

"THE PUNISHER"

by

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PRODUCER: Robert Kamen

THIRD DRAFT * SFX

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A man should not be afraid
to express his inner self

FADE IN ON:

STYGIAN DARKNESS

like the deepest, blackest night. A VOICE speaks on the soundtrack. A HOLLOW ANGUISHED voice as black and empty as the screen it rises from.

VOICE

Sometime after it happened I went to confession. I said, 'Father, how can such things be? How can men do this to one another?' He said, 'We are all God's children, my son,' and told me to do eight Hail Marys. I thought about this later, and realized... we are all God's children... the good children should be rewarded and... the bad children... they must be punished.

A powerful POUNDING begins on the soundtrack, and the title

THE PUNISHER

grows on the SCREEN, getting larger and larger until it is too big and...

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

FLASH! FLASH!

The courthouse doors fly open and debonair DON GIACCOMO, a silver-haired, handsome crime lord, followed by JUNIOR, his beast of a son, and SAL, MARIO, TOBY, ROBERT and JIM, five huge bodyguards that make his son look like a tadpole, step out into a crowd of REPORTERS with microphones. Flash pictures going off by the dozens. TV cameras being stuck in their faces... the reporters crowd around Giacomo, shouting out questions. Junior pushes them aside roughly, as Don Giacomo lays a restraining hand on his shoulder.

REPORTER #1

... Don Giacomo! How does it feel to be finally acquitted?

GIACCOMO

Great... it feels terrific...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER #2

Out of the five alleged bosses on trial, why do you think you were the only one declared not guilty?

GIACCOMO

In our system, justice prevails.
In America you are punished for being guilty, not innocent.

His bodyguards clear his way as they walk toward the street, keeping the reporters at bay as best as they can. As we DOLLY WITH THEM a HUGE BACK steps into the way, stopping Giacomo.

HUGE BACK

Are you guilty?

Giacomo looks confused for a second, then the horde of reporters pushes him forward and, surrounded by his guards, he is hustled toward his waiting LIMOUSINE. He smiles as politicians smile at the reporters, waving a final goodbye, and climbs into the limo. His bodyguards climb in after him and slam the door shut.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Sal starts the motor and the car pulls away. Giacomo turns and kisses his son on the cheek.

GIACCOMO

We're goin' home, Junior.

EXT. WHITE MANSION - WESTCHESTER - DAY

Another group of REPORTERS with TV cameras and flash pictures are waiting at the gates of a huge, white suburban mansion as the limousine pulls into view.

Giacomo, wearing his sparkling smile, steps out of the limo surrounded by his five goons, Junior circling around them like an angry satellite, snarling at the reporters, keeping them away. Giacomo fields a torrent of questions as he walks toward the gate.

GIACCOMO

... It's great to be home... thank you for your support... it's terrific...

The reporters stop at the gate and he waves goodbye as he steps into the front doors of the mansion.

INT. MANSION - DAY

Don Giacomo, Junior, and the five men enter the lobby. When the door is shut there is a moment of silence. Then they all throw their hands up and CHEER, lifting Giacomo off his feet.

JUNIOR

To the new head of all five
territories and the smoothest man
alive!

They cheer again, then put Giacomo back down onto his feet. He walks toward the kitchen, throwing off his jacket.

GIACCOMO

Sal... Mario... come with me. I'm
opening up some champagne... the rest
of you check out the phones.

Tony and Robert head up the stairs, taking off their jackets as well. Jim walks into another corridor. Junior stays standing in the hallway beneath the marble staircase, flexing his balloon-like muscles in front of a mirror.

JUNIOR

Y'know, Pop... it's the fuckin' media
that's bringin' America down today...
they're like parasites living off
all our blood. I'd like to take 'em
one by one and strangle the life out
of them.

ANGLE ON

a NYLON LOOP descending toward us from nowhere.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Giacomo has two bottles of champagne in his hands. Sal and Mario are getting out the glasses.

GIACCOMO

(calling out)

Hey! Watch your mouth, Junior...
your mother's gonna be home any
minute.

JUNIOR (O.S.)

They're like vultures pickin' the
bodies of...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is silence.

GIACCOMO

What was that, Junior?

(starts to uncork the
bottles)

Junior...?

There is no answer. Giacomo, both bottles in his hands, steps out of the kitchen to look for his son, and the CORKS pop out of the bottles, spraying champagne into the air as he looks up.

Junior is SWINGING two feet above the ground, blood pouring from his neck where a NYLON NOOSE has bitten deeply, the cord tied to the upper banister of the stairway.

Giacomo gets white as a sheet. He drops both bottles of champagne onto the floor.

GIACCOMO

... Mario... MARIO! SAL!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

JIM, a huge man, is at the door to his room, loosening his tie. He HEARS the shouts and spins around but --

A HAND, a very very BIG hand, wraps itself around his throat and...

Jim's FEET are lifted a foot off the floor.

Another HAND presses against Jim's face, pushes, and CRACK! his neck is broken.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Bob and Toby look up from the phones they have dismantled and are searching for bugs. They drop the phones and race out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

DOLLY BACK with them as they run out into the hallway STOP AS TWO MASSIVE BLACK-CLAD LEGS like tree trunks fill the front of the SCREEN. Bob and Toby come to a dead stop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE ON TOBY

his face filled with terrified recognition. He reaches for his gun.

TOBY

Jesus! It's the...

But before he gets it out two THROWING KNIVES whistle through the air and slam into both his and Bob's throats.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Sal and Mario race around the room, their guns drawn, pointing them at every corner, while Don Giacomo stands still as a statue, looking at his son in complete shock.

NOISE behind Mario. He spins around and

- PHUT! - PHUT! -

Two silent bullets hit Sal in the chest, knocking him into a vase on a pedestal, then to the floor. Mario spins around, pointing his gun at Sal's body. TWO MORE silent bursts and Mario crashes to the floor, spraying blood. We hear a deep breathing.

VERY CLOSE on Don Giacomo. His eyes widen with recognition.

GIACCOMO

You.

He reaches into his jacket, pulls out a pistol, aims it straight toward the CAMERA, squeezes the trigger, and...

EXT. WHITE MANSION - DAY

The reporters and photographers are getting their equipment back into the news vans and cars when...

- KABOOM! -

They all spin around and SHOUT in surprise as three consecutive explosions blow the roof off the mansion, the entire thing instantaneously bursting into flames. CAMERAS ARE TURNED ON. FLASH PICTURES go off... a REPORTER shouts into a microphone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER

... It is unbelievable, but the entire Giacomo mansion has just been blown to bits, mere moments after Giacomo and his entourage entered through the door... We can't tell if anyone has survived.

The reporters babble and we SEE SHOTS of the burning mansion through the VIDEO CAMERAS. The front door starts to open.

REPORTER

(with other voices in the b.g.)

... WAIT! There seems to be someone coming out of the mansion... someone seems to be alive...

POV VIDEO CAMERAS

Shimmering heat rises from the opening door... a FIGURE appears through the billowing smoke. It is Don Giacomo, soot-filled, blank eyes.

REPORTER

... It's Don Giacomo... It appears the dapper one has made it through his second gauntlet of the day, a man with nine lives this...

CLOSE ON DON GIACCOMO

BLOOD suddenly pours out of his mouth like an overflowing fountain. The reporters SHOUT as Giacomo falls face forward onto the ground. There is a HUGE FIGURE behind him. Dead silence as a MAN built like a tank all in black, a GRINNING WHITE SKULL on his T-shirt, a machine gun strapped to his back, a knife in his hand, steps forward into view... He is half obscured by billowing smoke and warping heat. His hair is jet black, his eyes deep in his skull, a white scar running across his right cheek. When he opens his mouth, his voice is deep, thunderous and empty, like a hot wind blowing through a bottomless canyon.

PUNISHER

If society won't punish the guilty...
I will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The reporters find their voices again and start shouting as POLICE SIRENS BEGIN APPROACHING... then all sounds are drowned out by a POUNDING ON THE SOUNDTRACK as the Punisher backs into the flames, disappearing like an elusive phantom.

POLICE CARS screech to a halt, cops getting out and running toward the house, unable to enter through the burning flames.

DISSOLVE TO:

A TELEVISION SET

A black female NEWSCASTER is facing the camera, the Logo -- MOB VIOLENCE -- behind her.

NEWSCASTER

... After the instantly controversial acquittal of dapper Don Giacomo early this morning, the Don was murdered in his own home by the mysterious figure known as 'The Punisher'... There is an all-out citywide manhunt for this man...

A picture of the Punisher's face flashes on the screen.

NEWSCASTER

... who is regarded to have been responsible for at least 168 deaths since his first appearance five years ago... Nearly nothing is known about the mysterious vigilante, other than that his victims have all been either proven or alleged members of organized criminal groups, primarily the New York-based Cosa Nostra... On the scene was Lieutenant Jake Berkowitz, the man officially in charge of the Punisher case...

SHOT of JAKE BERKOWITZ, balding, in a crumpled suit, fending off reporters as he walks to his car.

REPORTER #1

... Why haven't the police been able to apprehend...?

BERKOWITZ

No comment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER #2

Do you have any leads as to where the Punisher might be?

BERKOWITZ

No comment.

REPORTER #3

Do you still stand by your belief, officially denied by the police department, that the Punisher is ex-policeman Frank Castle, commonly believed to be dead?

BERKOWITZ

(turning for an instant)

Yes I do.

He ducks into his car, and PULL BACK TO REVEAL a TELEVISION SET in the middle of a bustling POLICE STATION. The COPS around the set disperse as a furious-looking CAPTAIN JOHN DONLEVY steps in and switches off the TV.

The FRONT DOORS open, and Jake Berkowitz, followed by half a dozen plainclothes COPS, bursts into the station.

BERKOWITZ

... look, pull some men out of the 5th Avenue area and send them down to Soho... you think he's hiding out at Saks?

He is approached by a young, bespectacled man in ill-fitting clothes.

MAN

Lieutenant Berkowitz?

Berkowitz stops for a moment.

BERKOWITZ

What's it to you?

MAN

I'm Sergeant Sam Kusack...

(as Berkowitz just stares at him)

... your new aide... the one you requested.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERKOWITZ

So you are.

(continues walking)

Fall in, Sergeant.

But his way is blocked by Captain Donlevy, fuming, red in the face.

DONLEVY

What is the meaning of that shit,
Lieutenant Berkowitz?

BERKOWITZ

What shit, Captain?

DONLEVY

For the last, and I mean last time,
Berkowitz... Frank Castle is dead.
He was killed five years ago in a
mob hit. What do you think it does
to public confidence in our
department when they think there's
a lunatic ex-cop running around
blasting people to bits? As far as
this department, and you are
concerned, the Punisher is an
unknown. You want to be back
directing traffic in Queens after
school, Lieutenant?

BERKOWITZ

No sir.

DONLEVY

Then get back on the case, and
remember to keep your goddamn
theories to yourself.

Berkowitz nods, and the captain stalks off. Berkowitz
gives him a look, then continues toward his office,
followed by Kusack.

KUSACK

I don't know, Lieutenant, it does
seem a bit far-fetched that some
ex-cop could do all that.

BERKOWITZ

Ex-cop? Listen, Kusack...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERKOWITZ (Cont'd)

(sits down at his desk)

... in '68 he trained with General Tong... he was in special forces Skull Company, from '70 to '74, he is the only surviving member walking the earth. He can kill you 87 different ways before you blink an eyelash and leave you standing there for half an hour before anyone notices you're dead.

KUSACK

If you'll excuse me for asking, sir... it's a case... why are you taking it so... personally?

BERKOWITZ

He was my best frie...

(can't get it out; takes
a deep breath)

You... me... we're here to hold this damn city together, not blow away every son of a bitch we don't like...
(pause)

I've been a cop twenty-five years, and God knows there have been times I've wanted to go out there and blow all that scum away myself... I've been pushed to the edge, Kusack, lots of times. But him... he was pushed over it. Way over it. It could have been me. I could be you. Unfortunately for those bastards, it was him.

(as Kusack nods)

He was a good man, Kusack. The best.

Berkowitz gets up and gestures to another cop.

BERKOWITZ

Grimes! Get me Harry on the line...
I want those guys in Soho.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACKNESS

The screen is dark and empty. The PUNISHER's cracked voice speaks again on the soundtrack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PUNISHER'S VOICE

I speak to God sometimes. I ask him
if what I'm doing is right or if it's
wrong...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A patrol car drives by a brightly-lit street. As it
passes a chipped blue van TILT DOWN to a sewer grille,
near its wheels.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SEWER PASSAGE - NIGHT

The filthy water flows through the cement tunnel... rats
scuttle in its shadows. We see several SHOTS of different
sections of the sewer, separated by DISSOLVES, giving us
the impression of falling deeper and deeper into an
underground labyrinth. A last SHOT shows a passageway
with ORANGE LIGHT coming from behind a corner.

DOLLY IN AROUND THE CORNER REVEALING:

INT. PUNISHER'S ROOM - NIGHT

The Punisher, huge, naked, his body pouring sweat, is
sitting in lotus position in the middle of the stone
cellar deep in the heart of the sewer system. There is
a cot in the room, a stove, the basic necessities of
living. DOLLY IN on the Punisher, closer and closer,
until we are right on top of his bowed head.

CUT TO:

BLACKNESS AGAIN

The pitch-dark SCREEN. The Punisher's Voice finishes:

PUNISHER'S VOICE

... There is no answer.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - MORNING

The lawn is perfect, manicured. The house a
picture-perfect suburban home.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

CLOSE ON a big, complex BATTLESHIP MODEL, half-finished. PULL BACK TO REVEAL TONY FRANCO, a 50ish man in a silk robe and slippers, and TOMMY, his nine-year-old son, standing beside each other, staring intently at the model. Tommy puts down a piece of plastic.

TOMMY

I give up. I can't find where it goes.

FRANCO

You looked everywhere, Tommy?

TOMMY

I looked three times.

Franco picks up the piece of plastic, peers into the model's innards and immediately sticks it into its corner. Tommy looks at him with wide eyes.

FRANCO

I served on one of these back in '54, in the Navy.

TOMMY

I wanted to do it myself, Dad.

FRANCO

Listen, Tom... one of the keys to success in life, is knowing who to ask for help when you need it. Remember that.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

FRANCO

Jimmy's here. Get your books, we'll finish this later.

Franco walks to the door, looks through the peephole, then opens the door. JIM TARRONE, a young man in an Armani suit, as yuppie as can be, steps in.

TARRONE

Hey, Tony.

The two men hug each other. Tommy walks up and gets his hair mussed by Tarrone.

TARRONE

Hey, how are ya, kid?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Franco kneels, gives Tommy a kiss.

FRANCO

All right, tough guy, get outta here,
you'll be late for school.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Tommy steps out and trots across the lawn to a BLACK LIMOUSINE that is waiting for him. The CHAUFFEUR gets out, opens the door for him, then closes it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Tarrone is taking off his jacket.

TARRONE

Beautiful kid, that Tommy. What you
give him in a day, I didn't get from
my father in a year.

FRANCO

I waited a long time for a kid...
these times are important.

Franco pours some coffee for himself and Tarrone.

TARRONE

The fuckin' Punisher did us a favor
gettin' rid of the Dapper Don. He
was one greedy son of a bitch.

FRANCO

Yeah... now he'll be after you.

TARRONE

I'm not scared.

FRANCO

You should be.

TARRONE

Funny you of all people should say
that. My pop said you would be the
last guy he'd want to face with the
entire U.S. Army behind him.

Franco just looks away, nodding to himself. Then he sits
down and takes a sip of his coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TARRONE

Tony... this 'summit' between me, Jaco, Defazio, Scalice and Genovese... my people don't know if it's such a good...

FRANCO

It's a good idea, Jimmy, and it's necessary. All the old bosses are in jail, and the dapper Don is dead. The territories are wide open. There can either be senseless bloodshed or a profitable co-existence.

TARRONE

If you could just tell Genovese and Defazio that...

GIACCOMO

Jimmy, I'm neutral. I don't take sides. I am here to insure a healthy business atmosphere for all five families... that is why your fathers all trusted me. I'll be at the summit to make sure everything goes smoothly.

Jim Tarrone nods in uneasy acceptance.

FRANCO

What's the story on the dope shipment from Marseilles?

TARRONE

Pickup's tonight. Jaco's security, my boys on transportation.

FRANCO

See? That's good, you and Jaco working together on this... it's good for harmony.

Tarrone bends over and looks at the battleship model.

TARRONE

Jeez, Tony, isn't this something? It's really great what you got with your boy.

FRANCO

Yeah. After a lifetime of hard work, a kid is God's reward.

He takes another sip of coffee.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

BRIGHT SUNLIGHT. TWO PAIRS OF LITTLE LEGS, barefoot... little girls' legs, splashing around in a shallow POND, the sun sparkling on the clear water like millions of shimmering golden drops, the SOUND OF CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER FILLING THE SCREEN.

CUT TO:

BLACKNESS

The Punisher's personal hell. His voice speaks from its depths.

PUNISHER'S VOICE

Sometimes a soldier goes to war, for all the right reasons, but, in his struggle to stay alive from day to day, he forgets why he is fighting in the first place.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The little legs splash around in the pond.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL two beautiful little girls in matching blue dresses, splashing the water on each other. They both fall completely into the water, then get up laughing, grab hold of each other's hands, and run out of the pond onto the grassy field.

CUT TO:

THE BLACKNESS.

PUNISHER'S VOICE

There is so much evil... so much violence... so many guilty... that it is too easy to forget... innocence still exists.

INT. JOSIE'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

DOLLY WITH SHAKE, a filthy disheveled bum, as he hobbles through the incredibly smoky, noise-filled bar. He shambles over to a table in the corner where a BLIND MAN with flaming red hair, a blue down jacket, and dark green sunglasses is sitting, his walking cane beside him.

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CONTINUED:

SHAKE

Prithy, fair Matt, canst thou find
it in thy generous heart to spare
a paltry few shekels with which you'd
not mind to part?

The man puts a dollar on the table.

MATT

Take it, Shake.

SHAKE

(pocketing it)

Matt, thou art a gentleman and a
scholar, and from the bottom of my
heart, I thank thee for thy dollar.

Shake shuffles over and leans across the bar. TWO
LONGSHOREMEN move over a tad, holding their noses.

SHAKE

Thomas! Thomas!

(waves his dollar)

Bubble bubble, toil and trouble,
bring me a whiskey and tonic, on the
double!

THOMAS, the big bartender, turns to Shake.

THOMAS

Take a hike, Shakespeare.

SHAKE

(waving the dollar)

Good sir, I...

THOMAS

You make noise, you talk stupid, and
you smell like shit. Get him outta
here!

TWO BURLY BOUNCERS flank Shake, pick him up by his arms,
and start carrying him out as he shouts over his shoulder.

SHAKE

There's none more cursed this I
think, than he who refuses his fellow
man a drink! Thomas! THOMAAAASS!

EXT. JOSIE'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Shake goes flying out the doors onto his ass. He straightens himself up, brushing off his filthy coat.

SHAKE

A pox on your pox, you pox-ridden pox!

He turns and starts shuffling down the sidewalk. As he passes a dark ALLEYWAY he hears:

- PSSSST!! -

He stops.

- PSSSSTT! -

Curious, he cranes his neck to look into the alley.

DARKNESS.

INT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Shake slowly enters the alley.

SHAKE

Who goes there like a thief in
blackest night?

His FOOT steps right into a NYLON NOOSE on the ground. A MOTORCYCLE roars to life in the alley, its lights flashing on. It jerks forward and the noose tightens around Shake's foot and he is swept off his feet. The CORD is attached to the back of the motorcycle and looped over the bottom rungs of a low fire escape so that Shake is hanging upside down by his foot, swinging in the air. The motorcycle is turned around, its LIGHTS shining right in Shake's eyes. A black booted FOOT kicks down the kick stand.

SHAKE'S POV UPSIDE DOWN

as through the glaring lights a huge FIGURE approaches until the lights from the street reveal the PUNISHER'S FACE staring right into ours, not a face you want to see staring into yours.

PUNISHER

I've been looking for you all over town. I don't like being stood up, Shake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHAKE

(barely able to speak)
An... emergency at the last moment
did arise, to which I...

The Punisher's huge hand wraps around Shake's mouth.

PUNISHER

No time for this. Where's it coming
in, Shake?

He releases his hand from Shake's face.

SHAKE

Honestly, punitive one... I know not
of what you spea...

The Punisher shuts him up again.

PUNISHER

Marseilles shipment, being picked
up by Tarrone and Jaco's boys...
working together... very publicized.
Where is it coming in?

He lets go of Shake's mouth.

SHAKE

What... has your humble fool to gain,
oh King of Pain, if from offering
this information I do not refrain?

The Punisher reaches up and dangles a BOTTLE of Johnny
Walker Red in front of Shake's nose.

SHAKE

Pier 42, one o'clock, the transaction
will occur upon the dock.

The Punisher puts the bottle down on the ground and walks
back to the still-humming motorcycle. He gets on, guns
the engine, then reaches back and cuts the cord. Shake
falls to the ground and the Punisher drives out of the
alley...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

... and out onto the street, down which he instantly
disappears. Shake comes hobbling out of the alley and
takes a big swig of the whiskey. He SHOUTS after the
Punisher...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHAKE

All the world's a stage and we're
all just goddamn out-of-work-actors,
you miserable nut.

He takes another swig and:

EXT. HUDSON RIVER - NIGHT

A medium-sized TRAWLER is chugging slowly through the water toward the lights of the city. On its deck are several FRENCHMEN in work clothes, the type who dress well but are now on the job. One of them, their leader, calls to the back of the boat.

FRENCH LEADER

Allez vite! Une hevre s'approche!

The man behind the wheel nods, and gives the engine some more steam.

EXT. PIER 42 - NIGHT

There are two vans and several cars parked out on the desolate pier. A DOZEN ITALIANS are standing in various positions around the pier, alert and ready. CARLO, their leader, turns to FREDO, another man.

CARLO

Give me a perimeter security check,
Fredo.

Fredo removes a small RADIO TRANSMITTER from his belt and speaks into it.

FREDO

Position two, check.

EXT. PIER ENTRANCE - NIGHT

There are THREE GUARDS hidden in the shadows by the gates. One of them raises a transmitter.

GUARD

Position two, check.

EXT. SECOND ENTRANCE - NIGHT

TWO more MEN, in the shadows. One raises a transmitter.

MAN

Position three, check.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

On the roof of one of the warehouses right on the pier are two more GUARDS, looking through INFRA-RED SCOPED RIFLES at the activity on the pier. One raises a transmitter.

GUARD #1

Position four, check.

He lowers the transmitter. Then a huge HAND wraps around his face from behind and - CRACK! - breaks his neck.

The other man spins around but a FOOT streaks in toward the CAMERA and...

EXT. HUDSON RIVER - NIGHT

The Frenchmen walk around the boat, keeping themselves busy. One man shouts out:

FRENCHMAN

Papillon! Regardez la!

The leader rushes to the other side of the boat.

A COAST GUARD CUTTER is approaching them. It turns its BRIGHT LIGHTS on.

The trawler is lit up like the day.

FRENCHMAN

Merde!

From the Coast Guard cutter a VOICE comes over a bullhorn.

VOICE

This is the United States Coast Guard. Please stop your boat and prepare to be boarded.

The French leader motions to his men and their engine stops. The Coast Guard cutter slows down as well and slides in beside the trawler. There are several SILHOUETTES OF MEN standing on the deck of the cutter.

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CONTINUED:

The CAPTAIN holding the bullhorn is in the forefront. As the boats pull together, we see he is a tall JAPANESE MAN. The boats bump up against each other.

FRENCH LEADER

Captain, you do not understand...
we are just pulling into port because
we have sprung a leak. You can look
at it yourself

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

The filthy water splashes against the side of the French trawler. Then, without warning, a black FIGURE rises from the depths and appears at the surface of the water. In a second, it is followed by TWO MORE FIGURES.

CLOSE ON

A BLACK GLOVED HAND, with a SUCTION CUP in its palm, adhering to the side of the trawler. It lets go, and

FAR SHOT

of the shapes, as they begin to climb up the side of the trawler, like three giant spiders.

EXT. BOAT DECK, - NIGHT

The Japanese "Captain" smiles a cold smile at the French leader.

JAPANESE CAPTAIN

No! You don't understand. You
haven't sprung a leak yet... but you
will now.

The French leader looks at him in confusion. Then there is a SHOUT from one of the men on the deck, and all the French spin around.

There are THREE JAPANESE MEN on the deck of the boat. All in black, evil WEAPONS in their hands, dripping water. TAK, the largest, is holding a deadly "sword with cutting knife" -- a longsword with a short, curved bayonet jutting from above the handgrip. SATO, tall and slim, is holding a KYOKETSU SHOGE, a short sword with a hooked blade jutting from its side, a long metal CHAIN extending from the handgrip. KOSHIGI, in front, holds two rounded SAI.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The French leader shouts, and the French dopers go for their guns, but it's too late...

In a blur of speed Sato dives to the side and THROWS something to the deck. There is a blinding FLASH as the chemicals EXPLODE, and before the French can gather their wits...

Tak spins, whirling like a deadly human scythe, cutting down a half-dozen men in an instant. The rest of the French get it together and start to shout at him but...

LOW ANGLE ON

Koshigi, leaping through the air like a black phantom. He lands amongst the dopers... he hits one man across the face with a sai, gets another man through the chest with the other, then wheels and kicks another right overboard.

A metal CHAIN wraps around a man's neck. Sato slices a doper with his short sword, then yanks on the chain attached to its grip, jerking the man snared around the neck forward, right into the weapon's hook.

Two Frenchmen get a clear shot at Tak. They FIRE their guns, but Tak spins and DEFLECTS both bullets with his sword, creating brilliant blue flashes.

Sato whirls, hurling two black THROWING KNIVES...

Both gunmen go down to the deck of the boat, knives jutting from their backs.

The last three Frenchmen run up to Koshigi, holding machine guns. His back is against a wall. They open FIRE but Koshigi does a BACKFLIP, carrying him to the second level of the boat. The BULLETS slam viciously into the tin wall Koshigi was in front of a second ago.

LOW ANGLE ON

Koshigi, throwing both sai, and...

Two of the Frenchmen scream in agony, the swords jutting from their chests. The third raises his gun, but - SLASH - he goes down under Tak's sword.

As soon as the French are all down, the rest of the men on the Coast Guard boat begin to climb aboard the trawler deck. We can see now that they are all JAPANESE. They shoot all the bodies with SILENCED machine guns, making sure they'll never get up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Koshigi shouts for a STOP. Then he walks back down from the second level, pulls his sai out of the men they killed, and barks another ORDER in Japanese. The men immediately rush over and begin to throw the bodies of the French overboard.

Tak, Sato and Koshigi walk to the edge of the boat, and one by one, as graceful as swans, dive off the side. They seem to DISAPPEAR into the darkness, and there is no sound of their bodies entering the water.

EXT. PIER 42 - NIGHT

The Italians are still standing there, waiting. Carlo is pacing angrily, nodding his head.

CARLO

Fifteen minutes late... Jesus
Christ... fuckin' faggot Frenchmen.

They LIGHTS flash on a short distance away and the French trawler comes into view.

FREDO

Here they come!

CARLO

All right! Come on, you guys. Look
professional.

The Italians spread out into position around the pier, ready for danger as the trawler approaches the dock.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

An AUTO SHOTGUN is strapped to a black-garbed back. A BLACK ARROW is snapped into a STEEL CROSSBOW. An Uzi submachine gun is slung around a shoulder and held over a WHITE SKULL on the front of a black T-shirt.

EXT. PIER ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The three guards in the shadows look out onto the street, their eyes alert, when SUDDENLY, all at once, they are JERKED BACK OFFSCREEN.

EXT. SECOND ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The two guards there are as alert as the first three were. One of them turns to his friend when - WHOOSH - a black figure RISES in front of him and...

EXT. PIER 42 - NIGHT

The trawler approaches the dock. The Italians stand around like a little army, waiting tensely, all eyes on the water.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

The Punisher watches as the trawler bumps up against the dock. A smile slowly starts to spread across his face. Then SUDDENLY something below catches his attention.

HIGH ANGLE - PUNISHER'S POV

There are THREE DARK FIGURES moving up behind the unsuspecting Italians on the pier, as silent as cats.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

The Punisher's eyebrows knit. What the hell is going on?

EXT. PIER 42 - NIGHT

Carlo steps up to the trawler, flanked by two of his men.

CARLO

You're fifteen minutes late, you poof
Frenchman. What's the big...?

His voice trails off. His men look at him. He falls face down on the ground, a slim black THROWING KNIFE sticking out of his neck. The two Italians spin around but...

- THWIIIP! -

Sato's metal chain wraps around one's neck, and before they know it, the three killers are among them, cutting, slashing, stabbing, an awesome force of destruction, and within several violent, beautiful, horrifying seconds, they are all dead on the pier.

Koshigi barks an order, and the men jump off the trawler onto the dock. Two of them run over to the dead Italians lying by the vans.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They go through their pockets, removing KEY RINGS, climb into the vans and start them, backing up toward the dock. Koshigi gives another order, and the Japanese rapidly begin to unload several CRATES from the trawler into one of the vans.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

The Punisher's face is in disbelief... He doesn't know what the hell is happening but he doesn't like it much. He hears a SOUND behind him and immediately ROLLS out of the way as...

- VIP! VEEEOOW! -

Bullets chip the roof right where his head was. There are two Japanese on the roof behind him, their silenced weapon spitting lead death, but the Punisher has not been around for five years because he is slow. Still rolling, he whips around his automatic shotgun, FIRES TWICE, and...

The two killers are blown right off the roof.

EXT. PIER 42 - NIGHT

The Japanese all spin around at the sound. One of them, standing by a car, looks up and...

- ZZZZZ THWOCK! -

An arrow with a nylon cord attached from its back hits him in the chest, passing right through him... slamming into the side of the car and CATCHING there.

MACHINE GUN FIRE ERUPTS all around the pier, sending the Japanese diving for cover behind the cars to the ground, shouting in panic to each other.

A grapple hook attached to one end of the cord is fixed to a niche in the wall.

The Punisher appears at the top of the roof. With one hand holding a small hook, he glides down the nylon cord that stretches from the warehouse roof through the dead Japanese, who is caught there standing like Jesus Christ, and into the car. The other hand is holding the Uzi and he flies down like a bat out of hell, spraying death in all directions. He hits the ground hard, right in front of the dead Japanese.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Another Japanese gets up, firing at the Punisher but...

The Punisher whirls, his Uzi firing, and the man is blown away.

A Japanese gets off two shots from the other side but...

The Punisher spins and nails him with the shotgun. KIRIGI, the man with the sai, shouts at the drivers in the vans. The Japanese who were loading the crates, slam the doors shut and the vans start to drive off the dock.

The Punisher rolls, comes up firing the shotgun and...

Another Japanese is BLOWN away. Sato dives behind a car, throwing something and...

- THOCK! -

A slim knife hits the Punisher in the muscle right below his neck.

PUNISHER

Aaarrgh!

He rolls under a car as bullets chip the concrete behind him. The Japanese have it together now and are BLOWING AWAY at the car the Punisher has gotten behind.

The vans are starting to drive off the dock and onto the pier. The Japanese stop firing for a moment to let them pass and...

The Punisher breaks from behind the car. BULLETS immediately start flying around him, but he runs behind one of the vans and jumps onto its side. The DRIVER inside sees him and begins swerving the van sharply. The Punisher reaches back, then SMASHES his fist in through the window, getting a grip on the door he is pressed up against. The driver pulls out a gun and levels it at the Punisher but the Punisher GRABS the hand, forcing it back until the gun is pointed right back at the driver's own face... The trigger is squeezed, fire erupts from the muzzle, and the driver falls forward hard. His FOOT pushes against the accelerator and...

The van roars past the other Japanese, the Punisher still hanging off the side, across the dock, and right into the water with a tremendous SPLASH! The Japanese all run to the edge of the dock and shoot into the water after the van.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOZENS OF BULLETS plow into the dark water, like angry dive bombing hornets.

The Japanese stop shooting. No one has come out of the water. SIRENS are beginning to be heard in the distance. Kirigi, Sato and Tak shout orders at the remaining men. They quickly load the remaining crates into the second van, then jump in themselves.

EXT. PIER ENTRANCE - DAWN

The first light of day is breaking on the horizon as the van drives out of the pier onto the street. The rest of the men run into TWO CARS waiting for them by the gate, which immediately pull out and drive after the van. They tear down the street, then disappear around the corner.

EXT. PIER 42 - MORNING

Lieutenant Jake Berkowitz and a stunned-looking Sergeant Kusack are walking side by side through the pier. There are DEAD BODIES scattered all over the pier and dock. MEDICS are covering them with plastic sheets, carrying them into several ambulances.

KUSACK

Christ! It's like a goddamn war zone.

BERKOWITZ

It is a goddamn war zone.

KUSACK

I recognize some of these guys... they belong to Freddie Jaco and Jim Tarrone. What are they doing here together? And who the hell are these Oriental guys?

They STOP in front of the still-standing corpse of the Japanese with the nylon cord stretching from his chest to the warehouse roof, the arrow still in the car behind him. Berkowitz looks the corpse in the face; its eyes are still wide open. He reaches over, closes the eyes, then looks up at the warehouse roof where the other end of the cord is connected.

BERKOWITZ

Merkel! Over here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A YOUNG POLICEMAN trots over to Berkowitz's side.

BERKOWITZ

Merkel! I want every shell lying on this pier picked up and sent to ballistics. All of them. I want them cross referenced with shells picked up from known attacks by the Punisher.

Merkel nods, then steps away. Kusack clears his throat.

KUSACK

Don't you think we should look into... ahh... other possibilities?

BERKOWITZ

Like what, a hydrogen bomb?

They are in front of a CRANE, which is pulling out the van that drove into the river. WATER spills out of its windows, the dead driver pale and bloated in the front.

BERKOWITZ

Beautiful...

Berkowitz turns and continues down the pier. Kusack looks on in sickly fascination for another moment, then quickly trots after the lieutenant.

INT. SEWER PASSAGEWAY - MORNING

HUGE LEGS splash through the filthy water... they are stumbling, unsteady. We hear a harsh, labored BREATHING. The legs trip, and...

- SPLASH! -

The Punisher falls face first into the black water. He lies there like that for a moment, then he slowly gets up and starts stumbling through the passage again.

INT. PUNISHER'S ROOM - MORNING

The Punisher collapses onto the floor of his small, cell-like cave. He is soaking wet, blood and sweat mingling with filthy sewer water. Sato's knife is still sticking out of the muscle below his neck. He crawls over to the wall, where he grabs another knife off a rack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, still on his knees, he cuts through his leather jacket, creating a tear big enough for him to be able to pull it off. Then he turns on the small stove he has in the corner next to him, and lays his knife on the blue flames. He reaches back down, grits his teeth and starts to pull on Sato's slim knife. It's deep. He works it in the wound, grimacing in pain, and finally gives it a sharp yank, pulling it right out. He GASPS in agony, crumpling to the ground. He slowly straightens up, rips off his T-shirt, and cleans the blood away from the wound. Then he reaches up and grabs the handle of the knife he laid on the fire; its blade is glowing, red-hot. He grits his teeth, pressing the blade to his wound and:

PUNISHER

Huuuuuaaghh!

EXT. SEWER PASSAGEWAY - MORNING

His cry of agony ECHOES back and forth through the black tunnels, growing dimmer and dimmer with each repetition.

EXT. BLACK TOWER - DAY

TILT DOWN the side of a huge black glass skyscraper in midtown Manhattan. When we reach the street we see the black limousine pull to a stop by the building's front doors.

The glass doors are opened by Tak and Koshigi, both dressed in super-slick, flashy KENZO fashions, and out steps LADY TANAKA, a thin, fiftyish Japanese woman in a white business suit.

CLOSE ON TANAKA

as she looks around herself, her eyes black and cold -- very, very dangerous eyes.

Sato steps out of the limousine and holds the door open for her. She steps in, followed by Tak and Koshigi. Then Sato closes the door and gets back into the limo. It pulls away from the curb and starts down the street. As it drives away we PAN with it and STOP on the WHEELS of a black motorcycle. A booted FOOT kicks up the stand, the engine roars to life, and the bike starts off after the limo.

EXT. BROOKLYN MANSION - DAY

There are a half-dozen limousines in a large driveway of a fantastic suburban mansion surrounded by a high wall with an iron gate at the front. There are several GUARDS in black at the gate, as well as by the doors of the mansion.

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

There is a huge oblong table in the center of a large living room. Seated around it are the five families' NEW BOSSES, all youngish, in their 40's, and very yuppie-looking: FREDDIE JACO, ROBERT DEFAZIO, JOHN SCALICE, RODDY GENOVESE, and JIM TARRONE, who we met before. Tony Franco is there as well, standing up, pacing back and forth. Sitting across from the Italians is Lady Tanaka, her hands crossed on the table. Sato, Koshigi and Tak stand behind her. Italian bodyguards are standing all over the room. As all this is revealed we HEAR the dragon lady talking.

TANAKA

... I will repeat... no disrespect was intended by interference with your delivery on Pier 42, and such an event will not occur again.

Freddie Jaco stands up, red in the face.

JACO

Yeah? If you got so much goodwill toward us, where's our smack?

TANAKA

Sold, for a profit of forty-five million dollars. Twice what you would have received for the same amount.

SCALICE

How? We control the distribution.

TANAKA

Who controls the supply, controls the distribution.

TARRONE

Why did you do it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TANAKA

It was meant as a demonstration of our ability to operate in this territory. If our demands are not met, however, there will be further interference.

JACO

Demands! We don't have to listen to this goddamn bullshit! Who the hell do you think you are?

TANAKA

We are Yakuza. When your ancestors were shepherds and farmers we were the most powerful criminal empire in Asia. We have decided to expand our interests at this time, and branch out to the West. You will find that not only is our capacity for violence far greater than yours, but that under the aegis of interlocking holding companies we have bought heavily into corporations your families hold stock in, and are prepared to instigate successful, or at the very least disastrous corporate raids on all of them.

(looks at the stunned

Italians)

If you think I am bluffing, here is a sample of your portfolios.

She gestures to Tak, who steps forward and puts a large sheaf of papers on the table. Freddie Jaco gets up again, but Tony Franco puts a hand on his shoulder and pushes him back into his chair. He speaks in a mediator's even tones.

FRANCO

All right, Ms. Tanaka. You will understand a certain resistance to what we can only see as an invasion by hostile forces. You have brought up some valid points, however, so I suggest you tell us just what the 'demands' you are referring to are.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TANAKA

You are a reasonable man, Mr. Franco.
And your reputation as a dangerous
one has earned my respect. First
of all, as a gesture of our good
will, we have killed the man known
as the Punisher.

The Italians all look at each other in complete shock.
Franco's eyes narrow.

FRANCO

Where's the corpse?

TANAKA

At the bottom of the Hudson River.

EXT. BROOKLYN MANSION - DAY

Her VOICE continues as we DOLLY PAST the limousines and
guards standing around outside.

TANAKA (V.O.)

... I think it is significant that
in five minutes the Yakuza was able
to accomplish what your combined
organizations could not in the five
years that you have been at war with
this man...

We are outside the gate now, DOLLYING PAST the legs of
several guards, until we STOP on a SEWER GRILLE by one
man's feet.

INT. SEWER CORRIDOR - DAY

TANAKA'S VOICE is coming from a rigged-up AMPLIFIER,
hooked into the wires on the filthy stone wall, a single
FLASHLIGHT lighting the set-up.

TANAKA (V.O.)

... This is just stated as a
recognition that our interests are
mutual and that we are able to act
on our words if we must...

A HAND holding a pencil is scribbling notes on a pad,
filled with the names of the Mafiosi attending the
meeting. The word TANAKA is circled twice.

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

The Italians are all silent. Tony Franco breathes deeply.

FRANCO

All right. What are your demands?

TANAKA

The existing families will still control the five territories, only now the Yakuza will have the freedom to operate in all territories with full immunity, as well as controlling the area known as Japan Town in the lower east side. Whichever territory we operate in, the controlling family will receive twenty-five percent of our profits. These are our demands.

Tony Franco is sadly shaking his head.

FRANCO

I am truly sorry. That is far too much to ask for.

JACO

(jumping up)

Damn straight. Now get out of here and never show your ass in any of the territories including Japan Town if you want to keep your yellow butt!

Lady Tanaka looks down at her hands.

TANAKA

You Americans have a great capacity for violence, but it is wild and unfocused.

Freddie Jaco gets up and walks over to Lady Tanaka. He stands up and faces her, towering over her. He sticks out his finger.

JACO

Let me tell you something, you little...

But Tanaka has reached out and grabbed his hand. She SQUEEZES, breaking his fingers. Jaco opens his mouth in agony. Then she bends her wrist down and Jaco is on his knees in front of her. She lets go of his hand and he collapses onto the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TANAKA

Measures are now being taken to insure your cooperation. Good day, gentlemen. When we next meet I suspect you will be more receptive to our proposals.

She rises and steps toward the door. Sato, Tak and Koshigi follow her, and they leave the room.

INT. SEWER CORRIDOR - DAY

LIGHTS flash on, an engine ROARS to life, and the motorcycle drives down the sewer passage, splashing through the filthy water, its lights growing dimmer and dimmer until it completely disappears.

EXT. SUBURBAN SCHOOL - DAY

GINNY, a pretty young girl of twelve, is walking out of the building, surrounded by several of her friends. They are swapping lipsticks and laughing with each other.

GINNY

I get the red... I hate the other stuff.

GIRLFRIEND

The red is gross, Ginny.

Suddenly the girls are PUSHED aside. An arm wraps itself around Ginny. TWO JAPANESE MEN drag her into a car waiting right at the corner while her girlfriends SCREAM, and drive away.

EXT. SUBURBAN MANSION - DAY

It's another large, pretty, mafia-type estate.

INT. PLAYROOM - DAY

Two little girls, five-year-old twins, are sitting on the floor, cross-legged, crying their faces off. Their nanny, a YOUNG GIRL of 18, is trying desperately to cheer them up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANNY

... Come on, girls. Your mommy will
be home soon... really she will.

No use. The Nanny walks over to a closet, pulls out a
big teddy bear, and holds its arms, walking across the
wall.

NANNY

Look... see the teddy, he doesn't
cry because he's big and strong.
Nothing can hurt Teddy.

As she passes the window it CRASHES INWARD, and she is
instantly pulled out of it by powerful hands, as if she
never existed.

CLOSE ON THE LITTLE GIRLS

They have stopped crying. TWO SHADOWS fall over them as
they look up with wide eyes.

EXT. ANOTHER SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

A BLACK LIMOUSINE drives in through the front gate. John
Scalice, one of the five bosses, gets out of the car
followed by two of his men, walks up to the front door
and opens it.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

There are DEAD SERVANTS strewn all about the floor, blood
spattered all over the walls. Scalice's men run in, their
guns drawn.

INT. KIDS' ROOM - DAY

Scalice bursts in through the door. The room is in
shambles, toys strewn all over the place. An old NANNY
is lying on the floor, stone dead. His eyes open wide
and he shouts...

SCALICE

NOOOO!

EXT. SCHOOL HOUSE - DAY

Tommy Franco comes out of the building, his books under his arm. Ahead of him in front of the school, a black limousine is waiting. He walks up to it and looks in. The CHAUFFEUR who took him to school is inside. Tommy knocks on the window and smiles.

TOMMY

Hey, Roger!

There is no response, so Tommy opens the back door himself and is IMMEDIATELY pulled inside the car.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Tommy is sitting next to a Yakuza SOLDIER whose arms are around him.

TOMMY

Hey, leggo! Roger!

But Roger doesn't move. ANOTHER YAKUZA rises from the front seat, pulls down the Chauffeur's lifeless body, takes his place and starts the car. The Yakuza next to Tommy reaches over, and...

TOMMY

Lemme out! Let gooomphh!

His mouth is taped shut.

INT. DIM STAIRCASE - DAY

Tommy, a blindfold around his eyes, is hustled up the long filthy staircase by the two Yakuza who kidnapped him.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

There are more Yakuza standing in front of an IRON DOOR. The Yakuza pull the blindfold off Tommy's face, rip the tape from his mouth, then open a door and shove him into...

INT. ROOM - DAY

Tommy looks around himself. There are FIFTEEN CHILDREN from the ages of five to thirteen sitting on the floor of the room, youngest and oldest alike weeping and terrified.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Among them are the kids we have actually seen being kidnapped. Tommy's mouth drops open.

TOMMY

... Holy shit...

INT. TARRONE MANSION LIVING ROOM - DAY

A black and white SLIDE PICTURE of LADY TANAKA, at a much younger age, fills the screen. Followed by another.

FRANCO (O.S.)

Lady Hidieko Tanaka, the first female warlord in Yakuza history. Take a good look at these, they're the only photos available of her before she assumed power.

The heads of the five families are sitting around the room, their faces drawn, an incredible tension in the air. Tony Franco is holding a remote control which he presses to change slides.

A PHOTO of Tanaka in graduation robes fills the screen.

FRANCO (O.S.)

Graduating Harvard business school, circa 1959. Top honors. First in her class. Went back to Japan and married Hiroshi Tanaka, a Yakuza general...

A PHOTO of Lady Tanaka with her husband and TWO CHILDREN fills the screen.

FRANCO (O.S.)

There he is. Those are their children.

JACO

Where are they? I want them found,
and then we kidnap them.

FRANCO

Not possible, Freddie.

The faces of the mobsters are taut... questioning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCO (O.S.)

In order to prove herself worthy to be Yakuza high command, Hidieko Tanaka murdered her husband and her two children. She slit their throats with a razor... while they were awake.

CLOSE ON TANAKA'S FACE

Her eyes are cold, inscrutable. The SLIDE changes to a photo of TAK and KOSHIGI, flanking Tanaka in a business meeting.

FRANCO (O.S.)

You met these beauties. They're known only as Tak and Koshigi.

A SLIDE of Tak, Koshigi and Sato pops on.

FRANCO (O.S.)

And that's Sato. No dossiers on them. They're rumored to be brothers, although no one knows for sure. What we do know is that they're collectively responsible for at least four hundred deaths... and that's only in Japan and China. They've constituted Tanaka's right arm for the last seven years.

The slide projector clicks OFF. Franco takes a hard look at the five bosses.

FRANCO

You think you're going to bargain with these people?

TARRONE

That's right, Tony.

FRANCO

We deal, our kids are dead, guaranteed.

JACO

(standing up)

We deal, we get our kids back, then
they're dead, guaranteed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCO

What do you think they are, stupid?
These people have plans within plans,
and you're not looking past your
noses.

SCALICE

We don't have a choice, Tony.

Franco is quiet. He walks over to a hanger and picks up
his coat.

FRANCO

Maybe not, but I'm not gonna be
there.

JACO

Then there's nothing that can save
your boy.

FRANCO

You're wrong, Freddy. There is
something that could.

(walks to doorway, then
turns)

But it's lying at the bottom of the
Hudson River.

He shoulders his coat, then walks out of the room.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - NIGHT

The huge train station is full of people, milling around
all over, looking for their gates.

Old Shake is moving clumsily through the terminal, as
filthy and disheveled as ever. He slickly removes a POST
from a newsstand he stumbles by, then walks over to a
two-sided bench and sits down on it, opening the paper.

No sooner has he opened it than a BIG FIGURE sits down
on the other side of the bench, his back to Shake. At
no point do we switch over to the other side of the bench
and see the face, just hear that terrible cracked voice.

SHAKE

Ah... I knew you'd never consent
to miss out on all the fun... how
does it go, allegedly dead one?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PUNISHER

Word on the street is the families
have agreed to deal with the Yakuza.
No one knows why. Why?

SHAKE

Our Oriental compatriots from the
East have lots of chutzpah, to say
the least. They abducted the
children and grandchildren of the
new bosses, who are now quite anxious
to recoup their losses.

The Punisher's back stiffens. His voice deepens an
octave.

PUNISHER

Children...?

EXT. FIELD - DAY

GOLDEN SUNLIGHT. The two barefoot little girls run
through the grass, over to a PICNIC BLANKET. Then they
suddenly stop laughing. One of them SCREAMS, as they are
swept off their feet by two sets of powerful ARMS...

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the Punisher's BACK.

PUNISHER

... innocent... children...
(takes a deep breath)
Where are they being held?

SHAKE

If that I did know, you'd be the
first to whom I'd go.

A BOTTLE of whiskey is set down on the bench next to
Shake.

PUNISHER

This is... a lot of information for
a bottle of Johnny Walker Red.

Shake's entire face reflects a deep hurt. He is, at once,
sober. He picks up the bottle and hands it back to the
other side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHAKE

Do you really think I do this for
a quart of liquor?

The Punisher is silent for a moment.

PUNISHER

You're a good man, Shake. I'm sorry.

Shake's eyes widen and he starts to turn.

SHAKE

Can I believe my own ears? Is this
an apology that I hea...

But he is alone on the bench. The Punisher is gone. Only the bottle of Johnny Walker Red remains. Shake grins hugely, reaches down and grabs the bottle, stuffing it into his overcoat. He stands and cups a hand to his mouth.

SHAKE

(shouting)

Good hunting, avenging one!

He tips his filthy hat to several startled people, then shuffles away.

EXT. BLACK TOWER - DAY

The huge building stands against the midtown skyline, an evil phallus reaching into the sky.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

There are several people inside it, including Tak and Koshigi.

The LIGHTS flash up... 32 - 33 - 34 - until it stops on 53, the last floor. Everyone gets out except for Tak and Koshigi.

The doors close.

Tak takes out an electronic REMOTE CONTROL and presses a combination on it. The elevator STARTS UP AGAIN to an UNNUMBERED FLOOR. Tak presses the remote. The elevator stops and the doors slide open.

INT. YAKUZA CORRIDOR - DAY

Tak and Koshigi step into a wide white corridor, the wall decorated with Japanese paintings and scrolls. There are Yakuza walking back and forth into rooms, passing by them as they walk through an archway.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - DAY

Tak and Koshigi pass through a large room full of Yakuza in black tights and sweatpants, doing karate and Ninjitsu. Several are on the side practicing Kendo with Japanese swords. Sato is leading a dozen men in kicking and punching exercises. They all stop to bow to Tak and Koshigi. Sato barks an order, one of the men runs up to take his place, and he joins Tak and Koshigi as they leave the room.

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

The three assassins walk up the steps to another level and...

INT. MUSEUM ROOM - DAY

They pass through a large room full of glass display cases. There are swords, ancient scrolls and urns in glass cases all around the room. There are ancient prints in glass cases all along the walls. They pass through the room and...

INT. TANAKA'S ROOM - DAY

The room is huge, all-white carpeting and Japanese decorations. There is a large BED in the corner, long red curtains hanging from the ceiling above it. One side of the room is all one-way windows looking out into the city. Toward the front of the room there is a vast marble desk behind which Lady Tanaka is sitting. The doors are opened by two black-garbed Yakuza, and Tak, Sato and Koshigi walk into the room. The dialogue is translated from Japanese.

TANAKA

The Italians have agreed to meet with us. They are predictably sentimental when it comes to their children.

(pauses)

You have spoken to Hassan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOSHIGI

Mr. Hassan says that there are buyers for all the children. At current market value they should bring us at least two hundred thousand each, plus five hundred thousand surcharge for being the children of known American criminals.

Lady Tanaka reaches over to a COMPUTER on her desk, punches in several calculations, and looks up.

TANAKA

Business is good.

INT. TENEMENT ROOM - DAY

The Mafia kids are all huddled in the corners, unwashed, still terrified. Twelve-year-old Ginny Genovese is sobbing heavily. Tommy Franco gets up from the corner he is in and moves over to sit beside her.

TOMMY

Hey... come on... we'll be back home soon... don't worry so much.

She doesn't stop crying. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out an almost-finished pack of LIFESAVER CANDIES.

TOMMY

Here... suck on one of these... it helps when your stomach gets real scared. Take 'em both.

GINNY

(through her tears)

It's all Daddy's fault... he's bad... I saw it on the news on TV... He's bad and I'm being punished and I hate him...

TOMMY

Come on... he's your dad, he loves you.

(gives her the
Lifesavers)

Come on... take 'em.

Ginny wipes her eyes and takes one, putting it in her mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tommy gives her a brave smile, then the DOOR is thrown open and two YAKUZA SOLDIERS, one holding a box full of McDonald's hamburgers, walk in.

YAKUZA

Here! McDonald's for lunch.

A little girl, one of the Jaco twins, bursts into tears.

LITTLE TWIN

I'm not hungry! I want my daddy!

YAKUZA

(approaching her
menacingly)

Your father dead soon. You never
go home again.

Tommy snarls, jumping up, runs over to the Yakuza and PUNCHES him. Anger flares into the man's eyes and he slaps Tommy, sending him flying backward. He straightens up and points at the terrified children.

YAKUZA

Your fathers all dead soon! We are
Yakuza. You listen to us and you
don't get hurt. There is no one can
help you now.

He turns and, followed by the second soldier, leaves the room, slamming the door.

EXT. JAPAN TOWN STREET - NIGHT

KRAKOOOOWW!

Lightning cuts through the sky like a knife. NEON LIGHTS flicker on and off as heavy rain falls onto the black tar streets, creating rainbows and reflections of light and color, smoke rising from manhole covers like steam from hell.

INT. BASEMENT GAMBLING DEN - NIGHT

In a smoky, dimly-lit gambling hall, a crowd of Japanese stand around tables, throwing dice, betting on roulette wheels, drinking at a bar on one side of the room. The place is LOUD and PACKED.

EXT. GAMBLING HALL - NIGHT

CLOSE on TWO JAPANESE GUARDS standing as nonchalantly as someone out in the rain for no reason can stand, blocking a stairway leading down into the darkness. A HUGE BACK STEPS INTO THE FRAME. The guards are looking way up.

GUARD #1

What you want, mister?

PUNISHER'S BACK

To go in.

GUARD #1

(shaking his head)

No. Only Japanese inside. Go away,
before you have trouble.

INT. GAMBLING DEN - NIGHT

The Men all continue their gambling, less loud than the Chinese but no slouches in the noise department either when...

- CRRUNCH! -

The entire front DOOR is torn right off its hinges, collapsing inward. IMMEDIATE SILENCE. Everyone turns and looks.

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER

dripping water from the rain, wearing only his T-shirt, black pants and combat boots, the white skull glowing in the dim lights. He steps into the room, one of the door guards slung over his left shoulder, the other hanging by the belt from the Punisher's right hand. DOLLY WITH HIM as he walks slowly into the center of the room, men moving away from him on all sides as he passes. He stops in the center of the room and throws the guard from his shoulder onto the floor, then one-handed he tosses the second up onto a gambling table.

The Japanese are all in awe. They are completely silent.

The Punisher looks around at the hostile faces surrounding him from all sides.

PUNISHER

Where are the children?

Silence. One GAMBLER steps forward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GAMBLER

They say you dead.

The Punisher's black eyes bore into him.

PUNISHER

Answer the question, or they'll say
the same about you. Only this time
they'll be right.

The gambler looks around. There are at least forty men surrounding the Punisher. He turns to his friend, says something in Japanese and they both laugh. He SHOUTS something at the other men, and they all get into FIGHTING STANCES, encircling the giant in their midst. The Punisher eases into a fighting stance of his own. Turning in a slow circle, poised as an arrow, he stops.

PUNISHER

That's not the answer I wanted to
hear.

The Japanese start to move in. One man SHOUTS, attacking with a kick. The Punisher spins with unbelievable speed for a man his size and the Japanese goes flying into his friends. Two more men attack... BAM! BAM! One whipping kick brings them down. A man jumps the Punisher from behind - WHOCK! - an elbow destroys his solar plexus. EVERYONE MOVES IN AT ONCE and the Punisher is like a tornado in a wheat field, spinning, kicking, punching, throwing. Japanese are flying in all directions, blood spurting from open wounds, the brittle sound of brutal blows and breaking bones punctuating the battle. The Punisher knocks down one man, picks him up by his leg and swings him around in a circle, knocking Japanese right and left. He THROWS the man into an advancing group, then jumps right into them, tearing into them with inhuman brutality and fury.

FAR SHOT OF THE DEN

as several final combatants attack the Punisher, only to be torn down as quickly and brutally as the others.

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER

He looks around himself, a terrible blood lust in his eyes.

The den is in shambles. There are twenty-five Japanese writhing on the floor all over the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The remaining men are flat against the walls, desperate to stay out of his way.

The Punisher straightens up out of his fighting stance, his huge arms at his sides. He takes a step forward and...

All the upright Japanese break north. They head for the front and back doors, bolting out of there like deer escaping from a forest fire.

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER'S FACE

An indescribable expression in his eyes.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

An entire wall SHATTERS from a series of shotgun blasts. EXPENSIVE VASES blow up like so much garbage.

Japanese men and women, as well as some whites, hide under low tables, covering their heads with their hands, screaming their faces off.

The Punisher walks through the restaurant, demolishing it with shotgun blasts, blowing everything in sight to smithereens, creating unbelievable destruction and...

EXT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

People run out of the doors into the rain, screaming and crying.

INT. JAPAN TOWN BAR - NIGHT

A MIRROR shatters from a burst of machine gun fire. DOZENS OF JAPANESE go diving for cover as the Punisher strides through the red-lit bar, blowing away the furniture and the walls with blasts of machine gun fire.

He spins around, bullets flying and...

Liquor bottles pop and explode, shattered by hundreds of bullets, as the BARTENDER lies on the floor behind the counter, his hands over his head.

All the customers hug the floor, their eyes closed, as bullets whiz through the air and slam into the walls all around them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOW ANGLE OF THE PUNISHER

as he turns around, the red lights glowing hellishly on his face, his machine gun spitting a non-stop stream of destruction and...

EXT. JAPAN TOWN STREET - NIGHT

A half-dozen POLICE CARS are on the street outside of the shattered front window of the Japanese bar. Cops in raincoats are being shouted at by the owners, who are pointing and gesturing at their ruined window.

A TELEVISION SCREEN

BONNIE TUNG, a female anchor person, is standing under an umbrella, followed by a VIDEO CAMERA as she speaks into a mic. Behind her is the front of the demolished Japanese restaurant. There are cops and police cars all over the place.

BONNIE TUNG

... Half the city's police force is gathered right here tonight in the usually quiet area known as Japan Town. For some reason, it seems to be a neighborhood under attack by a one-man army... the vigilante known as the Punisher. Miraculously, although there were numerous superficial injuries, no one was seriously hurt, and no lives were lost...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Jake Berkowitz, in his incredibly sloppy apartment, sitting in an armchair facing the TV, surrounded by dozens of empty beer cans. He is still wearing his gun, in a shoulder holster over his shirt.

BONNIE TUNG (V.O.)

In the past the Punisher has been known to take extraordinary measures in his self-declared war on organized crime, but has never been known to put the life of a civilian in danger. Tonight this changed, and the question on everybody's lips is... why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Berkowitz reaches over and presses a remote, shutting off the television.

BERKOWITZ

Why, Frank?

He slowly gets out of the chair, walks to a closet, and opens it. He moves aside a bunch of clothes, then digs even farther back, until his hands rest on an old, faded SHOE BOX. He carries it over to the kitchen table, sits down, and lifts off top.

CLOSE ON BERKOWITZ'S HANDS

as they pick out the contents of the box. A series of MEDALS and military decorations... two PURPLE HEARTS. A GOLDEN POLICE SHIELD, with the name "Lieutenant Frank Castle" engraved into the shining badge. The hands pick up several PHOTOGRAPHS...

Berkowitz's FACE reflects deep, painful emotion as he turns over the pictures...

A PHOTO of Berkowitz and Frank Castle in happier times, both in UNIFORM, pretending to choke each other. Another one, this time with Berkowitz pointing a gun at Castle's face, while Frank lifts his hands in mock surrender, a ridiculous expression of horror on his face. Then a PHOTO of Castle holding two LITTLE GIRLS in his arms, the little girls we have seen running through the fields in quick flashes.

BERKOWITZ

... Why?

HOLD ON the photograph.

CUT TO:

AN IDENTICAL PHOTOGRAPH

only this one tattered and torn. PULL BACK TO REVEAL the Punisher, sitting on the filthy stones of some long forgotten SEWER PASSAGEWAY, looking at the picture in the light provided by the headlight from his motorcycle. He covers the photo with his other hand, and whispers to himself...

PUNISHER

Why?

INT. JAPANESE BAR - NIGHT

Several Japanese men are standing around the bar counter, speaking urgently in stiff, gruff Japanese tones. SOMEONE is trying to get over their shoulders to the bar but is constantly being shrugged off. It is Shake. He looks bad, smells bad, his eyes watering. One of the Japanese finally turns to him.

JAPANESE

Get out of here!

SHAKE

Canst thou not spare drink, prithee,
for an accidentally passing
occidental, namely me?

The Japanese turns and barks something to one of his companions. The man grabs Shake and pushes him toward the door.

SHAKE

You're a sad reflection on your race!
In mine eyes you've lost much face...

EXT. JAPAN TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Shake goes flying out of the door onto the wet pavement. He stands up and looks all about him, a tremendously excited look in his eyes. He starts shambling down the street. Police cars pass him by, their strobbing lights drowning all of Japan Town in flashing red. Shake passes by groups of Japanese standing out in the rain, watching all the cops. He turns into a corner, and...

INT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

He enters an incredibly narrow alleyway between two buildings. He stops, pulls an IRON JACK out of his overcoat, bends down and lifts the cover off a manhole in the pavement. Then he climbs down into the darkness. The cover is slid shut and...

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

Shake climbs down the metal rungs leading down deeper into the sewer. It is almost pitch black. When he reaches the floor, he stops and peers into the shadows.

SHAKE

Hallooooo! Hallooooo!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lights flash on and he sees the Punisher sitting on his black motorcycle. Shake runs over, tremendously excited.

SHAKE

We have scotched the snake, not killed it, but it seems, O Subtle One, that through your little ploy, not discreet but plain, I, your humble linguistic expert, the whereabouts of a certain pack of babes was able to ascertain!

He starts clumsily climbing onto the back of the cycle, but the Punisher gently pushes him back.

PUNISHER

You've already done enough.

SHAKE

All my life, I've stood aside... but on this night, with you I'll ride.

The Punisher hesitates a moment, then guns the engine, reaches back and HOISTS Shake onto the motorcycle.

SHAKE

Ah, what a team we make... down in history we shall go as the Maniac and Shake.

The motorcycle ROARS. The Punisher kicks it into gear and it disappears down the sewer passageway, its lights growing dimmer and dimmer.

EXT. LUMBERYARD - NIGHT

The Punisher enters the frame. He has a black leather jacket over his shirt, several weapons slung across his back. He moves quietly, stealthily through the dark lumberyard, ducking behind machines and piles of wood as he makes his way toward the large WAREHOUSE in the center of the yard. The whole place seems to be completely deserted.

He ducks into the warehouse shadows, then works his way around the wall until he is at a steel ladder leading to the roof. He makes sure he is not being watched, then swings onto the ladder and swiftly begins to climb to the top.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

The Punisher comes up off the ladder and treads softly across the roof until he is at a glass SKYLIGHT. He bends over and peers down into the warehouse.

DARKNESS. He can't see anything but shadows and moonlight.

ANGLE ON THE PUNISHER

As he looks down a FIGURE moves in behind him. The Punisher sees it in the glass but - BAM! - he's hit in the face, then kicked right into the skylight and...

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The Punisher comes CRASHING through the skylight. He tries to grab several beams on his way down, but doesn't quite make it. He goes falling down down forty feet to the ground. He hits with a tremendous THUD, pieces of glass from the demolished skylight crashing down all around him.

LAMPS flash on all over and the entire warehouse is doused with light. The Punisher is lying right in the center of the huge empty warehouse, cut and bleeding. Japanese Men, YAKUZA, move in from all sides, surrounding the fallen giant, machine guns leveled. Tak and Sato are there at the front.

A long ROPE drops down from the shuttered skylight, and Koshigi slides down into the warehouse, unnaturally graceful, touching down with the lightness of a feather. He steps up to the Punisher who is somehow, impossibly, trying to struggle to his feet.

KOSHIGI

I see we did not kill you at the river. Who are you working for?

The Punisher, barely able to stand on his legs, reaches a full standing position.

PUNISHER

... Where... are... the children?

KOSHIGI

You have been tricked. We have leaked false information into the streets hoping to catch someone stupid like yourself. You will never find them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Punisher winces. He takes a step toward Koshigi. The Yakuza all cock their weapons. Sato shouts an order at them and they all lower their guns. Then Sato and Tak step forward beside Koshigi and face the Punisher.

PUNISHER

This isn't about children... let them go... they're innocent.

KOSHIGI

In war, there are no innocents.

PUNISHER

If any... of those kids... are hurt...

KOSHIGI

... You will be in no position to do anything about it.

He steps forward, then spins around with a kick. The Punisher tries to block it but Koshigi gets under it and hits the big man right in the stomach. Koshigi attacks again, but the Punisher gets his leg and sends him crashing to the floor. Tak jerks forward, kicking the Punisher in the face. The Punisher throws a punch, but Tak blocks it, then hits the Punisher once, twice, three times. The Punisher blocks a kick but - BAM! - he is hit in the side by Sato. He tries to fend him off but he is shattered by two thunderkicks from Koshigi. The Punisher stands there doubled over, refusing to go down. Sato steps forward, then throws a double spinning kick, hitting the Punisher twice in the head. The Punisher goes CRASHING to the floor. There is a DEAD SILENCE as the Punisher picks himself up slowly, impossibly, and stands once again. Sato looks questioningly at Koshigi: Who the hell is this guy?

Tak SHOUTS and attacks but the Punisher slams him with an elbow. Sato spins kicking but the Punisher moves and smacks him to the ground. Koshigi hits the Punisher in the back, but his leg is grabbed and he is SLAMMED to the floor, then kicked in the face by the PUNISHER'S boot.

A burst of EXCLAMATIONS rises from the throats of the surrounding Yakuza. Koshigi rolls away from the Punisher. Tak attacks again and the Punisher blocks, but Sato hits him in the side. Koshigi is behind the Punisher now, and he chops him in the neck, then kicks the back of his leg. The Punisher falls to one knee -- Sato double kicks him in the head and - WHAM! - Koshigi kicks the Punisher in the stomach, then brings his foot up under his chin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Punisher stumbles back, lifted to his feet, and totters like a giant oak tree about to collapse. The Yakuza all look at him, their eyes filled with expectation. The Punisher stays precariously on his feet a moment longer, then his legs give out, his head tilts back and he falls CRASHING to the floor. The Yakuza move in around him. His HEAD jerks up for a second, sending them a step back, then it collapses a final time.

Sato, Tak and Koshigi straighten themselves out. Koshigi barks several ORDERS and the half-dozen Yakuza lower their weapons, bend over the Punisher and lift him onto their shoulders. Koshigi shouts another order and they begin to carry the huge body out of the warehouse.

EXT. LITTLE ITALY STREET - DAY

A black limousine drives through the traffic, the sun bright in the blue sky.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

Another limo rumbles slowly, ominously through the traffic... it turns a corner.

EXT. LA STRADA PARKING LOT - DAY

One by one, FIVE LIMOUSINES file into the parking lot and park side by side. The DOORS open, and a DOZEN GUARDS step out of the cars, followed by the five bosses. TWO GUARDS run ahead as the others start walking through the lot.

INT. LA STRADA - DAY

The two soldiers step in and walk through the dimly-lit, spacious Italian restaurant. It is relatively busy; about half the tables are occupied. The soldiers scrutinize everyone as they pass.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY

They open a door and walk in, looking into the stalls to make sure the place is empty.

INT. LADIES' ROOM - DAY

A WOMAN putting on perfume is startled by the two soldiers. They walk through, looking into all the stalls.

INT. LA STRADA - DAY

The bosses, flanked by their guards, walk through the restaurant toward a large table near the back wall.

TARRONE

Maybe Tony was right... I don't like this...

JACO

Relax... We picked the spot... I know this place like my own kitchen.

The bosses pull chairs and sit at the table. Their bodyguards sit at two tables flanking the one the bosses are at.

JACO

(leaning over the table)

When this is over, those scumbags are history, you guys hear me? History.

MAITRE D' (O.S.)

Excuse me, Mr. Jaco.

The red-vested MAITRE D' sets down a tray with five sparkling glasses and a BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE on the table. He pops open the champagne.

MAITRE D'

Miss Tanaka called to say she will be a few minutes late. The house's finest, with her compliments.

He pours the champagne into the glasses. Scalice picks one up, but Jim Tarrone stops him. He gestures to one of the bodyguards.

TARRONE

Hey... Mikey, come here...

The big man gets up and walks over to Tarrone, who pours some champagne into a regular glass, then hands it to him.

TARRONE

Try that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mikey looks around. All the bosses are staring at him. He gulps.

TARRONE

Try it.

Mikey closes his eyes and drinks. Nothing. They wait a few seconds. Still nothing.

TARRONE

All right, get out of here.

SCALICE

You're gettin' paranoid, Jimmy.

He reaches for his glass, as do the others. They raise the glasses, but take one last look at the guards' table.

Mikey is sitting down, just fine.

They all take a sip, except for Jaco, who is leaning over the table again.

JACO

When this is over, we put aside whatever differences we have, and pool all our strength together, until those bastards are gone.

There are murmurs of assent from the others, then...

GENOVESE

Shut up, guys, here she comes.

All in white, Lady Tanaka, flanked by Tak and Sato, has walked in through the doorway. She nods to the Maitre D', then walks through the restaurant until she is standing in front of the table the bosses are at. The Italians can barely disguise the hatred in their eyes.

TANAKA

So, I see Mr. Tony Franco has declined to attend. He is a wise man, as wise as you are stupid.

The Italians are flabbergasted. Lady Tanaka takes a step back, her hands held behind her back like a Drill Sergeant and BARKS AN ORDER in Japanese. Madness. EVERYONE in the entire goddamn restaurant, men and women, get up out of their seats, SILENCED MACHINE GUNS leveled at the mafiosos. All of them are HIRED KILLERS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The mafia guards get up out of their seats, reaching into their jackets but...

TWENTY MUZZLES spit DEADLY FIRE and the St. Valentine's Day Massacre pales to a picnic, as all the bodyguards are mowed down... SLOW MOTION... Blood flying everywhere, tables splintering... bodies crashing. Then it is over. SILENCE. AN OMINOUS BASE CHORD begins on the soundtrack, as the five bosses look around themselves in utter horror. Lady Tanaka is looking at them, utterly without expression..

JACO

You bitch!

He reaches into his jacket, pulling out a gun but...

Sato's hand flicks out and...

TWO THROWING KNIVES whistle through the air, and puncture Jaco's hands, pinning them against the wall like some kind of bizarre crucifixion. CLOSE ON his face as he squirms in agony.

JACO

Go on, you bitch, what are you waiting for? If you're gonna kill us, get it over with.

TANAKA

I already have.

Jaco's face is filled with incomprehension. Then he looks down...

The other four bosses are lying face down on the table, stone dead, their eyes open like fish, champagne spilling out of overturned glasses. Tanaka picks one of the glasses up and runs her FINGER long the rim.

TANAKA

Poisoned glasses, Mr. Jaco.

Jaco's face fills with a deep, inescapable sense of his own doom.

Lady Tanaka reaches her hand out and Tak puts a SILENCED PISTOL into it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TANAKA

I see you refused the drink, Mr.
Jaco.

(levels the pistol)

Please accept a chaser.

Jaco starts to shout "Fuck y..." but is instantly nailed by a bullet right between the eyes. He goes limp, hanging from the wall by his two pinned hands.

Tanaka barks an order, turns, and everyone quickly follows her out of the restaurant.

HOLD ON the back of the restaurant. It is like some mass Italian graveyard, spattered with blood, the bosses and their guards lying grotesquely all over the tables and floor.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER'S FACE, contorted in absolute agony, he opens his mouth and screams.

PUNISHER

AAAAAARGH!

LOW ANGLE ON KOSHIGI

as he moves into the FRAME, looking down.

KOSHIGI

Are you comfortable yet?

FAR SHOT OF THE BASEMENT

The Punisher is stretched on a Japanese torture rack, naked but for his underwear. His arms are spread out, strapped down, as are his feet. His muscles are spasming, stretched taut as the rack pulls him apart. He is surrounded by FIVE YAKUZA, one of them standing by the wall, his hand on an ELECTRIC PANEL.

The Punisher is bathed in sweat, his head just lolling from side to side. Koshigi barks an order in Japanese.

The Yakuza by the wall lowers a switch, and GEARS in the torture rack WHIR to electrical life and begin to TURN, pulling the Punisher further apart, as he SCREAMS in agony.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOSHIGI

Yamato Rack. Eight hundred-year-old torture now powered by electricity. Harmonious marriage of the ancient and the modern, don't you think?

The Punisher is in no condition to express any opinion whatsoever.

KOSHIGI

It is pulling your whole body apart, inside and out. Soon your ligaments will tear, then your muscles, then your internal organs. You will slowly bleed to death without ever having been cut.

The Punisher is delirious with agony; sweat rolls off his face, dripping onto the rack.

KOSHIGI

At first we suspected that you were actually employed by one of the Italians, Mr. Punisher... But our sources say that is not so. Who do you work for? CIA? FBI?

The Punisher doesn't answer. Koshigi barks another order and...

- HUUUUUUAAAAGH! -

The Punisher's body is pulled apart even further. Koshigi shouts, and the Yakuza at the controls eases off the switch.

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER'S WRIST

The incredible straining against his bonds has left it torn and bleeding.

KOSHIGI

Perhaps you work for a private party, heh? It does not matter. Tonight they will be gone, but someone else knows about the children and...

(pauses)

I want to know who.

PUNISHER

I work... alone...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOSHIGI

Liar!

(breathes hard)

We have found one of your associates,
Mr. Punisher.

He barks an order in Japanese. Two of the Yakuza leave the room.

PUNISHER'S POV

As they come back in dragging in a wooden chair, with a man tied down to it. It is old Shake, shirtless, his hollow chest heaving with terror, as they set him down across from the Punisher.

CLOSE ON PUNISHER'S FACE

PUNISHER

He knows nothing.

KOSHIGI

He is fluent in Japanese, among other things. If you don't tell us what we want, he will.

Koshigi barks an order. One of the Yakuza picks up a steel WIRE and tapes it to Shake's heaving chest. At the other end is a normal electric plug.

KOSHIGI

Bolivian Telephone. A trick picked up from our South American friends.

The Yakuza sticks the plug into an OUTLET, and Shake SCREAMS in agony. His head plops down as the plug is removed.

PUNISHER

He's just a bum. He knows nothing.

Shake picks his head up and attempts a weak smile for the Punisher.

SHAKE

I'm... truly sorry... to be giving
you such cause for worry...
AAAAAAARGH!

Something very weird enters the Punisher's eyes and he slowly turns his head away as Shake convulses from a second shock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOSHIGI

It seems your employees are most inconsistent in their choice of operatives.

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER'S FACE

as it slowly rolls back over and looks right at Koshigi. His eyes are red... hollow. It is the face of death.

PUNISHER

You will be punished.

Koshigi flinches. No one likes staring his own death in the face. He barks an order, and the Punisher's muscles twitch and spasm with incredible stress. His head jerks up, and he SHOUTS in pain.

KOSHIGI

I want the same thing every half hour for ten minutes. Both of them. They will break.

Koshigi then turns and walks out of the basement.

HOLD ON THE PUNISHER, eyes watering, hair dripping wet with sweat.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - ALPHABET CITY - NIGHT

The street is completely empty and dark, demolished tenement buildings sticking out of the ground like sore thumbs. Huge piles of rubble gather between them like artificial hills, a wasteland. DOLLY DOWN THE STREET revealing more and more of the devastation, until we are on the corner building, eight stories high... gray, rotting.

INT. TENEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The mafia kids are lying around the floor on crude mattresses, sleeping in the darkness. The LIGHT is flicked on, and the kids groggily open their eyes as Sato walks into the doorway.

SATO

All of you... I must apologize...

The kids look at him uncomprehendingly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SATO

Your fathers have agreed to cooperate. You will be going home to see them shortly.

An excited babble rises from the kids as they hug each other.

SATO

Quiet! If you want to go home, you must stay quiet and behave. You understand?

The kids all fall silent.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A BLACK CAR with darkened windows is in the street right in front of the building. Sato comes out of the doors and walks up to the car. The window rolls down and Koshigi looks out.

KOSHIGI

Hassan's men should be here shortly. Five children in each van. After that, it's their problem.

Sato nods. Koshigi rolls down the window and the black car drives away down the street.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - NIGHT

A GRAY VAN appears to rise over a dip in the road. Then it is followed by another, and yet another. The three vans seem not so much to get closer as to grow bigger and bigger before our very eyes.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

SHAKE'S VOICE

AAAAAAAARGH.

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER'S FACE

as he grits his teeth, seeming to feel the pain himself as old Shake screams.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE ON HIS BOUND WRIST

as his hand twists. The ropes are now drenched with blood, and the hand seems to be sliding around more freely now...

ANGLE ON THE FIVE YAKUZA IN THE ROOM

their sleeves rolled up, sweat on their shirts. Three of them are wearing shoulder holsters, police-style. One of them tosses a knife into the floor, picks it out, then tosses it in again. The guy at the outlet pulls out the plug, and...

ANGLE ON SHAKE

He stops screaming, his head falls back, his eyes closed. His lips are moving slightly, inaudibly. The Yakuza steps forward to listen, but can't make anything of it. He grunts in Japanese, gets ready to stick the plug back in, when...

PUNISHER (O.S.)

Hey...

The Yakuza turn around. The Punisher's cracked, bleeding lips move, his voice is barely audible.

PUNISHER

I have... something... to tell you...

One of the Yakuza walks up to the Punisher and barks in Japanese. The Punisher looks at the man who was torturing Shake.

PUNISHER

Him... I have to tell him.

The Yakuza turns and calls to the torturer, who walks over.

TORTURER

What? What do you have to say?

PUNISHER

Say...

Both of the men lean forward to hear...

The Punisher's HANDS suddenly move. They twist and, slick with blood, pull right through the ropes binding them. They streak down, and...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAB both of the Yakuza's GUNS right out of their shoulder holsters and put them to the startled soldiers' faces.

PUNISHER

Sayonara.

A DOUBLE EXPLOSION, and both bodies go flying to the side.

The remaining three Yakuza jerk upright. The one with the pistol reaches for it, pulling it out.

The Punisher lowers both guns, SHOOTs off the ropes tying down his feet and rolls back off the rack just as it CHIPS from the Yakuza's bullet. The Punisher rolls and comes up firing...

DOUBLE BLAST incinerates the Yakuza. The fourth Yakuza goes for a SHOTGUN leaning against the table, but a BULLET catches him in the back and he goes crashing to the floor.

The last Yakuza aims the knife he was playing with at the Punisher, but the Punisher is too fast. He rolls over and intercepts the Yakuza's hand. He twists the wrists, making him drop the knife. Then he lifts the much smaller man, slamming him into the wall three times, turns him around and snarls into his face.

PUNISHER

Where are the children?

The Yakuza just glares at him defiantly. The Punisher lifts him off the wall, carries him to the torture rack, then flips him onto it and STRAPS HIM DOWN, tying together the bonds he shot in two.

PUNISHER

Do you want to answer me or do you want to play?

YAKUZA

Fuck... you...

The Punisher steps to the electrical panel on the wall.

PUNISHER

All right, we play.

He lowers the switch. The gears WHIR to life and begin to turn, pulling the Yakuza apart. He SCREAMS in agony, until the Punisher lowers the switch... he is weeping, in utter torment. The Punisher steps over and glares into his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PUNISHER

I'll know if you're lying.

YAKUZA

Third... Third and Howard... in
Alphabet City. But it's too late...
you're too late.

The Punisher turns, picks up the knife and moves to where
Shake is sitting limp in the chair.

PUNISHER

Shake... Shake!

One of the old man's watery eyes opens, ever so slightly.

PUNISHER

(cutting his bonds)

Easy, old man. It's over...

SHAKE

No.

(as the Punisher stares
at him)

Get you gone on the double... there's
a pack of lambs in dire trouble...

For the first and only time, a HUGE SMILE spreads across
the Punisher's face.

SHAKE

I'll be fine.

The Punisher loses the smile. He picks up one of the .357
Magnums he was using and puts it in Shake's lap.

PUNISHER

Keep this. It may come in handy
sometime.

His eyes are filled with a look of intense, almost insane,
purpose. He gets up and grabs the PUMP SHOTGUN lying
against the table.

PUNISHER

I won't be long...

He walks to the door, then turns and looks back at the
Yakuza spread out on the torture rack.

PUNISHER

... but he will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He flips the switch of the electrical panel, activating the rack, and disappears out the door, as the Yakuza's terrible SCREAM FILLS THE AIR.

EXT. 9TH AVENUE STREET - NIGHT

The Punisher bursts out of the building into the night, completely naked but for his wet underwear. Bloodstained, the shotgun in his hand, he starts running up the street.

LOW ANGLE DOLLY with him as he runs, huge, muscular. The few people in the street shout and move out of his way. There are bright lights up ahead as the Punisher turns the corner and...

EXT. BROADWAY - TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

NEON LIGHTS, hundreds of cars, thousands of people. The Punisher bursts onto 43rd Street, scattering people wherever he goes. He runs through the sidewalk, people shouting and screaming as he runs past them, the shotgun in his hand. The entire area is disrupted as people turn to look from every corner. The Punisher runs out into the middle of the street and...

- SCREECH! - HONK! -

Taxis and cars swerve crazily to avoid the naked maniac in the middle of the road, drivers screaming and shouting at him. The Punisher runs up right in front of an approaching CITY BUS, holding up the shotgun. The BRAKES screech and the bus stops an inch away from rolling right over him. He runs around and kicks open the bus door.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

COMMUTERS SCREAM as the Punisher runs onto the bus and points the shotgun at the TERRIFIED BUS DRIVER.

PUNISHER

Open the doors!

The back doors slide open and the Punisher turns into the bus, waving the shotgun.

PUNISHER

Out! Out! Everybody out now!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Everyone rushes toward the doors, desperate to obey, jumping out of the bus like there is no tomorrow.

PUNISHER
(to the driver)
You, too! Out!

The driver scrambles out of his seat and out the front door.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

The last people jump out of the bus onto the street, a huge crowd now gathered on the sidewalk.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

The Punisher climbs into the driver's seat, puts the bus into gear and starts it. The bus jerks forward and...

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

The bus roars through the street, sending cars and taxis in all directions, ignoring all lights and rules, causing more chaos than can possibly be imagined.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

The Punisher brakes hard, turning the bus down into a side street, causing two cars to drive right onto the sidewalk. His face is drawn, furious, his eyes glowing with an unholy fire. He takes the bus around another corner and...

EXT. EAST SIDE STREET - NIGHT

The three gray vans drive toward us, growing closer and closer, almost filling the entire screen.

INT. SECOND FLOOR ROOM - NIGHT

Sato and several other Yakuza are near the empty windows, looking out onto the dark street. A huge M-60 machine gun is perched on the windowsill, pointing outwards onto the street. Sato looks down at his watch, curses under his breath and continues looking out the window.

INT. TENEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The kids all sit huddled in the dim light, their faces reflecting fear, anxiousness and great anticipation. A LITTLE GIRL cries softly while her older sister holds her shoulders, comforting her.

SISTER

Hush, baby... They're taking us home
to Daddy soon... don't cry...

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE STREET - NIGHT

The gray vans are really close now. We can see the faces of Arabic drivers behind the windshields.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The huge city bus tears around the corner, scattering cars and pedestrians in all directions.

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

The Punisher straightens the wheel, his teeth gritted, his foot down on the accelerator. He sees some HEAVY TRAFFIC up ahead, snarls and spins the wheel hard to the right.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The bus goes half onto the sidewalk, passing to the right of the traffic. Chaos, as people jump desperately out of the way of the marauding vehicle... into stores onto each other... the bus passes the traffic, goes down off the sidewalk and roars around another corner.

INT SECOND FLOOR TENEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Sato is in the back of the room when one of the Yakuza next to the M-60 exclaims:

YAKUZA

They're here.

Sato rushes to the window and looks out.

EXT. ALPHABET CITY STREET - NIGHT

The three gray vans appear around the corner a short distance away, then drive down the street and turn into the alley separating the tenement the Yakuza are in from the next building.

INT. TENEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The metal door is flung open and Sato, followed by several Yakuza, steps into the room, a big smile on his face.

SATO

We take you to your parents.

The kids get up and the Yakuza begin to separate them into three groups.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Several Yakuza walk up to the vans and greet the drivers, then walk to the backs of the vans and begin opening the doors.

EXT. ALPHABET CITY STREET - NIGHT

The city bus slides around the corner and drives cautiously, slowly down the street.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

The Punisher looks out the window. He SEES the Yakuza walking around the front of the building into the alley. He turns the wheel and...

EXT. ALPHABET CITY STREET - NIGHT

The Punisher drives the bus to the opposite corner of the tenement building where there are FIRE ESCAPES going up to the top floor. He drives the bus right up onto the sidewalk parallel to the building, under the fire escapes.

The Punisher climbs out of the window onto the roof of the bus. Then he jumps onto the fire escape and looks in through a window into one of the tenement rooms.

There are THREE YAKUZA inside, sitting on chairs by the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Punisher curses under his breath and quickly pads up to the second story and looks through that window into a room.

It is empty. Dark.

The Punisher lifts the butt of his shotgun and, as quietly as possible, breaks a hole in the glass. He reaches his hand in, unlocks the window, lifts it up, and ducks into the room.

INT. TENEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The Punisher treads across the floor, silent as a cat, runs to the door and LISTENS through it. SOUNDS of Japanese orders being given come through. He opens the door a crack.

INT. CORRIDOR - PUNISHER'S POV

The fifteen kids are being herded out of their room into the corridor, and down into the stairway, by Sato and two Yakuza.

INT. TENEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The Punisher waits until they have all disappeared, then opens the door and streaks into the corridor. A YAKUZA SOLDIER suddenly appears out of a side doorway, but before he knows what hit him the Punisher has grabbed him by the neck and dives with him into the side room.

INT. SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

There is another Yakuza there. The Punisher CRACKS the first man's neck, and before the second can react, clobbers him with the barrel of the shotgun.

INT. TENEMENT LOBBY - NIGHT

Sato is talking to several of the ARABS as they nod in understanding.

INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

The kids file down the stairs, prodded on by the two Yakuza soldiers. There is a rustle of air above one of them, and he looks up.

LOW ANGLE ON THE PUNISHER

as he drops down onto the soldier like a gigantic vulture, acing him instantly. The second man reaches for his gun but the Punisher leaps right over several of the children, wraps his hand around the Yakuza's mouth, and slams his head into the wall. Then he turns to the children, who are in utter shock, and GROWLS.

PUNISHER

I'm taking you home.

Something in his voice. The kids all stare at him.

PUNISHER

Now, quietly, back upstairs.

A little girl opens her mouth, and...

LITTLE GIRL

But the man said they...

A hand over her mouth shuts her up. It is Tommy Franco.

TOMMY

Quiet. Listen to him! Let's go.

He starts up the stairs with the little girl, and the other kids turn and follow him, filing upstairs past the Punisher.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The Arabs outside are getting restless. One of them SHOUTS something into the front doors.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Sato turns to the Arabs, puts up a hand, then, followed by another soldier, walks to the door leading to the stairway and opens it.

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Sato CALLS upstairs. Nothing. He quickly runs up the stairs, and sees the two soldiers lying still on the steps. His eyes open wide. He pulls out two throwing knives, and SHOUTS at the top of his lungs as he runs up the stairs.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The kids are filing through it, the Punisher hovering over them like a gigantic shepherd. He snaps erect as Sato's SHOUTS ring through the building.

PUNISHER

Damn!

He raises the shotgun and runs past the kids, straight toward a DOOR at the end of the hall. It opens, and a Yakuza starts out into the hallway, but - BOOM! - is blown back into the room by a shotgun blast. The Punisher dives in after him.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

It is the first room the Punisher looked into. There are two more Yakuza there, going for their guns, but they are both BLOWN off their feet by shotgun blasts.

PUNISHER

In here, fast! Move it!

The kids run into the room. The Punisher slams the door shut, then, with an effort, TOPPLES the large REFRIGERATOR that was in the corner so that it is blocking the door. Then he runs to the window, slides it open, steps out onto the fire escape, and lowers the rusty ladder a short distance until it reaches right outside one of the bus' windows. He blows away the bus window with a BLAST from the shotgun and climbs back into the room.

PUNISHER

Don't ask questions! Get into the bus! Use the fire escape and go!

Some of the kids start to climb out onto the fire escape.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Sato and five Yakuza run up to the door and try to open it, but it won't move. Sato throws his weight against it.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

The Punisher watches the door buckle with anxiety. He turns to Tommy.

PUNISHER

What's your name?

TOMMY

Tommy.

PUNISHER

Help the little ones out, Tommy. Go!

Tommy immediately turns to help the youngest kids, as the Punisher runs to the middle of the room and scoops up a MACHINE GUN from the hands of a dead Yakuza.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Several of the kids pull themselves in through the shattered window as...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Several Yakuza and Arabs have run around the building and start to fire at the bus, but...

- BUDA BUDA BUDA BUDA BUDA -

They go diving for cover as the Punisher sprays the pavement with bullets from the window.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

The door splinters. The refrigerator starts to move... All the kids are out, except for Tommy. He is about to step out when he hears it. A CRY OF FEAR. Tommy and the Punisher spin around.

The tiny girl is hiding behind the toppled fridge, near the door, holding her ears, crying her face off. A HAND smashes through the top of the wooden door.

The Punisher takes a few shots at the door. Tommy SNARLS, and RUNS BACK INTO THE ROOM. He grabs the little girl and SHOUTS.

TOMMY

Go! Get out of here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pushes her, and the little girl runs over to the Punisher, who scoops her up in one massive arm... he turns, and CUTS LOOSE on the street again, covering the kids.

The door really buckles now. The refrigerator is shoved aside far enough, and Sato DIVES into the room, throwing knives raised. He registers SHOCK when he sees it's the Punisher, then starts to throw the knives, but - BAM! - Tommy dives forward and hits Sato in the side...

The knives SLAM into the wall right above the Punisher's head. The girl still in one arm, he spins around with the machine gun and levels it, but...

Sato has grabbed Tommy, who is struggling vainly against him, and holds the boy in front of himself as a shield.

A split second of indecision. A LOOK passes between the Punisher and Tommy. Then the Punisher looks at Sato.

PUNISHER

I'll be back.

He drops the machine gun, turns, and leaps out of the window.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

POLICE SIRENS begin to be heard in the near distance as the last kids climb in through the bus window. The Punisher follows, the little girl under one arm, climbs down the ladder and pulls himself into the bus.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

He puts the little girl on the floor and runs to the front of the bus, shouting.

PUNISHER

On the floor! Keep your heads down!

The kids all hug the floor as the Punisher gets into the driver's seat, DUCKING as the front window is perforated by hostile fire. He reaches under the seat, pulls out the keys and STARTS THE ENGINE as...

The THREE ARAB VANS drive out from around the corner and head toward the bus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BULLETS blow away the side windows, as the Punisher steps on the accelerator and the bus LURCHES FORWARD...

LOW ANGLE ON SATO

atop the fire escape, LAUNCHING HIMSELF INTO THE AIR...

INT. BUS - NIGHT

The Punisher hears a THUD atop the bus, but ignores it, too busy with swerving the wheel to avoid colliding with one of the vans. He puts the gears into reverse, when...

- SMASH! -

The entire front window SHATTERS as Sato kicks it in from atop the bus... his other foot streaks in and KICKS the Punisher in the face. BLOOD spurts from the Punisher's mouth as he puts the bus back into forward and GUNS the engine...

EXT. BUS TOP - NIGHT

Sato grabs hold as the bus lurches forward, getting a solid grip on the roof...

INT. BUS - NIGHT

The Punisher grits his bloody teeth and keeps on accelerating until the bus is right on top of one of the gray vans, and...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

It SMASHES RIGHT INTO IT, throwing Sato headlong off the roof, hurtling through the air... the van is knocked completely over, rolling on the pavement as the bus roars past...

Sato hits the ground rolling and comes right up, as if nothing has happened. He is furious, SHOUTING at the top of his lungs to the other vans as they turn to give chase.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - NIGHT

The bus roars around the corner SMACK into a half-dozen approaching police cars, totaling two of them. The other cars chase after the bus and...

INT. BUS - NIGHT

The Punisher looks in his rear view mirror. The gray vans turn away and drive in the opposite direction.

A slight, almost invisible smile crosses the Punisher's face and he eases off on the accelerator.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The bus slows down as it is surrounded from all sides by at least A DOZEN POLICE CARS, their sirens whining, their lights flashing, and finally it comes to a stop.

ANGLE ON THE COPS

as they run out of their cars, crouching behind the doors, their guns all leveled at the bus.

CLOSE ON THE BACK DOOR OF THE BUS

It slides open. One by one, the terrified, frightened faces of the kids appear as they file out of the bus and step down onto the street.

The cops lower their weapons. Their faces are amazed.

The last kids come out of the bus and stand in a bewildered circle with the others. Then two BIG LEGS appear in the doorway.

The cops instantly raise their guns again, leveling them at the doorway.

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER

as he steps out into the flashing red lights, naked, wet and bloody, the tiny, frightened little girl cradled gently in his arms, her hands clutched tightly around his neck.

He looks around himself.

The cops are all in shock. IT'S HIM. They keep their guns raised.

The Punisher gently puts down the girl beside the other children, then steps away from them and raises his hands. IMMEDIATELY, a dozen cops rush forward, guns aimed right at him. They put his hands behind his head and push guns into his face, as he towers over them... a giant among swarming ants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HIGH ANGLE ON THE STREET

as half of the cops rush over to the pack of frightened children while the others surround the Punisher.

INT. JAIL CORRIDOR - DAY

A metal door swings open and Captain Jake Berkowitz steps through into the dim light. The doors close behind him and, escorted by two brown-suited guards, he walks through the claustrophobic corridor.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

CLOSE ON PUNISHER. The shadows from the bars fall over his bowed head.

FOOTSTEPS approach and more shadows fall over him. Slowly, very slowly, the Punisher looks up.

Captain Berkowitz is standing outside the cell, flanked by the two guards.

BERKOWITZ

Let me in.

(when the Guard just
stands there)

It's all right.

The Guard reluctantly opens the gate. Berkowitz steps into the cell and they slide it shut behind him. He stands across from the Punisher, who is sitting in meditation position on his cot, completely unmoving.

BERKOWITZ

It's been a long time, Frank. A long time.

PUNISHER

Frank Castle is dead.

Berkowitz stares at him intensely for a moment. Then...

BERKOWITZ

You really did it this time, partner. Kidnapping the children of the new bosses. I would think that after what happened to your own...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PUNISHER
(interrupting)
I was rescuing them.

BERKOWITZ
Rescuing? The guy who ices every
male member of their families over
the age of eighteen, and you want
me to believe that?
(as the Punisher is
silent)
You were my partner, Frank, my best
friend. I know... what happened...
hurt. But what you're doing isn't
justice. It's sick.

PUNISHER
Justice? What do you know about
justice? This scum you're trying
so hard to protect from me... they're
the guilty ones. They bring the
suffering, not me.

BERKOWITZ
Maybe so. But there are laws you
and I swore to uphold. Who appointed
you judge, jury and executioner?

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER'S FACE

His eyes are dark, empty, truly frightening.

PUNISHER
A man should not be afraid to express
his inner self.

Berkowitz is silent for a moment, then he takes a deep
breath.

BERKOWITZ
All these years I been hunting you...
hoping that somehow, if I could talk
to you, I could bring you back...
(pause)
You were right. Frank Castle is
dead.
(leans forward)
But there's a price to pay.

He turns and steps out of the cell. The gate slides shut
again. He turns and looks back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERKOWITZ

Did you hear me, Punisher?

No answer. Berkowitz turns, and walks back down the corridor. HOLD ON THE PUNISHER'S EXPRESSIONLESS FACE.

EXT. COUNTRY FIELD - DAY

TWO LITTLE GIRLS press their faces against a PANE OF GLASS, tears pouring out of their eyes, screaming: "Daddy!... Daddy!" their cries muffled by the glass. The MUZZLE OF A GUN enters the frame pointing in at them. PAN ACROSS THE CAR. In the front, a PRETTY WOMAN behind a half-opened window is shouting "No!" There is a gun pointed at her as well.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL a BLUE VOLKSWAGEN surrounded by three men in blue suits, all pointing machine guns in at the woman and the children in the car. There is a PICNIC BLANKET spread on the green grass. DOLLY BACK FURTHER until we see the back of a MAN being held by three more men in suits, another thug standing in front of them.

LOW ANGLE OF THE THUG

as he raises his fist, brings it right toward the camera and right across the face of FRANK CASTLE. It is bruised beyond belief, blood pouring from the nose into his mouth. We see through the cuts and welts that he is a YOUNGER MAN... less lines around his mouth, fewer creases in his brow, and no scar across his eye. The fist hits again then he is kicked in the stomach.

ANGLE ON THE WOMAN IN THE CAR

screaming at the top of her lungs, pleading for the beating to stop.

The little girls in the back cry, their fists in their mouths and...

CLOSE ON THE THUG

... as he steps away from Castle and Tony Franco steps into the frame, his eyes burning with an unholy fire.

Frank Castle looks up, barely able to see through his swollen eyelids.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CASTLE
Let them go! Your rules... no
families!

A SWITCHBLADE flicks open in Tony Franco's hand and...

He cuts Castle right up his cheek and across the eye.
 The scar. The superficial one.

FRANCO
 No families? What about the families
 of the men you locked away for the
 rest of their lives? What about
 their families, Castle?
 (turns to his men)
Charlie!

One of the thugs steps around to the front of the car,
 a keg of KEROSENE in his hands, and starts to pour it in
 through the half-open front window of the car, drenching
 the screaming woman. She claws at him, and one of the
 others reaches in and HITS her with the back of his gun,
 knocking her unconscious. The girls scream "Mommy!
 Mommy!" in a total panic.

CASTLE
They're innocent!

He is shut up by a PUNCH to his stomach.

The man pouring the kerosene gets the last few drops in.
 Then Tony Franco steps up to the car, pulls out a
 MATCHBOOK, lights one of the matches, then sets the rest
 of the book on fire. He holds it near the open car
 window.

The little girls SCREAM.

The matchbook is tossed in. FLAMES ERUPT in the car.

Frank Castle, his face contorted in unbelievable agony,
 screams an inhuman...

CASTLE
NOOOOOOOOOOO...

INT. CELL - NIGHT

The Punisher jerks up from his cot, finishing the cry...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PUNISHER

...OOOOHHHH!

His body is soaked with sweat. His chest rises and falls like a marathon runner's. There are tears pouring out of his red eyes. He brings his hands over his face and sinks forward, a great sob jerking from the very depths of his being.

PUNISHER

AHUU!

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

TWO ANCHORPEOPLE, a white man and an Oriental woman, sit facing the camera. Behind them is a BOARD WITH A SKULL ON IT, and the word "Punisher" across it in red letters.

ANCHORMAN

Thanks, Ilona... Today was the first day in the trial of the legendary vigilante known as 'the Punisher.' He was led to the courtroom in mid-Manhattan surrounded by an unprecedented number of security guards.

SHOTS of the Punisher being led into the courtroom surrounded by umpteen cops, keeping away the pack of reporters pressing in on them like vultures.

ANCHORMAN

He took the stand but to the dismay of his lawyers he refused to answer questions, saying 'I punish the guilty. I have nothing more to say.'

The Oriental anchorwoman continues.

ANCHORWOMAN

The trial looks to be a long and uphill battle for defense attorneys Franklin Nelson and Matthew Murdock, as the Punisher is being charged with fifty-eight counts of First Degree Murder, forty-five counts of Second Degree Murder and forty-five counts of Manslaughter.

She can't help raising her eyebrows and looking at the anchorman, who does the same.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANCHORWOMAN

... Fifteen counts of Kidnapping for the recent attempt to abduct the children of the now-dead 'new bosses' of the five New York families, whose death the Punisher has also been implicated in...

SHOTS of Japanese restaurants, blown away and destroyed, shattered cars and burst fire hydrants.

ANCHORWOMAN

... as well as being sued by private individuals and the city of New York for millions of dollars in accumulated property damages.

The anchorwoman again appears on the screen.

ANCHORWOMAN

We will be at the court for the second day of the trial tomorrow to bring it all home to you, and now Warner with the sports...

INT. CELL - MORNING

The Punisher is lying on his cot, his eyes open, staring at the ceiling. The door to his cell slides open and a guard steps in.

GUARD

All right, big boy. Time to get dolled up for day two.

INT. JAIL CORRIDOR - MORNING

The Punisher, his hands cuffed behind his back, walks past other cells, flanked by two guards, while PRISONERS REACH OUT THROUGH THE BARS and shout at him: "Yo, Punisher, I hope they burn your ass!"... "Die, motherfucker"... "You're dead meat, motherfucker!" The Punisher completely ignores it until - SPLAT! - he is hit in the face by a WAD OF SPIT.

CONVICT

They put you on the rock and your ass is mine, Punisher.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Punisher stops. Despite the guards, he turns and faces the CONVICT. He stares at him, with his chilling eyes... the convict starts to melt. The guards try to push the Punisher forward, saying, "Come on... keep moving..." but he keeps staring. The convict can't take it anymore. He averts his eyes.

PUNISHER

I'm looking forward to it.

The convict looks up... real FEAR is in his eyes now. The Punisher turns and continues through the cell block.

EXT. JAIL YARD - MORNING

The door is opened and the Punisher is led out into the sunlight by the two guards. They walk up to a plated PADDY WAGON surrounded by several more armed guards. The Punisher looks around, then steps into the back and sits down as the doors are slammed shut behind him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The paddy wagon, flanked by three police cars, one in front, two in back, drives down through the crowded highway, heading toward the tall spires of the big city in the distance.

EXT. OFF-RAMP - DAY

The caravan turns off the highway and drives onto a street. As soon as they come out onto the street, a BLACK CADILLAC streaks out from the side and stops right in front of the lead police car. The caravan SCREECHES to a halt, and before they know it they have been surrounded by THREE MORE CARS. Two dozen MEN in GAS MASKS come running out of the doors, set themselves, and FIRE strange guns...

INT. POLICE CARS - DAY

The WINDOWS are punctured, and the cops inside begin to cough and gag as TEAR GAS fills the insides of the cars. They start to get out, but...

EXT. STREET - DAY

More GAS explodes all around them. Some of the men with the gas masks run over to the cops, leveling SHOTGUNS, and force them to the pavement face-down.

INT. BACK OF PADDY WAGON - DAY

Darkness then - BOOM! - the back doors are blow open, and three men in gas masks step into the van, their shotguns leveled at...

... the Punisher, who is sitting there, pretty damn confused. One of the gunmen lowers his shotgun, then raises a strange-looking PISTOL and levels it at the Punisher. He squeezes the trigger - PHUT! - and the SCREEN GOES immediately BLACK.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

CLOSE ON the Punisher's face. His eyes are closed. A RADIO ANNOUNCER is talking somewhere V.O.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

After being unsuccessfully hunted for five years, the Punisher was finally apprehended... but today with the aid of an unknown party, he has escaped and is once again free to wreak havoc on our streets...

The Punisher's eyes slowly OPEN, as a HAND CLICKS off the radio. The Punisher looks up.

He is in a small, clean, suburban basement. There are THREE tough-looking mob ENFORCERS in front of him. He tries to get up, but... he is tied down to the chair he is sitting in.

VOICE (O.S.)

So... the big man is finally with us.

ANGLE ON TONY FRANCO

ENTERING FRAME, the exact same way he did in the Punisher's nightmare.

PUNISHER

Wanted to finish what you started, Franco?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCO

I wish, you son of a bitch. I need your help.

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER

... his eyes are filled with utter hatred.

FRANCO

The devil only knows how your mind works, you sick fuck, but I know you weren't kidnapping those kids.

(pause)

They still have my son Tommy.

The Punisher's eyes widen.

PUNISHER

Your son...?

Franco takes out a PHOTOGRAPH of Tommy and puts it on the Punisher's lap. The Punisher looks at it, his emotions torn...

FRANCO

I've got twenty-four hours before I have to trade my life for his. Bullshit. There's no way they're letting him go alive. I know where he's being held. You're the only one who can...

PUNISHER

I'll get him out.

Franco freezes. He can't quite believe his ears.

PUNISHER

I'm not doing this for you. You may be his father, but he's not yet your son.

(looks up at Franco)

When it's over, you're dead.

HOLD ON Franco's face, as he slowly nods...

INT. LADY TANAKA'S ROOM - DAY

The front door is opened and Tommy Franco is pushed into the room by Sato and another Yakuza soldier.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lady Tanaka is sitting behind her marble desk flanked by Koshigi and Tak, talking into a phone.

TANAKA

That is correct, Mr. Franco. We are not going to insult your intelligence by making up lies you will not believe. It is your life for his... Tomorrow morning, eight o'clock. If you follow our rules, you have my word your son will not be harmed.

She gestures to Sato, who brings Tommy over. Tanaka puts the phone to his mouth.

TOMMY

Daddy...? Daddy, don't listen to
'em, they're just a bunch a...

But the phone is yanked away from him and Sato pulls him back.

TANAKA

He has not yet been harmed. We will call you in several hours with our instructions.

She hangs up the phone.

INT. FRANCO LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tony Franco, his sleeves rolled up, sweat stains on the back of his shirt, holds a phone in his hand, a busy signal coming from it, until he finally puts it down. He is surrounded by three of his soldiers, all in their shirts, their guns and shoulder holsters strapped under their arms. Franco takes a deep breath, then turns to his men.

FRANCO

She thinks I'm gonna try something stupid.

(smiles grimly)

But she thinks I'm gonna try it tomorrow.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Franco comes out of the stairway into the dimly-lit cellar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Punisher is in the corner, bent over a bunch of "blueprints" spread out over a table, guarded by four soldiers. Franco walks over to him. They are looking at the plans for the Black Tower.

PUNISHER

You're sure he's here.

FRANCO

I've had the calls traced. I'm sure. They have a couple of floors on top they're using for themselves. There's nothing about a building in this goddamn city that I can't know about if I want to. When we get into the first...

PUNISHER

Alone. I do this alone.

FRANCO

No. Tommy is my son. I go with you.

The Punisher takes a minute.

PUNISHER

Fine.

Franco starts to walk to one of the walls in the cellar.

FRANCO

All right... what are you gonna need?
We've got everything...

He slides open the wall. Behind it is a huge armory, just stacked from here till tomorrow with the newest, most advanced WEAPONRY. Rocket launchers, machine guns, bazookas... a veritable ARMORY.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

The LIGHTS of New York glittering and shining in the velvet night.

INT. POLICE OFFICES - NIGHT

Jake Berkowitz is standing in his office, looking out of his window onto the city.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE ON HIS FACE

He is weary, very very tired and defeated. Sergeant Kusack comes up behind him.

KUSACK

Lieutenant, they're short on cars in the downtown area. They wanna know if...

BERKOWITZ

I don't care!

Kusack stops, a concerned look on his face.

BERKOWITZ

Do it without me this one time. Just leave me out of it.

Kusack nods, then turns and leaves the office.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

A POLICE CAR patrols by, its red strobe light flashing in the windows of the other cars.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - NIGHT

Two BEAT COPS walk down the crowded sidewalk, twirling their nightsticks.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Another police car passes by the camera. TILT UP TO REVEAL the Black Tower. It is dark, ominous against the night sky. Several lights are on in some of the glass windows.

INT. SEWER PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

It is dark. The only SOUNDS AUDIBLE are of drops of water dripping into the filthy stream running through the tunnel, then a louder splashing. The sound of feet stepping through the water begins to be audible, growing closer and closer until a bright LIGHT appears from around the corner. The Punisher, followed by Tony Franco, is walking through the sewer, holding a flashlight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is wearing black pants, combat boots and a plain black T-shirt. Tony Franco is all in black as well, wearing sweatpants, sneakers and a black turtleneck. He has a silenced Uzi in his hands. The Punisher is completely unarmed.

FRANCO

You don't have a weapon on you,
Castle! Do you hear me?

(no answer)

If you're trying to get my
son killed, you fuckin'...

The Punisher whirls and grabs Franco by the shirt.

PUNISHER

Shut up.

(as Franco glares at
him)

We're doing this my way. One more
sound and I'll kill you right here.

Franco backs off. The Punisher turns, shines his flashlight on a set of IRON RUNGS leading upward, and starts to climb. Tony Franco slings his Uzi over his shoulder and starts to follow.

INT. SEWER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The flashlight appears around the corner, followed by the Punisher and Franco. The Punisher walks a short distance until he is in front of another iron ladder. Thick INSULATED ELECTRICAL WIRES are running alongside the moldy concrete wall.

PUNISHER

We're right under it now.

Tony Franco nods, then a LIGHT FLASHES ON behind him.

FRANCO

Shit!

He spins around, leveling the Uzi, but it is GRABBED and forced down by the Punisher, who raises his light to reveal...

Shake, tattered, filthy, with a large BAG slung over one shoulder, a slim BLACK CASE tucked under his arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHAKE

Ahh, Punitive One! You didn't think old Shake would miss out on all the fun!

FRANCO

What the fuck is this?

PUNISHER

(letting go of the Uzi)

A man, Franco. More of a man than you'll ever be.

He walks to Shake and, very quickly, they go through the following: The Punisher zips open the bag, pulls out a small PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE and straps it to the electrical wires. Then he takes out TWO BEEPERS. He attaches one to his BELT, and hands the other to Shake. He pulls out a rigged-up REMOTE-CONTROL BOX with two switches, and hands it to Shake.

PUNISHER

First signal, first switch. Second signal, second switch.

(off Shake's nod)

Signal check.

The Punisher presses the beeper on his belt. The RED LIGHT on Shake's beeper flashes, and it BEEPS, until Shake presses it off.

PUNISHER

Remote is only good at a hundred yards. Find a safe spot fifty yards from here and wait. Remember... on my signal!

Franco puts a hand on the Punisher's shoulder.

FRANCO

What about weapons?

The Punisher glares at Franco. Then he reaches down and pulls off his plain, black shirt...

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER'S BODY

as he straps on a black vest of tight-fitting KEVLAR BODY ARMOR with a WHITE SKULL spray-painted on the front, his huge, muscular arms naked and shining with sweat. He snaps open the top of the BLACK CASE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PUNISHER

There are two ways to fight a fire.
Some people fight with water...

He reaches into the case and brings up a shining, long, SAMURAI SWORD with one hand, and matching SHORT SWORD with the other. He spins the longsword around, making it whistle through the air, then stops it abruptly one centimeter from Franco's nose.

PUNISHER

I fight fire with fire.

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

It is dimly-lit, gray-walled. Two Japanese Security Guards with guns at their sides are standing by one of the walls, talking to each other. One of them holds up a light for the other's cigarette when...

- CLUNK -

They both turn at the sound. One gestures to the other and they put their hands on their guns and begin to walk through the corridor. They round the corner and...

INT. SMALL ALCOVE - NIGHT

It is a dead end. The GRATING TO A LARGE VENT is lying on the floor. One of them begins to walk toward it when... AAARGGH! The Guard behind him falls to the ground. He spins but there is a FLASH OF SILVER and he is on the floor as well. The Punisher steps out from the shadows, his long sword in both hands. He sheaths it, then turns to the vent.

PUNISHER

We're clear. Move it.

Tony Franco, huffing and puffing, pulls himself out of the vent into the basement. Then the Punisher turns and slips out of the alcove.

EXT. BLACK TOWER - NIGHT

We are on the street level. TILT UP, UP to the top of the building where several LIGHTS shine from the windows.

INT. YAKUZA CORRIDOR - NIGHT

There are several Yakuza guards, their shoulder holsters slung, standing outside the elevator door.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - NIGHT

There are about fifteen Yakuza on the floor. Several are practicing Kendo with wooden swords. The others are just working out around the room.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

The lights are on and we see at least two dozen Yakuza sitting around the large room, their jackets off, sitting around tables, playing cards and drinking sake.

INT. MUSEUM ROOM - NIGHT

Lady Tanaka is in a small alcove in the corner, kneeling on a mat before a statue of Buddha and two clay urns. She is in deep concentration, rocking back and forth, muttering something under her breath.

INT. LADY TANAKA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy Franco is sitting in the corner. He gets up and knocks on the front doors.

TOMMY

Hey... I'm thirsty. I want a drink.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

There are two Yakuza guarding the doors.

TOMMY'S VOICE (O.S.)

You hear me? I'm thirsty!

One of the Yakuza looks at the other and says something in Japanese. Then they both burst out laughing.

INT. BLACK TOWER LOBBY - NIGHT

It is dark, lit only by several night lights on the ceiling. There are two Yakuza by the glass doors in front. Another three men are sitting on folding chairs near the elevators.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

One Yakuza is patrolling around the corner. He passes by a DOORWAY and the door suddenly creaks open an inch. He stops, then steps forward to investigate and...

He is PULLED IN behind the door. We hear a muffled gurgle. Then the door opens again and the Punisher comes out into the lobby, followed by Tony Franco. He breaks forward as fleet and quiet as the wind, drawing the long sword as he runs.

The men by the elevators barely have time to look up as the Punisher sweeps from around the corner and, sword flashing...

The first man hits the floor. The other two get up reaching for their guns, but the Punisher spins around like a ballet dancer and with two more flashing strokes they are cut down as well.

The two Yakuza by the front doors HEAR THE SOUNDS and run toward the elevators but...

The first man is cut down by a burst from Franco's silenced Uzi. The Punisher sweeps by the second man, cutting him down without stopping. TRACK BEHIND THE PUNISHER as he races pell mell through the lobby, his sword raised. Another guard is racing toward him SHOUTING, reaching for his gun but - SWOCK! - the Punisher takes his head off, not breaking his stride, runs around the corner, catches up with the last guard who is reaching for an ALARM on the wall and sends him whirling away from the wall spraying blood. The Punisher keeps running around the lobby looking in all directions until he is back in front of the elevators where Franco is standing.

He reaches down, pulls a chain of keys from the pockets of one of the dead Yakuza and hands it to Franco.

PUNISHER

Get the elevator.

He unhooks a second PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE from his belt, kneels, and starts to tape it to the corner as Franco tries to get the right key into the elevator.

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

Shake reaches a platform at the end of the dark passage, and lifts himself onto it, out of the filthy water. He puts down his beeper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then he starts to put down the remote-control box, but - SCREEEEEE - his flashlight frightens a handful of huge RATS, and they streak past his hands... he loses the remote. It goes clacking to the cement and falls down a narrow space between the platform and the sewer floor.

SHAKE

No!

He gets to his knees and shines his light into the dark crevice.

The remote box is there. HIS FINGERS strain to reach it, but it's too far...

INT. BLACK TOWER - LOBBY - NIGHT

The ELEVATOR DOOR slides open. The Punisher ACTIVATES his explosive.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The Punisher steps in, followed by Franco.

PUNISHER

Keys.

Franco hands him the key ring. The Punisher finds the one he wants, and opens the plate behind all the FLOOR BUTTONS, revealing a complex maze of wires and circuits. He unhooks a WIRE-CUTTER from his belt and begins clipping the wires from the top floor buttons.

PUNISHER

You're positive it's the first level that's unguarded.

FRANCO

My sources don't make mistakes.

The Punisher twists the clipped wires together, reconnecting them in different combinations. He stands up and replaces the plate.

FRANCO

Castle, I gotta know...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCO (Cont'd)
(as the Punisher faces
him)

... all these years I been waiting
for that bullet in my back to come...
Why hasn't it?

The Punisher eyes sparkle, truly frightening.

PUNISHER
Every moment you've lived in fear...
has made life worth living.

The two mortal enemies glare at each other, neither giving an inch. Then the Punisher turns and presses 35. The door slides shut and the elevator starts to go up.

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

Shake's FINGERS strain to reach the remote at the bottom of the crevice... he strains with all his might, when - SCREECH! - a big RAT attacks his hand.

SHAKE

Aaaah!

He quickly withdraws his fingers, bleeding from a nasty bite...

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The lights flash 33 - 34 - 35.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

The elevator KEEPS GOING up, despite there being no more numbers.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The Punisher gets ready. He stands to the side, and when the doors open, he LEAPS out of the elevator...

INT. YAKUZA CORRIDOR - NIGHT

... to find himself surrounded by SIX YAKUZA GUARDS, all as shocked as he is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He LOOKS back at Franco, who is in the elevator doorway, holding the Uzi.

FRANCO

Nobody's perfect.

He steps back into the elevator as the doors slide SHUT, trapping the Punisher in the corridor. The Punisher is a whirlwind of motion, before the Yakuza can get a handle on the situation. A SLASH with the longsword, another with the short, then another, and THREE of the men spin through the air, spurting jets of blood. The rest have reached their guns, but - SLASH - SLASH - they are cut down just as fast. The Punisher immediately tears down into another hallway...

Two Yakuza come running out of a side door. The Punisher whirls, and they are both down. The Punisher turns and ducks into another doorway, and...

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

... he bursts into a room where at least twenty Yakuza are getting up from their card games and sake. He stops and presses the BEEPER on his belt. Nothing. Again...

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

Shake's EYES pop open wide as his beeper sounds off... he still can't reach the remote box... the rat viciously tearing at his fingers...

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

The Yakuza have reached their weapons. Without hesitation, the Punisher leaps right into their midst. SLOW MOTION... NORMAL SPEED... QUICK SHOTS... the Punisher slashes and whirls, Yakuza spin in all directions, spraying blood like fountains. SCREAMS FILL THE AIR.

Several Yakuza reach their guns. One targets the Punisher and SHOTS...

The BULLET hits the body armor. The Punisher whirls and cuts the man down as - BAM! - BAM! - two more shots are fired, another hitting the armor, the other missing altogether... the Punisher leaps forward, cutting the men down.

INT. UPPER LEVEL - NIGHT

Yakuza guards are running through the corridors, heading toward the noise on the lower level...

INT. MUSEUM ROOM - NIGHT

Lady Tanaka rises from in front of the prayer booth, a look of concern on her implacable face.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

The Punisher chases down the last Yakuza left standing, cutting them down with swift, vicious strokes, then he turns and runs out of the room.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

There are a dozen Yakuza running down the corridor toward him, their guns raised, FIRING AWAY.

BULLETS whiz past the Punisher's head as he slams himself behind a corner. He's really done for... bullets chipping away the wall...

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

The rat takes another BITE out of Shake's hand.

SHAKE

Aaargh! I've had enough, you filthy rat!

He reaches into his overcoat, pulls out the .357 Magnum the Punisher gave him, reaches into the crevice, and aims, point blank, at the rat...

SHAKE

See how you like a taste of that!

- BOOM! - the rat is blown to bits. He reaches the first switch on the remote box with the gun's muzzle, and CLICKS it down...

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The Yakuza are RIGHT ON TOP of the Punisher, when...

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

The PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE attached to the thick wires EXPLODES, and...

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The LIGHTS are all cut off and the entire place is plunged into darkness. We see the PUNISHER'S FORM streak through the shadows and hear the SHOUTS and SCREAMS of the Yakuza as his swords whistle through the darkness.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

Tony Franco has climbed out of the top of the elevator and, by climbing the cables, tortuously, he makes his way up toward the platform in front of the door leading to the second level.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the building's electrical panel. The emergency LIGHTS KICK IN and...

EXT. BLACK TOWER - NIGHT

Lights begin to flash on, one by one in the completely dark windows.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The lights flash back to life, revealing the Punisher cutting through the Yakuza, eight dead men on the floor behind him, the walls red with blood. He ROARS like a lion, pressing forward, pushing the remaining Yakuza back into...

INT. TRAINING ROOM - NIGHT

... the big gym where there are another ten Yakuza, most of them unarmed except for those holding wooden Kendo swords. The others all run for SWORDS AND SPEARS that are hung up on the walls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Punisher rushes toward a man who is pulling a spear off the wall and slashes him across the chest, then he spins and parries a blow from a wooden sword, cutting it in two, following with a devastating cut to its owner's throat. Three more Yakuza charge the Punisher with swords, SCREAMING at the top of their lungs, but are driven back as he cuts and slashes with incredible fury.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

Franco has reached the platform. Sweating, he takes a deep breath, then reaches for the inner lever that activates the door, and pushes. It SLIDES OPEN, and...

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

There are two Yakuza by the elevator. They look, and see the door open, but NO ELEVATOR. They step forward to investigate, but Tony Franco, SWINGS OUT from the shaft and cuts them down with a burst of SILENCED BULLETS. Then he turns and runs down an empty corridor... he hears VOICES, and ducks back into a corner.

FRANCO'S POV

Lady Tanaka passes through the corridor, followed by three of her men. She shouts at them, as they round a corner and disappear.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Punisher parries a sword thrust, spins and nails the man. He blocks another shot, runs the man through with his short sword, then kicks a third swordsman in the face. Another man charges the Punisher with a spear, only to find himself missing his hands as he hurtles past. There are three men left. One of them, holding a gun, has a clear shot at the Punisher and he SHOTS but the Punisher spins, catching the bullet in the armor, then goes into a forward roll, bullets hitting the floor right where he was standing, and comes up skewering the gunman with his short sword. The last men run in the other direction, but the Punisher bounds after the fleeing Yakuza and cuts them down. He looks around at the carnage he has wrought, then turns and heads out of the training room.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A POLICE CAR, lights flashing, sirens blaring, speeds past the other cars on the street like there is no tomorrow.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Jake Berkowitz is sitting in the back, next to Sergeant Kusack. Berkowitz is leaning over to the driver in the front, shouting, his face red.

BERKOWITZ

Step on it, man! Move it!

KUSACK

I thought you wanted to be left out of this one, Lieut...

BERKOWITZ

Shut up, Kusack!

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

The Punisher runs quickly up the steps, taking them two at a time, whirling around to slash apart a charging Yakuza soldier.

INT. MUSEUM ROOM - NIGHT

The Punisher comes into the large, ornate chamber and begins to move through it, when - BAM! - he is hit over the head by something hard. Then - WHOCK! - across the face. He crashes to the floor, and, gritting his teeth in pain, slowly looks up.

LOW ANGLE OF KOSHIGI

Towering over him, holding his two sai. A SMILE spreads across his brutal face. He lifts the sai, and swoops down, but the Punisher kicks out, knocking him back. The Punisher gets to his feet, but there is a FLASH OF STEEL, and blood spurts out of a gash in his arm. He parries reflexively as Tak moves in on him, driving him back with his LONGSWORD WITH CUTTING KNIFE. He parries, then moves to the side and trips Tak, but - WHIIT! - Sato's KYOKETSU SHOGE rakes his ribs, cutting through both his armor and his SUPPLY BELT, which goes sliding to the floor. A thunderkick catches him in the middle, knocking him into a glass cabinet in the middle of the room. Tak gets up. Koshigi steps forward. Sato moves in... the Punisher is seriously surrounded.

KOSHIGI

You are a formidable opponent,
Punisher-san. You will be remembered
with honor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PUNISHER

(eyes lighting up)

No. Now... you will be punished.

He hurtles forward with incredible speed, and KICKS Koshigi right over one of the glass cabinets, knocking it over. He whirls, cutting Tak across the back, cleanly tearing his clothes in two. Then he wheels on the floor, kicking Sato's legs out from under him, grabs his head, and smashes it into the floor...

... It is an amazing, enthralling ballet of violence and destruction, the greatest three-on-one fight of all time, as the awesome combatants, more forces of nature than human beings, slash and beat each other across the room. GLASS shatters... cabinets BURST... vases fall... it never lets up for a second. After a breathtaking series of blocks against Tak, Koshigi manages to hook the Punisher's swords with his sai, and YANKS them out of his grasp.

Sato's iron chain WRAPS around the Punisher's foot and TOPPLES him to the floor. Sato follows, stabbing with the Kyoketsu Shoge, skewering the Punisher's Kevlar vest to the floor. The Punisher throws Sato back, but he is pinned.

Koshigi hurtles through the air, his sai arcing downward.

The Punisher unhooks the straps and rolls out of his armor just as Koshigi lands and drives them right through the white skull on the front. Naked. Unarmed. The three killers press their advantage, mercilessly flailing at the Punisher, until a blow sends him crashing into a glass cabinet. He lies there, cut, bleeding, barely conscious. Tak, Sato and Koshigi regroup and stand over him. A moment of silence, an incredible tension in the air. Tak starts to bring his sword up... the Punisher's eyes flick downward.

His BELT is on the floor.

Tak starts to SHOUT, the sword ready to descend.

The Punisher's FOOT SLIDES FORWARD and PRESSES THE BEEPER.

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

- BEEP! - Shake's gun barrel clicks down the SECOND SWITCH...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

... The Black Tower's lobby doors EXPLODE OUTWARD.

INT. MUSEUM ROOM - NIGHT

The ENTIRE BUILDING is shaken... Tak loses the momentum of his sword-thrust...

...the Punisher rolls to the side, Tak goes forward. The Punisher pulls him face down into the glass, elbows the back of his head, and grabs the sword out of his hands. Then, with one long sweep, he comes up, DECAPITATES SATO and falls back, driving the point of the sword right through Tak's shoulder blades, nailing him face down to the shattered cabinet. Koshigi lunges with a sai but - CRACK! - the Punisher blocks and then is on him like a juggernaut, kicking, punching, knocking him back into the room. Koshigi tries again but two kicks from the Punisher send him to the floor. Slowly, he shakes his head and looks up.

LOW ANGLE OF THE PUNISHER

He is towering over Koshigi, blood pouring from cuts all over his body and face. Slowly, ever so slowly, his lips part, revealing bloodstained teeth, and the Punisher smiles.

Koshigi's face twists into a mask of sheer hatred. A CRY begins to well in his throat.

KOSHIGI

YaaaaaAAAH!

He jerks up, attacks with the sai one last time, but the Punisher blocks his arm, grabs his head and DROPS DOWN TO ONE KNEE, twisting Koshigi's neck as he goes and...

- CRAACK! -

Koshigi twitches briefly, then goes limp. The Punisher holds the body in that position for a moment, then finally drops it to the floor. He then starts to stand up, but his legs give out and he collapses right on top of Koshigi's corpse.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

There are a half-dozen police cars on the street in front of the Black Tower. Another car screeches to a halt and...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE ON A SEWER GRATING

It LIFTS, and old Shake comes out of it into the street. He brushes off his filthy coat and turns a corner...

... A half dozen cops race past him - BOOM! - one bumps right into him. It is Jake Berkowitz. He grabs Shake's shoulders.

BERKOWITZ

Christ, old man! Can't you see this is a dangerous area? Get the hell out of here!

SHAKE

Sir, I'll not delay... with your permission, I'm on my way.

He stands aside. Berkowitz gives him a strange look, then continues running toward the Black Tower. Shake cranes his head and looks at the upper stories of the building.

SHAKE

Fare thee well! One day we'll meet again, whether it be in heaven, or in hell.

He turns and continues down the street, as more COPS rush past him.

INT. BLACK TOWER LOBBY - NIGHT

Jake Berkowitz rushes through the burning lobby, followed by Sergeant Kusack and a dozen cops. Merkel, a cop already in the lobby, runs up to him.

MERKEL

... The gunshots that were heard came from the upper floors...

They step over the bodies of the dead Yakuza in front of the elevators.

BERKOWITZ

Get those elevators down here!

Some of the cops take out skeleton keys and start on the elevators.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERKOWITZ
(grabbing Kusack's
jacket)

... He's in here... I know he's in
here!...

INT. YAKUZA CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Tony Franco is at a corner holding his Uzi, breathing hard. He grits his teeth, spins around the wall and...

He is in the space in front of the doors leading to Lady Tanaka's room. There are three Yakuza out there, machine guns drawn. They spin around but...

Franco is faster... he squeezes the trigger and...

He NAILS two of the guards. One of them manages a burst, but he is also hit by bullets and goes flying back. Franco runs up to the door, steps back and kicks.

INT. TANAKA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The doors fly open and Franco jumps in.

There are two Yakuza inside. They both blast at Franco with their pistols. The bullets hit Franco in the chest, and he falls back against the wall. The Yakuza walk up to him, but he suddenly pops up and...

He BLOWS them away with his Uzi. He stands up, tearing away the remains of his shredded shirt, revealing KEVLAR BODY ARMOR. The POLICE SIRENS can be heard far below from Tanaka's windows.

VOICE (O.S.)

Put it down, Franco.

He slowly turns around and there, in front of the large bed, the red curtains behind her, is Lady Tanaka. She is holding a SHARP KNIFE to the throat of young Tommy, who's eyes are bulging.

FRANCO

TOMMY!

TOMMY

Shoot her, Daddy!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lady Tanaka presses the knife against the boy's throat, and Franco shouts.

FRANCO
No! Shut up, Tommy!

INT. BLACK TOWER LOBBY - NIGHT

The ELEVATOR DOORS slide open.

BERKOWITZ
Come on!

He runs into the elevator, followed by a dozen cops.

INT. TANAKA'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON FRANCO still holding the machine gun.

FRANCO
You're finished here, Lady. Let him go and I swear on my mother I'll give you safe passage back to your country. My word of honor.

Lady Tanaka doesn't budge.

TANAKA
Honor? Do you think I can return to Japan in such disgrace. You have won, Tony Franco, but you will not enjoy your victory.

She starts to draw the knife across Tommy's throat.

FRANCO
Nooooo!

But she has stopped. Frozen solid, she stares blankly ahead.

Tony Franco's eyes are wide with confusion... WHAT?

Lady Tanaka stands like that for a moment, then - BLURGH! -a GOUT OF BLOOD pours out of her mouth. The curtain behind her swishes open revealing the Punisher in all his glory. Slowly, Tanaka crumples forward, collapsing in a heap on the floor, Koshigi's SAI jutting from her back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCO

Tommy!

He runs over to his son and drops to his knees, hugging the boy with all his might.

FRANCO

Oh Christ, thank God you're
alright... thank God!

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER

as he watches the father and son for a moment, an indecipherable expression on his face. Then...

PUNISHER

Come on... the police will be up here
in a minute.

He turns and heads for the door.

Tony Franco lets go of Tommy, pushes him to the side, and reaches for his Uzi.

The PUNISHER'S HANDS reach for the floor.

Franco levels the Uzi and... the Punisher comes up with one of the dead Yakuza's pistols, spins around and...

- BADOWW! -

The BULLET hits Franco right between the eyes, knocking him flat onto his back.

LOW ANGLE ON THE PUNISHER

He looks at Franco for a moment, then turns to leave the room but...

TOMMY'S VOICE (O.S.)

You're dead!

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER'S BACK

His shoulders tense, he stops in the doorway.

Tears are running down Tommy Franco's cheeks, an anger unnatural for a boy his age burning behind his eyes.

TOMMY

(shouting)

I may be little now, but as soon as
I'm big enough... one day... I'm
gonna kill you.

INT. YAKUZA CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The elevator doors open. Jake Berkowitz, followed by the other cops, comes out into the hallway. They spread out, guns drawn, astonished by all the dead bodies littering the floor.

KUSACK

Holy shit!

Berkowitz pulls out his gun and walks into another corridor, shouting...

BERKOWITZ

Punisher! I know you're in here!

INT. TANAKA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The Punisher's shoulders are tense. Then he turns around and looks back into the room.

Tommy is glaring at him, standing over his father's body, his fists clenched at his sides.

The Punisher slowly walks into the room until he is towering right over little Tommy, who backs down not an inch, his fury erasing all fear. The Punisher raises the gun, pointing it directly at Tommy's head. Then he turns it around, reaches down, lifts Tommy's hands and wraps them around the gun's handle.

PUNISHER

If you grow up with this in your heart you will become a monster and thousands will suffer.

He gets down onto his knees, kneeling in front of the stunned boy.

PUNISHER

If you get it over with now, you still have a chance.

He raises the boy's hands until the gun is pointing directly between his own eyes. Then he lowers his hands. Tommy holds the gun there. It trembles in his small hands.

CLOSE ON TOMMY'S FACE

He bites his lips, steels his eyes. He tries to squeeze the trigger, God how he tries.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER'S FACE

His steely, unblinking eyes seem to burn right into Tommy's soul.

Finally, Tommy lowers the gun and holds it limp at his side. The SOUNDS OF THE POLICE APPROACHING grow louder.

BERKOWITZ'S VOICE (O.S.)

Punisher! I'm coming for you!

The Punisher gently takes the gun out of Tommy's hand.

PUNISHER

You're a good boy, Tommy. Be a good man.

He stands up, takes a few steps over to one of the WINDOWS, slides it open, then turns back to Tommy.

CLOSE ON THE PUNISHER

His eyes are wide, shining... not an image to leave a ten-year-old boy with for the rest of his life.

PUNISHER

'Cause if you're not... I'll be waiting.

Then, like a huge phantom, he disappears out of the window.

WIDE ANGLE ON TOMMY FRANCO

He stands there completely in shock in the center of the room, the corpses of his father, Lady Tanaka and the guards sprawled on the floor. Jake Berkowitz and several of the cops burst into the room, their guns leveled. Berkowitz is shouting.

BERKOWITZ

Punisher! Punisher!

We start to PULL BACK farther, farther until we are out of the window...

EXT. BLACK TOWER - NIGHT

We see the police milling around in the windows, PULLING EVEN FARTHER AND FARTHER BACK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERKOWITZ'S VOICE (O.S.)
PUNISHEEEEEEEERRRR!

His cry turns into a POUNDING PULSING BASE CHORD ON THE SOUNDTRACK AS the Black Tower grows smaller and smaller, the lights of New York City filling the screen like a billion stars in the velvet night. When we are high, high above it all, the entire city seeming small and insignificant, a familiar VOICE comes on the soundtrack.

PUNISHER'S VOICE
... I still talk to God sometimes.
I ask him if what I'm doing is right,
or if it is wrong.

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK.

PUNISHER'S VOICE
There is still no answer.

FADE OUT.

THE PUNISHER WILL RETURN