

**THE PUNISHER
WAR JOURNAL**

by

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Based on Marvel Comics character

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This is just a fan made

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OVER BLACK

The sound of a POLICE RADIO calling.

RADIO

All units. Central Park shooting,
requiring reinforcements
immediately.

CUT TO:

CELL PHONE POV: Filming towards of Central Park alongside more people. Everyone horrified, but we don't know for what yet.

CUT TO:

VIDEO FOOTAGE: Now in Central Park where the police and CSI surround an entire area that is filled with CORPSES. A REPORTER talks to the camera.

REPORTER

Today New York witnessed the biggest outdoor massacre. It is speculated that the victims are members of the Mafia or even gangs, but no confirmation from the police yet.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER FOOTAGE: With the cameraman zooming in the forensic putting some bodies in black bags. One of them we notice that it's a little girl, and another a woman.

REPORTER (O.S.)

Apparently there was only one survivor. The victim is in serious condition but the paramedics doubt that he will hold it for long.

CUT TO:

SHAKY FOOTAGE: The only surviving man being taken on the stretcher to an ambulance. An oxygen mask on his face. His body covered in blood. He still uses his last forces to murmur.

MAN

My family... I want my... family.

He is placed inside the ambulance. As the paramedics slam the ambulance doors -

CUT TO BLACK:

Then -

FADE IN:

INT. CASTLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

A small place with little furniture. The curtain blocks the sun from the single window of the apartment, allowing only a wispy sunlight to enter.

A man wakes up sitting on his bed. Meet - **FRANK CASTLE**. A person who once knew happiness.

Silhouetted in the shadows of his apartment.

He pauses for a few seconds staring into blank, as if he's been part of loneliness for a long time.

Then he gets out of bed. As he walks to the window, we
HEAR:

CASTLE (V.O.)
Frank Castle War Journal. Every
day I open my eyes thinking that
everything will be all different.

Upon reaching the window, Castle opens the curtains showing a beautiful view of New York. He stares silently the street below, all those people coming and going.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And I keep fooling myself all day.
They are still there... rapists,
murderers, thieves, scam
artists... and society crosses
arms to them all.

A beat.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Someone needs to be sane around
here. And I chose to be that
someone.

Castle turns and goes to a dresser. At that moment is when the sun illuminates his back showing almost a map of scars - some older, others more recent.

On the dresser, a small piece of paper.

He grabs the paper revealing a handwritten message: "DOM MASSIMO CESARE MANSION 33 miles West - 21:30h"

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Because there is always someone
 who already had one last chance.
 And others...

Next to the paper, a PHOTO - old and worn - with a WOMAN
 and a GIRL: Castle's wife and daughter.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ... only have the punishment.

Castle takes a jacket from his closet and leaves the
 apartment.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

Castle leaves his building walking down the sidewalk like
 anyone else there.

WE PULL BACK, ACROSS THE STREET, INTO:

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Parked with two passengers inside.

In the passenger seat is **ELIZA O'BRIEN**, eating her fast
 food. And in the driver's seat, **ROTH GALWAY**.

Both watching Castle discreetly.

ROTH
 You think he's going to the
 mansion?

ELIZA
 Of course not. You see some
 high-caliber with him?

ROTH
 The way everyone talks about this
 guy, I feel like he could do a
 slaughter with a pencil.

ELIZA
 When you marry, Roth, don't let
 your wife take advantage of your
 naivete.

ROTH
 I'm not naive.
 (beat)
 We should have finished him in the
 cemetery this morning.

ELIZA
I agree, but the Fat Boy back
down. And we're obedient.

ROTH
I'm starting to regret.

Eliza finishes her lunch and throws the scraps out of the
car window.

ELIZA
Let's go.

ROTH
What? Should not we follow him?

ELIZA
He will not do any massacre now,
Roth. Trust me.

Roth starts the car.

ROTH
If the boss gets mad I will not
take guilt for you.

Then he speeds away.

EXT. NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Establishing.

INT. SOAP'S OFFICE, N.Y.P.D. - DAY

DETECTIVE MARTIN SOAP, a man who exudes nothing but
insecurity and mistrust.

His room is a real mess of papers and files scattered all
over the place. There are several newspaper clippings about
the Punisher appearances at crime scenes.

But Soap doesn't care, he works focused.

LT. LAWTON comes in. He looks at all that sea of papers in
disgust. Soap startles seeing him at his door.

SOAP
(embarrassed)
Lieutenant, I -- well, I was...

LAWTON

I came to get the report of that murder at the motel. You're done, right?

SOAP

Yes! Of course, of course. I did earlier today, it should be...

Soap begins to scour through the papers on his desk.

SOAP (CONT'D)

... somewhere...

As he rolls a few papers, the Lieutenant begins to lose his patience.

LAWTON

I'll be in my office waiting.

Lawton is about to leave but Soap pulls the file right away, quite crumpled.

SOAP

Here! I found it.

Soap hands the file to the Lieutenant. Lawton glances around and realizes that most of those papers are about Castle.

LAWTON

I didn't know you were forming a task force to get the vigilante.

SOAP

What? No, it's just a small...
(thinking a word)
... research I'm doing.

LAWTON

Do you think you're going to arrest him sometime? That's it?

Soap is reluctant to respond.

SOAP

He causes carnage wherever he goes, then yes, I intend to arrest him.

Lawton can't hold a laugh. Soap is ashamed.

LAWTON

How many people have you killed, Soap?

Soap just hangs his head.

LAWTON (CONT'D)
What I was thought.

The Lieutenant turns to leave, but before he looks one last time to Soap.

LAWTON (CONT'D)
If I were you I would stop with
this stupid dream. Your place will
always be behind a desk.

Lawton leaves slamming the door hard.

INT. CASTLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Castle enters and turns on the light of the apartment.

After closing the door, Castle moves to his closet. Few clothes.

Then he kneels and removes a wooden slab at the bottom of the closet revealing a SECRET COMPARTMENT with WEAPONS of all kinds.

TEAR-GAS, GRENADES, RIFLES, PISTOLS, BLADES - everything capable of killing someone is there.

Castle chooses some of those options and lays them on the bed. Then he drags an old bag from the top of the closet and puts it next to the weapons, storing them in there.

With the bag in the back, Castle takes the picture of his family and leaves.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

A dark and isolated alley behind the apartment building. There is where an old and rusty but functional VAN rests.

Castle arrives in the alley. He opens the back doors of the van and puts his weapons bag in it. Then goes to the driver's cabin.

Castle starts the van, with difficulty, but do it.

And races away.

EXT. CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

Far from the city, a big party takes place.

Armed SECURITY GUARDS supervise the area.

Several MOBSTERS arrive in their luxurious cars and expensive garments to join the party. It's like a high society event.

From one of the limousines comes **BILLY RUSSO** - charming and appearance of a soap opera heartthrob - followed by a **BLONDE MODEL** and his faithful friend **MANSON ACKERMAN**. They also enter the mansion.

They step into the mansion.

INT. MAIN HALL, CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

CAMERA PANS ACROSS the crowded party. Waiters circle the lounge with trays of appetizers and drinks.

A long banquet table stands out in the center with a huge birthday cake.

In the midst of that people, we FIND - Russo, drinking some wine with the blonde alongside. Manson approaches.

MANSON

Billy, the Costas have come too.
As you said.

Russo glances up on the second floor where the Costa brothers are, talking to other mobsters.

RUSSO

The scoundrels think Cesare will name them as his successor, but will not.

MANSON

Are you sure?

RUSSO

Of course I have! I worked with him longer and did all his dirty work. I deserve.

MANSON

Well, the worst is that four more families feel the same way. It will be an interesting fight to watch.

RUSSO

I can go through each one of them. They're nothing more than men in expensive suits.

Russo's girl smooths him fondly.

BLONDE

Oh Billy, let this worry aside and
enjoy the moment.

She bends to kiss Billy's neck but he interrupts with his moodiness.

RUSSO

Just play your part as an escort
and get drunk.

Annoyed, the blonde ends her wine in a sip and walks away from Billy.

EXT. WOODS AROUND CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

Positioned hidden among the trees is a SNIPER that oversees the mansion from afar.

SNIPER

(into radio)

Luther, how's it going in the
south?

No answer.

SNIPER (CONT'D)

Luther, if you're drinking again,
I swear --

SUDDENLY -

- BLACK GLOVED HANDS come up behind the sniper. One covers his mouth while the other RIPS his throat with a knife.

When the shooter drops after bleeding to death, Castle emerges from the shadows and takes the sniper's rifle.

INT. MAIN HALL, CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

CARLLOTA CESARE, Massimo's wife, takes one of the champagne glasses and use a spoon to gently tap the glass, calling attention.

CARLLOTA

Attention, everyone! I want to
thank the presence of each of you
in this wonderful celebration.
It's not often that we can enjoy
moments like this.

ON RUSSO AND MANSON -

Both drinking.

BILLY

Is it just me or is her voice
incredibly annoying?

MANSON

I agree.

CARLLOTA (O.S.)

I have no doubt that my husband
will not forget it, because I see
many friends and colleagues here.

Russo takes another sip of his drink.

ON CARLLOTA -

Continuing her speech.

CARLLOTA

So I want to call our night
birthday and my beloved husband...

She turns to the wooden door behind her.

CARLLOTA (CONT'D)

... Massimo Cesare!

The doors open to **MASSIMO CESARE** - a hundred-year-old man
already ill-treated by time. His condition almost amounts
to that of a dying man.

The maid of the house leads Massimo in his wheelchair to
near Carlotta.

As everyone claps:

EXT. CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

One of the security guards is distracted by his cell phone,
losing his sense of what's going on around him.

ON THE PHONE: He's checking some nude photos.

And enjoying it.

THEN -

- A BULLET CRASHES THROUGH a car windows and hits the
security's belly.

The impact strength slams him on the glass door.

The man falls on the floor with his belly shedding blood non-stop. He cannot even move.

Moments later Castle approaches, carrying the rifle in one hand and his bag in another. The security only has time to see Castle for a few seconds before he collapses to the ground, dead.

Castle kneels, sets the rifle on the ground, opens the bag and begins to remove some grenades, tape and wire.

INT. MAIN HALL, CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

Everyone toast to Cesare.

ALL THE GUESTS

Sallut!

Carllota helps her husband to drink wine, since he can't move.

ON RUSSO AND MANSON -

Seeing that whole scene with pish.

BILLY

My God... when they said that the health of the old man was critical, I didn't think he would be at that level.

MANSON

It's a hundred years, Billy. A lot happens in this time.

RUSSO

So it will not take long for him to name his successor.

ON CARLLOTA AND MASSIMO -

She takes a small piece of the cake with a spoon and offers it to Massimo.

CARLLOTA

You will love, darling. Just open your mouth a little.

But the old man didn't show any reaction. Carllota persists in trying to make him eat the cake.

CLOSE ON MASSIMO'S FACE: Those cold eyes suddenly widen reacting to something that Massimo saw beyond the camera.

CARLLOTA (CONT'D)
Come on, open your mouth.

And - BANG!

A BULLET crosses the hall BLOWING UP THE CAKE, HEWS Carllota's hand with the spoon and culminate right into Massimo's forehead splashing blood and brains around.

He falls back over a pool of his own blood.

The party falls in silence. Carllota stares in SHOCK.

Still in silence, everyone looks at the window from where the shot came and they find Frank Castle outside, with the rifle barrel still smoking.

Then Carllota SCREAMS, so loud that the whole city can hear. It's as if she had returned to the real world at that moment.

Castle turns his back and starts to get out of there while everyone goes into despair.

MASSIMO'S SON doesn't think twice and pulls his gun. Other women help Carllota.

MASSIMO'S SON
Kill the motherfucker!

Russo also takes his gun. All the armed mobsters get their pistols and revolvers to go after Castle.

MANSON
Are you really going to get involved in this?

RUSSO
We know who he is and what he does. So any chance to kill him I'll --

AT THAT MOMENT -

- Massimo's son opens the door, which stretches a WIRE attached to the grenade's pin, triggering the bomb.

BOOM! THE FRONT DOOR EXPLODES.

The explosion consumes Massimo's son and all those close to him, killing them immediately.

The blast also YANKS Russo and others backwards to the ground.

TIGHT ON Russo, lying on the floor while the sound disappeared in a vacuum. All he hears is a high-pitched buzzing in his ears.

Stunned, he looks around - several bodies mutilated by the explosion. Some dying on the ground with serious injuries, others already dead.

EXT. CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

Calmly Castle moves away from the main house and reaches the fountain, where he removes his H&K G-36 of the bag.

As he sets the machine gun - BOOM! Another explosion at the back of the mansion. Another trap triggered.

After setting the gun, Castle turns to the house. The next step.

INT. MAIN HALL, CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

Russo crawls through the hall and the corpses still trying to recover. He spots a nearby pistol.

Before Billy gets the gun, Manson comes up to him and helps him to stand up again.

MANSON

You okay? Can you hear me?

RUSSO

We need... get out of here.

Russo leans on his friend's shoulder. As they walk towards the exit...

... they hear a MACHINE GUN ROARING outside.

EXT. CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

Castle walks back to the house firing at all those still alive or only injured.

INT. MAIN HALL, CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

Manson and Russo turn around immediately.

MANSON

Shit!

RUSSO

The stairs...

The two begin to climb the stairs to the second floor.

Meanwhile, Castle enters the house firing at those people still dying on the floor. Those who try to escape are given a bullet in the back.

While Castle reloads his weapon, he hears a moan. He looks up and sees Manson with Russo.

They know that Castle noticed them. Manson sees no other solution at the moment.

MANSON

Run!

Manson pushes Billy to the second floor and turns to shoot Castle with his pistol.

But the Punisher is faster and fusillades Manson mercilessly, turning him into a human sieve.

Dead, he rolls down the stairs.

UP ON THE SECOND FLOOR

Russo sees his friend dead on the ground but there is no time for mourning. He runs from there looking for a way out.

INT. STUDY, CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

Russo enters and locks the door as quickly as possible. He looks around and finds no door, only a window.

Looking through the window, he sees the back of the mansion with a pool in the backyard.

He tries to think in something to do, but...

... BLAM! Castle smashes the door. Russo grabs his pocketknife and points at Castle with a trembling hand.

RUSSO

You manic -- you know who I am?!

CASTLE

Billy Russo. Also known as Billy
The Beaut. I know very well who
you and the kind of rotten.

As Castle approaches, Russo steps back in fear.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Drop the knife if you do not want
to lose the hand.

No choices, Billy drops the small blade.

RUSSO

Is that so? You gonna kill me with
a head shot? This will not change
anything. You cannot imagine the
kind of people I have contact.

Castle lowers his G-36 and stay close to Billy. The two are
face to face, a few inches.

CASTLE

That's why you will live... for
now.

RUSSO

What?

CASTLE

When I leave this place, I want
you to call your contacts across
the city and report what happened
here, detail by detail. Tell them
that Frank Castle will do the same
with all of them.

RUSSO

Is that your plan, to declare a
war against organized crime?
You're not a hero like they say,
just a crazy psycho.

CASTLE

Heroes bring dreams and hopes. I'm
just the trash thrower.

Castle turns around and walks toward the exit. Billy sees a
chance now. He picks up his knife again and tries to stab
Castle in the back.

But castle sees the reflection of Russo in the little oval
mirror on the dresser ahead.

He DUCKS from Russo's attack and picks up the mirror by crashing it into Russo's face making the glass to tear his skin.

Russo yells in pain grabbing his bloody face. He staggers toward the room window.

Castle seizes the moment and KICKS Billy's chest by sending him through the window.

Russo rolls down the roofing falling inside the pool, staining the entire water with his blood.

Castle stares at him for a few seconds and sees that Billy doesn't react. Is dead. Then he walks away.

EXT. CESARE ESTATE - LATER

That same night, the place became a crime scene surrounded by police. Lieutenant Lawton watches the coroner pulling those corpses away in disgust.

Soap then arrives in his car. He shows his ID to the cop and goes through the yellow tape and joins Lawton.

SOAP

I came as fast as I could, sir.

LAWTON

And? You will only find dead bodies... or parts of them.

SOAP

Who owns the property?

LAWTON

Massimo Cesare, one of the heads of organized crime.

Soap notes what Lawton says in his notepad.

LAWTON (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

SOAP

Noting. Is not that what detectives do?

Lawton rolls his eyes. One of the cops comes running up to the lieutenant.

COP

Sir, we found another body.

LAWTON
I don't know if you noticed,
officer, but we have enough here.

COP
But this one is alive, sir.

EXT. BACKYARD, CESARE ESTATE - NIGHT

Soap, Lawton and the cop come to the pool where Billy Russo is placed in a stretcher by paramedics.

As they approached the victim, they notice that his face is covered in blood. It's almost impossible to recognize Russo in that state.

LAWTON
Holly shit...

Russo is still breathing. He emits some low sighing moans. The paramedics take him away. Soap approaches one of the CSI.

SOAP
Hey, the pool guy said something?

CSI
If he said something? You didn't see his face? Whoever did this massacre was not smart enough to notice the cameras.

The CSI points to the top of the house where there is a small SURVEILLANCE CAMERA filming everything.

CSI (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Dave! Find the HD from the cameras, it will be useful for us.

SOAP
For what? We know exactly who is the blame.

SURVEILLANCE POV: Soap looks straight for us. We begin to PULL BACK TO REVEAL we're in -

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

An expensive dwelling. That's where **MICRO** watches the camera footage in a laptop. He clicks a key on the keyboard and switches to another camera inside the mansion.

Micro closes his laptop. He doesn't seem surprised by what he saw there. When he lowers the laptop, reveals that Eliza and Roth were also present with their laptop's.

ELIZA

That was something quite unexpected.

ROTH

Are you kidding? He made a massacre there! Alone!

ON ROTH'S LAPTOP: He reverses the record to Castle quietly walking out of the mansion.

ROTH (CONT'D)

Look at this. He leaves there like it's another normal day.

ELIZA

It looks like you put us in a very risky game, Fat Boy.

ROTH

We should have got him while he was distracted at the cemetery. I hope to have another chance these soon.

MICRO

There is no hope. He only goes in the cemetery once a year. Doing the job there would be... indecent.

ROTH

You saw the same thing I did in those cameras, right? That's indecency.

ELIZA

It's better to have a good plan now.

MICRO

At least we know where he lives. You will no longer follow him.

ROTH

What? And if he leaves the current location?

MICRO

He won't.

ROTH
How can you be so sure?

MICRO
I know how he works, how is his
routine and how he thinks.

ELIZA
You must have been a nice couple
before.

MICRO
No... but I'm the only person
closest to a friend he has in the
world.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

An UNMARKED CAR parks in front of the building. Three men
get out of the vehicle, one carries a bouquet of flowers.

BENNY, CARMINE and **ROBBIE** - three members of the mafia and
personal friends of Billy Russo. They enter the hospital.

INT. RECEPTION, HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The three men arrive at the RECEPTIONIST'S desk.

BENNY
Could you tell us where Billy
Russo is?

RECEPTIONIST
Of course. You are...?

BENNY
(smiles)
Kin.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The trio strides toward a room where a POLICEMAN is
watching.

As he sees the three approaching, the policeman rises from
his chair giving space to them to pass as if he knows them.

BENNY
Jay.

The Officer just nods. The three men enter the room and the
policeman returns to his chair.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Inside, Benny tosses the bouquet in the trash can. They stand side by side looking at something we don't know yet.

CARMINE
Jesus Christ. How is he still
alive?

ROBBIE
Billy is like his father, he can
handle anything.

BENNY
Billy, wake up.

REVERSE ANGLE REVEALS to us -

Billy Russo lying on his bed with his face completely bandaged, leaving only space for his mouth and eyes. From the glimpses we see of his skin, we notice that his situation is critical.

Gradually we see Billy's eyes opening and recognizing his friends inside.

RUSSO
Ben...ny.

BENNY
Yes. We came as soon as we knew.
You were very lucky in that
mansion.

CARMINE
You were one of the few survivors.

BENNY
Tell us who did it. Have you seen
the bastards?

ROBBIE
Was it the Costas, Billy? We all
know that they are not reliable.

Russo shakes his head, no.

CARMINE
The Costas would have more
decency.

BENNY
Was it some independent group?
Newbies? Anything can help us.

Billy raises his index finger.

BENNY (CONT'D)
Would that be... ten?

RUSSO
No. Just one.

The other three exchange glances. Billy must be crazy.

BENNY
You should still be stunned, think
a little more about what happened
and --

RUSSO
(cutting in)
I said it was just one. One
fucking man.
(beat)
Castle.

ROBBIE
Who?

CARMINE
That guy who punishes criminals. I
thought he'd already died in some
alley a long time ago.

BENNY
This is ridiculous. We are not
sure if it was him.

RUSSO
I was there! And he was in front
of me.
(re: his face)
He did this to me.

ROBBIE
That's it? Let's hunt an army of
one man?

CARMINE
This will be interesting.

RUSSO
Benny...

Benny approaches Billy.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
You need to get me out of here. I
want to kill the motherfucker
myself.

 BENNY
We'll take care of it, do not
worry.

The three leave the room.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

The car of the three friends runs through the city.

INT. UNMARKED CAR - NIGHT

Benny drives while Carmine sits in the passenger seat, and
Robbie in the back.

 ROBBIE
So, what will we do?

 CARMINE
We need to know the enemy better.
Know how he acts.

 BENNY
I agree. Robbie, call our police
contacts.

 ROBBIE
For what?

 BENNY
I want everything about the
slaughter at the mansion. Maybe
there's something there to help us
against the bastard.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Castle's van is in its place as before.

INT. CASTLE'S VAN, ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Castle is getting ready to leave. He picks up a pistol,
checks its ammunition and puts it on his belt. Then he
shuts his gun bag on the passenger seat.

Before leaving completely, he opens the sun visor taking back the photo of his family and keep it in his jacket.

Then he leaves.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Establishing. A seedy looking bar. It's almost possible to smell urine and vomit prowling there.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE BAR - NIGHT

A man steps through the back door. He is Castle's INFORMANT.

Completely drunk he staggers leaning against the wall of the alley while holds a bottle of drink.

He stops for a moment and puts the bottle on top of a dumpster as he looks for something in his pockets, but having difficulty.

The informant finally finds the keys to his car.

When he tries to pick up the bottle, he bumps his hand into it by knocking it from the dumpster. The bottle is about to break on the floor when...

... a hand catches it a few inches before hitting the ground. Castle.

INFORMANT

You always startle me, Mr. Smith.
Came for more...

(sobs)

... information? From what I heard
you enjoyed that party.

CASTLE

No. You already gave me what I
need.

INFORMANT

What about what I need?

Castle pulls out a handful of five hundred dollars in his pocket and gives it to the informant.

INFORMANT (CONT'D)

It's always good to deal with you,
Mr. Smith.

The poor man tries to get his bottle back but Castle don't let him.

CASTLE
You're not thinking of driving in that state, are you?

INFORMANT
What? Of course not! I just wanted to... finish what I started.

Castle smashes the bottle on the wall.

CASTLE
You already done.

Then he takes the informant's keys.

INFORMANT
Come on, I live far from here!

CASTLE
Great, so sleep here.

Castle starts to leave.

INFORMANT
Wait -- If you give me the keys, I'll give you more addresses.

CASTLE
No need. They will come after me now.

CUT TO:

A CNN-TYPE BROADCAST. The ANCHORMAN speaks.

ANCHORMAN
-- after the terrible massacre in Massimo Cesare's estate, today will be the burial of family members and friends murdered.

Behind him, photos of the cemetery where the funeral will take place.

ANCHORMAN (CONT'D)
The Cesare family was suspected of having relations with the Mafia. Police suspect a possible settlement.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

WIDE ON: Men, women and children wearing black fill the place.

CUT TO CLOSE ON A TOMBSTONE which reads: "Massimo Giovani Cesare, beloved father and husband."

A PRIEST prays at the side of the tomb while Massimo's relatives weep hearing those words.

Among these people we notice Carllota, her wrist bandaged without her hand.

LATER:

Most of the people are gone. Three gangsters stand in front of Cesare's tombstone.

GANGSTER #1

I've said it once and I'll say it again: we cannot leave it alone or we'll continue to bury more of our people here.

GANGSTER #2

They say that it's the Punisher causing all this turmoil. He must have some staff somewhere.

GANGSTER #1

This is not the only problem. The old man is dead. Who's going to be in charge now?

GANGSTER #3

Everyone believes it would be Russo because of his father's close relationship with Massimo. But he was also in the mansion that night, so...

GANGSTER #1

He's alive.

The others are taken aback.

GANGSTER #2

What? How?

GANGSTER #1

From what I knew, he was on the verge of death, spitting his own blood. Maybe the Punisher thought he killed him.

GANGSTER #3
Lucky son of a bitch.

GANGSTER #2
Should we consider him as part of
the team?

GANGSTER #1
That idiot of Russo is nothing but
a bourgeois who wants to rule
everything!

GANGSTER #3
What do you suggest? Let's kill
him?

GANGSTER #1
That too, but first let's resolve
everything else more important.

EXT. ENTRANCE GATES, CEMETERY - DAY

An old van enters the cemetery in contrast to all those
luxury vehicles around.

We've seen this van before and we know who it belongs to.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Back at the three gangsters. As they talk, Carlotta joins
them.

Silence.

She stares at her husband's tombstone with a cold, widowed
look for revenge.

CARLLOTA
I want him dead. I want the
Punisher's head on a fucking
stake.

GANGSTER #1
We're working on it, Carlotta.
(to Gangster #3)
What do we know about him?

GANGSTER #3
He's a lunatic who has no contacts
with anyone, who is not on the
map. He just... hunt.

ON THE VAN -

Moving slowly through the graveyard. The windows are dark, no one can see who is inside.

Its acceleration is gradually decreasing.

ON CARLLOTA AND THE GANGSTERS -

GANGSTER #1
Has anyone ever tried bribery or anything?

GANGSTER #2
He doesn't seem to be the type to do business.

ON THE VAN -

Stopped. Moments later the driver's window begins to descend.

ON CARLLOTA AND THE GANGSTERS -

CARLLOTA
I don't care who he is or what he does, but he's still a man and there must be a way to kill him!

ON THE VAN -

Now we see Castle aiming a GRENADE LAUNCHER through the window toward the tombstones.

Then he FIRES.

ON CARLLOTA AND THE GANGSTERS -

As they notice something approaching.

GANGSTER #1
What hell...?

AT THAT MOMENT -

- KA-BOOM! That shot explodes right in the middle of Carlotta and the gangsters swallowing them in a flaming dome.

The whole cemetery had turned into chaos soon after.

While everyone runs for their lives, Castle keeps the grenade launcher and steers quietly out of there.

ROTH
(pre-lap)
A funeral?

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - DAY

Eliza and Roth watch the news about the cemetery attack. Micro stands in front of the window gazing the city.

ROTH

What was he planning to do? Kill the dead the second time?

(turns to Micro)

How could you be friends with such a guy?

ELIZA

(admired)

With such a man, I would be more than a friend.

Roth shoots a look at her.

MICRO

He's just holding the pressure. Leaving the bosses scared.

ELIZA

And what will be his next move? Going to hell to kill the spirits?

MICRO

He wants everyone to know that he will not run away. Will not give up. He will always be there.

ROTH

Are you going to pray on his altar too, fat boy?

Micro reacts.

MICRO

You want to say something else, Roth?

Eliza rolls her eyes, she already imagines what is to come.

ELIZA

Here we go.

ROTH

We're here to catch Castle, but all you've done in the last few weeks has been describing his routine! Do you know when he goes to the bathroom too?

ELIZA
 Forgot your stress remedy again?

ROTH
 It's not your fucking business!
 (to Micro)
 While our target massacres
 gangsters all over New York, we
 stand here and watch everything in
 the stateroom. I'm beginning to
 think you can not handle it.

Micro remains serene.

MICRO
 You done?

ROTH
 Yeah... I think so.

MICRO
 Good.

Suddenly Micro uses a judo stroke on Roth without him having time to react, slamming his face on the coffee table.

Micro is about to break Roth's arm. Eliza watches everything enjoying it.

ROTH
 You madman! What do you think
 you're doing?!

MICRO
 Now you're going to listen to me,
 Mr. Galway, got it?

Roth shakes his head yes, but Micro twists Roth's arm a little more, making him moan in pain.

MICRO (CONT'D)
 We're still good, you know? Castle
 not only killed you because he was
 busy with more significant people.

Roth tries to get up, but Micro presses him again on the glass table.

MICRO (CONT'D)
 And first of all, my name is
 Micro, not fat boy. And then, I
 helped Castle kill over 800 people
 during eight years of work.
 (MORE)

MICRO (CONT'D)

The only ones who knew him from that time are dead.

ROTH

You're gonna break my arm, you shit!

MICRO

I invaded computers, adapted guns, discovered secret sites... I turned that lonely man into a deadly war machine.

(leans to Roth)

If you think I'm scared, yes, I am. So I must act with double caution.

Micro finally releases Roth. Roth falls to the floor massaging his sore arm. Micro heads off toward his office.

MICRO (CONT'D)

Prepare your things, let's act soon.

Micro leaves leaving Eliza and Roth alone.

ELIZA

You have to admit, it was a hell of a sermon.

ROTH

Shut up.

EXT. RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - DAY

A luxurious residence in the city center.

INT. RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - DAY

A beautiful bespoke kitchen/living room. Outside, an incredible view of Manhattan.

Sitting in his chair is Billy, seemingly recovered, but with his head fully bandaged. Those strips hide something terrible over there.

While Billy watches the news about the killing in the cemetery, he takes four pills of a medicine in his hand.

He swallows at once.

Whatever they serve, it makes Russo squirm momentarily in pain. Moments later Benny, Carmine and Robbie enter.

BENNY

Billy... are you awake?

RUSSO

Do you see me in some goddamn bed?

CARMINE

Castle is erasing all the remaining guys. He didn't even let Cesare rest in his own pit.

(beat)

In my time, even the criminals had a little of respect.

RUSSO

I know. I saw the news.

ROBBIE

If he finds out that you are still alive, he will come to kill you... all of us.

RUSSO

I know! No need to remind me of obvious shit!

BENNY

What are you suggesting we do, boss?

Russo gets up from his chair, still feeling some of the effects of the medicine.

RUSSO

Let's get Castle before he catches us.

ROBBIE

But we do not even know where he is.

RUSSO

That's why I want you to spread it out: a million dollars for anyone to find Castle.

BENNY

Everyone?

RUSSO

EVERYONE! Everyone we have contact with! Even a beggar under the bridge! I want everyone to know that, right?!

Billy turns to face the city through his window.

A beat.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

Now leave.

Without a word, Russo's three men walk out the room leaving him alone. He walks to the mirror on the wall and looks at his own reflection.

Russo lightly touches the bands on his face fearing what he might find beneath them.

Afraid, Russo unfolds a little of the strip showing only a glimpse of his forehead - a different colored skin with a protruding seam.

In fear, he puts the band back and walks away from the mirror.

INT. CASTLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Every inch of the table is filled with weapons and ammunition. Castle has been reorganizing all of them for quite some time.

Nailed to the wall just above him, a huge pyramid arrangement of pictures. The lower ones - less important gangsters, some of whom we've seen die. At the top is old Massimo Cesare.

CASTLE (V.O.)

Alberto Cavella: member of the Italian mafia. Dead: explosion wounds.

In the pyramid, one of the gangsters in the funeral.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Ezio Auditore: Italian trafficker. Dead: explosion wounds.

Another photo of another cemetery gangster.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Mikhail Arinov: member of the
 Russian mafia. Dead: explosion
 wounds.

And we see the third gangster on the mural. Castle picks up a small piece of newspaper and glue next to those three men.

REVEAL a picture of Carllota cut out from the newspaper.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Carllota Cesare: Massimo Cesare's
 wife. Dead: explosion wounds.

INT. LT. LAWTON'S OFFICE, N.Y.P.D. - DAY

The phone rings and Lawton answers.

LAWTON
 Yes?
 (beat)
 Hey Hey! Calm down, what's going
 on?

INT. UNMARKED CAR - INTERCUTTING

Benny drives through the city streets while talking to Lawton on his cell phone. The other two are also together.

BENNY
 We do not have time, Lawton. Billy
 is freaking out, and if I falter,
 you wreck too!

LAWTON
 Is he already active? I thought he
 could not even talk anymore.

BENNY
 Yeah, but he's not just talking
 but he wants to kill the Punisher
 too.

LAWTON
 What? And how does he plan to do
 such a thing?

BENNY
 That's where you come in. I want
 you to have each officer go after
 him.

LAWTON

What? I cannot do such a thing!
I've always cleaned the Russo
family, but that does not mean
they can interfere with my
district.

BENNY

After Castle broke him, Billy is
acting mindless, so if I were you,
I would not make him nervous.

Lawton rubs the back of his neck in anguish.

LAWTON

If I get the bastard, I'll have to
get him to the maximum security
penitentiary, understand? The
Russo boy will not be able to
touch him!

BENNY

Okay, okay! So find him and let us
know the location, Billy will want
to kill him in person.

LAWTON

I don't know how it works in your
crime world, but here in the real
world there is bureaucracy.

BENNY

That's why we paid you to cheat on
it. Find Castle and let us know.

LAWTON

But --

Benny sudden hangs up the phone.

CARMINE

Do you think Lawton can handle it?

BENNY

Probably not, but if Billy said
everyone, let's put everyone.

INT. SOAP'S OFFICE, N.Y.P.D. - DAY

Soap is at his tedious job when a police officer opens the
door to the office.

POLICE OFFICER
Hey Soap. The lieutenant wants
you.

SOAP
For what?

POLICE OFFICER
I don't care.

INT. LT. LAWTON'S OFFICE, N.Y.P.D. - DAY

Soap stands before Lawton at his desk.

LAWTON
You've spent the last few years
trying to find th Punisher, right?
I heard you even met him at that
time.

SOAP
That's true, he broke my nose at
that time.

LAWTON
(disinterested)
Okay, okay. Let's suppose so.

SOAP
But --

LAWTON
What do you say about officially
hunting him now?

Soap is blown away.

SOAP
What?

LAWTON
I'm talking about a task force
specializing in getting Castle
with you leading.

Soap stares, incredulous.

SOAP
Is that serious?

LAWTON
Dead serious.

SOAP
 (excited)
 This is amazing! But why did you
 choose me? I thought you didn't
 trust me.

LAWTON
 You know most of the staff here
 support the Punisher, and you've
 studied him longer than anyone in
 town. You're the right person.

SOAP
 Wait -- If no one wants to go
 after Castle, how am I going to
 make a team?

LAWTON
 How does that saying...?
 (tries to remember)
 You travel faster if you travel
 alone, right?

Almost all the excitement of Soap disappears in a blink.

LAWTON (CONT'D)
 Now get to work, hurry up.

Soap hangs his head and heads off.

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - DAY

Micro leaves his office talking on the phone, nervous.

MICRO
 -- I already said that I do not
 know.
 (beat)
 Do you doubt me? After all this
 time we've negotiated together?

He waits for the answer on the other side. Roth and Eliza
 just watch.

MICRO (CONT'D)
 Go fuck yourself! Without me, you
 would not have half of that money!

Micro shuts off the phone.

ELIZA
 As anyone discovered your love
 affair with Castle?

MICRO

This is no time for this. Let's do the job today.

ROTH

Finally.

MICRO

Hurry, before I regret that decision.

EXT. BACK ALLEY, HOTEL - DAY

A line of high-end AUTOS dispenses well dressed GANGSTERS. **SHARK**, the leader, leads his men into the hotel.

INT. KITCHEN, HOTEL - DAY

Shark and his gang walk through a METAL DETECTOR manned by two Chinese.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, HOTEL - DAY

New York's most notorious GANGSTERS. All gathered around a rectangular table. Shark enters and joins them as his men stand in the corner of the room as security guards.

At the end of the table is **ANTHONY SOLOMON**, one of the heads of crime. Behind him, two men standing as his bodyguards.

SHARK

It's good that you have a good reason to meet in broad daylight, Solomon.

SOLOMON

The answer is in the papers.

Solomon pushes the newspaper along the table for everyone to see the headline that says: "Genocide among Gangsters!"

Some photos of the Cesare mansion and the destroyed cemetery.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

We're being hunted down one by one. And it will not be long before we get on the list of this newspaper.

CRIME BOSS #1

It's the guy who wears the skull
on his chest, right? Everyone just
talks about him.

SOLOMON

I do not care who he is, we just
need him in a fucking coffin.

SHARK

Is that why you brought us here?
To be friends and kill the guy?

SOLOMON

He will not handle an entire army.

CRIME BOSS #2

No? And old man's mansion?

SHARK

I don't need help. I can finish
him myself, alone.

CRIME BOSS #1

Are you lowering someone down
here, Shark?

SHARK

Glad you heard, I'd hate to
repeat.

Crime Boss #1 didn't like that arrogance. He rises
threatening to strike Shark.

SOLOMON

Sit down right where you are!

That voice causes a chill in the spine of the listener.
Without hesitation, Crime Boss #1 sits again.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

I do not care who kills anyone
among you, but here, in my city,
I'm in charge!

CRIME BOSS #2

Billy Russo spread that he was the
new head now.

SOLOMON

Is that idiot alive?

CRIME BOSS #1

He spread a reward for the
Punisher's head.

SHARK

Looks like things don't always go
the way we want, Fisk.

SOLOMON

Billy Russo died in that mansion
for me. All that was left was his
vague recollection.

RUSSO (O.S.)

I love you too, Solomon.

All eyes turn back as Billy walks into the room in an
elegant suit, but his face is still bandaged. Some of those
strips are stained with dried blood a few days.

RUSSO

But we need to clarify a few
things.

SHARK

The hell is this...?

RUSSO

(re: his face)

This, my friends, is proof that
Billy Russo does not give up
easily, even with the Punisher in
front of him.

Solomon chuckles, Billy looks at him seriously.

FISK

He just left you alive for pity.
Do you think you can take the
place of Massimo?

RUSSO

And who else would it be? You and
your fat ass?

Suddenly Solomon's sarcastic expression disappears and he
grabs Billy's throat in a swift move.

SOLOMON

The Punisher may have left you
alive, but I'm not the kind of
person who makes mistakes like
that.

RUSSO

I already imagined.

Then -

- An ARMED GROUP of Billy burst enters the room through each door aiming their machine guns at everyone inside.

The security guards of the mobsters don't have time to react. They are rendered under the eyes of others.

Solomon just glances at his surroundings. Without a choice, he loosens Billy's neck.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

Good boy.

WHAM! Billy punches Solomon's face by knocking him from his chair. Solomon's bodyguards try to act but the machine guns pointed at them don't allow it.

Blood runs down Solomon's nose, he barely believes in what's happening.

SOLOMON

Have you lost your mind?!

RUSSO

I'm no longer that child following
in the footsteps of his father,
Solomon.

Billy moves on Solomon and SMASHES him into the ground, POUNDING, pounding, pounding the gangster's head.

The others watch that grotesque scene, eyes wide, and hearing the sound of crushing bones.

In addition to the punches, Billy also grabs Solomon's head and slams it against the ground hard, until his skull cracks.

Blood flows down the floor. Solomon no longer shows any sign of life and Russo stands up, fists dirty with blood. He sits down on Solomon's chair.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

Well...

Russo takes the newspaper on the table and uses its leafs to wipe his hands.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

When I was on the verge of death,
I had a little... revelation in my
life.

Without much choice, the other gangsters listen to Billy.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

What I realized was: we will never get where we want without being able to overcome some obstacles. Massimo Cesare was the first; Solomon, the second, and now we have the Punisher.

SHARK

Let me guess... you want to kill him.

RUSSO

You got it, Shark. And for that, I need you to work for me... all of you.

No one reacts positively to that information.

CRIME BOSS #3

Are you out of your mind? Do you think you can come in like that suddenly and hire whoever you want?

RUSSO

Yes I do. Someone like Solomon or Cesare would easily die for the Punisher, for they are mind-biased in the past, when we could bribe whoever we wanted or erase from the map. Everything has changed today. And it's up to me to shape this new world.

CRIME BOSS #2

This is bullshit! I will not work with a madman like you.

Russo just SIGNALS and one of his men shoots the chest of Crime Boss #2 killing him right there.

RUSSO

Has everyone got the message now?

CRIME BOSS #1

We do not seem to have a choice, do we?

RUSSO

No, you don't.

SHARK

What you want?

RUSSO
Frank Castle dead.

EXT. CASTLE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Parked across the street from the front of the building,
the Roth and Eliza sedan.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Besides Roth and Eliza, Micro is also with them.

ROTH
Can not we just break into that
damn apartment?

MICRO
Do you plan to catch him with your
magnificence?

ELIZA
We should have expected
reinforcement.

MICRO
No. If we act the right way, it
will not be necessary.

INT. CASTLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Castle sets his HOLSTER.

CASTLE (V.O.)
Today is another one of those
days. The day when I shall know
better the pigs for slaughter.
Know how they act and think.

Then he takes his black jacket and wears it.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It will not be long until someone
takes the old man's place. And
when that happens...

Castle moves to the door...

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... I will dedicate myself
entirely to him.

... and go away.

EXT. CASTLE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Castle leaves his building walking normally along the sidewalk.

But at that moment he hears a sound that makes him freeze for a few seconds.

MICRO (O.S.)
Hello, Frank.

That voice. Castle turns back and finds Micro facing him.

MICRO
I suppose you're surprised.

A beat. Mind churning on in each one's head.

Then Castle decides to take the pistol in his holster, but...

... Micro is faster and draws a SHOTGUN firing immediately into Castle's chest, knocking him back in the ground.

Full of pain, Castle tries to get up by leaning on a car and getting on his knees.

CASTLE'S POV: He glares at the barrel of the shotgun directly at him.

MICRO (CONT'D)
Forgive me.

As Micro fires -

SNAP TO A BLACK SCREEN.

Sudden silence.

Then we began to hear distressed voices, like distant echoes.

FEMALE VOICE
Frank... FRANK!!

Then the voice of a young girl:

LITTLE GIRL
DADDY!

And - BANG! - a shot shuts those voices.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Castle, hanging head, just wearing a tank top and pants, without any weapon. Sitting in a chair with his wrists handcuffed behind.

HOLD on him a while.

Then he starts to wake up, disoriented and a little dizzy. Castle looks around trying to identify where he is, but it's just a dark, empty room with no windows and only a door.

Moments later Micro enters. He sits face-to-face with Castle with a table separating the two.

MICRO

I think it's time for some explanations, Frank.

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Roth has his ear pressed against the door trying to hear something. Eliza watches TV.

ELIZA

So...?

ROTH

Nothing yet. Either they're talking low or they said nothing.

Roth joins Eliza on the couch.

ROTH (CONT'D)

Do you think he'll take it?

ELIZA

Sincerely? He doesn't look like the kind of man who is easily convinced.

ROTH

He and the fat boy were close. Maybe he'll convince him somehow.

ELIZA

As I said before, Roth, your naivety may be a problem in the future.

ROTH

Are you always against me?

ELIZA
Only when I'm bored.

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Micro pulls out of his pocket shotgun rubber bullets and puts it on the table for Castle to see.

MICRO
Stunning bullets. Or rubber bullets, if you prefer to call them that. I'm sorry for the second shot, but you were still standing with the first.

Castle remains silent.

MICRO (CONT'D)
Look, we do not have much time, so I'll be brief.
(beat)
You need to stop this madness, Frank. Believe it or not, this is for your own good.

Micro places two photos on the table. Castle flinches for a moment.

REVEAL photos of MARIA AND LISA CASTLE.

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Eliza continues to watch TV while Roth fills a glass of drink.

ELIZA
Oh shit.

ROTH
What now?

ELIZA
Look.

Roth approaches and watches. Eliza increases the sound of TV.

TV VOICE
-- also known as the Punisher, was arrested this afternoon in a quiet neighborhood of Brooklyn.
(MORE)

TV VOICE (CONT'D)
 Police say Castle has been held in
 custody pending intense
 interrogation.

ROTH
 Who released this shit?

TV VOICE
 A local resident says he witnessed
 the last moments of the
 vigilante's arrest...

ON TV: An OLD MAN gives an interview to a reporter.

OLD MAN (ON SCREEN)
 I heard the shots from my room. I
 thought it would be those gangs
 fighting again, but when I looked
 out the window, I saw three men
 and one woman putting that man
 with the skull in his chest inside
 a car...

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Carmine and Robbie play snooker. Benny's at the counter,
 drinking. It's at this point that he looks at the TV and
 sees the old man's interview about Castle.

The bartender stretches his arm to change channels.

BENNY
 Touch this button and I'll rip
 your hand out.

Scared, the bartender walks away. Benny pays attention to
 the news.

OLD MAN (ON SCREEN)
 ... and then they took him away.
 I'm glad men like him are in their
 proper place.

Benny goes back to his comrades.

BENNY
 Get your things, we're out.

Then he picks up his phone and dials a number.

BENNY (CONT'D)
 Billy, you're going to want to
 know that.

INT. LT. LAWTON'S OFFICE, N.Y.P.D - NIGHT

Lawton smokes his cigar quietly until Soap enters euphorically.

SOAP
Sir, is it true?
(off Lawton's stare)
Did we get Castle?

LAWTON
What?

SOAP
I am in charge of arresting him,
as you said yourself. So how can
they have --

LAWTON
Hey! Calm down.

Soap controls his emotions.

LAWTON (CONT'D)
Nobody here took the Punisher, as
the newspapers say.

SOAP
What? So why did they disclose
that information?

LAWTON
This is how the world works, Soap.
People want to walk quietly on the
streets without thinking there's a
lunatic on the streets shooting at
anyone they want.

SOAP
Are you going to fool the city
with this lie?

LAWTON
Why not?

Soap thinks a moment.

SOAP
So who's with Castle?

LAWTON
And I don't know, what matters is
that we lose this great weight on
our backs.

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Eliza and Roth are getting ready to leave.

ROTH
You stay here.

ELIZA
What?

ROTH
If the fat boy comes out of that room and does not see anyone, he's probably going to break my arm for real next time.

ELIZA
We will not be long.

ROTH
I'll take care of it... alone.

Despite not liking it, Eliza returns to the couch. Roth leaves.

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Frank only has eyes for the photos.

CASTLE
Take these pictures out of my face.

MICRO
Their death took you to the limit, Frank, and I don't blame you for it, you know I lost a son too. But... you're using your family as an excuse to keep killing.

CASTLE
(grim)
Take the pictures out of here now or you'll have to kill me soon... for your own good.

Micro collects photos.

MICRO
I still think you're human, so I saved you. And for being friends, I think.

CASTLE
You saved me?

MICRO
Yes, because you caused a great uproar in the world of crime with your show in the mansion. It was a great domino effect, and only worsened with his presence at a funeral.

CASTLE
You know how I act.

MICRO
And so every damn criminal wants your head. Even the crazy Billy Russo you left alive.

Castle reacts.

CASTLE
He should not be alive.

MICRO
He is and spread a reward for your head.

CASTLE
Let them come. I'll be waiting.

MICRO
Jesus, Frank ... you cannot win everything. I don't know if you're overexcited or crazy, but it will not have a happy ending.

CASTLE
So that's why you gave up... could not you see a happy ending in the end?

MICRO
I had other reasons. You were not the best boss in the world. I needed to survive, and for that I would need money.

CASTLE
And then you went to use your services to the other side.

MICRO
Did you know?

CASTLE

75%.

Micro tries to continue his reasoning.

MICRO

Well... what I'm trying to say is
-- I have an opportunity to make
you stop being the Punisher
forever.

Off Castle's stare:

INT. CORRIDOR, APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Roth knocks on the door. Moments later, the old man who gave the TV interview opens.

OLD MAN

Yes?

ROTH

Hi, my name is Roth Galway and I
came to ask you some questions.

The old man looks suspicious.

OLD MAN

Are you a cop?

ROTH

Yes. Listen, sir, I do not have
much time. If you want I'll show
you my badge when I come in.

But the old man shuts the door on Roth's face, ignoring him completely.

ROTH (CONT'D)

Hey, you can't do it with me! Open
this damn door!

Roth slams the door several times but in vain. Then three shadows cover him from behind. Roth turns to face Benny, Carmine, and Robbie.

BENNY

How about you talk to me, Mr.
Galway? It seems like you know of
some things.

Carmine HITS Roth's face hard, making him fall to the ground, fainting.

BENNY (CONT'D)
Let's take him.

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Micro continues.

MICRO
I know you must be thinking this must be some kind of trap, but it's not. I'm being honest with you.

Silence.

MICRO (CONT'D)
How about hunting down terrorists? Paramilitary groups? Mercenaries? People who cause great harm to the world, not those little fish of a city.
(beat)
I'm talking about getting the real monsters.

Castle avoids answers.

MICRO (CONT'D)
There are two CIA agents outside this room just waiting for your decision. Use all the government apparatus with this... thing inside you.

CASTLE
Is that what you suggest? Become one of the government puppets?

MICRO
I made the demands myself, Frank. You would act alone, choose the equipment you wanted, plan every move, and nobody would know of your existence.
(sighs)
It was like I said, Frank, I'm trying to help you. What do you say?

INT. UNMARKED CAR - NIGHT

Benny drives with Carmine in the next seat. Roth is in the backseat, sweating in nervousness between Robbie and Russo.

Russo pulls his medicine bottle and takes two more pills, squirming like that time. Roth just gets more nervous about it.

RUSSO

Let's try to be brief, Mr. Galway.
We're strolling around the block,
and when we're done, I want to
know everything I ask.

Roth shakes his head quickly.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

If you're a police officer, why
would you investigate that old man
if you're supposed to have the
prisoner himself?

ROTH

Well... I just... I think...

RUSSO

And you know what's most curious?
You have no police badge. That
intrigues me a lot.

ROTH

L-Look, I can explain --

Russo picks up his pocketknife and shows it to Roth.

RUSSO

Sorry, did I bother you?

ROTH

I do not know what you're
thinking, but please, leave me...

RUSSO

Robbie, the arms.

Robbie grabs Roth's arms to keep him from moving too much.

ROTH

No -- wait!

RUSSO

Easy, don't move too much or I can
kill you by accident.

Before we know what Billy will do with that pocketknife -

CUT TO:

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Micro still waiting for Frank's answer about his proposal.

CASTLE

You want to know what I think
about everything you said, Micro?

(leans)

Put all these words deep in your
fat ass.

Micro sighs regaining his patience.

MICRO

Why? It would be like in the old
days, Frank, but with more
resources.

CASTLE

I do not work with anyone,
especially if you have relations
with the government.

MICRO

I think you're not thinking right
about it...

CASTLE

No, I thought about that very
well. To fight for the people who
rule the world is the same as
carrying a dagger in the back.

MICRO

Frank, please --

CASTLE

You fight their wars, kill the
monsters they create and after
all, you get the sequels and they
with the money.

MICRO

It's not how it works. We're
talking about the CIA.

CASTLE

Some people in Washington would
disagree with that. But it will be
difficult for them to speak out,
for all they have left is a name
on a black wall.

MICRO

Do not you understand the gravity
of it all? You have no way out!

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The unmarked car stops in front of the alley. We see everything from afar.

RUSSO

(inside the car)

Thank you for your cooperation,
Mr. Galway.

A door opens and Roth is thrown to the ground - moaning in pain and bleeding heavily in the middle of his legs.

The car accelerates from there, leaving Roth alone on the ground. Seeing more closely, we realize that the thing was more serious.

Roth is pale, blood streaming down his pelvis all over his pants and dirtying the asphalt. Only by that image can we imagine why he's like that.

ROTH

(weak)

Somebody... help me...

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Castle remains unshaken. Micro scrubs his head, indignantly.

MICRO

Frank... I want you to keep in mind that if they can't use you, they will not let you out there.

CASTLE

Apparently my choices were: yes or for sure.

MICRO

Basically.

CASTLE

But you already know my answer. If you want, you can add a bonus message: go to hell.

INT. SOAP'S CAR - NIGHT

While Soap drives he constantly checks an address on his cell phone.

SOAP
All right.

However, when his attention returns to the street, Soap comes across something.

SOAP (CONT'D)
Jesus!

He slams the brakes - the tires burn on the asphalt stopping before he hit ROTH, crawling on the street.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

Quickly Soap gets out of his car and rushes to succor Roth.

SOAP
You okay?!
(notes the blood)
Oh my God.

ROTH
Please...

INT. UNMARKED CAR - NIGHT

Russo and the gangsters prepare their weapons.

RUSSO
And to think that I trusted that fat traitor.

CARMINE
Is not it better we call reinforcements?

RUSSO
For what? The Punisher is alone there besides the fat man.

CARMINE
Exactly, he's still there.

Billy pauses and thinks.

Fine. Then he picks up his phone and starts calling.

INT. SOAP'S CAR - NIGHT

Racing across the streets, Soap makes his way hastily and nervously.

SOAP
Stay calm! Stay calm!

Bleeding and suffering lying in the back seat, Roth pulls a cell phone from his pocket.

ROTH
O'Brien... O'Brien... you need to warn her.

SOAP
Who is she?

ROTH
Say Billy Russo is coming.

That captures Soap's attention immediately.

EXT. HOTEL CLAUDE - NIGHT

Shark is already waiting with a small group. Russo and the others arrive moments later.

SHARK
Are you sure he's here? It does not seem like a hiding place.

RUSSO
I have my sources.

Before entering, Shark pulls Billy by the arm.

SHARK
Listen, Russo, if he's not in there, we're going to have a lot of trouble with the police, and that would not be good for business.

RUSSO
You're very nervous, Shark. Calm down and take your filthy hand off me.

Shark loosens Russo.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
 If you're scared, stay down here
 watching, but I want some of your
 men for support.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Soap brakes his car abruptly. He gets out of the vehicle
 and sees two nurses outside.

SOAP
 (shouts)
 Here! I need help!

Soap opens the back door and leans to Roth.

SOAP (CONT'D)
 Hey, I need your help. Where's
 Russo going?

All that Roth responds to are painful groans.

SOAP (CONT'D)
 Come on, try.

ROTH
 Hotel... Claude.

SOAP
 Okay -- right.

The two nurses arrive shortly thereafter and see Roth
 bleeding there. Without thinking twice, they begin to take
 him to the hospital.

INT. LOBBY, HOTEL CLAUDE - NIGHT

A serene environment with some people - sitting, talking,
 texting.

Then Russo enters leading his little squad through the
 lobby. All eyes focus on him as he passes. We see the
 frightened expressions of civilians seeing that sinister
 figure with bands on his head.

The HOTEL SECURITY suspects those guys and accosts them.

HOTEL SECURITY
 I'm sorry but I'll have to see
 your ID.

Billy and the others stop. When it looks like he will
 obey...

... Russo draws a PISTOL and kills the guard. All other people get panicked but the gangsters aim their guns at them.

RUSSO
I hope no one else will try any
heroic act.

Russo points to two Shark's men.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
You two watch each one of them. If
someone make a bad move you don't
like, shoot to kill.

The two men stay in the lobby while Russo and the rest enter the elevator.

INT. SOAP'S CAR - NIGHT

While driving, Soap tries to call Eliza using Roth's cell phone.

SOAP
Come on... come on...

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Eliza's cell phone vibrates on the coffee table. She notices and answers.

ELIZA
What the hell, Galway, did you go
take a drink with the old man?

SOAP (ON PHONE)
Ah... hello...?

ELIZA
Who are you?

SOAP (ON PHONE)
Well, I --

ELIZA
Why do you have Roth's cell phone?
Who the fuck are you?!

SOAP (ON PHONE)
I am -- you are O'Brien, right?

ELIZA
Who wants to know? Identify
yourself!

INT. CORRIDOR, HOTEL CLAUDE - NIGHT

The elevator doors open and Russo steps out into the hallway followed by his gang. They wield their guns as they walk.

INT. SOAP'S CAR - NIGHT

Soap tries to control his nervousness.

SOAP
(into phone)
This is Martin So -- Detective
Martin Soap, I've taken care of
your friend. But no... like that,
you know, I took him to a
hospital, that's all.

ELIZA (ON PHONE)
What the hell are you talking
about?

SOAP
Whoever is with you there, needs
to leave now!

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Eliza remains confused.

SOAP (ON PHONE)
Billy Russo is about to get there!

Now Soap has her attention.

ELIZA
What?

Eliza turns to the front door of the room and sees SHADOWS moving behind it.

ELIZA (CONT'D)
Oh shit --

Then Russo CRASHES the door.

At that moment, Eliza leaps to the back of the couch taking cover.

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - SAME

They both hear the noise outside.

MICRO
What was that?

CASTLE
Looks like you have visitors.

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Russo and six more men invade the place. They look around but cannot find anyone.

WE PULL BACK TO - Eliza, hiding behind the couch taking her Glock without making noise.

The gang spreads through the environment, scouring.

CLOSE ON A SHARK'S GANGSTER: As he rolls his eyes through a bookcase - BANG! A shot rips his jaw.

He drops to the ground and the other thugs come on the alert. Eliza fires at them behind the sofa, catching them by surprise.

RUSSO
Take cover!

Carmine and Billy run to the back of the kitchen counter. Benny, Robbie and the others scatter the room and protect themselves.

In a matter of seconds the place becomes a shooting range.

The penthouse is being damaged every second with the bullets flying from side to side.

Eliza shrinks behind the couch as the bullets pass through the furniture a few inches from her.

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Everything the two men hear are bursts of insatiable shots from the outside.

CASTLE
Do you have any weapons here?

MICRO
With you in this room? I'm not crazy yet.

CASTLE
So you need to break me.

Micro shoots him a look. Seriously?

CASTLE (CONT'D)
Sooner or later they'll come in
and something tells me they are
not friendly people out there.

Micro pauses, he doesn't know what to do.

While Micro gets into an internal conflict, Castle looks
around the room looking for something that might help.
Anything.

Then he spots - A FIRE EXTINGUISHER.

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

The couch is almost all pierced. Eliza resists reloading
another comb on her gun.

ON RUSSO AND CARMINE -

Also reloading their weapons behind the counter.

RUSSO
We know he's here and you're in
lesser numbers! Be a good girl and
maybe I'll kill you painlessly.

BACK ON ELIZA -

She ignores the proposal.

ELIZA
(to herself)
Kiss my ass, motherfucker.

Lying on the floor, Eliza shoots under the couch on the
legs of another thug, knocking him to the ground, screaming
in pain.

Another man down. Russo is losing his patience.

RUSSO
(shouts, indignant)
Someone kill that bitch!

Now Eliza is in the lead, she shoots over the sofa,
destroying Micro's home more and more.

TIGHT ON Carmine, eyes closed and concentrated. The shots of Eliza cease followed by a CLICK. No bullets.

CARMINE

Now!

Carmine steps out from behind the counter and heads toward Eliza.

Eliza has no time to reload her gun. She runs away from the couch as Carmine fires.

The bullets shatter the windows and some furniture. Eliza leaps to the back of a pilaster, narrowly escaping.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

Come on, get out of there, love. I don't bite.

ROBBIE

Kill her, Carmine!

Carmine walks slowly to the pilaster while he "playful" shoots at it, just to scare Eliza.

After several shots he is forced to reload the weapon. This was the moment Eliza had been waiting for. She leaves her cover aiming her pistol at Carmine. He raises his hands, surrendered.

BANG! BANG!

Two shots that does not come from Eliza or Carmine. She looks at her belly and sees blood dripping. A lot.

She collapses on the ground revealing Russo behind her, with the gun barrel smoking.

Even weak and on the verge of death, Eliza tries to reach her pistol but Carmine approaches and kicks the gun away. He aims at her head. Eliza closes her eyes already waiting for her fate.

RUSSO

No.

(off Carmine's stare)

Let the bitch slowly die on the floor. It will be worse.

CARMINE

As you wish, Billy.

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Micro moves behind Castle trying to get him out of there.

BLAM! Russo breaks the door and walks in there with Carmine, Robbie and Benny.

RUSSO
Now the main prize of the night.

EXT. HOTEL CLAUDE - NIGHT

Soap parks his car a little far from the hotel after seeing Shark and his men standing nearby. Not a good sign.

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Micro raises his hands to show that he's rendered. Castle shows no fear.

RUSSO
We need to have a good
conversation, do not we Micro?
(to Robbie)
Chair.

Robbie leaves.

MICRO
Let's stay calm, Billy.

Robbie enters the room with a chair. Billy sits facing the other two.

RUSSO
(to his gang)
Now get out. All of you.

BENNY
Are you sure? I think it's better
--

RUSSO
I told you to leave! I'm the boss
now, aren't I? You obey me, damn
it!

Startled, the three move out leaving Russo alone with Micro and Castle.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
Finally we are alone. Sit down,
Micro.

Micro sits on his chair.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

If I remember correctly, when I called you, I heard you say, "No, I don't know where he is." And when I come here, I have a pleasant surprise.

MICRO

I have priorities, Russo.

RUSSO

You know, when I heard the rumors that you and the Punisher were together, I doubted. I thought, "how would a mass murderer allude to a guy like that?"

MICRO

Destiny's irony.

RUSSO

But I started to think differently when you started negotiating with us... to make us rich. I underestimated you at first, I admit.

CLOSE ON CASTLE'S HANDS: Trying to unlock the cuffs with caution, silent.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

But tell me, Micro, did you help him from the beginning? Did you take him to Cesare's mansion?

MICRO

No --

Russo interrupts Micro by firing at the ceiling suddenly.

RUSSO

Do not lie to me!
(aims Micro)
Did he send you to our organization like a fucking spy?

MICRO

No! I told you, I just wanted to get off the battlefield!

CASTLE

And failed miserably.

RUSSO
 (to Castle)
Shut up. Soon it will be your
turn.

Castle is silent but not at all intimidated, he's concentrating on the handcuffs. Russo back to Micro.

 MICRO
We can still work this out, Billy.
Let me persuade Castle to...
disappear from our lives. Just be
a ghost.

Billy laughs sarcastically looking a little crazy.

 RUSSO
It's not how it works. Your friend
changed everything. I told myself
that I was going to put an end in
the Punisher, and I was not
talking about isolating him from
the city.

Billy gets up from the chair and approaches Micro.

 RUSSO (CONT'D)
Everyone fears the Punisher.
Imagine what would happen to the
person who killed him and exhibit
his body as an example.

 MICRO
So that's how you treat it all?
Like a power game?

 RUSSO
It's always a power game! One
moment, the Russians are in power,
at another time, there are the
Irish. It's always like this, and
only those who struggle to stay
survive.

Russo points his pistol at Micro's forehead. Castle realizes he has to hurry.

 RUSSO (CONT'D)
And guess what, Micro, you did not
fight enough.

Billy's finger is about to pull the trigger. Micro closes his eyes, just waiting. The tension increases.

ON CASTLE'S HANDS, he finally UNLOCKS the handcuff. But at that moment -

- Russo gives up shooting. Castle cancels his attack plan.

 RUSSO (CONT'D)
Not yet. Thanks to you...
 (re: Castle)
... the puppy is on the leash.
That gives you a living bonus.
Temporarily.

Russo takes a step closer to Castle.

 RUSSO (CONT'D)
And you...

He leans the gun barrel at Castle's forehead. Frank does not take his eyes off Russo in a second.

 RUSSO (CONT'D)
... I'm thinking better of what to
do with you.

 CASTLE
Think fast or I'll end up breaking
one of your fingers. Maybe more
than one.

 RUSSO
That's self-confidence! If I had
ten men like you, I would do a lot
of damage where I wanted to.

ON CASTLE'S HANDS, loosening the cuffs a little more.

 RUSSO (CONT'D)
You should have guaranteed my
death in that mansion, Castle, for
this day would come. I knew it
would come, and so did you.

 CASTLE
I think so.

 RUSSO
But now things have reversed, I'm
with the gun now and you, about to
take the shot.

Micro notices the movement in Castle's hands. A thread of hope.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

But first, I want you to know who really defeated you. Who broke the legend of the Punisher... the man behind the strips.

Still aiming at Castle, Russo uses his other hand to unroll the bands in his head. We see mixed dry and fresh blood.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

Sometimes I wish you had killed me so I could end the pain.

The top of the head is completely untied, Castle and Micro may have a sense of what will come next.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

The doctor gave me medicine to stop the pain, but it never goes away completely. He said that if I exaggerated doses, my psychological state could have some... change.

(chuckles, looking
crazy)

Doctors and their theories to scare their patients. I feel great!

But he is just the opposite of that and this is clearly visible.

He discovers the region of the eyes. One of the eyeballs is redder than the other, as if it had a blood stain.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

Now, Castle, I want you to see the face of the man...

Finally Billy removes all his bandages revealing his face.

THE CLASSIC JIGSAW LOOK. His face is a patchwork of scars and seams that disfigured the entire Russo's face, leaving him unrecognizable. He's more like a creature.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

... who went to hell and came back.

Billy presses the gun harder on Castle's forehead. When he's about to shoot...

CASTLE

I think you forgot something too, Billy.

... he stops.

 RUSSO
What would it be?

Castle stares deep into Russo's eyes.

 CASTLE
I've been to hell too.

THEN -

- CASTLE BITES HARD RUSSO'S FINGER ON THE GUN.

Hard enough to expel blood and make Russo drop his pistol. Quickly Micro runs to the door with his chair.

 BENNY (O.S.)
Billy!

Castle makes Billy to fall on his knees in front of him and then headbutts him to the ground.

Meanwhile Micro locks the door with the chair and his own body. The gang tries to enter.

As Billy writhes in pain on the floor, Castle finally loosens his handcuffs. The first thing he does when he's free, he picks up the fire extinguisher.

 MICRO
What do you think you're doing?!

With the extinguisher in hand, Castle grabs Billy's gun.

 CASTLE
Improvising. At my signal, you
open the door.

Micro nods.

Billy, still lying down, tries to attack Castle but he gets a kick in the jaw that leaves him almost unconscious.

 CASTLE (CONT'D)
I should blow your head here and
now.

When it looks like Castle will do that...

... BANG! BANG! BANG! - several shots through the door of the room. Castle throws himself on the floor.

 CASTLE (CONT'D)
Now!

Micro kicks the chair by releasing the door. The gang burst enter ready to kill.

Instantly, Castle tosses the fire extinguisher across the floor toward them.

As it slides through the floor, Frank fires.

The extinguisher explodes near gangsters.

And the BLAST hurls them away - one of Shark's henchmen CRASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW falling downwards.

Benny, Robbie and Carmine remain downcast and stunned.

MICRO (O.S.)

Frank...

Castle turns to Micro, sitting on the floor with a red spot on his belly. He was hit.

CASTLE

Let's move.

Castle helps his friend get up to take him out of there.

EXT. HOTEL CLAUDE - NIGHT

Shark talks to his other thugs in a relaxed way.

SHARK

-- and after I turned off the
bedroom light, I made her never
forget that night.

Some laughs. SUDDENLY -

- THAT THUG SMASHES INTO ONE OF THEIR CARS.

Sinking the vehicle roof completely. Shark and the others jump in fright.

INT. SOAP'S CAR - NIGHT

Soap does not believe what he just witnessed.

SOAP

What the fuck...?

So he picks up his RADIO.

SOAP (CONT'D)

Central, answer!

RADIO

Here is the central, what's the occurrence?

SOAP

Detective Martin Soap ordering reinforcements on 42nd Street, Hotel Claude. Armed and highly dangerous suspects.

RADIO

Understood, Detective. We'll get support in fifteen minutes.

SOAP

Fifteen minutes?!

INT. MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

A pale and weak Eliza crawls across the floor trying to reach for her cell phone. But she stops to see Castle and Micro leaving the room.

INT. CORRIDOR, HOTEL CLAUDE - NIGHT

Still supporting Micro, Castle pushes the elevator button and waits.

One of the hotel's residents rounds the corner of the hallway and notices the two there. Castle just aims his pistol at him and the man runs scared.

MICRO

I need a doctor, Frank... I'm losing a lot of blood.

CASTLE

Press the wound. Basic measures when taking a shot.

MICRO

It has always been easier for you.
(beat)
Why did not you kill the bastards?

CASTLE

We have a few bullets. If there's more of them outside, I want to have more chances.

The elevator doors open and they enter.

INT. DARK ROOM, MICRO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Russo gets on his feet, nose bleeding. Benny, Carmine and Robbie also get up still dizzy.

Upon realizing that Castle and Micro are no longer there, Russo becomes nerve. Fire in the eyes.

INT. LOBBY, HOTEL CLAUDE - NIGHT

The elevator door opens. Castle and Micro come out from the inside towards the exit, but they come across with -

- Shark arguing with his men.

SHARK

... One of us fell from above!
Something went very wrong!

But he stops as soon as he sees Castle and Micro there.

SHARK (CONT'D)

Shit -- open fire!

Another rain of shots. The civilian hostages scream in horror.

Castle retreats with Micro as he shoots the last bullets at his enemies. A pistol against automatics.

Almost by luck, Castle shoots down one of the bad guys. As he turns his back, he's hit on the shoulder splashing blood and dropping the gun.

Shark and his men advance to reach Castle, but he is already inside the elevator and going down.

SHARK (CONT'D)

They are coming down.
(realizes)

The parking! Get the cars!

Then they all start running out of the building.

INT. SOAP'S CAR - NIGHT

Soap watches Shark and his gang leaving the building urgently getting into their cars.

For the time being he's completely oblivious to that, until...

... a Sedan bursts out of the hotel parking lot skidding down the street.

SOAP'S POV: TIME SLOWS for Soap as he sees the Sedan - Castle driving the car with bleeding shoulder.

After a few seconds in shock, Soap returns to reality when he sees that three cars are about to follow Castle.

The first and second car accelerate to the chase. Soap makes a decision and starts his car.

EXT. HOTEL CLAUDE - NIGHT

The third gangster car is about to go too when - BLAM! Soap crashes his car on the side of the thugs' car, preventing them from continuing.

One less car.

INT. SOAP'S CAR - NIGHT

Dizzy and with a light wound in the forehead, Soap rests a little on his seat after the beat.

But the thugs get out of the car angry and wielding their guns. Soap quickly tries to pull his pistol awkwardly.

When it looks like the detective will die right there - police car sirens save him right now. The cops come surrendering the criminals.

COP

Drop your weapon!

Without choice, the thugs drop their weapons and surrender. Soap sighs in relief.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

The Sedan roars zigzagging through the civilian cars quickly.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

As Castle drives, Micro opens his shirt on the side bench revealing that he wore a bulletproof vest all the time. But a bullet went through.

CASTLE

It was bad?

MICRO
I think it could have been worse.

CASTLE
But you're still bleeding.

MICRO
(re: the vest)
These crap never works completely,
right?

SUDDENLY -

- the rear window BLOWS UP under wild gunfire.

Castle turns back and sees that he's being followed by TWO CARS. And one of them is Shark.

CASTLE
Stay down!

Castle speeds up and WHIP the car around a SUDDEN TURN.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

THE CHASE IS ON.

We see Castle's skills on the steering wheel for the first time, sewing through the city traffic. Shark is right behind his ass too at high speed.

INT. SHARK'S CAR - NIGHT

Shark drives while his thug reloads the SMG.

SHARK
Stop that son of a bitch!

The thug puts half of his body out of the car window and fires.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

SMG shots fly through the streets during the race. Pedestrians crouch down scared on the sidewalks. Other cars are hit by bullets.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

We hear the rear of the vehicle being hit by the shots.

CASTLE
Find some gun in here.

Micro looks everywhere, under the seat, on the dashboard, but when he opens the GLOVE COMPARTMENT, he stumbles upon a small REVOLVER and grabs it.

He shows it to Castle, who shoots him a look: what the fuck? This sounds like a toy.

Castle loses his attention from the street as he takes the revolver, wondering what to do with it. But Micro spots something.

MICRO
Frank!

Castle turns his head to where there is a traffic jam blocking the entire street.

Without thinking twice, Castle makes a sharp turn with the car to -

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

- the sidewalk, escaping traffic and diverting pedestrians on the way, almost trampling them.

Shark makes the same move too, following the sidewalk.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Castle glances at the REAR VIEW - his pursuers are on his tail. He's about to leave the sidewalk when another car emerges from a corner.

Quickly Castle hits the break - the car SKIDS and PIVOTS slamming hard in the other car side by side.

Instantly the windows shatter with the collision.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

With the car already badly damaged, Castle does not give up and accelerates from there. Shark and the others still chasing him.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Castle takes the revolver from Micro's hand and checks its ammo - five bullets left.

Then - THUMP! The thugs' car hits the nose in the back of the Sedan. The thug shooter outside the window fires at them.

Castle and Micro lower as the shots pierce the vehicle's windshield and dashboard.

But Castle speeds up and takes distance from the foes.

INT. THUGS' CAR - NIGHT

The shooter takes another comb to reload his weapon.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Castle notes the distracted shooter while reloading his SMG. An idea comes to mind. Unexpectedly, Castle pulls the HANDBRAKE making an abrupt stop.

INT. THUGS' CAR - NIGHT

The thug driver is the only one who notices the car slowing down in his direction. He turns to his shooter.

DRIVER

Look out!

As the driver turns the wheel, the shooter outside the window tries to get back into the car.

However, he's not fast enough to put the arm inside the vehicle. As the two cars pass by each other in parallel...

... the thug's arm outside the car is RIPPED OUT by the rear of the Sedan in a blink.

It was such a quick action that the man doesn't feel the pain from the beginning. He just stares at that bloody opening without an arm.

Then slowly the pain and the despair begin to hatch.

INT. SHARK'S CAR - NIGHT

He narrowly strays from Castle's car. He notices something is wrong when he spots a severed arm in the street.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

With the car still slowing, Castle opens the door, slung by his seatbelt as he aims his revolver at Shark's car.

In three shots he blasts two Shark tires causing him to lose control of the car, capsizing down the street.

The car stops to flip lying upside down, with everything crumpled and damaged. Castle gets out of his car with his revolver.

MICRO

Do you think they died?

CASTLE

Stay here.

Castle walks toward the overturned car, but in the middle of the road he notices the second car of the gang, also stopped.

He checks the ammunition again: two bullets left in the revolver.

INT. THUGS' CAR - NIGHT

The man who has lost an arm is almost passed out in his seat, pale and blood spilling a lot by the car.

The driver tries to help his friend on the verge of death.

DRIVER

Press the injury! Do not let the
blood out!

Furious, he grabs SMG in the lap of his dying friend. Check its ammo, full. Then opens the car door ready to kill.

But before he set foot on the pavement -

- BANG! A shot blows out of his skull. The body falls backwards, dead.

Castle approaches, the barrel of the revolver smokes, and sees the other thug losing blood sitting. The man without an arm still has forces to turn his eyes to Castle.

The Punisher aims at the thug to end the suffering of the poor man there. But, he thinks better and gives up.

Instead of using a bullet, Castle approaches the man and breaks his neck with his bare hands.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON Shark, crawling out of the car with her legs crushed after the overturn. Several people watch the situation around, some filming with the cell phone.

Then he hears footsteps coming for him. And he knows exactly who it is.

SHARK

No...no... please...

Castle makes Shark stop moving just by stepping on one of his injured legs.

SHARK (CONT'D)

Aaargh! -- You dirty cock sucker!

CASTLE

I still have a bullet in that gun, so it's better to behave. Although you would wish to die by a shot than by my hands.

Shark calms down.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Now let's talk. Alone.

Castle kicks Shark's chin causing him to faint completely. Then he puts the body on his shoulders and starts to take him away.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Castle puts Shark lying in the back seat and then back to the driver's seat.

MICRO

What are you going to do with him?

CASTLE

Get some answers.

EXT. HOTEL CLAUDE - NIGHT

The place was surrounded by police. The hostages leave the lobby. Soap is sitting on the back of an ambulance with an ice pack on his forehead.

In the middle of all this, we see Eliza being taken by paramedics lying on a stretcher. Lawton approaches Soap.

LAWTON

Who knew... Detective Soap arrested some members of one of the biggest thugs in town.

SOAP

I think I was lucky.

LAWTON

Did you see anybody else involved here besides the Punisher?

SOAP

Some witnesses said they saw a man with bandages on his face covering some scars.

LAWTON

You know...

Lawton sits next to Soap.

LAWTON (CONT'D)

... thinking better, you should stop it all. You're starting to mess with big people in the area.

SOAP

But you're the one who appointed me to this case and you want to get me out?

LAWTON

You're sinking too deep into it, which should not happen. It can annoy a lot of people out there. And this may end bad for your side.

SOAP

Is that some sort of... threat, sir?

LAWTON

Threat would be to say that I will blow your brains while you sleep, this here was just advice, of those you should follow.

From the tone of those words, Soap feels that this can really be a threat.

LAWTON (CONT'D)

Give a media statement that the Punisher is going through an intense type investigation or some crap like that. It will be better for everyone.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Micro constantly looks back to make sure Shark is asleep.

MICRO

I hope you know what you're doing here. Where are we going?

CASTLE

For my apartment, I need to recharge.

MICRO

No, you don't. Russo has put all criminals to go after you, we can not risk being seen.

CASTLE

If you're suggesting that I run away, Micro, you can forget that.

MICRO

No, I'm not such an idiot as to suggest this to you.

(beat)

Let's go somewhere else, a safe haven.

Castle just stares.

MICRO (CONT'D)

Trust me.

Castle thinks, considering.

CASTLE

Lead me there.

INT. HALLWAY, RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Carmine and Robbie rest there. Benny arrives with his mobile in hands.

BENNY

Where is he?

CARMINE
Where do you think?

BENNY
We need to talk to him.

CARMINE
I would not do that.

BENNY
Do you have any idea what the
Punisher does to us?

Benny shows his cell phone to the other two.

ON THE PHONE: Amateur footage of Castle catching Shark on
the city street.

BENNY (CONT'D)
This has turned on the internet
more than shit on the fan!

ROBBIE
And? Shark was an idiot.

BENNY
"And?" Now no gang wants to go
after the castle after they see
what he did to Shark! They are
scared.

CARMINE
And you think this will help
Russo?

BENNY
He calls himself the leader of
this criminal organization, so he
has to find a way!

INT. RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

All lights are off. Billy is sitting on his couch drinking
some whiskey in silence.

He stops drinking and picks up three more pills of his
medicine and takes it at once. Seconds later he writhes in
pain, more intense this time.

Russo gets up and faces the city below, trying to forget
the pain with that beautiful sight around him.

However, the window barely reflects his own face, which makes his angry erupt. He hits the glass with his fist, cracking the window.

Benny enters the room. Robbie and Carmine are apprehensive and just stand at the door.

BENNY
Billy, we have... a problem.

He slowly approaches Billy, who has his back to him.

BENNY (CONT'D)
Castle seems to have captured
Shark in the chase. Unfortunately,
other gangs have heard of this and
are...

Russo does not react, he's fixed staring at the window.

BENNY (CONT'D)
... afraid to continue in the job.
Some have given up, others will
only accept part of this for twice
the price.

A beat.

BENNY (CONT'D)
Billy? Are you listening to me?

Russo does not answer anything until...

... he starts to LAUGH. In a way that he becomes more
creepy.

BENNY (CONT'D)
(confused)
Billy...?

Russo turns to face his friend with a sinister grin.

BENNY (CONT'D)
(tense)
Billy, you need to calm down and
focus on the real situation. We
have a big problem on our hands.

Suddenly - Russo PUNCHES Benny knocking him down.

RUSSO
I'm not like my father! I am
better! MUCH BETTER!

BENNY

Billy, you listen to me... it's
the drugs tinkering with your
head, you need to be control --

WHAM! Billy starts beating Benny on the floor several
times, making him spit his own blood.

RUSSO

Control? Are you saying I'm going
crazy, exaggerated? Think you and
these damn doctors can control my
life?!

Russo is completely out himself.

BENNY

No... that's not what I wanted --

Another kick into Benny's face. Russo bends down and holds
Benny's head close to his.

Benny can see the madness in his friend's eyes.

RUSSO

I overcame the challenge, I came
back from hell, I stared at the
devil and survived!

BENNY

Billy... please...

Suddenly, Russo begins to slam Benny's head against the
ground several times in a row.

RUSSO

I am...

As he beats, Benny's face disfigures in the midst of blood.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

... Billy Russo...

The other two look at the scene in SHOCK.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

... and I do not have...

Benny is already unconscious but Russo continues.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

... any problems!

Russo finally stops. Benny lies there motionless, dead.
Around his head, a small pool of blood forms.

Robbie and Carmine exchange concerned glances, one not knowing what to think or do.

Russo turns to the two with bloody hands.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
Send a message to others. Triple
for anyone to find Castle.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A few mafia cars parked there. Bodyguards watch the place.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A huge hold. In the middle: all those crime bosses we saw at the meeting, arguing.

CRIME BOSS #1
... I say and say it again: he is
out of control, we can no longer
rely on Russo.

CRIME BOSS #2
He still has important contacts
for the organization, we can't
just rule him out.

CRIME BOSS #1
We do not have the choices
anymore. We all saw what he did
with his own hands, Russo is out
of his mind. And if nobody does
anything, I will.

CRIME BOSS #3
Maybe no one needs to get involved
in this. Russo is obsessed, sick
to kill the Punisher... so let's
get on with it. Hopefully, we'll
solve two problems with one shot.

The criminals exchange looks, not a bad idea.

CRIME BOSS #2
Are you telling us to just watch
the two kill each other?

CRIME BOSS #3

Yes. In this way we will not take chances to tighten our relations with the outside for killing one of ours. Everything will fall on the back of the Punisher.

Off their stare, agreeing -

CUT TO:

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

The sedan stops near hundreds of CONTAINERS gathered there. Micro is the first to get out of the car an improvised bandage on his belly.

Castle gets out grabs Shark, still unconscious.

Micro leads the way among all those containers. Castle follows with Shark on his shoulder. After a bit of walking they stop in a specific container.

CASTLE

When you set up it?

MICRO

Four years ago.

Micro opens a small secret window in the container revealing a DIGITAL PANEL where he types the opening code.

MICRO (CONT'D)

Do you remember Ivan Gabreski? All that shipment of stolen weapons and ammunition?

CASTLE

Yeah.

MICRO

Well, I had to keep those things somewhere.

The container doors open. Micro turns on the lights revealing to us -

- a real ARMORY inside. All kinds of weapons occupying every inch of the wall, a small paradise for the Punisher.

MICRO (CONT'D)

What did you think?

CASTLE
(grins)
Perfect.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Establishing.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Eliza is lying on her bed passing some TV channels, bored.

Then two government AGENTS in black suits enter the room and close the door.

ELIZA
So Bethell already know...?

AGENT #1
Some time ago. You are being requested.

ELIZA
I'm not going without my partner.
At least, not until I know how he is.

AGENT #1
Mr. Galway is already being referred by our team.

ELIZA
Are you going to shoot us?

AGENT #2
It would probably be Bethell's wish, but he chose another choice.

ELIZA
Screw it. I'm out of this shit.

AGENT #2
Funny, Bethell said the same thing about you.

ELIZA
Why am I not surprised?

INT. CONTAINER, DOCKS - NIGHT

Shark is sitting in a box, hands tied behind his back.
Still unconscious.

Suddenly, a bit of water splashes his face waking him with a fright. When he wakes up, he stumbles across Castle.

CASTLE

Do not try to resist or anything.

Nervously Shark looks around and sees weapons all over the place.

SHARK

W-Where am I?

Castle begins to grind an intimidating knife.

CASTLE

In a distant place where you can shout at will.

SHARK

Look, dude... your problem is with Russo, we do not have to go through with this, do we? I just wanted the money.

Suddenly Castle stabs the knife right on Shark's right foot, making him scream in pain.

CASTLE

I would agree, but unfortunately you crossed my path.

Castle pulls the knife.

SHARK

Shit -- Jesus Christ!

Then, Castle takes a small TOOLBOX, where there are pliers, screwdrivers, scissors, etc. He takes one of the pliers and approaches Shark.

He stands with one pliers in one hand and a blade in the other.

CASTLE

So how is it going to be? In my favorite way...

(re: the blade)

... or my favorite second way?

(re: the pliers)

You choose.

SHARK

No, please! I say everything you want, just let me live, please!

Castle doesn't care for those nervous requests.

CASTLE
Okay, I choose.

SHARK
Wait! Wait! -- I said I tell
everything! You want information,
do not you?

CASTLE
Yes... but I like to make sure my
informants will not lie.

SHARK
What?

Castle keeps the blade and opens Shark's mouth by force,
scanning his teeth.

CASTLE
Do not move too much or it may be
worse for you.

FROM BEHIND CASTLE -

We do not see the damage happening, but we can assume and
hear.

While Castle uses the pliers to pull Shark's teeth, we see
his legs shaking in despair amid muffled cries.

EXT. DOCKS - LATER

Micro walks with two plastic bags in hand. He reaches the
container and enters the access code.

INT. CONTAINER, DOCKS - NIGHT

Upon entering Micro he encounters Shark sitting
unconscious, hanging head and much blood dripping from his
mouth.

Castle cleans his pliers.

CASTLE
Did someone follow you?

MICRO
No.

Micro puts the bags on a table.

MICRO (CONT'D)
I brought some food. Even machines
like you need to refuel.
(re: Shark)
He is dead?

CASTLE
No. He just passed out when I took
out the third tooth.

MICRO
And did he say something at least?

CASTLE
Russo is in a residence near the
Central Park.

MICRO
And you intend to end him there.

Castle nods.

MICRO (CONT'D)
No, you'll be alone there, and
I...

CASTLE
(cuts in)
Run.

MICRO
What?

CASTLE
Go the farthest from here if you
want to survive. Go while there is
time.

MICRO
(beat)
You will face almost an army,
alone. I do not want to turn on
the TV one day and see that it
will be the day of the Punisher's
funeral.

The two face each other. Castle realizes that Micro has
made a decision.

CASTLE
It's your choice.

Castle leaves.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

An almost paradisiacal place. Families getting together, children playing, men and women hiking. A view full of peace.

Sitting on one of the benches is Castle, discreet with cap and sunglasses.

CASTLE'S POV: Across the street he looks at Russo's residence.

Then he gets up and walks a little closer, standing behind a tree. He takes a small BINOCULARS and looks once more.

BINOCULARS' POV: Plus four armed security guards in the lobby, the POLICE LIEUTENANT (Lawton) leaves the building discreetly and enters one of the cars parked there.

He keeps the binoculars. Off Castle's stare -

LATER:

Castle is walking alone through the park, in a quieter area. It looks like it's familiar to him.

He takes slower steps there observing the environment around him. Then he comes very close to a tree.

Castle slides his finger down the trunk, finding a BULLET HOLE in the wood. Something bad happened there. Then he walks again, his feelings rising.

At one point, Castle steps into something. He bends down and picks up a long-lost bullet CAPSULE.

A little piece of metal that brings him painful memories.

Castle gives up on continuing and drops that capsule on the floor. He turns and walks out.

EXT. LAWTON'S HOUSE - DAY

Lt. Lawton gets out of his car and enters his luxurious home. Too luxurious for a lieutenant.

WE PULL BACK slowly across the street as SOAP'S CAR parks in front of the house.

INT. SOAP'S CAR - DAY

Apparently Soap had been watching his lieutenant for quite some time.

He picks up his CAMERA and passes some photos, showing Lawton walking out of Russo's residence.

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

Castle enters the access code and enters the container.

INT. CONTAINER, DOCKS - DAY

MONTAGE

Throughout the day we see Frank preparing for the great battle. He cleans, mounts, and dismounts various weapons as we hear:

CASTLE (V.O.)
Frank Castle war journal.
Sometimes I feel that I will not
return from certain missions.
Sometimes I tell myself that it
will be my last...

Castle checks a huge shotgun. He reloads it with its cartridges.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... but it will never be, because
the war never ends for a soldier.
It chases after you like a damn
cancer that can not be treated...

Now an rifle. He checks the whole weapon like an experienced pro.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... and when you give yourself
completely to it, there is no way
out. You must accept and keep
going.

Castle grinds a machete.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
My treatment was to punish the
guys who punish the world with
their rules and laws. And for now
it has worked.

Castle attaches some grenades to his belt.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And even if I die before
fulfilling my mission... one day,
they too will die, all of them...

He wears his bulletproof vest with the white skull painted.

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... and I will be in hell waiting
for each one of them. I will make
them wish the devil himself to
watch over them.

END MONTAGE

INT. LOBBY, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

The DOORMAN shows some videos on his cell phone to the other three guards while they chat.

DOORMAN
Did you see how the boss is? Luke
said he looks like a patchwork
quilt.

A black Lexus arrives outside. Quickly the doorman runs to the door and opens for Russo, Robbie and Carmine to enter. All guards pretend to be focused on work.

They avoid direct eye contact with Billy. The three of them enter the elevator.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

VERY CLOSE ON - the windshield, facing Billy Russo building but a little distant. We do not see the driver yet.

PAN DOWN revealing the hands of the mysterious driver taped to the steering wheel and the wheel tied with ropes, being unable to maneuver.

INT. LOBBY, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

The guards and the doorman talk again.

GUARD #1
-- that's what I was talking
about, so I want to be the
furthest from here and the crazy
one.

GUARD #2
You're exaggerating, that's what I think.

GUARD #1
Exaggerating? Yesterday we saw what he did with one of his friends. Even the mother of that guy would not recognize him any more.

GUARD #3
And you think every criminal treats his companions with affection and flowers?

GUARD #1
Really?

GUARD #2
Screw you. I'm going to the toilet.

As the Guard #2 walks, a beacon light beam illuminates the lobby making him stop.

GUARD #2 (CONT'D)
What hell...?

THEN -

- KA-BLAM! THE SEDAN CRASHES THROUGH THE DOOR AT HIGH SPEED.

The three guards throw themselves on the ground to save themselves, narrowly escaping. The car destroys the entire surveillance counter.

A beat.

The lobby became a real mess in a matter of seconds.

Guard #2 helps the doorman get up. He spots something in that car.

DOORMAN
Look this.

He points to a painting of the Punisher's skull at the door of the Sedan.

GUARD #2
Holy Jesus.

Inside the vehicle they notice the silhouette of the driver.

DOORMAN

It's him? Must be... what will we do?

GUARD #2

Let's get him.

The Guard #2 picks up his pistol and points to the driver inside.

GUARD #2 (CONT'D)

Get out of the car now, slowly and without surprises!

They wait for the driver to obey, but they just see that he shivers a little.

DOORMAN

He will not obey.

GUARD #2

You open the door and I shoot.

The doorman nods. Nervous, he takes the handle of the car door. And...

... he opens the door in a bump revealing SHARK in the driver's seat.

GUARD #2 (CONT'D)

It's not him.

The other two guards approach, still a little dizzy.

GUARD #1

Who the hell is he?

GUARD #3

I think it's one of the guys the boss paid to kill the Punisher.

DOORMAN

He must have run away from him.
Let's find out what happened.

Guard #1 tries to remove Shark from there, but his hands are trapped. With a penknife, he starts cutting the tapes.

But Shark reacts frightened, with wide eyes. He tries to speak but his mouth does not open, it's just moans. Releasing Shark from the wheel, he becomes more desperate.

GUARD #1
Stay calm, we'll help you.

The more they try to take Shark, but he struggles to stay. That's when the doorman notices something - Shark's lips are SEWN together, so he cannot speak.

DOORMAN
Wait!

GUARD #1
What now?

When Shark is pulled off the seat, a thin wire strapped to his waist stretches by activating a MINE inside the car.

KA-BOOOM! In a flash, the entire lobby is engulfed in flames by the explosion.

INT. RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - SAME

As Billy fills a glass of whiskey, the burst in the lobby shakes the panes of the room.

INT. HALLWAY, RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - SAME

The echo of the explosion catches the attention of Carmine and Robbie, who stop walking when hearing the blast.

ROBBIE
What the fuck...?

Without wasting time, Carmine picks up his radio.

CARMINE
Attention, everyone in the works
now! We are under attack!

EXT. ROOFTOP BUILDING - NIGHT

In a building next to Russo's apartment is Castle, standing on the edge just watching the situation.

MICRO
(over radio)
You're free to go, Frank.

Castle draws a GRAPPLING HOOK and fires to the building ahead, while the rear end of the gun shoots another hook in this building.

A zipline connects the two buildings now.

Using the grappling gun, Castle slides down the cable toward the building and breaks into through the window.

INT. HALLWAY, RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Russo leaves his room and finds Robbie and Carmine approaching.

ROBBIE

Sir, it was a explosion downstairs! We don't know who made it yet.

RUSSO

Oh, we know. Call Lawton and tell him to stop the firemen from getting here.

ROBBIE

Yes sir.

RUSSO

I do not want anyone to stop me from killing him.

INT. ELEVATOR, RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

TEN GOONS heavily armed are preparing for a real war.

GOON

You have heard the boss: let bring Castle alive for him. But that doesn't stop us from breaking something.

INT. CASTLE'S VAN, ALLEY - NIGHT

Inside we find Micro on his laptop looking at the security cameras of the building on his screen.

MICRO

(into radio)

Frank, you have a nice gift basket in the elevator.

INT. TWELFTH FLOOR, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Walking with attention and wielding his rifle, Castle makes his way down the corridor.

Moments later he finds the elevator door. Using a knife, he opens it and comes across the deep pit. He aims down his rifle...

... and FIRES.

INT. ELEVATOR, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

The gunfire strikes the roof of the elevator. Some bullets pierce through the ceiling and kill some men.

But the elevator starts to jerk, as if something is loosening. And it really is.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

Thanks to the shooting, the cables have been damaged and are breaking.

Until a certain point, finally the cables RUPTURE, dropping that load of almost a ton in free fall.

All we hear is the frightened yells of the passengers in the elevator, fading as it descends.

INT. TWELFTH FLOOR, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Barrel smoking, Castle waits at the edge of the elevator shaft.

Then - BLAM! The sound of when the elevator hit the ground echoes through the pit. Castle finally has his confirmation.

Castle moves from there towards the stairs, and starts to climb.

INT. STUDY, RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Robbie and Carmine reload their pistols.

CARMINE

You stay with the boss, I go after Castle.

ROBBIE

Are you sure?

Carmine gives him a nod, confident.

INT. CORRIDOR, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

BAM! Castle breaks the access door to the staircase and steps into the hallway, rifle raised.

MICRO
(over radio)
Frank, I found a back door. I
think I will --

SUDDENLY -

- A GROUP OF BODYGUARDS emerge from a corner. As soon as they see Castle on the way...

BODYGUARD
Open fire!

... everyone shoots at the same time punishing the entire corridor with their bullets. Castle doesn't think twice and throws himself into one of the rooms aside.

EXT. ALLEY, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Micro stops at the back door as he hears shots on his earpiece.

MICRO
Frank?!

No answer.

MICRO (CONT'D)
Shit!

Quickly Micro pulls his shotgun and blasts the door handle, thus getting into the building.

INT. CORRIDOR, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Walls, floor and even the ceiling were holed. The eight bodyguards move cautiously down the hall, or scared toward the room where Frank came in.

BODYGUARD #1
Ray... you'll see if he's dead.

BODYGUARD #2
(no way)
Me? You go!

INT. OFFICE, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Anchored on the wall, Castle checks his wound on the shoulder - just superficial. Then he pulls something out of his belt that we don't see yet.

INT. CORRIDOR, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

The bodyguards keep arguing, losing focus.

BODYGUARD #1
I'm the boss here, so I choose to
go check it out!

BODYGUARD #2
No one here voted for you at all.

BODYGUARD #1
Keep arguing with me and I swear I
will --

A small metal object is thrown out of that office and bounce on the floor, rolling to near the men.

REVEAL A SMOKE GRENADE.

Then - WHOOSH! It blows up generating a cloud of smoke that covers almost the entire hallway bewildering all bodyguards.

All of them are disoriented within that smoke, some coughing hard and others grabbing their eyes.

When they least expect - BRDDDDT! BRDDDDT! - rifle shots sever through the smoke cloud without them noticing where it came from.

We see some of the bodyguards falling after being hit.

BODYGUARD #1 (CONT'D)
I'm gonna kill you, bastard!

But he does not notice Castle behind him. The Punisher only breaks the man's neck in a single move.

ON ANOTHER BODYGUARD -

Barely seeing the path, he stumbles around the wall, until - Castle HEWS DOWN the bodyguard's hand that he used to grope the wall.

Before the poor man can scream in pain, Castle sticks his machete down his chin until the tip comes from the top of his head.

Suddenly enemy bullets whiz a few inches from Castle's head. Quickly he takes the newly dead bodyguard and uses him as a human shield as he advances.

The shooter notes that he's hitting someone, but all he sees is a silhouette in the middle of the smoke.

As the dust settles, the shooter realizes that he was firing on a dead body.

Off his confused face...

... Castle drops the corpse and kills the shooter with his rifle.

Along the corridor, Castle spots two bodyguards running.

ON THE TWO BODYGUARDS -

Running like hell. They just want to get out of there as soon as possible.

But - BRDDT! - a shot knocks down one of them, still alive. The other does not stop running

When it looks like he'll succeed, a bullet bursts through his left eye, blowing a hole in his face. The man falls instantly dead on the ground.

TIGHT ON the wounded bodyguard, crawling across the floor still hoping to escape. Castle approaches behind him quietly reloading his rifle.

When finished reloading the gun, Castle doesn't even stop. He shoots the crawler's head and keeps moving, fast and precise.

INT. TENTH FLOOR, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Micro opens the access door to the staircase, wielding his shotgun. The place is clean, so he comes back up the steps.

INT. CORRIDOR, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

In a different corridor, Castle makes his way. For now no enemy signal. It's very quiet.

Upon arriving at the corner of a perpendicular corridor...

... someone KNOCKS Castle's rifle off his hands with a kick. Carmine emerges with his pistol ready to blow up the Punisher's head.

The two go into a hand-to-hand combat. Carmine doesn't give Castle time to get another weapon, so he uses his bare hands.

Every second Carmine tries to shoot Castle, but the vigilante jolts his arm at time, missing the shots by inches.

We see for the first time the martial skills of Carmine, which are equivalent to that of Castle.

Castle hits Carmine's ribs, which gives him a momentum to be able to grab the bandit's throat and slam him against the wall.

Castle tries to choke Carmine right there. Carmine does not give up easy and kicks the knee of the anti-hero - he did not expect it.

Consequently Castle falls on four on the ground and releases Carmine, who recovers his breath.

CARMINE

That was close, motherfucker.

While Castle is on his knees, Carmine leans the barrel of his gun to his head.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

The boss wanted you alive to give some lessons, but I can make up a little story.

When he pulls the trigger - CLICK! - no bullets. He spent everything moments ago. For a second he gets scared.

Castle sees his chance there. He grabs Carmine's hip and lifts him above his head, slamming him into the fluorescent lamp of the ceiling.

Then smashes him down in the ground.

Carmine seems to have fainted at first. Castle grabs his pistol and prepares to kill his enemy there.

But - Carmine wakes up suddenly by stabbing Castle's leg with his pocketknife. The blow makes him miss the shot.

Carmine stands and tries to push Castle's gun into its own owner's face. When the gun barrel lines up with Castle's face...

... Carmine FIRES as Castle tilts his head, escaping from the shot.

At the same moment, Castle headbutts Carmine twice, enough to tear blood out of his mouth.

So he drops his pistol and carries Carmine down the hall, toward the -

INT. RESTROOM, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Both burst into the empty restroom, crashing the door. The knife tucked into Castle's leg leaves after he falls to the ground.

Castle tries to rise, but Carmine is already up and kicks Castle back to the ground once more.

Carmine grabs her knife back and tries to stab Castle once more. However, Castle raises his hand instinctively shielding with it as the knife runs through his palm.

Over Castle, Carmine pushes the blade to culminate in his victim's eye. But Castle withstand, his blood dripping from the knife.

Using his knees, Castle pushes Carmine forward, near a few sinks. The knife stagnates in his hand yet.

Just murmuring in pain, Castle removes the knife.

As Carmine tries to get back on his feet, Castle throws the knife at his shoulder. Then he comes up and KICKS the knife, sinking it further.

Castle grabs his foe in a CHOKE HOLD, but Carmine headbutts him with his nape splashing blood from Castle's nose.

Impatient and furious, Castle grabs Carmine by his leather hair and slams his face into the sink. But he doesn't stop there.

With Carmine's head inside the sink, Castle SMASHES it - POUNDING, pounding, pounding hard with his first cracking the sink more at each blow - until finally the sink SPLITS a piece and Carmine falls on the ground, face covered in blood.

He's dead.

A beat. Castle breathes hard.

Limping, he leaves.

INT. RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Russo is on his couch putting the bullets in the comb of his Desert Eagle. Robbie is standing near the door, trying to hide his nervousness.

ROBBIE

Boss... are not you scared?

RUSSO

Scared?

He puts the last bullet on the comb.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

Last time I was scared, Robbie...

He fits the comb inside the gun, ready to fire.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

... I lost a face.

INT. HALLWAY, RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

There are still four more bodyguards to get to Russo. All restless and nervous.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO -

At the corner of that hall is Castle, hidden. He knows there are more people out there.

As he thinks of a solution to pass there, he glances up and has an idea. What he sees - an AIR DUCT.

JUMP CUT - MOMENTS LATER

Back with the bodyguards.

Everything is very calm when suddenly -

- BANG! BANG! BANG! A shower of bullets comes from the duct, killing all four men there, almost in the blink of an eye.

INT. RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

On hearing the shots, Robbie takes a few steps backward looking at the door. Russo remains unshakable.

INT. RESTROOM, RUSSO'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Micro arrives at the place of mortal duel. He only finds Carmine's body lying there. He sighs relieved not to see his friend either.

Then a gunfire not too distant catches his attention. Micro heads toward the noise.

INT. HALLWAY, RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

The place became a carnage. The four bodyguards dead together. Blood and bullet hole to all sides.

Castle descends from the air duct feeling a pain in the chest. He looks and sees that he was hit twice in the vest. A little blood trickles down his shirt.

Even looking tired, Castle wants to continue. He holds his rifle and prepares.

INT. RUSSO'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

BLAM! Castle breaks through the door and stumbles across Russo in front of the window, his back to him.

CASTLE
Billy Russo!

Billy turns to Castle, not at all frightened. Castle walks towards him.

CASTLE (CONT'D)
You wanted me, now I'm here. And I
came to kill --

BANG! CASTLE IS HIT FROM BEHIND BY A SHOT, knocking him down. As he drops REVEAL Robbie, who was hidden.

Castle falls to his knees leaning on his hands, with a hole in the back of his vest.

RUSSO
What's it? Can you repeat please?

Robbie approaches and places his gun on the back of Castle's head.

ROBBIE
Next time will not be on the vest.

Billy pulls out his coffee table and sits on it, facing Castle.

RUSSO
How do you feel so helpless now,
Punisher?

Then he draws his Desert Eagle from within the suit.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
This weapon, I just use it to kill
anyone who is really worth it.
Guess what, you were one of the
chosen ones.

CASTLE
What a honor.

RUSSO
Unless, of course, you swear
obedience and faithfulness to me.
A man with your skills would be a
great supporter.

CASTLE
To be your hunting dog...?

RUSSO
Basically. Think about it, I'll be
able to provide you with location
of some big fishes, some
competitors.

Castle chuckles.

CASTLE
They made me a similar proposal,
but I had to refuse. Already your
proposal, I have a hint from where
you can put it.

Russo did not like that attitude at all. He gets up and
aims his pistol at Castle.

RUSSO
Well, I tried. Even so, killing
you will still help me a lot.
(beat)
"Billy Russo, the man who killed
the Punisher."

CASTLE
It's good for you to pray to kill
me first time, or I'll come back
and end your life.

RUSSO

I do not make the same mistake
twice.

Billy is about to pull the trigger and kill the Punisher forever, but a VOICE saves his life:

MICRO (O.S.)

Get down!

Without thinking twice, Castle hurls himself on the floor as Russo and Robbie turn to the door where...

... Micro stands toting his shotgun. In the same second, the three SHOOT.

Castle rolls his body across the floor out of the fire line. The room turns into a mini battlefield.

Micro shoots Robbie in full, killing him. However, Billy hits Micro three times in the chest, knocking him down, but not before hitting Billy on the shoulder too.

The exchange of shots ends as fast as it started. Castle gets up and goes to his friend lying on the floor, backs to the wall.

He notes that it was more serious this time for Micro. He coughs up his own blood.

MICRO

I think we're even...

CASTLE

Two bullets went through your vest.

MICRO

Yeah... I was just lucky once. You better get out of here, before the cops come.

But Castle just stares at Micro. When -

- BANG! A bullet whirs a few inches from Castle's head and hits the wall.

RUSSO

I'm not going to die like this!

Castle sprints towards Billy as he tries to hit him with other shots. Thanks to Russo's inaccuracy, he misses most of the shots, but still hits in the chest and on the Punisher's leg.

That knocks the Punisher down, Russo has the chance to kill him there, but Castle is faster and throws a blade in his belt.

It pierces Russo's LEFT EYE making him miss another shot. With that immense pain, he shoots randomly, uncontrollably.

Castle gets up, pulls his machete and cuts off Billy's hand with the pistol. Screaming in pain, he retreats toward the window.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
 (painful, angry)
 You son of a bitch -- wait a
 minute! Wait a fucking minute!

Castle does not mind a word, he's cornering Billy near the window.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
 Just tell me how many zeros you
 want in your account for you to
 leave me alone. Any amount.

No answer.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
 Okay, no money. All right.

Billy leans his back against the window, nowhere else to go.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
 Are you even listening to me?!

Castle responds by stabbing Russo with his machete until cracking through the window behind him.

CASTLE
 I'm... so worms like you do not
 deserve to be breathing anymore.

RUSSO
 I'll... still... tear your
 heart... out.

In a quick move, Castle pulls back his machete and DECAPITATES RUSSO - the body falls to one side while the head bounces to another.

BEAT.

CASTLE (V.O.)
 Billy Russo, head of organized
 crime. Dead: knife wound.

Castle turns and heads toward Micro, already pale with his blood loss.

MICRO

I do not think he's coming back
this time.

CASTLE

Yeah.

CASTLE (V.O.)

David L. Liberman, also known as
Micro. Dead: a bullet wound to the
skull.

Castle grabs Micro's shotgun and checks its ammo. There's still bullets. Micro already knows what to come.

MICRO

You know... sometimes I wonder if
there was a time you could have
chosen not to be the Punisher. But
now I realize...

Micro spits more blood. He's suffering from internal bleeding.

MICRO (CONT'D)

... that this thing was already
inside of you a long time ago,
just needed the right incentive.
Now, you go once a year at the
cemetery to apologize to them for
using their deaths for something
terrible.

CASTLE

Is that what you think?

MICRO

No... it's a fact.

SHHK! SHHK! - Frank prepares the shotgun to shoot.

MICRO (CONT'D)

That day, when I caught you, you
hesitated --

CASTLE

I had not seen you in years.
Besides, you was armed. You shot
me and tried to sell me to the
damn government. And I still find
that you help criminals.

MICRO
I should have known by now that
you would not.

CASTLE
Yes, you should.

MICRO
But in the container... you told
me to run, run away, that means...

CASTLE
You should have run.
(beat)
Are you really going to beg me?

Micro just stops talking and hangs his head. castle aims
the shotgun and BLASTS MICRO'S HEAD.

Castle drops the gun and walks away leaving his friend's
body there.

And we slowly -

FADE TO BLACK:

Then -

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

SOARING over Manhattan looking north as we hear RADIO
VOICES:

NEWSCASTER #1 (V.O.)
-- the police told the press that
the Punisher was involved in the
attack on mobster Billy Russo last
night --

NEWSCASTER #2 (V.O.)
-- Frank Castle, also known as the
Punisher, has not yet been found
after the massacre.

Now we hear voices of CIVILIANS commenting on the subject.

CIVILIAN #1 (V.O.)
I think this guy is right, the
city deserves someone who fixes
these criminals. No, the world
needs him!

CIVILIAN #2 (V.O.)
Justice is in the hands of the
authorities, and only they can
make the decisions, not any
psychopath.

CIVILIAN #3 (V.O.)
If this Punisher is on the side of
the good guys then, why does he
keep running away? Hiding himself?

INT. NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Three federal agents take Lt. Lawton ARRESTED through the
station while all the other officers stare at him STARTLED.

But Soap is the only one with a discreet smile on his face.
Before leaving, Lawton shoots him a look of anger and
revenge.

INT. CASTLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Castle finishes packing his things in his bag. Only one
thing left - the photo of his family on the dresser.

He stares at it appreciating. Then put it in his pocket.

CASTLE (V.O.)
Frank Castle, also known as
Punisher...

He opens the door...

CASTLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... unknown whereabouts.

As castle slams the door -

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END