the punisher
blood & gunpowder
“ flares & scares ”
conclusion
written by jun

BREAKING NEWS

we interrupt this segment to provide breaking news , police have arrived freshly on the scene at the crimson inn massacre — so far the police have recorded 53 casualties . security cameras showed that the building was being guarded by multiple unarmed men before it was stormed by the punisher . among the casualties was a frequent felon as well as immigrant roman diez , who seems to have died via gunshot wound to the head .

the interesting thing about the massacre is that all the victims have similar characteristics to those of vampires in fictional media - the police chief has yet to comment on this . in other news—

FZZZZ—

television goes silent , finally - news reporting the strangeness of the last few days . still washing the trenchcoat from last night , bits of brain & sinew decorate the coat - more than there ever has been .

“ yo !” a voice calls out , castle stops what he’s doing as tomas enters the dingy room , pointing towards a news article on his phone . “ you used a *chainsaw* on those freaks ? that’s badass man !”

“ hmph .” sponge continues scrubbing out the viscera decorating the coat , tomas standing there admiring the room — weapons decorate the wall , placed on several tool racks .



“ *woah* .” he utters under his breath , picking up a flare gun , examining it . “ really bro ?”

“ put it down , tomas .” stopping what he’s doing completely to stare down the other , the younger male following the order swiftly .
he hated this , babysitting this kid . where the hell are his parents .

“ sorry , punisher— sir .” the boy takes a squat on a small stool in the armory . a deep exhale soon following “ i just can’t believe it , i mean— you killed the fucker ! no more diez , what did he tell you anyway ?”

frank stands up , throwing the coat aside - turning his gaze towards the other . there’s a slight pause as he tried to think of what to say— of what he even *could* say about it . “ it wasn’t diez’s idea , it was whoever’s in charge of those things . what matters is now .. now i know where they’re all held up .”
he gets up , moving towards a small foldable table — large tarp covering something on it .

“ the sewer system under hell’s kitchen , they’re all held up there — i killed fifty of them in the hotel , & that was just in one place for the time being . there must be *hundreds* down there .” digits reach towards the fabric covering the table - pulling it off .
sitting there , illuminated by the light - an M2 flamethrower .

“ they’re dug in deep , so i’ll burn them out .”

SEWER SYSTEM

hundreds of figures feast on innocent blood , all piling up within the waste of the city that never sleeps — among them is the ring leader , boss of the new colombian crime family & the mastermind of this entire grand operation .

“ gentlemen , gentlemen — i understand you’ve been hungry , i have been too . after you are done feasting - bring your attention to me ,” thiago martíne , the columbian butcher . “ my time in the old country has enlightened me , there — i found one of us .. he bit me that day , turned me . yes , yes he did .. however , he also showed me the truth , showed me the way ,” thiago explains , pacing around on a small stage he had made — the sewage system was expansive & wide , large . enough to house them all . “ i came here to share it with you , to kill the fools who slaughtered the empire we once had here — yes , but also .. to spread the gospel .”

the crowd cheers , husks of corpses drained completely dry of their blood — all the while martíne smiles wildly .

TOPSIDE , HELL’S KITCHEN 8:40 AM

hisss , not one of a vampire but of a flame being ignited .

———————

here goes nothing

———————-

bandolier of flashbangs & grenades decorate skull covered chest , castle holsters the flamethrower on the side of the fuel tank mounted on his back — twisting & opening a grate , lifting it up & putting it aside .

whatever happens next , it’s going to get bloody — & the punisher wouldn’t have it any other way .



dual pistols are pulled out after proceeding down the latter - huff escaping nostrils as he enters the lion's den . walking forward , castle sees a pair of three ,

BLAMBLAMBLAM !

he makes short work of them . the desert eagle is a contrary old bitch — hits like a truck but can't hit jack . akimbo is just ridiculous , maybe he has more balls than brains — castle thinks , as he walks through the tunnels .

more are drawn out due to the sound of gun fire — like moths to a flame , they go down the same .

BLAMBLAMBLAMBLAMBLAM !

holstering the pair of high caliber pistols , he pulls out the weapon of the hour , walking through a tight tunnel & seeing a gathering of them . they all surround a wooden table , atop the table is some poor soul they abducted off the street — his chest ripped open with blood oozing out of it . the vermin's eyes rise as they then yelp out in rage , charging at him — or at least attempting to .

FWWWOOOOOOSSSSHHHHHHH

hell's hot , but so is the M2 , they stop drop & roll but to no avail . their skin chars & their lungs fill up with smoke , flesh melting beneath the heat . plastic explosives are put on the walls of the tight spot from earlier . not only was he going to burn everything in sight— he was also going to bury them too . by now , with the gunshots echoing throughout - the streets should be vacant enough , civilian casualties minimalized — that & an anonymous tip about bombs being planted around the city would help too .

castle pushes onward , eventually reaching a large stream of waste — cascading down a water fall . sliding down - he can hear some figures coming towards him .

" he has to be here ! come on !"

FWWWOOOOOOSSSHHHHHH

the same results as before , he doesn't even bother making sure they die - he plants more explosives & continues forward .

DEEPER IN THE SEWER SYSTEM

“ MR MARTÍNE , MR MARTÍNE—” , staggering , tripping over the large piles of bodies , the man pants loudly . thiago turns his attention from his chalice of blood toward the man . “ what do you want , child ?” brow rises , assuming this is the waste of his time .

“ IT’S THE PUNISHER , HE’S HERE !” thiago smirks , waving his hand away .

“ the punisher is no match for us boy , let him come— let him find out the hard way why such is a bad idea , hm ?”

SAFEHOUSE 9:13 AM

“ it’d figure that this place is used by him .” the man said to himself , adjusting glasses - they say this was where a poker game went wrong , punisher came in & wasted fifteen men here . “ can read you like a book , frank .” he chuckled , carrying dufflebag with him .

door’s locked - of course it would be , bobby pin comes in handy however . he’s not as .. spry as he once was but he can twist & turn a small object no problem . by now , he knows that frank knows he’s coming - as he twists the door knob ; the man is met with a gun barrel aimed right at his nose .

tomas , shaking in his boots — holding the gun sideways . “ who the hell are you— uh , dickwad !” blinking at the younger male , the mystery man rolls his breath .

“ the name’s micro , i used to work with our mutual friend — i’m just here to deliver some ..” looking down at the duffle bag in hands - shaking it a little . “ .. stuff .”

unfazed by the firearm - it seemed as though tomas was more frightened by it than micro was . “ also , the sights are on top for a reason .” still trembling , tomas backs up — sweat beading off of brow .

“ speaking of which , where is he ?”

SEWER SYSTEM 9:19 AM

FWWWOOOOOOOSSSSHHHHH

“ ***FIREEEEE*** ”



they all screech in pain as the flames from the M2 dances around them - he was getting closer & closer to the heart of the sewer , to the heart of this hell—hole .. he could feel it . another piece of semtex placed on the wall , another pile of charred corpses . he started counting in the beginning , two - then three , pulling out the flamethrower brought it up to about twenty - something in a span of minutes . by now , it had to have hit the seventies at the very least .

they were capable of thought , but they were also mindless , driven by hunger . they think that maybe , maybe this time they can get him . they’re wrong .

as he rounds a corner , he hears a long screech — eyes narrow .. came up from about ten o'clock north , maybe three clicks up ahead—

HISSSSS !

before he has time to react , frank castle has a piece of brick smashed into the back of his head . he falls face first into the floor , they finally got him . they finally got him ..

…

…

SAFEHOUSE 9:27 AM

" you just LET HIM LEAVE *?!"* voice rising , micro's fingers poke right into tomas's chest - teeth chatter as he gulps in result . " *well .. uh — uhm er— he said he could .. handle it ?*"

eyes narrow , face blanks — where the fuck does frank find these idiots , this was the kid helping him track down these things ?
" you're kidding me , right ?" grimacing at the other , tomas can hardly speak , backing up against a wall . " look— he can handle himself - i mean the guy has killed like what , a thousand peo—" " try tens of thousands . not including his time in vietnam ." micro interrupted - crossing arms & tilting head , patience wearing thin .

" look … mr micro , all i'm sayin' is - he's the damn punisher i mean .. he can handle himself . you heard about the hotel for crying out loud ! what was i even supposed to fucking do ?! block his way out & risk getting a closed casket funeral ? fat fuckin' chance !" face falls into the vigilante's old partner's hand .. rubbing brow .

" it's a damn maze down there , kid - hundreds of them , all amped up & wanting to suck his blood in particular . if the news knows he's been hitting them , then they most certainly know too ." a heavy sigh escapes the man , both he & castle were getting far too old for this horseshit .

" grab some guns & follow me ,"

" whuh— why ?" tomas asked - raising a brow .

" we're going to save the punisher from some vampires , that's *why* ."



SEWER SYSTEM — 9:31 AM

“ *hey* ”

“ *—punisherrrr* ”

“ *wake up* ”

“ *—should’ve just killed him* ”

“ *wake up—* ”

“ *nah , we gotta savor this* ”

“ *WAKE THE FUCK UP !*”

castle’s eyes open , barely adjusting to the dark , he’s unarmed & tied to a chair ; just his luck . standing in front of him , are multiple figures - all within a circle , all surrounding him .

yet one steps out of the darkness , who is the leader - & is just vampiric as the rest of them ; thiago martíne , the butcher diez mentioned .

his head's on fire , pulsing , with each pulse it burns more - not to mention how dizzy he is . it feels like at any moment that he'd slump over & black out , part of him wants to .

" i have waited for this meeting , this conversation - for a long time .. mr castle ."

" … "

" being the strong silent type will not save you , *hehehe this fuckin' guy eh ?* , no — on the contrary . your fate , it is .."

he pauses , coming closer as he clenches his fist tightly - crimson eyes showcase rage , true unbridled anger .

" .. inevitable . si ? when i am done with you , or rather my men — you are not worth my time , you won't even come back as one of us . that would be too much of a privilege , too much of an honor . no .. you are an animal - you kill & you kill & you don't even think ," he points at his head as he describes this - clearly getting a kick out of seeing frank tied up . " you will join your family , your whore of a wife & your dogs of a son & daughter - you will see them again in hell . only for them to be torn apart in front of you once again . what do you think of that , punisher ? tell me ."

" … "



spit flies into martíne's face , whose smirk fades - turning into a disappointed frown .

" what a waste , truly . kill him , please ?"

thiago vanishes eventually , a group of four of them soon approach castle . " just so you know , we are really goin' to enjoy this ."

INSIDE A PICK UP TRUCK — TOPSIDE

" okay , do i have to go over the plan one more time , or no ?" micro asked side eyeing the other , breath heavy , digits gripping the steering wheel . " no way boss !" the other responds , twirling flare gun .

“ why… why’d you pick that ?” brows furrow slightly , admittedly - micro knew why but .. god it annoyed him .

“ well they’re vampires , you feel me ? so they don’t like the heat , & the punisher already took the flamethrower so i might as well .” shrugging , tomas exited the passenger side & observed the streets
“ where is everyone ?”

“ bomb threat , whole districts locked down - especially with recent events .” walking alongside the other , micro peers down the coverless manhole .

“ must’ve went down here .”

descending downwards , micro shakes his head — the smell was awful , not to mention the addition of corpses .

“ follow the trail & if you’re going to use that thing — use it if they group up , okay ?” the larger male said , turning back towards the former gunrunner . “ sir yes sir !”

“ jesus christ ..”

THWAAACKKK

their relentless offense on castle continues , they beat & beat on him some more .

“ that’s for the hotel !” one exclaims , as his boots smash into the vigilante’s forehead . over & over again . the chair’s tipped on it’s side now , chair leg broken off & being used to beat him .

is this how he dies ? he wonders . he closes his eyes - & he can see them , he can see his wife , maria - lisa & frank junior

“ daddy ?” lisa reaches out , frank’s hand extends forwards - trying to grab it , but it’s too late . the flurry of bullets follows soon after - gang dispute in the middle of the park , his daughter’s head nearly explodes , his son coughs up his own guts - & his wife’s heart explodes .

as he stands amongst the carnage - his wife’s lifeless eyes look up at him , & she speaks .

“ frank .. we’re still dead .. frank ..

punish them .”



he stares back , & as he closes his eyes in his mind - his eyes open to reality . he can feel blood pooling out of a gash on his forehead , & the rhythmic thumping of each consecutive whack .

finally , he uses all the adrenaline he has left to rip free from binds - breaking the multiple strings & zip ties binding his wrists .

“ HOLY SHIT !” they exclaim , he stands up & grabs one’s neck - slamming him against the wall & taking the chair leg out of his hand , smashing another one’s head .

“ you maggots aren’t going to kill me yet - i’ll take every single one of you with me— DO YOU HEAR ME !”

one grabs him from behind in a chokehold with his arm , another tries slashing at his gut with it’s claws - frank retaliates by kicking the creature down .

he struggles & pushes himself downward on his back to crack the foe on his back's skull — brain leaking out of him , the kicked foe is about to pounce " FUCKING KILL YOU !"

PAFWISSSHH

SKREEEEE !!

a flare burns right into the back of the pouncing vampire's head , melting out through the mouth . castle backs up before it falls atop him . " HELL YEAH !"

he can recognize the voice , as well as the disappointed roll of someone's breath . tomas & micro , they came back for him .

" thought you said you were through with *my* war , micro ." frank's voice croaked out - standing up & dusting himself off . " i was , but i had one last gift to give ." dropping duffle bag from earlier onto the floor - frank's eyebrow rises .

" better unwrap your present fast though frank , we got bad guys coming in hot ."

RRRRRRRRRROOOOAAAARRRRR

they're everywhere , closing in - coming for him - waiting for him - ready to kill *him* .

" let them come then ." zipper closes back up as frank lifts the heavy object up , throwing belt over his shoulder .



DUDUDDUDUDUDUDUDUDUDUDUDUDU—

the M60 sings her song , 7.62 flies down range & doesn't just put holes in the vampires - it blows them apart , piece by piece . arms , legs , guts - they all fly off . they don't stop coming —— so he doesn't stop shooting .

DUDDUDUDUDUDUDUDUDUDUDUDUDU
DUDUDDUDUDUDDUDUDUDUDUDUDU



twenty , thirty , forty , fifty , fifty five , sixty , seventy five , ninety — no matter how much . they all die .

they

all

die .

corpses — corpses is all he can see , giblets of flesh & viscera decorate .. well , everywhere .



“ good god frank , you haven’t gotten soft in these past years at all— *holy shit* .” micro’s eyes widened behind frames .

“ listen , we should leave - that’s definitely the last of them , i mean christ .. there must be hundreds—”

“ no .” castle replies coldly , stepping over the pile .

“ no ? frank , it’s over , they’re dead .”

“ it’s over when i get martíne . i still have to find him .” he checks the bodies , they aren’t coming back - no way . “ where’s tomas ?”

AAAAAAAGHHHHHHH !!

the pair turn around — they see him , they see tomas , but they also see thiago martíne .

his teeth dug deep into the boy’s neck , blood oozing out , tomas falls limp - dead . “ i get the feeling ..” wiping blood from mouth— “ you won’t have to look very far .”

“ micro ?” he doesn’t even look back , shocked look on micro’s face says it all - he turns & run . “ i’m glad you sent him off - his blood is .. tainted . your’s however ..” the pair circle each other like alleycats , the hatred in their eyes on an even scale - here amidst the corpses , under the feet & cars of new yorkers , amidst their waste & trash . this is their final stand , this campaign is nearing it’s conclusion .

a wet flap soon follows as castle drops the M60 on the floor , (or on the corpses is more like it) “ you really shouldn’t have thrown away your weapon , si ? big mistake .”

he taunts , it doesn’t work on castle - instead , his gaze narrows & his vision steadies .



“ shut the fuck up & fight me .”

the pair run at each other - martíne is fast , dodging castle’s punch & slashing his side with his long vampiric claws - the vigilante staggers & trips slightly . turning around castle runs back & throws a punch square into the bloodsucking mobster’s nose , it doesn’t break . martíne retaliates swiftly & grabs castle’s arm , twisting it out of its socket & kicking him to the ground .
more kicks are delivered towards frank’s ribs - he can feel them crack , the vampire laughing all the while . the gunslinger’s given the opportunity to get up , so he takes it . shoulder charging the creature of the night into a pillar of rusty pipes - one’s sticking out & impales the columbian boss through the shoulder .

AAAAAIIEEE !

THWUMPTHWUMPTHWUMP

gloved fists repeatedly smash into the impaled thiago's face - over & over again , the one arm being broken makes it hurt like hell , but castle doesn't care . thumbs then dig into the other's crimson eyes , martíne screams even louder - his head getting slammed against the pipes over , & over & over again . a final headbutt is delivered , as castle falls to his side - panting heavily .

vision's blurry , the beating from just now & earlier when he was captive really start to hit now , as he gets up - the boss springs to life & removes himself from the pipes , pouncing on castle & bringing him to floor .
claws slash through plate carrier , slicing open flesh around chest — over & over again , each gash being deeper than the last & the punisher is powerless to stop it .

he can feel it — he can feel his consciousness fading , this is it , he thinks , the final curtain . as his mind fades to black , he sees himself .

vietnam , firing his rifle at the enemy .
central park , watching his family's demise .
parking lot in hell's kitchen , smashing billy russo's face into a windshield .
queens , webbing being fired at his hands .
the warehouse , finding tomas .

his eyes open , & he turns his head left , then right .

" war … not … not over ."

he mutters to himself , arm reaching towards tomas's corpse , grabbing something .. solid - a gun , small but a gun nonetheless . he points the barrel right at the temple of martíne & squeezes , not pulls , the trigger .

PAFFWWIIISSHHH .

the flare burns through the skull , the vampiric foe falling limp atop castle , who just barely pushes him off & gets back on his feet , using the wall to support himself as he walks the sewer system .

he turns towards tomas's corpse , & nods .

eventually he finds a latter to the surface , climbing it & walking a few feet out . he falls against a bus stop - blood staining the glass . he didn't die back there , he wasn't sure how , but he didn't .

hand reaches for detonator in coat pocket — pressing red button .

BBBOOOOMFFFF

hell's kitchen shakes & rumbles , the sewer system is buried completely - anything & everything left there is gone . it's over .
his vison darkens , blurs — he feels tired & hurts all over . he just needs to get up & walk home .

get up .. walk home .

get…. up… walk home .

get…… up—

FLOPP .

SAFE HOUSE — 3:42 PM — conclusion

pain . all he feels , pain . head - chest - legs & arms . he tries to get up , but it sends a sharp feeling through out his upper chest , " *ARRGH*— god damnit .."

however he got here , is unknown - maybe he walked her—

" oh , finally up - are you ? twice i've saved your ass ." micro . that explained a lot - also caused another headache , since frank knew that the other wouldn't let him live this down . " why'd you come back for me ?" castle doesn't even bother with eye contact , he just rests his head for a bit .

" yeah yeah— funny . you're welcome ." arms crossed , micro rolls his breath .
" listen , the kid .. he uh—"

" i know ."



there's a moment of silence - micro rubs his brow awkwardly before sitting up & walking out . steps echo on the creaky floor - before he can leave though .

" thank you , david ." frank's voice croaks out . micro looks back - & nods , before leaving .
as he lays there , he thinks back to the warehouse , about when he saved tomas — this likely wouldn't have been possible without the man .

in the end , that boy repaid castle twice that day - not only by saving him from his interrogators , but also with the weapon he brought with him . maybe flare guns are game after all .

fin .