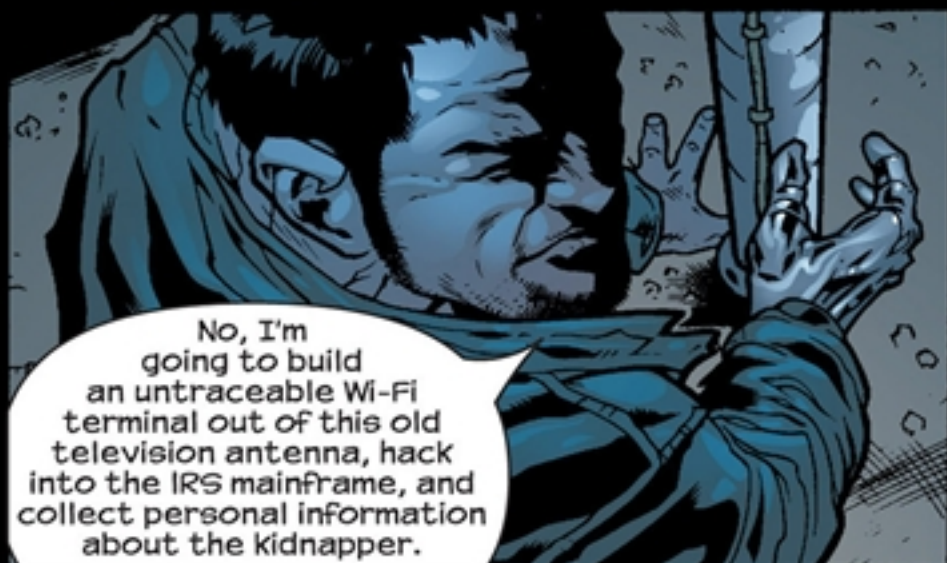


No, I'm going to build an untraceable Wi-Fi terminal out of this old television antenna, hack into the IRS mainframe, and collect personal information about the kidnapper.

Oh.

And what's with all the Indian cracks tonight, anyway?

I know you've got some stupid hang-up with *humans*, but since when were you a *racist*?



Easy, Maker. I just like reminding you who you are.

I mean, I don't understand how a *Native American* could have any love for humans. They systematically *exterminated* your ancestors.

My *human* ancestors, you mean?

You spit out this tired old anti-humanity rhetoric, but deep down, I think you know that peaceful coexistence is the only answer.

Yeah, after they're done slaughtering us, maybe humans will give us some *mutant casinos*. Or at least name one of their *mascots* after--

Here we go. Anthony Bronson, age 39. Lost his job as a night watchman at a warehouse in Gravesend last month.

We should shake down his old work buddies for info.

You don't think the police have tried that already?

You really believe cops are working overtime to help a *mutant*?

Forge, do you know what Oscar Wilde said the basis of all *optimism* is?

Sheer terror.

⊗ 9:51 P.M. [EST]

I don't
get it.

How can you
love Oscar Wilde
so much if *he* was
a human?

Actually, he
wasn't. Wilde was
a low-level empath.
I met him in Paris
in 1898.



Okay,
I'm lying...
but so
what.

I love
his writing,
not the
man.

Isn't that
a little
hypocritical?

You love
Leni Riefenstahl
movies, don't
you?

Does that
mean you love
all *Nazis*?

Forget it.
As soon as *that*
word is used, any
constructive
debate is
dead...





Forge, think about it.

You're trying to defend humanity... as we hunt down a human who put a **gun** to his kid's head.

We don't know the whole story yet, Raven.



What, you think it's the **boy's** fault?

I don't know *what* to think. Haven't you heard about those teenage runaways in Los Angeles who supposedly **murdered** some girl?

Who understands kids these days?



These days? What were you doing when *you* were a teenager? Hiding in some rice paddy overseas, waiting to shoot innocent men and women?



Hey, that is *way* out of--



Quiet.

This is it.



Time to put my game face on.

⊗ 9:57 P.M. [EST]





He must have been ashamed that... that he started dating again so soon after the divorce.

But it wasn't like that, I swear!

Lady, what the *heck* are you talking about?



I'm Anthony Bronson's girlfriend, Bill.

He let me borrow five thousand dollars from him a few months ago. I was going to pay him back, but then he and his son had to... to *leave*.

Oh, well... I don't know nothing about that.



Bill, please! He won't be able to survive long without this money, and if *he* tries to tell me where to send it, the police might find him!

What makes you think *I* know where he is?



He always told me you were his best friend.

That you were the only one he could trust.

Seriously...?



Anthony is just doing what he *had* to do, Bill.

The courts *stole* Spencer from him. They always side with the mother, no matter *what* kind of monster she is.

You ain't lyin' there...



All right, listen... Anthony called here a few hours ago. Said he needed a place to lie low for a couple nights.

I told him he could stay at this rich family's *brownstone* I get paid to check in on every other weekend. They're outta town for the next month.



I'll tell you where it is...long as you do one thing for me.

Anything.



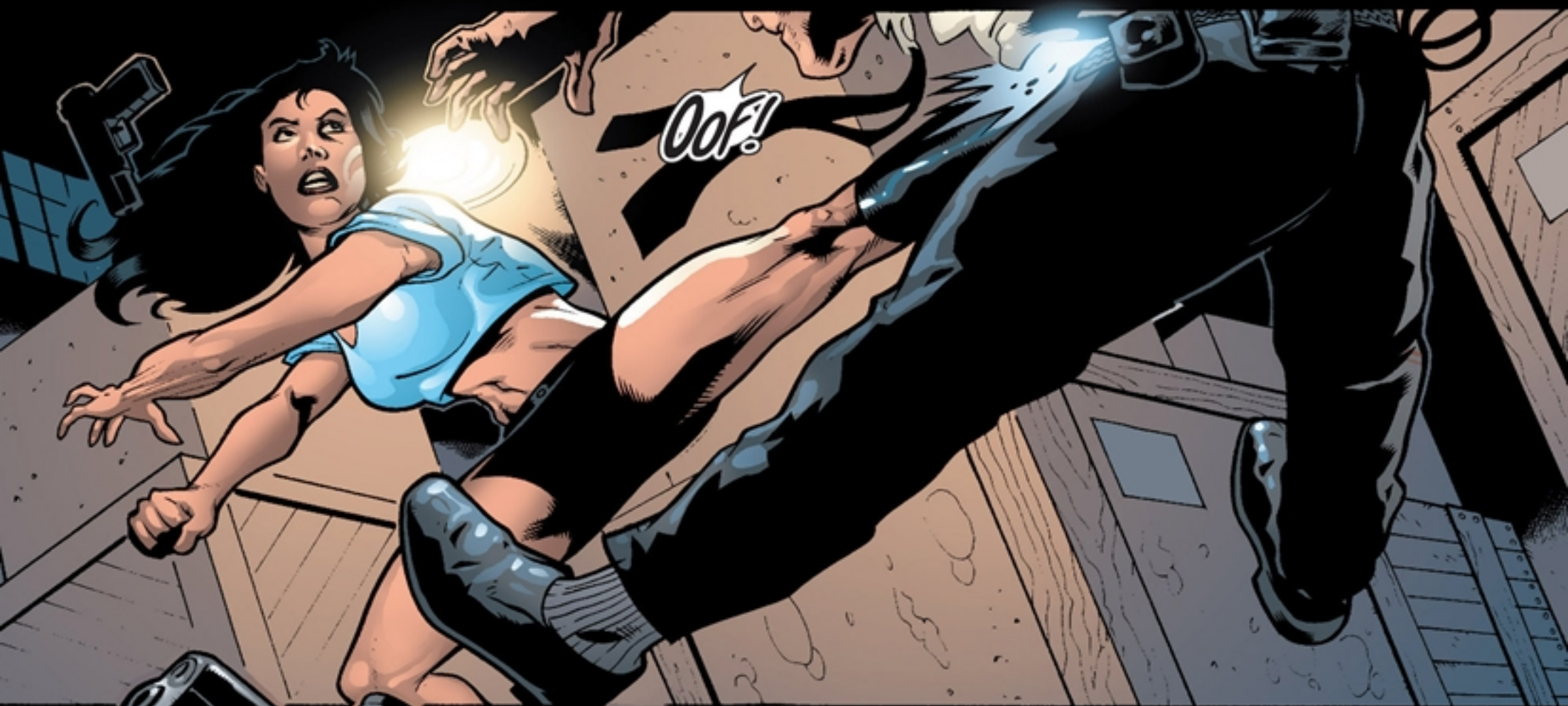
Bring him an ice-cold six-pack from his old friend Bill.

You know I will, handsome.

Klick



That's funny... seeing how Bill swore off booze six years ago.





Point a gun? At me?

I should shoot your eyes out.

Wait!



The...the *brownstone* Anthony took his kid to, it's...it's across from Prospect Park, okay?

But you have to promise not to hurt him. He's a good--

You're lying!



No, I swear!

He's telling the truth.



I turned his phone into a *verbal* polygraph machine.

Now let's go.

Where did *you* come from? Who *are* you freaks?



Good freaking Samaritans.

⊗ 10:53 P.M. [EST]

All right,
I'm going
in.

Mystique,
wait!

Maybe I can
build you some
kind of non-lethal
stun weapon
to--



Trust me,
I don't need
gadgets to
rescue some
kid.





BING
BONG



Come on,
come on.

If this guy
gave us a bum
address, I'm
gonna kick
someone
in the--



Oh, hey,
Bill.



Spencer?!



Uh, come
on, buddy, we
have to get
you out
of--

Go away,
Bill.











That lady is *blue*.

And this guy's hand is *metal*.



We're not here to hurt you, Spencer.

We just want to take you back to your *Mom*.



No way. Mom's a *jerk*.

She doesn't let me do *anything*.


But my friend and I--



Your friend is *my* friend now.



Get rid of her, please.



Well, *this*
should be
fun.

⊗ TO BE CONCLUDED...