

AUTOMOTIVE

## Lexus plays on struggles of parking in new Marvel campaign

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Actor and comedian Kumail Nanjiani stars as Kingo in Lexus' newest Marvel Studios commercial. Image courtesy of Lexus

By NORA HOWE

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus has tasked Kumail Nanjiani, actor, comedian and star of Marvel Studios' upcoming film *Eternals*, with finding a safe parking spot for the new Lexus IS 500 sports sedan.

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As the exclusive automotive partner of the new movie, Lexus has debuted a long-form advertisement following Kingo, played by Mr. Nanjiani, as he attempts to find a place to park his Lexus before joining an epic superhero battle. The upcoming blockbuster, directed by Academy Award-winning director Chlo Zhao and starring Angelina Jolie, Gemma Chan, Salma Hayek, Kit Harrington and more alongside Mr. Nanjiani, will premiere in the United States on Nov. 5.

"We're excited to once again partner with Marvel Studios as the exclusive auto partner of *Eternals*," said Vinay Shahani, vice president of marketing at **Lexus**, Dallas. "We love the human-centric storytelling through its diverse cast and felt that it aligned very well with Lexus' audience."

"This partnership is the perfect opportunity to showcase our new IS 500 F Sport Performance sports sedan, the most powerful IS ever," he said. "There's a natural synergy between Marvel Studios and Lexus, as we both go all-in to deliver amazing experiences."

### Parking spot

The newest film from Marvel Studios, *Eternals* debuts a team of ancient alien superheroes who have been secretly living on Earth for centuries.

Following *Avengers: Endgame*, in which the Avengers and their allies attempt to reverse the destruction inflicted by antagonist Thanos in the previous film, *Infinity War*, members of the Eternals are forced to reveal themselves and unite against the Deviants, mankind's ancient enemy.

### *Eternals* - Official Trailer

To celebrate its partnership with the studio and its complex metaverse, Lexus has released a new spot featuring *Eternals* member Kingo, who must solve the ordinary and human issue of finding a parking space downtown before

participating in the extraordinarily non-human event that is a superhero battle.

Directed by brothers Anthony and Joe Russo, who have directed four Marvel Cinematic Universe movies, the advertisement opens on an urban city that has been obviously destroyed by an assailant as debris falling from the sky and vehicles are set ablaze.

A Lexus IS 500 sports sedan speeds through the streets, dodging obstacles and flying objects. In a matter of seconds, Kingo is revealed to be driving the car.

*The campaign takes a humorous spin on the mundane struggle of finding a parking spot*

Through the vehicle's Bluetooth dashboard system, he receives a text message from Sersi, Ms. Chan's character in the feature film. She urges Kingo to join the battle against the Deviants.

Seemingly unfazed by the chaos, Kingo begins looking for a parking spot.

The first open spot he finds is hit by a massive rock, so he forgoes this option and continues in his search. He finally finds a new option, but it is restricted by eight conflicting zoning signs a comedic reference to a universal issue among urban drivers.

He enters a parking garage, where he finds a single open space, but the car parked in the adjacent spot is over the line, ultimately making it impossible for the Lexus to fit.

The spot "ends" with a plug for the film and the Lexus brand graphic, however, as most Marvel fans know, there is always an additional scene following the end credits of any MCU movie.

The extra scene shows the Lexus IS 500 in a deserted parking lot where nothing is likely to interfere with or destroy the car, except for a shopping cart that is accelerating towards the parked vehicle. Before it is able to hit the car, though, Kingo destroys the cart using his superpowers.



*Drivers can relate to some of the annoyances Kingo faces while driving in the city. Image courtesy of Lexus*

The spot officially ends with Kingo running towards the battle, shouting at his ringing cell phone that he is a seven-minute walk away.

For the campaign, Lexus enlisted Academy Award-winning visual effects company [Framestore](#). The video also features the new voice of the brand, actor Gaius Charles.

"Parking Spot" is set to appear in a range of media placements, from special events to Lexus dealerships, and a 30-second version will air on cable as well as during college football, NHL and soccer games,

In addition to broadcast, the campaign includes advanced TV, digital and social. Further, the Lexus LS 500 flagship sedan and the new NX luxury crossover will make appearances in the upcoming film.

"We want viewers to take away that exciting things are happening at Lexus, and that our vision of luxury is both effortless and intuitive," Mr. Shahani said. "Of course, we also hope they're entertained and get a few laughs out of Kingo's all-too-relatable parking woes."

Auto in film

Especially within the action-adventure genre of filmmaking, automotive brands have secured their spot on the silver screen.

Iconic franchised film series James Bond has famously featured British automaker Aston Martin in its films, and the

brand has been celebrating that relationship with the new *No Time To Die* movie, which is set to open in U.S. theaters Oct. 8.

In August, Aston Martin launched a global *No Time To Die* campaign starring the famous DB5 as well as an out-of-home effort in London ([see story](#)).

No stranger to film collaborations, Lexus was named the official automotive partner of Sony Pictures' 2019 film *Men in Black: International*.

The 2020 RC F was featured in the film as the vehicle of choice for high-speed chases as the main character fought against alien races to save humanity ([see story](#)).

"Film partnerships are an effective way to get in front of an engaged audience, and we are certainly open to future opportunities when there is strategic alignment between a film production and our brand/product marketing objectives," Mr. Shahani said.

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