Movies

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'Spider-Man' spins towering tribute to New York

By Susan Wloszczyna, USA TODAY



Handout art
Spiderman (Tobey Maguire) rescues love interest Mary Jane (Kirsten Danst).

Several movies underwent the editing knife after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks caused certain sights and subjects suddenly to be in questionable taste.

But *Spider-Man*, which suffered a snip of its own, may be one of the few to be inspired to make an addition because of last fall's world-shattering events.

The creators of the big-screen action adventure, which stars Tobey Maguire as the comic-book marvel and swoops into theaters May 3, cut an image that appeared in a pulled teaser trailer as well as in the feature: a helicopter stuck in a web spun between the World Trade Center towers.

Says producer Laura Ziskin, "After 9/11, none of us felt comfortable with aircraft in a web."

That was the only sacrifice, though. Considering the prominent role the real-life metropolis has always played in Spidey tales, director Sam Raimi nixed any other alterations to the New York skyline: "I left the towers in the entire picture except for that one shot." Other familiar Manhattan landmarks are featured, including the Flatiron Building (serves as the offices for the *Daily Bugle* newspaper) and Times Square.

The addition comes during a climactic struggle between the Green Goblin (Willem Dafoe) and the superhero. The battle of wills below the Queensboro Bridge always featured feisty Big Apple types tossing objects at the villain as he imperils both a cable car full of children and Spider-Man squeeze Mary Jane (Kirsten Dunst).

After the September tragedy, however, Raimi decided "to give something to the city" and pay tribute to its spirit by having one of the avenging locals declare, "You mess with one of us, you mess with all of us." It's a sentiment that is bound to resonate with residents of Anytown,

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- Flash Gordon
- Green Lantern
- Incredible Hulk
- Spider-Man
- Storm
- Superman
- Wolverine
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USA, as well. Little wonder the film ends with the Stars and Stripes complementing Spider-Man's blue and red suit.

"There is a gestalt about New York now," Ziskin says. "*Ich bin ein* New Yorker. This is our nod to that. But it's not out of character. New Yorkers would behave that way in any case."
