

PUNISHER: MARTYRDOM

Written by

C.T. McMillan

Based on the Marvel Comics Character

Created by

Gerry Conway, Ross Andru, and John Romita, Sr.

Inspired by

"Punisher MAX"

By

Garth Ennis

OPEN ON BLACK

SUPER: TO THOSE WHO SERVE AND THE THINGS THEY CARRY

EXT. GNUCCI MANSION - NIGHT

The mansion stands atop a hill. JERSEY COP cars pack the driveway. Snow falls.

SUPER: 1985

A Cadillac stops at the front door. MARTIN SOAP, 35, black, mustache, steps out in an Army field jacket over pajamas. J. COP 1 approaches with two cups of coffee.

J. COP 1
Detective Soap?

SOAP
In the flesh.

J. Cop 1 hands him a cup.

J. COP 1
Welcome to Conway County. Sorry you had to come over this late.

SOAP
It happens. What's the situation?

They walk to the door.

J. COP
We looked around the main house. Some windows are smashed and the guest house at the back is empty, blood and brain all over. Drag marks in the snow lead from there into the main house.

SOAP
Anyone go inside the main building?

J. COP 1
You kiddin'? The Scourge called you. We're just back-up.

SOAP
You call him The Scourge?

J. COP 1
 Fits, don't it? He's a scourge of
 the underworld. Makes us look like
 amateurs. What do you call 'im?

SOAP
 The Punisher.

Soap and J. Cop 1 stop at the steps. On the door handles sit
 two flares. Soap passes his coffee to J. Cop 1, pockets one
 flare, and takes the other. J. Cop 1 readies to draw.

Soap activates the flare and opens the door.

INT. MANSION FOYER - NIGHT

A row of chairs stand before a Christmas tree in the center.
 CHILDREN and MAIDS sit bound and wrapped in blankets. Soap
 drops the flare and checks the pulse of CHILD.

SOAP
 Radio for medical.

J. COP 1
 You got it.

J. Cop 1 calls to his people. A few come in.

J. COP 2
 Survivors?

J. COP 3
 That's new.

Soap moves far right and sees a body on the floor behind the
 chairs. He walks round and activates the last flare. J. COPS
 look over and vomit. Soap rubs his eyes.

SOAP
 Tell the coroners to bring extra
 bags. They're gonna be here all
 morning.

MAMA GNUCCI, 60, hangs by her wrists at the top bannister,
 cheeks slashed, and jaw hanging past her open neck. Piled
 across the stairs and floor lay BODYGUARDS under her feet.

CUT TO BLACK

FRANK (V.O.)
 They never tell you about the kid
 that lost his legs to frostbite at
 the Bulge...
 (MORE)

FRANK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 the Lieutenant that hung to death
 in his parachute on D-Day... the
 two friends flattened by a Panzer
 at Kursk.

INT. HUEY - DAY

SUPER: 1968

The Huey flies over South Vietnam packed with MARINES. FRANK CASTLE, 17, big, black hair, holds an M16 and clenches a small Bible. He sits beside DOOR GUNNER with an M60.

FRANK (V.O.)
 All they ever tell you is the good.

He looks at the Bible. A rubber band holds a Captain America trading card on the back. He smiles at it.

FRANK (V.O.)
 Only the good.

Frank puts the Bible in his flak jacket pocket before a bullet tears his helmet strap and throws it off his head. More pierce the floor and spark on the ceiling.

Frank almost falls out before Gunner shoves him back in. Alarms go off. PILOTS struggle to keep flying.

PILOT 1
 I'm putting her down!

PILOT 2
 Mayday, Mayday, this is Yankee 4.
 We are taking fire. I say again, we
 are taking fire. Bowing out.

MAJOR (O.S.)
 Copy, Yankee 4. Get to the LZ on
 foot, o --

The chin-bubble at Pilots' feet bursts and the Huey dives. Corpses pour out. Frank hits the back wall. He grabs Gunner and pulls him close.

EXT. VIETNAM JUNGLE - DAY

The Huey falls through the canopy and stops short of the ground between two trees.

INT. HUEY - DAY

A few bodies remain. Frank lays on his back on the floor, Gunner on top. He nudges him awake.

FRANK
Hey? Hey, you okay, man?

Gunner winces.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Can you move?

Gunner tries to sit up.

GUNNER
I think my leg's broke --

Bullets rip into Gunner from outside. Frank grabs the M60 and shoots for a long second. He pauses and receives silence. Frank slides Gunner off and looks for his dog-tags.

INSERT - GUNNER'S DOG-TAG

It reads:

MACK, J.

BACK TO SCENE

Frank takes Mack's helmet and sees a hole in his jacket. He takes out the Bible, the bullet caught in the pages, card intact. Frank pats him on the chest and takes one tag.

Static growls from the cockpit.

MAJOR (O.S.)
Yankee 4, Yankee 4, anyone alive?
Does anyone copy, over?

Frank steps in and grabs the bloody mic.

FRANK
This is Private Castle. Yankee 4's
down. I say again, we are down.

MAJOR (O.S.)
You the only one?

FRANK
Yes, sir, over.

MAJOR (O.S.)

Then get y'r ass over to the LZ! We
need every rifle we got!

FRANK

Yes, sir! I'm Oscar Mike!

Frank returns and takes Mack's M60 and ammo, followed by the
other Marines' dog tags.

EXT. VIETNAM JUNGLE - DAY

SONG: "Mother of Mine" by Neil Reid

Frank hops out and walks. Beside a tree saturated by smoking
bullet holes lays VC. Frank looks at the shredded meat, VC's
eyes open. They stare at each other.

FRANK (V.O.)

Only the good.

Frank starts in a run.

EXT. VIETNAM HILLTOP - DAY

Marines stand in trenches defending the steep hilltop with
Hueys coming and going behind them. Frank shoots the M60 and
sees a huddle of VC come up the left.

Frank rushes to the flank, steps over the line, and sprays.
The ground gives way and he slides down on his back. He kills
more on the way down and falls into the opposite treeline.

VC charge from both sides. Frank M60 clicks empty and he
draws his knife.

EXT. VIETNAM HILLTOP - DUSK

Hueys land and unload Marines. They pitch tents and place a
sign that reads: CAMP VALLEY FORGE. Some stand in formation,
Frank in front. MAJOR pins a Silver Star to his jacket.

Frank salutes and shakes his hand.

EXT. CAMP VALLEY FORGE - DAWN

SUPER: 1969

The ground smolders, burning bodies everywhere. Hueys land with a crunch. BILL, 22, steps off with Marines. Ahead stands a figure. Bill approaches and stops, his eyes wide.

Frank stands covered in blood, wounded and cut up, eyes red. He holds a broken M16 caked in brain matter.

EXT. MARINE CAMP - DAY

Frank sits on the steps of an aid station with bandages on his arms, chest, and face. He smokes a cigarette and stares at body-bags lined up before him, his stare vacant.

From the side comes LT and JAMES FALSWORTH in tiger-stripes, Howling Commandos patch on his sleeve with a British flag. Frank salutes. LT introduces James and they shake hands.

EXT. S.A.S.R. BASE - DAY

TRAINEES stand on a field under the Australian sun. They perform hand-to-hand exercises as DUM DUM DUGGAN walks among them, screaming instruction.

Frank trains with BRIAN FALSWORTH, 20, James' son.

EXT. S.A.S.R. BASE RANGE - NIGHT

PERCIVAL PINKERTON laughs and shoots an M60 over Trainees crawling in mud in full kit. Frank crawls along side Brian.

INT. S.A.S.R. BASE MACHINE SHOP - DAY

GABE JONES lectures before a chalkboard with the image of a blown up M16. On a table before him the same weapon is in pieces with tools at the side.

Frank and Brian sit together with Trainees on tables with whole M16s and tools.

INT. AUSSIE NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Trainees and Brian dance in a crowd under colored lights. Frank sits at the bar, stares vacant at the back wall. HOOKER sits next to him and puts her hand around his thick arm.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank sits on the side of a bed. Hooker sleeps behind him. He

holds a glass of whiskey in both hands, staring forward. He squeezes in a shaking hand until the glass cracks.

EXT. BURNING JUNGLE - DAY

Frank sprints with a smaller M60; a Chopped M60 (C-M60), in tiger-stripes with the Howling Commandos patch and face paint. He runs with COMMANDOS in similar getup.

INT. INTEROGATION ROOM - DAY

A lone lamp shines at NAKED VC hung by his ankles. CIA AGENT paces round while Frank lights a welding torch at the side.

EXT. POW CAMP - DAY

In a cage sits POW with severed heads. VC GUARD pisses on him before Frank creeps behind and opens his throat with a gush of blood. Commandos rush quietly into the camp with CAR-15s.

EXT. BURNING VILLAGE - NIGHT

All but one hut burns. Frank comes out of the hut and stops. COMMANDO lays on the ground with no head, chest open like a mouth with ribs for teeth. Frank stares at him vacant.

SONG ENDS

EXT. JFK PICK-UP LANE - DAY

SUPER: 1970

Frank wears Marine Class Bs with the rank of Sergeant and a duffle bag. He looks up the sidewalk to a cab. GIOVANNI CASTLE, 57, leans against the cab in a 101st Airborne jacket.

Frank walks up and Giovanni embraces him.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Frank sits in the passenger seat as Giovanni drives.

FRANK
How's Ma?

GIOVANNI

Oh, y'know, herself. Might have a heartattack when ya get home... Andy's been acting up in school.

FRANK

How so?

GIOVANNI

Oh, he whacked one of the Sisters.

FRANK

He killed a nun?

GIOVANNI

No! No. He took the yard stick and swung at her. Wasn't too bad.

Frank shakes his head.

FRANK

He knows to stand up for himself, but he shouldn't hit a woman. Ever.

GIOVANNI

Second kids are always squirrely. I was born third, so your brother is better off. Believe me.

FRANK

I'll talk to him. Set him straight.

GIOVANNI

G'head. It'll save me and your mother cash to get him fixed.

INT. PARENTS HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

KATRINA CASTLE, 52, scoops spaghetti and meatballs onto Frank's plate. He wolfs it down. ANDREI CASTLE, 12 sits opposite. She speaks with a Ukrainian accent.

KATRINA

In Day School, you were punished by reading Torah on one foot. What do Catholics teach beating with rulers? The metric system?

FRANK

It's just how it is, ma.

Katrina sits.

KATRINA

I don't like how it is! If those
Papist poviyi beat him again, I
will shoot them!

FRANK

Andy just needs to shape up. Right?

Andrei crosses his arms.

ANDREI

I didn't do it. It was Tommy.

FRANK

Doesn't matter. You should've taken
your beating like everyone else.

KATRINA

But you were never beat at his age,
Francis. You behaved.

Frank wipes his mouth.

FRANK

I know what'll fix him.

He stands and Andrei follows.

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - DAY

Posters of Uncle Sam, Rosie the Riveter, and Captain America
line the walls. Frank unloads his bag while Andrei sits on
the bed with a sleeved comic book of Captain America.

ANDREI

Where'd you get this?

FRANK

Dad used it to help me read. Know
who that is?

ANDREI

Cap.

FRANK

And what is he doing on the cover?

ANDREI

Punching Hitler.

FRANK

Right. And he never once laid a
finger on any woman.

Frank sits beside him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
He was all about justice and
morality, acting like a true
American...

EXT. ARDENNES FOREST - DAY

YOUNG GIOVANNI shivers in a fox hole behind an M1919, the
ground covered in snow with no visibility.

FRANK (V.O.)
It didn't matter what flag you
wore. He treated everyone equally.

Giovanni smacks ice loose in his canteen for a sip.

FRANK (V.O.)
Sure he killed people like Mom and
Dad, but if he hadn't, the world
would be worse off.

Footsteps approach. A hand in red reaches from the side. He
looks up then takes hold.

FRANK (V.O.)
A real hero uses his ability for
good, even at the cost of his soul.
And he never lets it bring him
down. Never.

CAPTAIN AMERICA lifts Giovanni out and puts a blanket over
him. They move to the rear as 3rd Army marches in with tanks,
GENERAL PATTON standing out one tank.

BACK TO SCENE

Frank holds the Bible and card in a plastic wrap, the bullet
still in the pages.

FRANK
On my first mission, everyone died
except me. I survived because of
this. Know why?

ANDREI
The Bible's bulletproof?

Frank smiles.

FRANK

I think I lived to see you again because I believe in what Cap stands for. A lot of bad happens in the world, no matter who you are. But as long as you stay good and defend those who can't, you'll live to keep living. Understand?

Andrei nods.

ANDREI

Does that make you a hero, Frankie?

Frank stares vacant and doesn't blink.

KATRINA (O.S.)

Francis! You have visitor!

Frank snaps back.

FRANK

Coming!

He stands.

FRANK (CONT'D)

When you're finished with that issue, there's more in the closet.

ANDREI

Okay. Thanks, Frankie.

INT. P.H. FOYER - DAY

Frank walks down the stairs and sees Soap beside his mother. He wears a field jacket with jeans.

FRANK

What's up, Martin?

SOAP

'Ey, Frank! How's it hanging?

The two meet at the foot of the stairs and embrace.

SOAP (CONT'D)

Oh man, I don't want my Army rags getting your threads all messy.

FRANK

Don't worry about it. We have more spares than you guys.

Soap chuckles.

INT. HARLEM DINER - DAY

Soap has a burger and Frank a milk shake at a booth.

SOAP
Eat something solid, man.

FRANK
I had a ton of meatballs when I got home. Haven't had a proper shake in a while.

Soap nods.

SOAP
So, you gonna get a job?

FRANK
I start at the end of the month.

SOAP
Oh yeah? Where at?

FRANK
Bragg.

Soap puts down his burger.

SOAP
Sending you back so soon?

FRANK
No. They want me training people.

Soap shakes his head.

SOAP
The Army, my Army, hired a leatherneck to train dough-boys? That's just wrong.

FRANK
Tell that to Nixon.

SOAP
That why they kept you over there an extra year? Learned something to teach the new kids?

FRANK
Pretty much. Yeah.

Frank takes a sip of his shake as they go quiet.

SOAP

...Sometimes I wanna go back. The more I'm here, the more I wanna get my ass in the grass, y'know? Like, I don't feel at home, at home, man.

Frank nods then Soap sighs.

SOAP (CONT'D)

I need a job to keep my mind off something as dumb as that.

FRANK

I could talk to Dad. Plenty of room for more cabbies.

SOAP

That'd be great! I really appreciate it.

FRANK

You got it, brother. Wanna do it full time?

SOAP

I was thinking I could work up enough cash for the Police Academy.

FRANK

You wanna join the fuzz? Am I hearing that right?

SOAP

I was a cop over there. Maybe I wouldn't do too bad --

STUDENTS interrupt.

STUDENT 1

-- Why are you in here?

STUDENT 2

Baby killers!

STUDENT 3

You should be ashamed of yourselves.

The diner goes quiet. Frank stares at them sitting at the bar. Soap eats his burger.

SOAP

It's just talk, man. Used to it.

STUDENT 1

How can you wear that uniform?
You're disgusting.

Frank glances at Soap then takes a sip of his shake.

FRANK

I didn't kill babies... but I
killed a lotta kids like you.

Soap almost chokes on his food.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Me and them were just as gung ho
about fighting the war as you are
about ending it.

Frank finishes his shake and takes out his wallet.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Nobody thinks about all the work
you have to do, but it doesn't
matter as long as you're willing to
do it. I was. They were. We were
itching to kill each other.

He lays a \$10 on the table and turns to Students.

FRANK (CONT'D)

...It's like I knew 'em. We just
spoke a different language. I could
see it in their eyes before I shut
them... forever.

Frank stands.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Let's get outta here.

SOAP

Cool... Cool.

They exit the diner in silence.

FRANK (V.O.)

It's not that they didn't let us
win. We didn't care as long as we
saw tomorrow. Flags mean nothing
covered in mud and blood.

Student 3 suddenly bursts out crying.

FRANK (V.O.)
It's that they made us stop.

EXT. FT. BRAGG OBSTACLE COURSE - DAWN

Frank and other INSTRUCTORS watch CANDIDATES run the course yelling at them.

FRANK (V.O.)
We bet 60,000 kids and our sanity
on 'Nam. Hard to recoup costs after
making a whole generation look like
rapists and murderers.

EXT. FT. BRAGG MUD FIELD - NIGHT

Across a field of barb wire Candidates crawl. Instructors shoot blanks above their heads. Frank dumps pig guts on them.

FRANK (V.O.)
We were there to clean up their
mess. Get us ready for new
customers. Grease the gears so the
engine never stalled again.

EXT. FT. BRAGG TRAINING GROUND - DUSK

Candidates train with rubber knives in pairs. Frank watches from the side. He paces, eyes on CANDIDATE 1 doing exceptionally well.

FRANK (V.O.)
I try not to question why I put up
with it as long as I did. Beggars
can't be choosers.

Frank draws a real knife and charges. Candidate 1 drops the rubber knife and engages with his hands. Frank puts him on his back before Candidate 1 kicks him in the nose.

Candidate 1 swings him to the ground, takes the real knife, and raises it before Instructors pull him off. Frank stands, face bloody, and gestures Instructors away.

Candidate 1 hands the knife back and they nod to each other.

INSERT - CANDIDATE 1'S NAME TAPE

It reads:

FURY

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. FT. BRAGG GUN RANGE - DAY

Candidates train on the range. Instructors and Frank watch from the stands. He has a bandage on his nose.

INSTRUCTOR 1
I'm stayin' home with the wife and beer.

INSTRUCTOR 2
What about you, Morton?

MORTON
Yeah, sure. I'll bite. Been waitin' to use my eighty pounder.

INSTRUCTOR 3
An eighty pound bow? Damn, Will, you one expensive sum-bitch.

MORTON
I got high standards.

INSTRUCTOR 2
How 'bout you Castle?

Frank looks over.

FRANK
Hmm?

INSTRUCTOR 2
We're going bow hunting on Saturday. Want in?

FRANK
...Don't we have PT?

MORTON
Sergeant Major gave us the day off.

FRANK
...Can I bring my rifle instead?

INSTRUCTOR 2
Now where's the fun in that? Ain't you gone bow hunting before?

Frank shakes his head.

INSTRUCTOR 2 (CONT'D)
Wanna try?

FRANK
...I don't have a bow.

Instructor 2 gets up.

INSTRUCTOR 2
No need.

He hands Frank a piece of paper.

INSTRUCTOR 2 (CONT'D)
When we get off, head to "Quincy's
Lodge" on Yadkin next to the hobby
store, and pick up the stuff on
that list.

INT. QUINCY'S LODGE - DAY

Frank stands at a rack of woodland print jackets.

???
Need some help, mister?

Frank turns to CLERK, 20, short, skinny, redhead.

CLERK
Havin' trouble?

FRANK
Yes, ma'am. I was invited on a
hunting trip and this is my...
first one.

Frank shows her the list.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Here's what I was told to get.

Clerk takes it and turns to the rack.

CLERK
I reckon you're a large?

Frank snickers, but gets serious.

FRANK
Yes- yes, ma'am.

Clerk walks around the rack.

CLERK

You're gonna want a thick jacket for the morning. If you got long-johns, you can wear 'em underneath a thin jacket at half the price.

FRANK

Sounds good.

Clerk picks out a thin jacket. She carries it on her arm and leads Frank through the store.

LATER

Clerk stands behind the register opposite Frank, a jacket, orange vest, and wool socks on the counter. He smiles.

CLERK

Not much hunting where you're from?

FRANK

Not many animals.

CLERK

Oh? Where would that be?

FRANK

The Bronx.

Clerk's eyes go wide.

CLERK

You're from New York City? I always wanted to see the Statue of Liberty. Is it beautiful?

FRANK

She sure is.

CLERK

Some friends of mine went up after high school. I couldn't go 'cause Daddy needed me to run the store.

FRANK

If you make it up, I wouldn't mind giving you a tour.

She tries to hide her blush.

CLERK

What's it like living in a city?

FRANK
I'd tell you, ma'am, but you have
people waiting.

Frank gestures the line of customers at his rear.

CLERK
Oh gosh! I'm sorry y'all. Let me
get you on your way, sir.

FRANK
Call me Frank.

Clerk rings up his items then takes a business card, circles
her name and number, and hands it to Frank with his change.

CLERK
Have a good day, Frank.

Frank makes his way to the exit and looks at the card.

INSERT - BUSINESS CARD

It reads:

MARIA QUINCY

BACK TO SCENE

He looks back and MARIA meets his gaze.

INT. SMOKE HOUSE - NIGHT

A jukebox plays COUNTRY. Maria and Frank sit in the back. He
wears civilian clothes without the bandage. Other tables are
taken by PATRONS while a small group dances by the jukebox.

FRANK
...Then she stepped across the
checkpoint and an Army Chaplain
married them right there.

MARIA
Did it cause a fuss with the Reds?

He shakes his head.

FRANK
Nobody wanted to start a war over a
marriage. After that, Dad retired
and brought Ma to the States.

MARIA
That's a sweet li'l story.

WAITER comes by to refill their drinks.

MARIA (CONT'D)
So, Castle doesn't sound so Italian
for an Italian family.

FRANK
It used to be Castiglione.

MARIA
Quite a mouthful.

FRANK
The recruitment officer thought the
same and told Dad to make it easier
to say.

MARIA
I think it fits.

FRANK
Thank you.

They share a silence as Maria takes a bite of her ribs.

MARIA
Ready for a fight or something?

FRANK
Hmm?

MARIA
Your hand has been balled up in a
fist since we sat down. Hope you're
not about to slug me, hon.

Frank looks at his left hand locked in a fist, shaking
slightly. He's a little surprised.

FRANK
Oh. Sorry. I don't...

Maria takes his hand and slowly unfolds the fingers.

MARIA
I'm not a doctor, but I heard the
tendons lock up when you strain 'em
too much. Like pulling a heavy rope
without gloves.

Maria turns his hand palm up and lays her own on Frank's, her hand tiny. He looks at her like a lost kid.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Daddy said the Japanese made him sleep on a wooden bed. Sometimes, when I go to wake him, he'll be on the floor next to a perfectly good mattress.

Maria looks at Frank with a half-smile.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Guess it's different for everybody.

SONG: "Johnny Guitar" by Peggy Lee

They stare at each other, Frank not knowing what to do. He opens his mouth to speak before Maria's eyes light up.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I love this song!

She pulls him to the jukebox where other Patrons slow-dance. She leads while he looks confused. Maria puts her head on his chest and holds him tighter. Frank relaxes and seems happy.

INT. FRANK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Frank drives Maria on a backwoods road. She looks out the window, and glances at Frank. He smiles. They stop at her house in the woods. Frank keeps the car on.

MARIA

I had a really great time.

FRANK

I hope.

MARIA

I did! Honest... Y'know, if you have anymore weekends, I'd like to spend more time with you, if you wouldn't mind sharing.

FRANK

I wouldn't mind.

MARIA

...Or if you just wanna call, I'm off at 7PM Monday through Friday. We can just talk, even about nothing.

FRANK
I'd like that.

MARIA
Well, I aught to let you get back.

She shakes his hand.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Have a good night, Mister Castle.

FRANK
You too, Miss Quincy.

Maria gets out. Frank stays until she's inside.

INT. MARIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Frank sits in Class As with Maria's family on Thanksgiving. The two hold hands under the table. At the head sits ROYCE QUINCY, 50, missing one arm.

Frank finishes his plate and takes others from the table before going to the kitchen.

INT. MARIA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Frank washes his plate in the sink and doesn't see Royce stand in the threshold.

ROYCE
What's you're body count, Marine?

Frank pauses then continues.

FRANK
...51 confirmed, sir.

Royce comes closer.

ROYCE
When MacArthur broke us out, I begged him to put me back in the fight... Then my war ended before I could get my share of blood.

Royce stands beside Frank and gestures his stump.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
Lisa, Maria's mother, couldn't handle what I brought home.
(MORE)

ROYCE (CONT'D)

I had to keep it all buried after she ran out. It's not a thing for a little girl's eyes and I can see it plain as day in yours.

Frank puts the plates on the drying rack.

FRANK

She... calms me. When I'm around her, I let my guard down and I'm right where I want to be.

He shuts off the sink and wipes the plates.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Last week I had my 1911 in my mouth. Then Maria called about today and I forgot all about it. It's always there, but when I remember her face, the way she holds me... it's gone.

They share the silence before Maria walks in with dishes.

MARIA

Puttin' him to work, Daddy?

Royce turns before Frank stacks the dishes.

ROYCE

Oh, he put himself to work. A real hard-charger this one.

MARIA

Uncle Jesse's about to play the piano. They're asking for your voice.

ROYCE

Lead the way, honey.

The two walk out. Frank stays to finish.

EXT. LAKE SIDE - DAY

SUPER: 1972

Frank and Maria get married. He wears Dress Blues with the rank of Staff Sergeant. On Maria's side of the audience sit WW2 VETS opposite silk suited ITALIANS and UKRAINIANS.

When Frank and Maria kiss, the audience claps and stands. NICK FURY, Army uniform, rank of First Lieutenant, both eyes, stands at the back on the Castle side.

UKRAINIANS

Mazel tov!

SONG ENDS

EXT. MARIA'S HOUSE BACKYARD - DAY

Frank and Maria sit at a table with MAIDS and BEST MEN, including Andrei and Soap in tuxedos. GUESTS form a line with gifts. OLD MAN stands in front flanked by two GANGSTERS.

He hands Maria an envelop and speaks with a Russia accent.

OLD MAN

For children's education.

MARIA

Thank you so much.

Old Man smiles and walks on. Frank looks in the envelop under the table and finds a stack of \$100s. He leans to Andrei.

FRANK

Who is that guy?

ANDREI

Which one?

FRANK

Zoot suit with the tough guys.

ANDREI

That's Uncle Piotr from Ma's side.

Frank looks at PIOTR, 62, among Guests.

ANDREI (CONT'D)

He stayed with us when he got out of Russia. I was... 5? He runs a restaurant in Brighton.

Frank shows him the money.

FRANK

He makes this at a restaurant --

SOAP

-- And from most of the dope in Brooklyn.

Frank and Andrei look at him. Soap avoids eye-contact and downs more champagne.

SOAP (CONT'D)
Just letting you know.

FRANK
He's a friggin' mobster?

ANDREI
I thought you knew?

FRANK
I do now.

He looks to Soap.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Are you cool with some wiseguy out
in the open, 'cause I'm not.

ANDREI
Frankie --

SOAP
-- Unless he's hustling with
Hillbillies in a barn over yonder,
I can't do a thing. It's your
wedding, man. Don't worry about it.

ANDREI
Yeah, and he's a nice guy. He gave
me a job at his place.

Frank stares at Andrei.

FRANK
(Ukrainian)
You work for him?

ANDREI
Yeah --

FRANK
(Ukrainian)
-- You wash his dishes and pull
hits on the side?

ANDREI
No, I --

FRANK
(Ukrainian)
-- What are you doing around a low
life --

MARIA
-- I didn't know you spoke another
language, hon.

Frank forces a smile.

FRANK
Yeah. Ma taught us when we were
young.

MARIA
Is it Ukrainian?

ANDREI
Mm-hm.

FRANK
Maybe I could teach our kids.

Maria smiles with a blush.

MARIA
Gimme a year or two.

She kisses him. Frank and Andrei go silent.

FRANK (V.O.)
Should've done it there. Cake knife
in the eyes. Both barrels from a
side-by-side. Teeth through the
jugular. Anything. Would've changed
so much.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Frank drives Maria in a rental Cadillac with the top down.

EXT. MIAMI BEACH - DUSK

Frank and Maria hold hands as they walk. They wear tacky
floral shirts and have dinner at an outdoor bar.

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - DAWN

Maria stands in a robe, her hair a mess. Frank comes from behind. The pair watch the sun crest the horizon before he pulls her inside.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: 1975

Frank kneels by Maria's head, holding her hand. DOCTORS clean and swaddled a boy and girl before passing them to her.

MARIA

What do you think?

Frank lightly pets their heads.

FRANK

They're perfect.

MARIA

I mean the names. Now's your chance to change your mind.

Frank shakes his head with a smile.

FRANK

No.

He touches the girl.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Lisa Mary after your mom.

He touches the boy.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Franklin Royce. We'll call him Junior for short.

They stare at the TWINS.

MARIA

I love --

He kisses her, holding the Twins closer.

INT. FT. BRAGG BEDROOM - NIGHT

Frank holds the twins as Maria sleeps. He rocks them to sleep, humming the "Marine Corps Hymn".

INT. FT. BRAGG AUDITORIUM - DAY

SUPER: 1984

Frank, rank of Master Sergeant, receives a retirement plaque.
Maria, LISA, 9, JUNIOR, 9, sit in the audience.

FRANK (V.O.)
Lisa would be in college. Junior,
against my wishes, would enlist,
maybe shoot for the brass. He'd
make a great Marine.

The family takes a picture together. Frank and Fury, rank of
Major, also get a photo.

EXT. FT. BRAGG HOUSE - DAY

A moving truck sits on the curb. Maria, Lisa, and Junior
carry luggage into Frank's truck, dressed for winter.

FRANK (V.O.)
Should've stayed after Nicaragua
and died in Kuwait or some Yugoslav
backwater. Anything.

Frank, black jacket and jeans, looks once more at the house.

FRANK (V.O.)
As long as it was me.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. P.H. FOYER - DAY

Giovanni, Katrina, and Andrei welcome the family. Katrina
hugs the twins.

KATRINA
Hello, dity! I'm so happy you're
here!

MARIA
Save some for Papa, y'all.

Andrei gives Frank a hug. He wears a black suit and white
shirt, the top buttons open, tattoos on his fingers.

ANDREI
Wanna drink?

FRANK
Yeah, sure.

INT. P.H. KITCHEN - DAY

Andrei digs through the fridge.

ANDREI
You guys find a place?

FRANK
3 bed, 2 bath in Queens.

ANDREI
Nice. Beer?

FRANK
OJ.

ANDREI
You got it.

Andrei takes out a bottle and hands Frank a carton. He takes it to the counter and gets a glass.

ANDREI (CONT'D)
Y'know, if you have any problems with the HOA, I know some guys.

Frank snickers as he pours the glass.

FRANK
Really? You know some guys?

ANDREI
Well, I do!

Frank puts the cap on the juice.

FRANK
You gonna tell 'em to put a horse head in my neighbor's bed? C'mon, Andy.

ANDREI
These days people do anything to get money, like stealing from Vets. A lot's changed.

Frank eyes him and takes a sip.

FRANK
Sure has.

Andrei rolls his eyes.

FRANK (CONT'D)

The world's moving fast. I know. I just don't want you doing the worst to keep up. And I don't want it around our folks... or my family.

Andrei nods.

ANDREI

I know how it looks, but it's survival, Frankie. Out there, you gotta do what you can to stay outta the gutter. And I don't do anything bad. I drive Piotr and work at the restaurant. I do it to stay alive, like any ol' schmuck.

Andrei puts down his beer.

ANDREI (CONT'D)

Life ain't a friggin' comic book. You can't dress up and start punching guys. They'd throw you in the nut house. In the real world, all you can do is work around the hard stuff. You guys in 'Nam wouldn't be here if you hadn't. Not an ounce of morality in it.

Andrei makes his way out and turns back.

ANDREI (CONT'D)

I know you don't like him, but Piotr would like to have dinner with the family. He just wants to see the kids. It's harmless... I'll talk to you about it later.

Andrei leaves. Frank pours his glass down the sink.

INT. VOLGA LOUNGE FRONT - NIGHT

Mahogany chairs and red tables fill the dining room with gold against crimson, black leather, and a floral carpet, full of dog-faced SLAVS in suits and furs.

Frank and the family descend into the basement lounge dressed nice. Behind a podium stands HOSTESS with a Slav accent.

HOSTESS

Castle?

FRANK

Yes, ma'am.

Hostess picks up four menus.

HOSTESS

Follow me, please.

She turns and stops before IVAN, 38, in the threshold. He dwarfs Frank, with a blonde flat-top, and black coat over a blue/white stripe shirt. Ivan takes the menus.

He speaks with a Russian accent.

IVAN

Come.

INT. V.L. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Frank and Maria hold the twins' hands.

MARIA

Everyone's looking at us.

LISA

It's so fancy down here.

JUNIOR

Do you know anyone, Dad?

FRANK

Just two, little-man.

In a booth sits Piotr with Andrei. Andrei helps Piotr as Ivan comes to his side.

PIOTR

Francis! It has been too long.

He walks on his own to Maria and kisses her hand.

PIOTR (CONT'D)

You have not aged a day, dorogoy.

MARIA

Thank you, Uncle.

Piotr looks at the children.

PIOTR

So these are the twins. Do you know your dyadya?

They hold close to their parents and Piotr laughs.

PIOTR (CONT'D)
Come sit. You must be starving!

Piotr walks into the booth followed by the family. Andrei and Ivan remain outside.

ANDREI
So, what do you guys want to drink?

PIOTR
(Russian)
No, no, Andrei. Sit.

ANDREI
Yes, sir.

PIOTR
(Russian)
Ivan, take a break. Be back in two hours.

IVAN
(Russian)
Are you sure, Papa?

PIOTR
(Russian)
Find a girl and stay away from vodka.

Ivan inclines his head and walks away.

PIOTR (CONT'D)
He is good boy. Soldier like you and I, Francis. Fought for the Red shlyukhi in Afghanistan.

FRANK
No disrespect, Uncle, but please watch your language around my wife and children.

PIOTR
Oh! They speak Russian?

FRANK
Not yet.

PIOTR
Ah. Then I will watch mouth... Do you like table? Shall we move?

MARIA

I think we're fine, right honey?

Frank nods.

LISA

Why do you sound like Gran?

Piotr looks puzzled.

FRANK

She's asking why do you sound like Katrina.

PIOTR

Ah. I am from Ukraine, but I lived in Russia. Both tongues different, but sound the same.

ANDREI

Uncle Piotr fought in World War 2 like Gran and Papa. He came to America when me and your dad were little.

JUNIOR

Dad says people in Russia are bad.

Piotr bursts out laughing.

PIOTR

They are, mal'chik. The Reds hate good Russians like me. So, they chase us out, but we come here to city and make better life.

FRANK

That's right, Junior. Our family came to America for real freedom and we got it by being good people. Right, Andy?

Andrei forces a smile.

ANDREI

Yeah... that's right.

WAITRESS comes to take their drink orders.

INT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Unpacked boxes and furniture sit everywhere in stacks.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Frank and Junior carry a green box and lay it on the floor.

FRANK

Good work. Now, let's load up the
bookcase.

Franklin opens the box.

JUNIOR

What's this?

He turns and Junior holds the C-M60 barrel. Frank walks over
and kneels.

FRANK

It's called a light machine gun. It
belonged to a guy named Mack. He
saved my life.

Frank turns up the feed-tray up. He gestures the dog-tag
welded over the "Stark Industries" stamp.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I put that there to remind me
everyday where I got this weapon.

JUNIOR

It's pretty heavy for something
called light.

FRANK

Carry it around for a while and it
doesn't feel so heavy.

JUNIOR

When did you carry it?

Frank takes the barrel in one hand.

FRANK

Before I met your mother. It kept
me alive long enough to marry her
and to put it away.

JUNIOR

Can I shoot it?

Frank puts it in the box.

FRANK

Maybe when you're older and as big
as Rambo.

He stands.

JUNIOR
Could you beat up Rambo, Dad?

Frank smiles.

FRANK
Wouldn't that be something. Now
come help me load the bookcase.

JUNIOR
Yes, sir.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The family eats breakfast. Twins wear Catholic school uniforms. Junior pulls at the collar of the sweater vest.

JUNIOR
I hate this thing.

LISA
It's not so bad.

FRANK
Nobody likes their uniforms at
first, son.

MARIA
That's right.

Frank wipes his mouth.

FRANK
Remember what I told you two about
bullies?

JUNIOR
Yes, sir.

LISA
Yes, sir.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Never, ever hit first. If someone
socks you in the mouth, hit them
back until they say they're sorry.

MARIA
That's a little violent, hon.

FRANK
So are most New York kids. We
talked about this.

ANDREI

'Ey! What's up?

JUNIOR

Hi, Uncle Andy!

LISA

Hi, Uncle Andy!

PIOTR

Come to enjoy sunshine?

MARIA

Yes, sir, indeed. We need a good long bask after that winter.

PIOTR

Better than Siberian winter, eh, Ivan?

IVAN

Da, Papa.

PIOTR

Let me buy you hotdogs.

MARIA

Oh, we brought our own food--

PIOTR

Nyet, nyet. I insist.

Piotr walks to the stand.

FRANK

I'll go set up. You two tell Piotr what you want.

JUNIOR

Yes, sir.

LISA

Yes, sir.

Maria walks to the stand with Twins. Frank heads left down a slope. He finds a spot and lays out the blanket. Quick gun shots ring out and Frank drops. A ringing replaces all sound.

People run from the direction of the stand. Frank gets up, walks, then runs. He stops at the scene. Holes riddle the stand.

Andrei, wounded shoulder, holds Piotr, two in the chest, on the ground. Ivan twists the head of WISEGUY beside them. Andrei shouts, but it can't be heard over the ringing.

Frank stares just beside them. Maria holds the twins' hands, lying in blood. Frank falls into a crawl. He pulls Maria and the twins close, staring vacant.

Ivan and Andrei shout at each other before Ivan drops the Wiseguy and runs off with Piotr over his shoulder. Andrei tries to get Frank's attention, but he's in his own world.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

The ringing goes on. At three graves stand Frank, Katrina, Giovanni, Andrei, Soap, and FAMILY. They leave, but Frank remains. Katrina pulls on him until Giovanni takes her.

LATER

Rain falls hard. Frank sleeps against the tombstone with all three names.

LATER

A fog congests the area when Frank wakes up and walks away. The ringing dissipates.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Frank ascends the stoop. A newspaper sits on the doormat.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER

The headline reads:

PARK ASSASSINATION SUSPECT STILL AT LARGE

BACK TO SCENE

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Frank opens a footlocker at the foot of the bed and pulls an old bottle of whiskey. He sits on the floor and opens it. Frank stares at it vacant.

LATER

Whiskey covers the opposite wall. The TV lays on its side smashed. Bloody holes dot the walls. The bookcase stands ripped apart. The night stands and lamps lay in pieces.

Frank sits on the floor, the seams of his suit open. Blood drips from his forehead. He breathes heavy, calms, then shuts his eyes, and puts his M-1911 in his mouth. Seconds go by.

Tears roll down his cheeks. He pulls the gun out and cries in silence. Frank wipes his mouth and stands.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

The mirror lies in pieces and the toilet caved in. Frank takes a large shard of mirror and turns on the sink. He wipes his cheeks, forming a skull shape in blood, then pauses.

INSERT: MIRROR SHARD

Reflected in the mirror is a burning jungle.

BACK TO SCENE

He looks closer at the fire, drawn in. There comes a ringing. Frank's hand shakes and bleeds around the shard before...

FLASHBACK - EXT. BURNING VILLAGE - NIGHT

Frank stands in the threshold of the hut. VC WOMAN screams on the floor with Commando on top. They turn to Frank.

COMMANDO
Come to watch, Castle?

Commando stands. Woman scurries away.

COMMANDO (CONT'D)
You want some? I was here first.

Commando chuckles and pulls up his pants.

COMMANDO (CONT'D)
Oh, I see. Captain America
disapproves.

He approaches Frank.

COMMANDO (CONT'D)
These slope whores send their kids
out to blow up our boys. Believe
me, she has it coming, in more ways
than one. Don't sweat it.

Commando smiles and pats Frank on the shoulder. Frank drops the C-M60, grabs his wrist, and twists his arm. Commando yelps and comes in for a punch.

Frank ducks, pulls the arm back, and puts Commando on his knees. He pulls a grenade, smashes Commando's teeth with it, and shoves it into his mouth. Frank stands him up.

FRANK
Believe me, you have it coming.

Frank pulls the pin and kicks Commando into the open. He tries to pull the grenade out before it goes off and...

BACK TO SCENE

The mirror shard breaks, but Frank doesn't react. He opens his hand, then makes a fist. Blood seeps between his fingers.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Ivan and GANGSTER 1 stand beside a recovery room door. Frank comes down the hall, hands and face in bandages. NURSE pesters him until he reaches Ivan.

FRANK

He awake?

Ivan nods but Gangster 1 blocks the door.

GANGSTER 1

I must search --

IVAN

(Russian)

-- He is family. Let him go.

Gangster 1 returns to his post.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Piotr reads a book in bed. He sees Frank and the book falls. His eyes turn red. Frank comes to his side.

PIOTR

It should have been me! No children should die for bastard like me!

He grabs Frank's arm.

PIOTR (CONT'D)

I swear to God, I will make those grease ball bitches pay!

Piotr coughs and lets go. Frank waits for him to stop and pulls out his knife sheathed to his belt on his back with his left hand. Piotr looks concerned.

FRANK

Names.

PIOTR

...Francis --

FRANK
-- Names, Uncle.

Piotr starts to sweat.

PIOTR
I know what you want. I wanted same
after Stalin threw my comrades back
in prison. But now --

Frank grabs Piotr by the lower jaw and pulls him close, tip
of the knife over Piotr's eye. Frank looks vacant.

FRANK
They shot through my wife and
children to get to you. And here
you lay with two holes in your
sternum.

Frank puts the tip on Piotr's eyelid.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Names.

Frank moves his other hand and Piotr stares at the blade.

PIOTR
The Gnuccis. Sicilians. They try to
push us out for years. Killing was
hit on me.

FRANK
The shooter that got away.

PIOTR
I don't know --

FRANK
-- Who would?

PIOTR
...NYPD. Gnuccis pay for silence.

Frank backs away, sheathes his knife, and heads to the door.

FRANK
Get well, Uncle.

PIOTR
I beg you Francis. Leave them to
me. It is my fault and I must pay,
not you. Now is time to grieve.

Frank doesn't look back.

FRANK
I am grieving.

INT. SOAP'S APT. HALL - NIGHT

Frank knocks on the door. It opens to Soap sporting a mustache. A baby cries in the background.

SOAP
Hey. What happened to your face --

FRANK
-- Need to talk.

SOAP
Uh, sure.

Soap steps out.

SOAP (CONT'D)
What's up?

FRANK
What's the price for a cop these days?

Soap looks down both ends of the hall, looking scared.

SOAP
(Whisper)
Frank --

FRANK
-- You know who did it, what he looks like, and where he sleeps.

SOAP
(whisper)
Now, wait a minute --

Frank's eyes go red.

FRANK'S
-- Did you crack after 'Nam or do they pay you to look the other way? What do you think the boys on that Wall would say --

SOAP
-- You hold on a goddamn second, mother-fucker. I feed my family like any other man and those kids got nothing to do with it.

FRANK

They wouldn't let a murderer walk the streets.

SOAP

What do you want me to say? I had to change to keep up. Everything I was I left in that jungle. This is the new, normal me, in a normal world --

FRANK

-- Children aren't butchered in parks in a normal world.

SOAP

Yeah they are, Frank! Some of the worst shit I've seen happens right here. It's not so simple. Probably never was, but you don't see that because you're...

Soap stops when Frank wipes his cheeks and looks ashamed.

FRANK

...Know why didn't come back after my first tour?

SOAP

You said they wanted to keep you for training --

FRANK

-- No. I volunteered to stay. I didn't want to come home because I was right where I belonged. A year in that jungle was home and I wouldn't 've had it any other way. And when they made me come back, I couldn't deal with it. I just wanted to get back in the grass. And then she came into my life and I didn't think about it ever again... until I felt her warm brains in my hand.

Soap looks destroyed before Frank wipes his face again.

FRANK (CONT'D)

If my world ends, so does yours.

He starts down the hall.

SOAP

F- Frank? Wait.

He turns.

SOAP (CONT'D)

"Anthony's Pizzeria" on Morris.
There's... there's a busboy named
Billy. Cooks call him The Beaut.

Frank stares for a moment, then walks on. When he is gone,
Soap goes pale and trembles to a sit on the floor. He looks
terrified, covering his mouth with both hands.

SOAP (CONT'D)

(whisper)
Oh, sweet Jesus.

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

A bag, balaclava with two eyes, flight gloves, and duck tape
sit on the table. Frank cleans his 1911 with no bandages and
stubble.

He assembles the pistol, screws on a suppressor, and puts it
in the bag. He loads the rest, but stops at the balaclava,
and stares at its face.

FRANK (V.O.)

Cap wore the flag as a symbol of
justice and morality. He lived and
breathed it, even after waking up
in this filth... What's my symbol?
What do I live and breathe?

Frank opens a cabinet for a bottle of white paint.

FRANK (V.O.)

I go out and make the world sane.

INT. FRANK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Frank sits opposite the pizzeria. His jacket covers a portion
of the window. He scrolls in a notebook descriptions of the
WISEGUYS inside.

BILLY, 23, a handsome greaser, exits down the sidewalk left.
Frank gets out.

EXT. BRONX - NIGHT

Frank tails Billy. Three blocks later he heads into an apartment. Frank crosses in time to see him climb the stairs.

INT. BRONX APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank comes to the 4th floor and sees Billy enter a room.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Billy stares through the peephole on his door with a sawed-off. The TV plays in the background. CHINO, revolver in a shoulder holster, sits on the couch.

A bag of cocaine and money sit on a coffee table.

CHINO
S'got you on edge?

BILLY
I was followed.

CHINO
Yeah? By who?

BILLY
I don't friggin' know. Some huge guy. I think he's inside.

CHINO
Well, lock the door and keep the scatter gun close. If all else fails, you got me, m'kay?

Billy locks the door and walks to the living room, sweat on his forehead. He sits beside Chino.

BILLY
Vicky asleep?

CHINO
G'head and join her. I'll hold down the fort.

BILLY
Fuck that. I'm staying up.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Frank digs through a dumpster for a pizza box. Beside it sleeps BUM with a Red Sox cap. Frank pokes him with his foot.

FRANK
Wake up, old-timer.

Bum awakens and Frank shows him a \$10.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Nice hat.

INT. APT. 4TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Frank stops before the hall and kneels. He puts the box on the floor, the tape, gloves, pistol, and hat inside.

He puts on the gloves, looks at the Sox cap with disdain, and puts it on. Frank holds his pistol sideways in his right and places the box on top.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Billy paces with the shotgun.

CHINO
Wanna hit?

BILLY
I'll only crash. Need to keep moving.

CHINO
Billy, you got work t'morrow and y'scarin' me. Leave the gun and go to bed.

BILLY
Someone's out there. I saw him.

CHINO
I know, but do me a favor and put the shooter down before --

Billy aims at the door after a loud rap. Then another.

BILLY
Who's 'at?

Frank speaks with a terrible Boston accent.

FRANK (O.S.)
Cha'lie from Ant'ny's. Got a pie
for ya.

Billy approaches the door.

BILLY
Tony don't make deliveries.

FRANK (O.S.)
Just sta'ted. Calls it a trial run.
Y'know, late night stuff. Guy's
timin' me.

Billy stands inches away.

BILLY
Where you from, kid?

FRANK (O.S.)
Cha'lestown and I ain't no kid,
pal. Y'want this while it's hot?

Billy looks out.

BILLY
Little late for making pizza...

FRANK (O.S.)
You're tellin' me. I just work
here.

Billy puts down the gun.

BILLY
Lemme get you a tip.

FRANK (O.S.)
Much obliged.

INT. APT. 4TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The locks click and the door opens.

BILLY
Be sure to thank Tony f --

Frank grabs his hair and pulls Billy out. He hits the
opposite wall and drops unconscious. The pizza box falls and
Frank moves in, pistol forward.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Chino throws his hands up. Frank moves closer and speaks normally.

FRANK
Who else is inside?

Chino remains silent. Frank thumbs the hammer.

CHINO
V- Vicky. Vicky Russo. Billy's
girlfriend inna bedroom.

FRANK
...You work for the Gnuccis?

CHINO
They pay me to look after 'im. Kid
ain't too bright as you can tell.

FRANK
What's he to them?

Chino cracks a smile.

CHINO
Family. You got a family, big guy?

Frank takes off the cap and puts it on Chino.

FRANK
I did.

He presses the muzzle on the red "B" and shoots. Frank walks to the side kitchen, takes a paper bag, and loads the guns, wallets, and money.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Water drips echo with a deep hum of the subway in the dark. Billy wakes taped to a chair in his boxers. He shouts for help and winces at the pain of his broken nose.

BILLY
Oh fuck. Oh fuck. Oh fuck --

A flare hisses and reveals Frank. He wears the balaclava, painted with a white skull with three long teeth, and latex gloves. Billy shudders. Frank tosses the flare to the side.

FRANK
What are you to the Gnuccis?

BILLY

W- what?

Frank draws his knife.

FRANK

Are you a cousin? Nephew? Bastard?
Why are you so important you need a
bodyguard?

BILLY

I'm- I'm George Nero's son, Mama's
cousin.

FRANK

Mama?

BILLY

The Godmother. She runs the family.

Frank paces round him.

SONG: "Here's to You" Joan Baez

FRANK

What do you do for the family?

BILLY

Bus tables.

FRANK

And?

BILLY

Small time; deliveries and escorts.

FRANK

Narcotics?

BILLY

All I know is how it tastes. Don't
know a thing about the operation. I
swear.

FRANK

But you know addresses and names.

Frank stops in front and leans close to Billy's face.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I want those addresses and names.

Billy smirks.

BILLY

You with the Pinkos? Westies?
 Tryin' ta move in on us, you fuzzy
 foreigner? Well, fuck you! You
 don't know what you started taking
 me, dude! You and the rest of those
 leprechauns are gonna fry for this!

Frank stares, walks to the back of Billy, and drags a small cart to the front. A turned-down frame and a tray of cutting tools and syringe sit on top.

Frank stands with his back to Billy and turns up the frame.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Ya gonna torture me, you IRA fuck?
 Take your time. I ain't sayin' a
 friggin' word while Mama's out
 turning your friends into fish
 food. Ya not getting a word...

Frank steps to the side. Billy sees the frame and breaks down. Frank's retirement family photo stares back.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Oh God... Oh my fucking God! I- I
 didn't mean to! It was just
 supposed to be the fat man and his
 boys! I didn't wanna kill any kids!

Frank approaches with a box cutter.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Mister Castle! I'll tell you
 everything! My father's City
 Treasurer! We cut coke at a
 butchers in Yonkers! Our suppliers
 're in Tampa and Miami! Guy's name
 is Barracuda!

Frank moves behind. Billy struggles to get free.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ please! I'll rat! I'll
 tell you! I'll tell you every --

Billy screams and thrashes when Frank grabs him by the nose and cuts. He discards the nose and moves back to the table. Billy writhes to himself, crying.

BILLY (CONT'D)

(Nasally)
 I'm sorry... I'm sorry... I'm
 sorry...

Frank wipes the blade on the edge of the cart and stands in front of Billy.

FRANK
Addresses and names.

He waits for a reply, but Billy just sobs. Frank pinches his cheek and Billy screams before the blade slices his skin.

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAWN

SONG ENDS

Soap walks to the precinct. Next to the stoop sits a trash bag. He stops and shakes his head.

SOAP
Lazy sons of bitches.

He pulls the bag and it moves. Soap jumps before ripping it open. Billy sits bound, his entire face skinned, and ID stapled to his forehead.

INT. ER HALLWAY - DAY

Soap wrings his hands. CHIEF SCHROEDER and a pair of COPS approach. Schroeder looks anxious.

SOAP
He's in recovery. Girlfriend called
in a body and possible break-in.

Schroeder sighs.

SCHROEDER
...Has he talked?

SOAP
Frank Castle.

SCHROEDER
Oh! Who d'thunk it?

Schroeder wipes his brow.

SCHROEDER (CONT'D)
If this were any other city he'd
get corn-holed at Riker's day one.
Either we get Castle off the
streets now, or George Nero --

NERO
-- Schroeder, you fat fuck!

They turn. GEORGE NERO and two Wiseguys approach.

SCHROEDER
Mister Nero --

NERO
-- I don't wanna hear nothing but a name.

SCHROEDER
We do, sir --

NERO
-- Name, chubbkins!

Schroeder glances at Soap. Nero points a finger.

NERO (CONT'D)
You know somethin', buddy?

Schroeder puts his hand on Nero.

SCHROEDER
Sir, please --

Nero grabs him while Wiseguys subdue Cops. Soaps tries to put himself in between everyone.

SOAP
Frank Castle! It was Frank Castle!

Nero releases Schroeder.

NERO
Can I get an address with that?

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

A Rolls-Royce pulls up. Nero and more Wiseguys pour out with pistols and Uzis. Nero kicks the door in.

INT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Wiseguys search a barren house.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Nero finds the kitchen empty, save for a table. Nero opens the fridge to bare shelves. WISEGUY 1 comes in.

WISEGUY 1
The whole place is cleared out.
Bedroom upstairs is totally
thrashed.

Nero nods.

NERO
So he fucked off before we had the
chance...

He kicks in the bottom cabinets.

NERO (CONT'D)
Shit! Fuck! Fuckin'! Shit...

He wails on the kitchen a bit longer and stops.

WISEGUY 1
What should we do, boss?

INT. SOAP'S CADILLAC - DAY

Soap sits down the street, eyes on the house to the left. He watches Nero and Wiseguys step out.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

NERO
Find his parents and get some idea
of where he could be.

WISEGUY 1
I know a guy in the Reds that knows
a guy named Castle. Messing with
his folks might stir up trouble.

They stop on the sidewalk.

NERO
'Ey, I'm not telling you to pull
some old lady's teeth, kid. Just
ask 'em about their son. Then I
want you to ask that guy of yours
about this other Castle, capisce?

WISEGUY 1
You got it, boss --

Wiseguys 1's head explodes. Nero falls back, face bloody.

NERO
SHIT!

Wiseguys form around him and shoot down the sidewalks. Another round kills a Wiseguy and penetrates to wound WISEGUY 2. Nero and the others pile into the car and drive off.

Soap darts across and attends Wiseguy 2.

SOAP
You're okay, man. I got you.

He pulls a radio before two muffled shots kill 2. Soap jumps back. Frank comes up with sup-1911 drawn. He wears BDU pants, boots, black shirt, gloves, mask, and an M70 rifle.

SOAP (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ! Why'd you do that!

FRANK
He was moving.

Frank loots the corpses. Soap draws his pistol before Frank shoots it out of his hand.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I'm not the enemy, Martin. Pass that on to your CO.

SOAP
Frank, you got your revenge and made Billy suffer. It's time to stop. Don't be stupid.

FRANK
I'll let you know when I'm done.

Frank slings the Uzis on his shoulder.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Keep your friends away from the Gnucis. Don't want any collateral.

Frank sprints away. Distant sirens blare. Soap is shocked.

LATER

Cops probe the scene. Soap sits on the stoop of the house. Schroeder paces before him.

SCHROEDER

I want you working this. You grew up with him and know what he's capable of. I want a profile and service record in two days.

SOAP

...I'm going to need something to help the investigation.

Schroeder stops.

SCHROEDER

Like what?

SOAP

An office goes without saying, but...

Soap stands and comes closer.

SOAP (CONT'D)

(whisper)

...I'm gonna need a list of family and associates of George Nero.

Schroeder goes pale.

SCHROEDER

My desk before you go home tonight.

Soap nods.

SOAP

Thank you, sir.

INT. SOAP'S APT. HALL - NIGHT

Soap carries a suitcase. He opens the door and his wife, NIKA, sits in the kitchen with their son MAX. Frank feeds the baby a diced pizza. Soap freezes.

NIKA

Hey, honey! Frank showed up looking for you. I gave him a bit of dinner while he waited.

FRANK

Best pizza this side of Harlem.

Nika smiles.

NIKA

Oh, I don't know about that.

Frank stands.

FRANK

Well, good night, ma'am. You too,
little-man.

Frank pats Max on the head and steps into the hall. His face goes neutral.

FRANK (CONT'D)

If I see Wiseguys at my parent's
you'll find more bags.

SOAP

There's a unit watching 'em now.
And we had Andy surveilled since
the shooting. He's fine.

Frank pulls an envelop from his jacket and passes it to Soap.

FRANK

Furniture's in storage. Address and
key are in there.

SOAP

What is this?

FRANK

My house for your family. Need to
remodel the master, but I'll help
you soon.

Frank starts on his departure.

SOAP

Hold up.

He turns and Soap presents the suitcase.

SOAP (CONT'D)

Every snitch, package boy, soldier,
lawyer, and relation to George
Nero. Bring it back soon.

Frank takes the suitcase.

FRANK

...I owe you.

SOAP

I want you to stop, but I don't
wanna kill you, Frank. I don't
blame you for how you feel... Just,
try to keep it clean.

FRANK

It's war, Martin. Never clean, no
matter how hard we try. And
remember, what comes next isn't
your fault. It's all mine.

INT. BEACH HOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT

Nero sits at a desk with his back to the beach at Long
Island. He wears a robe and talks on a phone.

NERO

...About a month for the graphs to
take... I know. He broke the
mirrors in his room and attacked a
nurse for staring...

Nero's face turns red.

NERO (CONT'D)

...I'm gonna destroy 'im and all
the rest of those Polak, Ruskie
pieces of trash. Stomp 'em out for
good like we should've done years
ago...

Nero nods.

NERO (CONT'D)

...Thank you, Izzy. You're too good
to my boy... I will. Love you too.
Tell Francesca good night for me...
Alright. Good night.

Nero hangs up, rubs his eyes, and goes outside.

EXT. B. H. BALCONY - NIGHT

He holds the railing and stares out. He looks at the beach to
find it empty save for foot prints and storms back inside.

INT. B. H. FOYER - NIGHT

By the front door sits ROCCO with 4 Wiseguys spread around
the foyer. Nero comes down the stairs.

NERO
 'Ey! Where the fuck are the guys
 outside?

Rocco shrugs.

ROCCO
 I just saw 'em. Ain't they out
 there?

Nero reaches the bottom floor.

NERO
 No they're not friggin' out there!

ROCCO
 Sorry, boss. They're probably on
 their smoke break --

A Wiseguy flies through one front window, his throat open,
 followed by another through the second window. Nero panics.

ROCCO (CONT'D)
 Get behind me! Boys!

Wiseguys surround Nero. The lights go out and one Wiseguy
 squeezes off a burst.

ROCCO (CONT'D)
 Hold your fire!

WISEGUY 3
 The fuck, man!

WISEGUY 4
 I just shit my pants!

ROCCO
 Shut up and listen!

The Wiseguys go quiet. Something splashes in the house. The
 noise grows closer.

WISEGUY 5
 What is that?

Rocco sniffs.

ROCCO
 Gasoline?

A flare hisses. Frank holds it before Rocco, an LBE harness
 added to his costume. Frank jams the flare into his head.
 Rocco's eyes glow red from the inside.

SLOW MOTION

Frank tosses the flare right. He shoves Rocco to WISEGUY 6 at the left and moves right. Wiseguy 3 brings up his Uzi. Frank slashes his throat.

Frank hooks him with his knife and pulls himself to Wiseguy 4. He shove-kicks him in the groin. When he bends forward, Frank stabs him in his ear.

Frank rolls across Wiseguy 4's back, pulls his knife out, and brings it down on Wiseguy 5's face. He gets him in an arm-lock, spins about, and throws him into Wiseguy 6.

While 6's staggered, Frank draws his pistol, and puts two in the head. He turns on Nero and they freeze.

END OF SLOW MOTION

The flare hits the wall and sets it on fire in an explosion.

INT. B. H. HALL - NIGHT

The fire spreads. Frank pulls Nero by the collar.

NERO

Fuck you, Castle! I left flowers
for your wife and kids, you prick!
You're a dead man!

FRANK

Sure.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Frank holds Nero's chin from behind and forces him over the railing.

NERO

Kill me and you're all sorts of
fucked! You're gonna suffer!

FRANK

Everything in moderation.

Frank sees Nero's throat.

INT. SOAP'S OFFICE - DAY

Soap sticks pins into a map of NYC, a body-count tally sheet in one corner. Schroeder walks in.

SCHROEDER
My office. Now.

INT. SCHROEDER'S OFFICE - DAY

A wall mounted TV plays the news.

ANCHOR WOMAN
...Started last night until fireman
arrived. Less than a dozen bodies
were found, including City
Treasurer George Nero without...

Schroeder turns to Soap.

SCHROEDER
Drop whatever you're doing and get
out there.

SOAP
If he's willing to torch a mansion,
we should expect worse. Now we
really need to pull our under-
covers.

Schroeder sits at his desk and rubs his eyes.

SCHROEDER
What's next? He gonna blow up a
building? A whole friggin' block?
This is domestic terrorism, plain
and simple. Guy's gonna turn the
city into downtown Beirut.

Soap looks at the floor. STAN LEE comes in with a square box.

STAN LEE
Package for ya, Chief.

Lee leaves it on the desk. Schroeder pulls a letter opener.

SCHROEDER
We need the Feds. This is gonna get
too big real fast. Mark my words,
Martin. Better yet, we need the
Army.

SOAP
Castle is the Army... and the
Marine Corps.

SCHROEDER
Oy vey.

Schroeder breaks the seal on the package.

SCHROEDER (CONT'D)

The last thing we need is a Charles
Bronson knock-off, running around
with a- FUCK!

Schroeder jumps back. Cops rush in. Soap sees the head of
George Nero in the box with a note, signed with the Punisher
Skull. He pulls it and reads aloud.

SOAP

Put Billy in jail. If the charges
don't stick, I'll send you the
judge's head stuffed with Gnucci
money. You can't stop what's
coming.

Schroeder pisses himself. Cops look at each other and Soap
puts the note down.

SOAP (CONT'D)

...I'll head- I mean, get a report
from the guys at Long Island.

Soap turns to Cops.

SOAP (CONT'D)

Four units on Nero. Don't let
anyone see him except a lawyer. Get
to it, people.

Cops disperse and Soap takes the box.

SONG: "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore" by The Walker
Brothers

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

INT. BUTCHERS - DAY

Behind hanging meat four Wiseguys play cards. LABORERS cut
and bag cocaine on an adjacent table. From the meat comes
Frank in costume with a sup-MAC10 and greases the Wiseguys.

The Laborers put their hands up. Frank gestures them away and
pours a canteen of gasoline on the table. He sets the powder
on fire and loots the Wiseguys.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank angles a lamp on an NYC map. It has pins with notes on the sides. Frank comes up with his notebook, crosses out an address, and takes a pin off.

INT. SOAP'S OFFICE - DAY

Soap puts a pin in the map and adds four dashes to a tally.

EXT. JERSEY CITY - DAY

A Chevy sits at a red light with WISEGUY 7, cigar in his mouth. Frank pulls up beside on a motorcycle. He wears jeans, jacket, and mask up like a beanie. He smiles at Wiseguy 7.

FRANK

Cuban?

WISEGUY 7

Fuck you.

Wiseguy 7 glances over and gasps. Frank has his mask down and empties a sawed-off into 7's face before riding away.

INT. SOAP'S OFFICE - DAY

Soap puts on another pin and dash, the sheet half full.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

More lights illuminate the interior with a makeshift bed, wire-spool table, cinder-block bookcase, chairs, table saw, blow torch, belt sander, and reloading stand.

Frank cuts the barrel of an M16 very short. He replaces the handguard with one from a CAR-15. He removes the buttstock, but leaves the buffer housing, making a Chopped M16 (C-M16).

INT. SOAP'S OFFICE - DAY

Soap cuts out newspaper clippings that call Frank "The Punisher" and puts them in an stuffed file.

INT. STRIPPER BOOTH - NIGHT

WISEGUY 8 watches STRIPPER from behind a two-way mirror. He reaches to undo his pants before Frank comes up behind Stripper with his M1911 and shoves her out of the way.

LATER

Soap questions Stripper who's traumatized. He looks to the booth. FORENSICS examine Wiseguy 8 turned to Swiss cheese.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Lights flash while CLUBBERS flee. Wiseguys shoot at Frank behind the bar. He has the C-M16 loaded with a drum. He shoots a hole in the wood and shoves it through.

Frank puts the neck of a bottle in the trigger guard and sets the gun off. While it fires Frank draws the M1911 and dives out of the bar to the far side.

Spread across the dance floor Wiseguys take cover behind tables. Frank gets the jump on them.

INT. SOAP'S OFFICE - DAY

Soap comes in with a New Jersey map and places it beside the NYC, marking new spots with pins.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Wiseguy 9 sits taped to a chair surrounded by plastic sheets. He shakes as Frank, dressed like a surgeon with an apron and face shield, revs a chainsaw.

INT. SOAP'S OFFICE - DAY

A small Christmas tree stands in the corner with decorations spread throughout. Soap rests at his desk. He looks at the maps full of pins. The tally sheet is small stack of paper.

On his desk lays a thick file marked PUNISHER MURDERS.

END OF SONG

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. GNUCCI Mansion - day

Trees stand absent color under a grey sky in winter. A pair of limbos flanked by Sedans pull up to the front door. The escorts drive on and park outside the fence.

At the door stands LUCIANO, 74, suit and bow tie, with a troop of Bodyguards in trench coats and MP5s. From the limbo emerges Mama Gnucci in furs and a black veil.

Behind follows Children in black. Luciano hugs Mama.

LUCIANO

(Italian)
How was the ceremony?

MAMA

(Italian)
There have been so many I am used to them. All that is left are the children.

They walk to the door.

LUCIANO

(Italian)
Thank God they are innocent You will live to see them grow. You have my word, Isabella.

They stop before the door.

MAMA

(Italian)
Come drink with me.

LUCIANO

(Italian)
I will, momentarily.

Mama goes inside with Children. Luciano faces Bodyguards.

LUCIANO (CONT'D)

(Italian)
To your posts. Radio checks every hour.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Frank wears the LBE over a black fleece, mask up. He has a beard and longer hair. He sits in a tree with a poncho liner, and stares at the mansion through a scope.

FRANK'S POV:

Bodyguards patrol the grounds, the corners of the mansion marked with security cameras.

BACK TO SCENE

Frank tallies the numbers of men and cameras in a notebook and climbs down. His camp below has a fox hole, rucksack, and compound bow. Frank steps into the hole and shuts his eyes.

EXT. MANSION PERIMETER - DUSK

Frank kneels behind a tree. He carries the bow, arrows, sup-1911, sup-MAC10, and a bundle of rope. Frank looks at Bodyguards on the fence. He moves back and sits.

He relaxes until snow begins to fall. He catches some flakes before wind casts them away.

He peers to the sky. Dark clouds approach and Frank pulls down his mask.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - DUSK

A communal table runs down the center with some cots occupied by Bodyguards. At the end of the table stands a stack of small TVs. Luciano watches the screens fill with snow.

He looks outside to see the blizzard consume the grounds. He walks back and speaks into a walkie-talkie.

LUCIANO

(Italian)

Door men, inside. Everyone on the perimeter, to the guest house. And somebody put the tarp over the pool.

INT. MANSION LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Mama and Children watch the weather report on the TV. It shows the blizzard will last till tomorrow morning.

MAMA

I guess we're inside for the night.

She stands.

MAMA (CONT'D)

Now, who wants to help me light a fire to make s'mores?

Children cheer and Mama smiles.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mama sits at the bedside of JENNY CESARE, 5, and a few other Children. She puts a book down on the nightstand.

MAMA

That's enough Seuss for the night.
Time to go to sleep.

She kisses her on the forehead and stands.

JENNY

Is the Punisher coming to get us,
Grammy?

MAMA

No, sweetheart. He's not coming
anywhere near you or anyone in this
house.

JENNY

Everyone at school says he will
because Daddy was a bad man.

MAMA

Uncle Luciano will keep you safe.
There's nothing to worry about.

She kneels.

MAMA (CONT'D)

From now on, you and your sister
will be going to a new school,
without all those rotten kids.
Okay?

Jenny nods and Mama walks to the door.

MAMA (CONT'D)

Good night, dear.

She turns the light off.

INT. MANSION HALL - NIGHT

One Bodyguard stands at each door. Mama steps out and joins her two escorts. They follow her down the hall.

MAMA

Have you boys been fed?

BODYGUARD 1
Yes, Mama.

BODYGUARD 2
Yes, Mama.

MAMA (CONT'D)
And the ones in the guest house?

BODYGUARD 1
I'm sure there's plenty for 'em in
the pantry.

MAMA
Yeah, if maids did what I said and
went to the store. Fucking
immigrants... I need a drink.

INT. MANSION FOYER - NIGHT

The Christmas tree shines with Bodyguards posted around. Mama
descends the stairs and makes for the kitchen.

INT. MANSION KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maids tend dishes. Mama heads for the liquor cabinet.

MAMA
What's your poison?

BODYGUARD 2
I don't think we're allowed --

MAMA
-- What I say goes and I say drink.
What do you two want?

The escorts pause.

BODYGUARD 1
Whiskey.

BODYGUARD 2
Scotch, please.

Mama puts the bottles on the counter. The escorts get
glasses. Mama leaves with a bottle of wine and sits at the
table. She drinks and the escorts watch.

She points outside to the blizzard.

MAMA (CONT'D)
God must love me if he sent that.
Let's see Castle try to make a move
now. All the blood and guts and
bull-shit is finally paying off.

BODYGUARD 1
 Been a rough couple months, Mama.

MAMA
 You have my word, boy, it's come to
 an end. A cornered wolf is as
 dangerous as a pack and I'm the
 only alpha left.

Bodyguard 2 makes an uneasy smile.

BODYGUARD 2
 Uh, God bless the Gnucci Family.

Mama smiles with stained teeth.

MAMA
 You're god damn right.

Luciano walks in looking scarred.

LUCIANO
 (Italian)
 You two, take her to the study and
 barricade the door.

The escorts move.

MAMA
 (Italian)
 What's the matter?

LUCIANO
 (Italian)
 The guest house has not checked in.
 I am not taking any chances.

Mama stands.

MAMA
 (Italian)
 I'm sure it's just the --

LUCIANO
 (Italian)
 -- Get going.

The escorts usher Mama away. Lucian speaks into his radio.

LUCIANO (CONT'D)
 (Italian)
 Everyone inside, post at the study.
 No one goes in and no one comes out
 without an escort.

EXT. MANSION BACKYARD - NIGHT

Luciano fights through the blizzard to the guest house and sees the lights off. Before he could go in he sees the camera above the door impaled by an arrow.

The door opens and a hand pulls Luciano into the dark.

INT. MANSION HALL - NIGHT

Bodyguards stand piled around the door to the study.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Two pushed-over bookcases barricade the door. Mama sits at a desk with a tall window at her back and drinks. The escorts stand at the back corners. The power goes out.

Bodyguard 2 gasps, pulls a flashlight, and walks to the door.

BODYGUARD 2
'Ey! Send somebody to check the
fuse box!

BODYGUARD 3 (O.S.)
Fuck you! We're not going anywhere!

BODYGUARD 2
Then send a bunch of youse!

INT. MANSION HALL - NIGHT

Five Bodyguards walk together. At the threshold to the foyer Frank hugs the wall with night vision goggles (NVGs) on.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

The escorts tense up at thumps and shouts. There is shooting, followed by screaming for a long couple of minutes. When the house goes quiet, Bodyguard 2 bangs on the door.

BODYGUARD 2
'Ey!... 'Ey! Anyone out there?

At no reply he backs away.

BODYGUARD 2 (CONT'D)
Mama, get under the desk and pull
the chair in.

Mama takes the last drop from the bottle.

MAMA

There're enough guns out there to
take over the Empire State
Building. Don't be paranoid.

INT. MANSION BATHROOM - NIGHT

Frank wipes his knife with a hand towel, sheaths it, and reloads his 1911. He scales under a skylight above the tub and pushes the glass out.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

The ceiling creaks. The escorts move to opposite corners of the room, eyes up. The creaks stop and they freeze.

MAMA

It's the wind.

BODYGUARD 2

Mama, get on the other side of the
desk and lay down.

BODYGUARD 1

For your own safety, get away from
the window.

Mama takes an empty swig.

MAMA

If I say we're safe, we're safe. If
I say it's the wind, it's the
fuckin' wind --

The escorts cock their guns.

BODYGUARD 2

-- Get away from the window!

She throws the bottle, misses, and stands.

MAMA

Don't you ever raise your voice to
me, young man! Nobody tells me --

Two rounds hit each Bodyguard through the window. Mama turns in time for Frank to crash through the glass and kick her in the head. He rolls to the floor in a kneel and turns to Mama.

She chuckles with glass in her face.

INT. MANSION HALL - NIGHT

Bodyguards carpet the floor, stuck with arrows, bullets, and open throats. Mama flies out the study and hits the wall. Frank grabs and throws her to the left.

MAMA

You think I'm the worst? You don't know shit, you pinko commie rat!

Frank walks down the hall.

FRANK

I'm Ukrainian...

He grabs her by the neck.

FRANK (CONT'D)

...Jewish...

He throws her against the wall.

FRANK (CONT'D)

...And Italian.

He drags her by the hair, her body limp.

MAMA

A Christ-Killer and a Red? Every ounce, shit.

At a bend Frank throws her. She lands face-first in corpses.

MAMA (CONT'D)

Knock me off, get ready for a fight, Castle... The Paddies, Chinks, fuckin' Colombians... Don't get me started on the Japs. Who'll be left to hold the leash? You?

She turns over.

MAMA (CONT'D)

I AM THE EAST COAST, YOU FUCK!

FRANK

One neck is easy to squeeze.

INT. GNUCCI FOYER - NIGHT

Frank holds Mama over the top bannister.

MAMA

You killed all the useful men in my
life. Even the sickest bastards
wouldn't touch a woman.

Frank yanks off the NVGs and brings Mama to his eyes.

FRANK

But they touch wives and children.
Don't they, whore?

He pins her by the neck over the railing and draws his knife.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Last words?

A bloody smile forms before a loud laugh.

MAMA

Hail --

The blade flashes.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

SONG: "1916" by Motorhead

A clock reads 3:06. Frank stands by a phone, gear removed,
and trench coat on. He dials 911.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)

9-1-1, what's your emergency?

FRANK

1913 Hunter's Hill Drive; Conway,
New Jersey. Send Detective Martin
Soap. His number is 718-479-1921.
Tell him it's Frank Castle.

He puts it down off the hook.

INT. SEDAN - DAWN

Frank drives through rural Jersey. Guns and cash sit at the
foot of the backseats under coats. A ray of sun beams through
the dark. Frank looks into it and starts to chuckle.

In the rear-view he sees Maria and Twins in shadow. He smiles
then focuses on the road.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Soap walks out the door and sees a shoe box on the stoop. He finds stacks of money inside. On top a note reads: I'M DONE. He breathes a sigh of relief and nods.

EXT. PARENT'S HOUSE - DAY

The door opens. Katrina falls to her knees and weeps before Frank walks in to hug her. Giovanni joins them.

INT. APT. HALL - DAY

Frank knocks on the door. It opens to Andrei in a tank-top and boxers, his Vor tattoos visible. They embrace.

INT. ANDREI'S APT. - DAY

The brothers sit in the living room. Frank stares at the stars on Andrei's knees and chest.

ANDREI

The cops stopped coming around
November.

FRANK

...Did they say why they were
looking for me?

Frank looks at his face as Andrei shakes his head.

ANDREI

I thought it was about the park,
but they never said, like they
didn't care. I told 'em you became
a monk after Martin got the house.
I like the beard, by the way.

Frank chuckles.

FRANK

No, I'm not a monk, but I needed to
give it up. It helped a lot.

ANDREI

Where are you living now?

FRANK

Some hole in Manhattan.

ANDREI

Aren't we all... Are you really
okay, Frankie?

Frank pauses.

FRANK

...It took a while, but everything
seems kind of normal again. I can
finally move on.

He smiles.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm happy.

Andrei smiles.

ANDREI

Think you're happy enough for a New
Years party?

FRANK

Sure. I'm game.

SONG ENDS

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

In the back sits Andrei, Piotr, Ivan, and two Gangsters. They slurrily sing "Auld Lang Sign." Frank remains sober. He looks out to the crowded sidewalk. Frank speaks over the singing.

FRANK

You guys can let me out here.

ANDREI

Oh no! It's not over yet!

FRANK

It's late, Andy. I need --

PIOTR

-- Listen to brother. We go to
Anya's place!

The limo cheers. Ivan shoves a shot glass in Frank's hand.

IVAN

To victory.

FRANK

For what?

Ivan smiles and passes a glance to Piotr.

IVAN
Gnucci bitches dead. We advance.

Frank turns to Piotr. He makes a toothy grin and raises his glass. Frank remains silent.

FRANK
In that case...

He forces a smile and raises the glass.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(Russian)
Oorah, comrades.

The limbo cheers. They chug bottles and Frank casts the shot over his shoulder. He rubs his eyes and slicks back his hair, looking like he knows he screwed up.

INT. BROTHEL LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Speakers "Digital Versicolor" by Glass Candy. In the center stands a stripper pole occupied by DANCER with platinum hair, surrounded by couches with Gangsters and GIRLS.

Piotr leads the group upstairs to the room. ANYA, 43, greets them in a fancy dress.

ANYA
(Polish)
Welcome, Papa! Happy New Year!

Piotr kisses her hand.

PIOTR
(Polish)
Made all the more happy in your
presence, darling.

Frank looks at Girls, young with dark spots under vacant eyes. A ringing grows. He looks to Dancer. With every spin her face changes.

He sees Maria, then Lisa and regular noise slowly returns.

ANDREI
Frank? Hey, Frankie?

The ringing ends.

FRANK

Huh?

ANDREI

Miss Anya's asking which girl you want.

FRANK

Andy, I can't --

PIOTR

-- It is on house, Francis. Take your pick.

Frank looks awkward and points to Dancer.

ANYA

You want Daisy? I hope you control yourself, big-man.

Anya winks at him.

INT. BROTHEL HALL - NIGHT

Frank and Daisy pass other rooms where moaning and grunts can be heard. They enter one room at the end.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank closes the door and stops. Daisy moves to the bed and lazily takes off her top.

FRANK

How old are you?

She says nothing.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(Ukrainian)
How old are you?

DAISY

(Ukrainian)
Fourteen.

He puts his back to the door when she comes closer. She unzips his jacket.

DAISY (CONT'D)

(Ukrainian)
Come to bed, baby. I'm good.

Frank grabs her hands and sees track marks on her wrists.
Then he sees her as Lisa.

LISA
I'm good.

INT. BROTHEL HALLWAY - DAY

Andrei stands looking messed up at Daisy's room and knocks.

ANDREI
You awake, Frankie?

He knocks again.

ANDREI (CONT'D)
Let me give you a ride. I'll drop
you off... where ever.

He opens the door.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - DAY

He finds the window slightly open and bed still made. He moves to the window and tries to close it, but it is too stiff. He pauses to catch his breath and looks out.

The alley sits two stories below. Andrei moves away and scratches his head. He moves back, but cannot see past the glass. He starts to breathe heavy.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Laundry hangs on lines of para-cord. Frank cleans his C-M60 at the table by a kettle atop a hotplate. At his back Daisy sleeps in bed next to a makeshift couch. She stirs.

Frank pours the kettle into a mug of coco and kneels to her.

DAISY
(Ukrainian)
Where am I?

FRANK
(Ukrainian)
Somewhere safe. How are you
feeling?

He touches her forehead as she tries to sit up.

DAISY
 (Ukrainian)
 Madame Anya has my papers. I must --

Frank lays her down gently.

FRANK
 (Ukrainian)
 -- You need to rest. It'll take a few days to flush that shit out of your system.

Daisy retreats behind the blanket.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 (Ukrainian)
 What's your real name?

DAISY
 (Ukrainian)
 Romashka... Sablinova.

FRANK
 (Ukrainian)
 Where are you from, Romashka?

ROMASHKA
 (Ukrainian)
 Donetsk.

Frank passes her the coco. He helps it to her lips

FRANK
 (Ukrainian)
 My mother is from Odessa. She met my father after the war. Where's your family?

Romashka slowly sips.

ROMASHKA
 (Ukrainian)
 Still there. They sold me to the Thieves in Law.

FRANK
 (Ukrainian)
 Is that who brought you to America?

She nods.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 (Ukrainian)
 Tell me everything.
 (MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

How were you brought here, where
were you when you first arrived,
and describe who put you to work.

INT. BROTHEL LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Anya tends five Gangsters with a handful of Girls. Frank
comes up behind in jeans and jacket.

FRANK

(Polish)
Afternoon, ma'am.

She turns and smiles.

ANYA

(Polish)
Mister Castle! I did not know you
spoke Polish.

She puts her hands on his giant chest.

ANYA (CONT'D)

(Polish)
I am afraid Daisy has run away, but
I am here for whatever you need.

Frank smiles.

FRANK

(Polish)
I was hoping you could help me with
my Polish. I pick up language
pretty well, but I am having
trouble with a phrase.

She unzips his jacket.

ANYA

(Polish)
I have some time.

FRANK

(Polish)
I think it goes, "rape them to
break them?"

Anya pauses and sees white under the jacket. She backs away.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(Russian)
They had to be shown who was in control before you pumped their little bodies full of heroin. Made them easy.

Gangsters rear their heads.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(Russian)
They had to understand they were powerless to prevent anything from being done to them.

Gangsters stand up, pull knives, and gather towards Frank.

ANYA

We-we wanted to be here. We just wanted to do business.

FRANK

I'm stronger than you, so I can do anything I want.

They stop when he draws his knife and sup-1911, the Skull more visible on his chest.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Isn't that how it works?

Frank kneecaps Anya and kills two Gangsters before the rest charge. They die to the last round. Anya cries on the floor. Girls watch in shock. Frank reloads and calls downstairs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(Ukrainian)
It's clear. Come up.

Romashka comes upstairs in modest clothes and healthier. She goes to Anya and stomps on her wound. Frank lets her stomp some more then pulls her off. He gestures Girls.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(Ukrainian)
Keep them here until I get back.

She nods and Frank goes upstairs. Romashka smiles at Anya.

GIRL 1

(Ukrainian)
We thought a customer stole you.

GIRL 2
 (Ukrainian)
 They were very mad.

Romashka shakes her head.

ROMASHKA
 (Ukrainian)
 He saved me. He's going to save all
 of us.

Shouts come through the ceiling, followed by muffled shots.

INT. BROTHEL OFFICE - DUSK

Anya dials into a safe on the floor. Frank sits on a desk. Romashka and more Girls watch from behind. The safe opens. Inside sits money, a leather case, and a stack of papers.

Anya hands the papers to Frank. He hands them to Romashka who passes them out to Girls.

ANYA
 You have what you want. Let me --

Frank pistol-whips her in the mouth and reaches for the case. He finds syringes inside, glances at Girls, then to Anya. He grabs and slams her on the desk facing up.

FRANK
 (Ukrainian)
 Hold her arms.

Romashka and Girls oblige. Frank holsters his pistol.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Not a fan of needles.

He takes the syringes by the fistful as Anya thrashes.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Don't think the girls liked them
 either.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DUSK

BYSTANDERS walk by when Anya hits the pavement with a splat, syringes bored into her eyes. They scream.

INT. SOAP'S OFFICE -DAY

Soaps, miserable, puts a pin in the map and adds dashes to a fresh tally sheet. He takes a drag from a cigarette and moves to his desk. Soap sits and leans back. Schroeder walks in.

SCHROEDER

We got a new --

SOAP

-- I know... I know, Chief.

SCHROEDER

Well, you gonna do anything about it?

Soap gestures the board.

SOAP

I just did.

SCHROEDER

Martin, I'm serious.

SOAP

Me too, Rich. He wasted five Russians and a Pollack with gang affiliations, a few Wall Street types, and freed the minors they were fucking. I just got back from interviewing the girls at Immigration.

Soap takes a longer drag and blows smoke.

SOAP (CONT'D)

What do you think I've been doing for the past year? Just keeping count? Wanna tell me how to do my job, Rich --

Schroeder puts his hands up and backs away.

SCHROEDER

-- No, no. Carry on, Martin. Y'doin' just fine.

After he leaves the office Soap turns to the board and flicks his cigarette at it. He rests his elbows on his desk and puts his face in his hands.

SOAP

...What did you do?

Soap pulls at his hair.

SOAP (CONT'D)
 ...What did you do?

INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

Andrei sweats behind the wheel. He glances at the rear-view. and pulls up to a boom barrier manned by GUARD in a booth. Guard raises the barrier and Andrei enters the Docks.

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

Stacked shipping containers sit behind harbor cranes before an anchored freighter. Across the river Manhattan stands in bright contrast. Andrei drives through to the Waterfront.

EXT. WATERFRONT - NIGHT

Two white vans sit between the stacks, the ends facing the water. 14 Gangsters stand around two containers separate from the stacks. They turn when Andrei pulls up and gets out.

GANGSTER 2
 (Russian)
 What's up, Captain?

ANDREI
 Dumb-ass! No Russian!

GANGSTER 3
 Sorry, boss. He's new kid.

Andrie walks to the containers and glances over his shoulder. Gangster 3 meets him.

GANGSTER 3 (CONT'D)
 Everything okay?

ANDREI
 Yeah, yeah. How we doing?

GANGSTER 3
 Almost there.

Gangsters open the containers and point flashlights inside. NEW GIRLS sit pushed to the back, huddled with blankets. Gangsters walk in.

GANGSTER 4
 Welcome to America!

Andrei pulls Gangster 3 to the side and walks to his car.

ANDREI

We need to get outta here. The quicker we move them, the better.

GANGSTER 3

Consider it done.

They stop at the car. Andrei looks back.

ANDREI

I want people on top of the boxes watching for anything outta the ordinary.

GANGSTER 3

But that will draw attention.

Andrei reaches into his coat and hands Gangster 3 a roll of money.

ANDREI

Share it with the boys. After tonight we're going on hiatus.

Andrei makes for the driver's seat.

GANGSTER 3

What is hiatus?

ANDREI

A very long break until further notice.

He gets in and drives off. Gangster 3 shrugs, pockets the money, and walks back to the containers.

GANGSTER 3

Hey! Sasha and new kid, climb to top of boxes.

INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

Andrei pulls up to the barrier. He honks for it to rise and sees the glass of the booth spider-webbed. He gets out.

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

Andrei runs over and finds Guard hog-tied on the floor. He breathes hard and looks back to the Waterfront.

EXT. STACK TOP - NIGHT

POV:

Through a scope Frank sees the vans, New Girls, and Gangsters 75 yards out. Two Gangsters stand on the closest stacks.

BACK TO SCENE

He carries his sup-1911, sup-MAC10, and mask up. He crouches beside his bow, arrows, and a bundle of rope on the edge of the container.

Frank puts the scope in the butt-pouch of his LBE, and pulls the mask down.

FRANK (V.O.)

The Bulats were smart, studied how the Russians failed. Made their operation small and scattered.

Frank takes off one glove and feels the breeze.

FRANK (V.O.)

They brought Slavs, Muslims, Croats, Serbs, Albanians...

He puts it back on and takes up the bow.

FRANK (V.O.)

...Daughters, widows, and orphans they made in Bosnia.

Frank knocks, draws, and aims at one of the Gangsters on top.

FRANK (V.O.)

For the worst decade of my life, sometimes I miss the 80s.

Frank releases.

SONG: "Sinnerman" by Nina Simone

The arrow hits and Gangster 2 falls. The other shouts below before Frank puts an arrow in him. He drops the bow, throws the rope, and repels down the stack.

EXT. DOCKS - CONTINUOUS

On the ground Frank heads right. At the corner of a path he peers round. At the far end sit the vans and Gangsters. With flashlights they run toward him.

Frank glances at the stun-grenade taped to the corner with a trip wire by his foot. He draws his 1911 and moves left in a brisk walk, passing a middle path.

At the left starts a third path to the Waterfront. Lights come closer from all three paths. Frank sprints to a single container down across the left path and climbs.

He gets in the corner and crouches. On the ground a pair of Gangsters pass by. Frank hops off behind and shoots them. He sprints to the other side of the path and climbs.

EXT. STACK TOP - CONTINUOUS

He moves quietly until he sees the rope of his previous vantage point across the space. On the ground two Gangsters arrive with pistols drawn from the middle.

GANGSTER 5

Face us, Punisher! Fight like man --

The stun grenade goes off at the right path. The pair moves to the corner clouded by smoke. Frank follows them. The pair meets the other as they shout at each other.

A third pair farther down the right path watches from cover, perpendicular to the path. Frank stands right above the four Gangsters and steps off.

EXT. DOCKS - CONTINUOUS

Frank lands on Gangster 5. His bones crunch and Frank rolls back, the other three in front. He shoots them before the pair down the path open fire. Bullets spark around Frank.

He rolls left into cover and lays suppression fire. His pistol empty, Frank holsters and brings up the sup-MAC10.

He sprints to the pair while firing and keeps left. At the perpendicular path Frank draws his knife in his right and meets GANGSTER 6 and GANGSTER 7.

He opens 6's throat and uses him as a shield against 7's fire. Frank kicks 6 into 7 and dashes. 7 puts up his hand to block and takes the blade in his hand.

7 screams and tries to shoot when 6 falls away. Frank grabs the gun hand and tries to keep it down, the two struggling to get an edge.

GANGSTER 7

(Russian)
Son of a bitch!

7 shoots and empties his pistol before Frank grabs him by the jaw, and slams 7's head into the container wall. Frank jerks 7 to the ground and stomps his throat with a gush of blood.

Frank breathes hard before wiping his blade and reloading his guns. He steps out onto the path and looks to the Waterfront.

SONG ENDS

EXT. WATERFRONT - NIGHT

Gangster 3 and the last three kneel bloody against the van by the water, handcuffed together. New Girls watch them from the containers.

Frank ties a rope to the bumper and a knot around the Gangster's necks. They cry and beg. Frank opens the driver's door and releases the breaks. The van slows back.

The rope tightens. The van plunges into the water and pulls the Gangsters. Frank walks to the edge and stares.

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

Andrei crouches in shadow and watches Frank. He whimpers and fights back a cry. Andrei makes for his car away from the stacks, tears pouring in silence.

INT. VOLGA LOUNGE OFFICE - NIGHT

Piotr sits with a hand on his chin and Ivan behind watching Andrei cry.

ANDREI

He's knows everything. He got that
bitch to talk and he's gonna kill
us all! He knows where I live too
and he's gonna kill me --

Ivan slaps him and lifts Andrei by the collar.

PIOTR

(Russian)
Put him down, Ivan.

Ivan obliges. Piotr stands and puts his hand on his hip, looking out the two-way mirror into the Lounge.

PIOTR (CONT'D)

So far he has come after us and only us. He removes suspicion from other families.

ANDREI

Because he's killing our guys. Right. Otherwise, they'd think we're trying to pull a fast one.

PIOTR

Doesn't mean we are not fucked. He will come for us, boy.

Andrei wipes his eyes.

ANDREI

My own brother...

PIOTR

Francis is hungry animal. War gave him taste, but Gnuccis gave him whole meal. No family to keep him at peace. No end until he dies.

IVAN

(Russian)
Set me loose, Papa. I will bring you his head.

PIOTR

(Russian)
No.

Piotr turns.

PIOTR (CONT'D)

We need the families on our side. Better in numbers and keep deception. Andrei...

He moves to his desk and sits. Andrei stands.

PIOTR (CONT'D)

...Halt operations. Let Francis go after other families. When more die, we hold conference. Make Punisher everyone's problem.

INT. FRANK'S TRUCK - DAY

Frank drives Romashka, a bag in her lap. Frank pulls up to his parent's house on the other side and stops.

FRANK
 (Ukrainian)
 Nervous?

ROMASHKA
 (Ukrainian)
 A little.

FRANK
 (Ukrainian)
 Don't be. They'll be happy to have
 you. Ma might put you to work
 around the house.

Frank pulls a thick envelope from his jacket.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 (Ukrainian)
 Give this to whoever answers the
 door. Tell them it's from Frank and
 they'll let you stay. Make sure
 they read the letter.

Frank reaches back and hands her an Ukrainian to English
 dictionary on top of an American History book.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 (Ukrainian)
 I'll pick you up in three weeks.
 Make sure you study.

She looks at the house.

ROMASHKA
 L-let me stay. Feel safer with you.

FRANK
 (Ukrainian)
 The farther away I am, the better.
 Too close and you're at risk.

He leans over and opens her door.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 (Ukrainian)
 Watch for cars.

She quickly hugs and plants a kiss on his cheek.

ROMASHKA
 T-thank you. You are good to me.

They share a silence before she steps out. Frank waits for
 her to go inside.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DUSK

In Frank stands at the grave with flowers. He wears jacket, boots, and skull shirt. He stares at the names then looks to Maria and Twins stand under a far tree holding hands.

Frank places the flowers, and kisses the tombstone.

FRANK

I'm coming... I promise.

He walks away, Maria and Twins gone.

INT. V.L. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

BOSSSES with Gangsters gather at a long table. At the head sits Piotr, Andrei, and Ivan. Andrei wrings his hands. The doors of the lounge close and lock.

PIOTR

(Russian)

We have lost much in these past few months. The Punisher has found us his prey and profits have subsided. What are we to do?

BOSS 1

(Russian)

Give our boys better guns. 38s and 9mms are not enough.

BOSS 2

(Russian)

They would have them had that skull-fuck not raided our shipments from Africa.

BOSS 3

(Russian)

How does he know our operations?

BOSS 1

(Russian)

He tortures for information like the MGB. The police find the bodies in pieces, but they do nothing. We should pay them for help.

ANDREI

(Russian)

The cops do nothing because they love the Punisher.

(MORE)

ANDREI (CONT'D)

They stood by while the Gnuccis were slaughtered because he does more than they ever could. No amount of money is going to convince them otherwise.

BOSS 4 eyes Andrei.

ANDREI (CONT'D)

(Russian)

We have grown too comfortable with our gains and let our guard down. The best we can do is keep low and our eyes open.

Boss 4 points at Andrei.

BOSS 4

(Russian)

Why is this half-breed punk allowed to speak?

PIOTR

(Russian)

He is my nephew --

ANDREI

(Russian)

-- Because I know what to say. I have seen enough bodies and stolen girls to know how to fix this. That monthly tribute you received, from this half-breed punk, is gone and here you are talking down to me like a woman.

Boss 4 stands.

BOSS 4

(Russian)

I'll put your fucking eyes out, bitch!

ANDREI

(Russian)

Not wise to insult the bread winner. Might get smacked.

Boss 4 tries to make a move until the Bosses calm him down.

PIOTR

(Russian)

Andrei is right.

(MORE)

PIOTR (CONT'D)

We are fat and weak. Tonight we fix
it and we are not leaving until --

The door creaks open, followed by heavy footsteps, and a rattle of bullets. Bosses look to the front. Andrei pushes his way through Gangsters before the footsteps stop.

INT. V.L. FRONT - NIGHT

Frank holds his C-M60 connected to a belt of ammo from a bag at his left. In the other hand is the C-M16. Bosses and Gangsters stare in frozen horror. Frank looks to Andrei.

ANDREI

Frankie...

He cries.

ANDREI (CONT'D)

...Jesus Christ --

Frank fires both weapons. Bullets tear through the restaurant. Bosses and Gangsters fall into each other, their screams drowned out by discharge, and shredding meat.

The rounds skip across fallen bodies like stones on water and find purchase in those fleeing for the kitchen at the back. The barrel of the C-M60 glows orange as Frank moves in.

FRANK (V.O.)

Only then, pouring fire into a
human wall, did I feel something
like peace.

INT. V.L. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He saws turned-over tables in half before the C-M60 clicks empty. The smoke settles and the restaurant goes quiet, bodies and puddles everywhere.

Frank drops the C-M60, reloads the C-M16, and calmly executes survivors. He finds Piotr but before he could shoot, Ivan charges in, the side of his head blown out.

He tackles Frank and drops the C-M16. Half way across the room Ivan trips. Frank falls, rolls to his feet, and draws his pistol. Ivan takes a clip in the chest, but keeps moving.

In the middle of a reload Ivan swings. Frank ducks, but takes a spinning punch. The pistol flies from his hand. Frank staggers and draws his knife.

He dodge-rolls to the back and slashes Ivan's leg. Frank takes an elbow that staggers him before Ivan grabs his throat. Frank stabs his arm until his grip loosens.

Frank goes for the throat, but Ivan punches him across the room, landing in gore. Frank wipes blood from his face and looks up to Ivan's foot in a stomp.

Frank rolls clear and drags the knife through as his leg comes down. Ivan grabs and snaps his left arm at the elbow. Frank shouts and is kicked to his feet.

He backs away as Ivan approaches. He readies a punch before Frank uses a corpse as a shield. Ivan puts his fist through the corpse, tosses it aside, and grabs Frank by the head.

He reaches with his wounded arm to crush Frank's head. Frank shoves his fingers into the wound before Ivan lets go. Frank hooks with his other arm and flips Ivan forward in a grapple.

Releasing the arm, Frank looks frantically and spots the C-M16. Ivan gets up while Frank leaps for the gun. Ivan charges as Frank snatches the C-M16.

He gets on his feet and they crash to the floor, Ivan on top. Ivan shakes with a muffled rumble before the barrel bursts out his back.

Frank pushes Ivan off then shoots a long burst into his head. Piotr watches Frank catch his breath. Without aiming, Frank points the C-M16 and unloads a short burst, killing Piotr.

Frank turns to a choking cough and sees Andrei under a body. He walks over as Andrei reaches into his suit-jacket and pulls the Captain America card. It falls from his fingers.

ANDREI

I guess... I wasn't good enough.

Frank squats before him, staring vacant. Andrei spits a wad of blood at his face.

ANDREI (CONT'D)

You monster... You're own family.

FRANK

My family's gone.

ANDREI

You think... think you're better than me? A m-mass murderer?... Why didn't you stay in Vietnam? That was always your home, right Frankie?

(MORE)

ANDREI (CONT'D)
 You never gave a shit about
 anything except that war... That
 was your real home.

Frank stands.

FRANK
 No, Andy.

He aims at Andrei's head.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 I am home.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Soap watches the casket lower into the grave behind Katrina weeping into Giovanni's arm. Nika stands beside him with Max in her arms. He grimaces and turns his head away.

NIKA
 (Whispers)
 It's okay, baby. Nothing you could
 have done.

SOAP
 (Whispers)
 Maybe...

He turns his back to the grave.

SOAP (CONT'D)
 (Whisper)
 ...Maybe I didn't care enough to
 try. I don't know anymore.

NIKA
 (Whisper)
 Andy made his choices... So did
 Frank. Why can't we just live our
 lives like it never happened?

SOAP
 (Whisper)
 It did happen. It's right in front
 of me. The thing that did it has a
 face and a name. I took his home
 and his money and I let him get
 away with all of it because I call
 him friend.

Nika comes closer, bringing Max between them.

NIKA

Whatever you choose, whatever man you decide to be, we're not going anywhere. We love you and there's nothing the Punisher can do that'll keep us away.

Soap looks around the surrounding hills and trees and sees no-one. He kisses Nika and pets Max's head.

SOAP

It's gonna be okay. I promise.

CUT TO BLACK

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Max, 27, his sisters KAT, 24, and JAS, 21, stand in police uniforms. Max's WIFE, 26, holds their son MARTIN, 2, beside Nika. They stand before a casket lined with flowers.

A photo of an old Soap stands at the foot of the casket. Cops and VIETNAM VETERANS attend. Bagpipes play "Amazing Grace". In the background stands Manhattan with Stark Tower.

LATER

The attendees walk away with Nika on Max and Kat's arms. Jas walks with Wife behind them. Martin stares back. Frank, in Marine Class A's, salutes the grave.

MARTIN

Who's that, Mommy?

The family stops and turns.

WIFE

I don't know, sweetheart.

NIKA

That's Mister Castle. He was grandpa's friend... and a kind man.

The siblings look at each other. Nika walks on her own.

NIKA (CONT'D)

Can I hold him, honey?

WIFE

Of course. You want grandma to carry you?

Martin smiles. Nika takes him and walks ahead, Wife behind. The siblings stay and stare at Frank.

JAS
Should we say hi?

Max and Kat look at her.

JAS (CONT'D)
I'm just being nice.

They turn back.

MAX
He's better off alone. It's how he likes it.

Frank relaxes and walks away. The siblings move on.

KAT
Rule number one, Jas: only speak when he comes to you. It can't look like we associate regularly.

JAS
But the whole city loves him.

MAX
We have to keep up appearances. Just like Dad.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAWN

Frank, 61, sweats pants and shirt, has long hair in a wolf tail with grey sides, and a trimmed beard. He jogs on his own before YOUNG RUNNERS join him.

EXT. PARENT'S HOUSE - DAY

Romashka, tall and fit, walks her step-son, JOEY, 12, down the stoop to a Crown Vic on the crib. She looks down the sidewalk and sees Frank on his jog. She stops and waves.

ROMASHKA
Hey, Charlie!

She speaks with flawless English. Frank stops, jogs in place, and speaks in his terrible Boston accent.

FRANK
Hey! How ya doin', Diane?

ROMASHKA

Doing good. I'm taking Joey to his friend's house. You?

FRANK

Great! I was on my usual route and I figured I'd say hi. How ya doin', kid?

Joey smiles, but tries to open the car door. Frank chuckles.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Well, I better get on to the gym. Tell Dan I said hi.

ROMASHKA

Okay. Have a good day. Tell Mister Fort goodbye, Joey.

Joey turns.

JOEY

Goodbye.

Frank jogs on. Romashka watches him and moves on.

INT. GYM - DAY

GYM RATS watch Frank lift a stacked bar. He counts off reps in the thirties before he stops. Rats clap.

GYM RAT 1

Good job, old man.

GYM RAT 2

That was nuts.

Frank stands and takes a swig of a protein shake.

GYM RAT 3

That all you got?

Frank smirks, still using his terrible accent.

FRANK

No, but I'd like to see you try.

Rats chuckle before the power goes out.

GYM RAT 2

What the hell?

GYM RAT 1
Is it a thunder storm?

GYM RAT 3
Yeah, a thunder storm in broad
daylight --

A boom shakes the gym. Frank shudders and rushes outside with the others.

EXT. GYM - DAY

Bystanders run down the street. Frank looks to the opposite direction. From the top of Stark Tower CHITAUURI pour from a portal and shoot into the city. His expression goes vacant.

INT. P.H. FOYER - DAY

The door bursts open with Frank, destruction sounding in the distance. He walks fast down the hall toward the kitchen.

INT. P.H. KITCHEN - DAY

Just as he turns the corner to the basement, Romashka comes in with a chromed AK-74, platinum hair pulled back, pointing at Frank. He stops and she quickly brings the gun down.

ROMASHKA
Oh, sorry! You okay?

Frank talks normally.

FRANK
Call the boys and tell them to get
under something heavy.

He makes for the basement door.

ROMASHKA
Is it terrorists?

FRANK
I don't know.

Frank opens the door and rushes down. Romashka follows.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Frank shoves away a stack of boxes for a footlocker underneath. Frank stomps off the lock and opens it. Military equipment lies inside.

FRANK
Sorry for barging in. Other cache
was far away.

Frank pulls out a pair of tan boots, Multi-cam trousers, tan plate carrier vest, tan knuckle gloves, black combat shirt, and Skull mask.

ROMASHKA
Pass me my uniform --

FRANK
-- You quit for a reason. Walk it
back and you won't stop.

ROMASHKA
My family's --

FRANK
-- Safe. I'll make sure this stays
at the epicenter.

Frank undresses.

FRANK (CONT'D)
If I make it back, remind me to buy
you a new car.

ROMASHKA
...What?

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

Two Cops crouch behind a wrecked car. They take shots at Chitauri. COP 2 lays beside them with a wounded arm.

COP 2
We gotta move guys. It's getting
crazy.

COP 3 kneels beside her.

COP 3
Stay with us!

COP 2

I'm not going anywhere, dick-head!
We need t- LOOK OUT!

Cops turn to CHITAURI 1 at the right. It brings up its rifle before the Crown Vic pins it to a lamp post. Frank steps out in costume with an AA-12 in hand and slung C-M16.

He puts two shells in its face as he pulls a duffle from the car. He kneels with Cops, hands them two shotguns from the duffle, and slings it.

FRANK

You're relieved.

Frank pulls a grenade from his vest and tosses it over the wreck. It blows before he vaults over. Cops watch Frank engage the Chitauri.

Frank dashes for cover to the left, firing from the hip. Behind a mailbox he kills a few Chitauri on the right. He looks at two that got close on the sidewalk.

Frank moves in, shooting the leg off one, and charging. He grabs the Chitauri and uses him as a shield before pasting the other. Frank shoves the wounded off and plugs him.

The AA-12 clicks empty before shots strike at his feet. Frank shoves the gun into the duffle before pulling an FAL. From a car on the curb he shoots back before rushing in.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

In another part of town Frank crouches behind a burning car. He's covered in dust and battle damage. The duffle lays on the ground with spent magazines and shells spread about.

Frank reloads a Mosin Nagant Carbine when a laser shot hits the car's gas tank. It blows and sends him into the cafe.

INT. CAFE - DAY

He hits the bar and slumps down, followed by a ringing.

POV:

He looks ahead in a blur. Chitauri move in before BLUE FIGURE takes them down. When they're dead, Blue Figure walks in.

BLUE FIGURE

You alright... Hey?

Frank feels himself helped to his feet. The ringing ends before his vision returns and sees a battle-worn Captain America.

END OF POV

CAP
Can you move?

FRANK
Y- yes, sir.

They walk out, Cap helping Frank along.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

CAP
That's quite a uniform. How are you on ammo?

FRANK
If need be I can use their weapons, sir.

They stop. Cap nods.

CAP
Can you handle yourself from here?

FRANK
Yes, sir.

CAP
If you need help, head to Stark Tower.

FRANK
I will, sir.

Cap starts on his way out.

CAPTAIN
Stay alert, stay alive.

Frank watches him sprint away. He takes off his mask, eyes wide, and stares until he can't see him.

FRANK
Wow.

INT. HELICARRIER CORRIDOR - DUSK

MARIA HILL walks with a file under her arm, bandages on her face. She stops at a door and presses her ear piece.

HILL
I'm at the door.

The door opens and she walks in.

INT. HELICARRIER OFFICE - DUSK

The door closes, locks, and Hill walks to a desk. She opens the file and lays out monochrome photos of Frank in combat. One shows him without his mask.

HILL
Agent Russo made a positive match through facial recognition. I can't believe he still fights at his age.

A hand picks up one photo of Frank with Captain America.

HILL (CONT'D)
How should we proceed, Director?

INT. FRANKS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank cleans a gun in sweat pants on a table by a wall, windows left, front door right. Creaks come from the door and Frank grabs his knife. A window bursts behind.

He turns and takes a kick from BLACK WIDOW. She rolls to the floor and moves in for a punch. Frank counters, but she grapples him with her legs.

Widow tries to swing him down, but Frank's too big. He grabs her neck and brings her toward the table. Frank tries to slam her head into the wall, but Widow braces her feet to the wall and shoves a pistol in his eye. At the same time, he raises the knife and Widow grabs his hand. They stay like that before Cap bursts through the door.

CAP
Damnit, Nat! I told you to wait!

WIDOW
Talking doesn't work on guys like him, Steve. More animal than human.

CAPTAIN
I beg to differ.

Captain takes off his helmet.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Master Sergeant Castle? Frank --

Frank lets go of Widow and drops the knife. Widow moves to stand and draws a second pistol. He faces Cap, goes to his knees, and puts his hands behind his head.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. ??? - ???

A light beams down on a table where Frank sits with his arms behind in braces. A door opens and ??? sits down. ??? places a thick file on the table, the front marked PUNISHER OP.

Frank looks up and chuckles.

FRANK
Eye patch suits you, Fury. Before you kill me, tell me how you lost it. I bet it's quite a story.

Fury interlocks his fingers on the table.

FURY
What happened to you, Sergeant?

Frank's looks vacant.

FRANK
I lost something too.

SONG: "Roost" by Big Black Delta

ROLL CREDITS

ENDING CREDITS SEQUENCE

INT. RIKER'S PENITENTIARY - DAY

Bar doors slide open. PRISONER with two COS walk down a corridor to the release center.

INT. RELEASE CENTER - CONTINUOUS

COs do not look at Prisoner as he walks to a booth. He receives an old suit and a wallet. Prisoner opens it and leaves an expired ID, picture scratch out.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

A limbo waits when Prisoner comes out. YAKUZA in shark-skin suits stand by. One holds the door open.

YAKUZA 1

Mister Nero. Boss Yashida would
like to have you for lunch.

Billy, 50, a face of patchwork-skin, black hair slick back, forms a toothy smile.