

Punisher

The **Punisher** (**Francis "Frank" Castle**, born **Castiglione**) is a fictional character appearing in American comic books published by Marvel Comics. The character was created by writer Gerry Conway and artists John Romita Sr. and Ross Andru, with publisher Stan Lee green-lighting the name. The Punisher made his first appearance in *The Amazing Spider-Man* #129 (cover-dated Feb. 1974).

The character is an Italian-American^{[5][6]} vigilante who employs murder, kidnapping, extortion, coercion, threats of violence, and torture in his campaign against crime. Driven by the deaths of his wife and two children who were killed by the mob for witnessing a killing in New York City's Central Park, the Punisher wages a one-man war on the mob and all criminals and employs the use of various firearms.^[7] His family's killers were the first to be slain by the Punisher.^[8] A war veteran and a United States Marine Corps Scout Sniper, Castle is skilled in hand-to-hand combat, guerrilla warfare, and marksmanship.^{[5][6]}

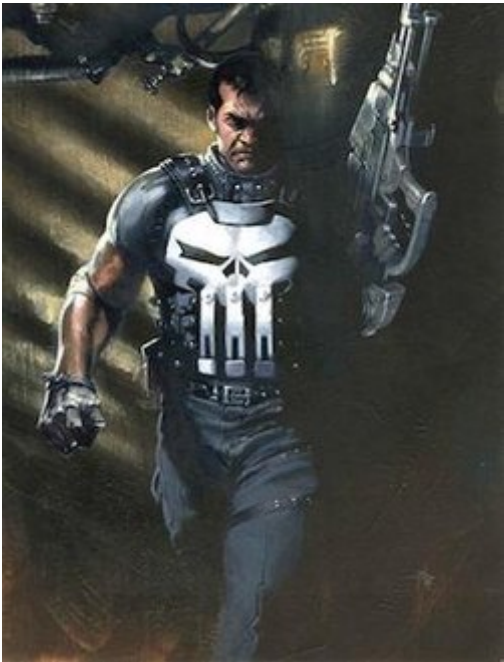
The Punisher's brutal nature and willingness to kill made him a novel character in mainstream American comic books when he debuted in 1974. By the late 1980s, the Punisher was part of a wave of psychologically-troubled antiheroes. At the height of his popularity, the character was featured in four monthly publications, including *The Punisher*, *The Punisher War Journal*, *The Punisher War Zone*, and *The Punisher Armory*. Despite his violent actions and dark nature, the Punisher has enjoyed some mainstream success on television, making guest appearances on *Spider-Man: The Animated Series*, and *The Super Hero Squad Show*, where the depiction of his violent behavior was toned down for family viewers. In feature films, Dolph Lundgren portrayed the Punisher in 1989, as did Thomas Jane in 2004, and Ray Stevenson in 2008. Jon Bernthal portrays the character in the second season of *Marvel's Daredevil* as a part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Bernthal reprised the role in *The Punisher*, his own self-titled series.

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Punisher



Variant cover of *Original Sin* #4 (August 2014)

Art by Gabriele Dell'Otto

Publication information

Publisher	Marvel Comics
First appearance	<i>The Amazing Spider-Man</i> #129 (February 1974)
Created by	Gerry Conway (writer) John Romita Sr. (artist) Ross Andru (artist)

In-story information

Full name	Francis "Frank" Castle ^[a] (born Castiglione) ^[1]
Team affiliations	United States Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance Code Red^[2] Heroes for Hire Secret Defenders Thunderbolts^[3] Hydra^[4]
Notable aliases	Mr. Smith, Charles Fort, Frank Rook, Johnny Tower, Franken-Castle

11/2/2018 Punisher - Wikipedia <i>Punisher: In the Blood</i> The Punisher (2011) Thunderbolts The Punisher (2014) Original Sin Secret Wars All-New Punisher & Civil War II: Kingpin Secret Empire Characterization Skills, weapons, and abilities Reception Supporting characters Other versions In other media See also Notes References External links	Abilities ■ Skilled in guerrilla and military tactics, close quarters combat, infiltration, marksmanship, and demolitions and skilled in armed and unarmed combat ■ Special operations training
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Publication history

First appearance

The Punisher was conceived of by Gerry Conway, writer of *The Amazing Spider-Man*, who helped design the character's distinctive costume. As Conway recalled in 2002, that, "In the '70s, when I was writing comics at DC and Marvel, I made it a practice to sketch my own ideas for the costumes of new characters—heroes and villains—which I offered to the artists as a crude suggestion representing the image I had in mind. I had done that with the Punisher at Marvel."^[9] Conway had drawn a character with a small death's head skull on one breast. Marvel art director John Romita, Sr., took the basic design, blew the skull up to huge size, taking up most of the character's chest.^[10] *Amazing Spider-Man* penciller Ross Andru was the first artist to draw the character for publication.

Stan Lee, then Marvel's editor-in-chief, recalled in 2005 that he had suggested the character's name:

Gerry Conway was writing a script and he wanted a character that would turn out to be a hero later on, and he came up with the name the Assassin. And I mentioned that I didn't think we could ever have a comic book where the hero would be called the Assassin, because there's just too much of a negative connotation to that word. And I remembered that, some time ago, I had had a relatively unimportant character ... [who] was one of [the cosmic antagonist] Galactus' robots, and I had called him the Punisher, and it seemed to me that that was a good name for the character Gerry wanted to write — so I said, 'Why not call him the Punisher?' And, since I was the editor [sic; Lee had been named publisher in 1972], Gerry said, 'Okay.'^[11]

Appearing for the first time in *The Amazing Spider-Man* #129 (Feb. 1974), the Punisher was initially an antagonist of the titular hero. He is portrayed as a bloodthirsty vigilante who has no qualms about killing gangsters, something that most superheroes of the time refrain from doing. J. Jonah Jameson describes him as "the most newsworthy thing to happen to New York since Boss Tweed". In this appearance, the Punisher is determined to kill Spider-Man, who is wanted for the apparent murder of Norman Osborn.^[12] The Punisher is shown as a formidable fighter, skilled marksman, and able strategist. All he reveals about himself is that he is a former U.S. Marine. He has a fierce temper

but also shows signs of considerable frustration over his self-appointed role of killer vigilante. He is engaged in extensive soul-searching as to what is the right thing to do: although he has few qualms about killing, he is outraged when his then-associate, the Jackal,^[13] apparently kills Spider-Man by treacherous means rather than in honorable combat. Spider-Man, who is himself no stranger to such torment, concludes that the Punisher's problems made his own seem like a "birthday party".^[12]

The character was a hit with readers and started to appear on a regular basis, teaming up with both Spider-Man and other heroes such as Captain America and Nightcrawler throughout the 1970s and early 1980s.^{[14][15][16]} Conway said the Punisher's popularity took him by surprise, as he had intended him only as a second-tier character.^[17] During his acclaimed run on Daredevil, writer and artist Frank Miller made use of the character, contrasting his attitudes and version of vigilante action to that of the more liberal character of Daredevil.^[18]

Initial series

In the early 1980s, writer and college student Steven Grant was at a comics convention in New York City over the Christmas break. At the time he was living with Duffy Vohland, an employee in Marvel's production department. Vohland encouraged Grant to pitch story ideas to Marvel, and arranged an interview with then-editor-in-chief Marv Wolfman, with whom Grant would become good friends. Grant sat at Vohland's typewriter for a day and wrote three ideas: One involved the Black Knight and one was the Punisher, since those were characters he liked that as far as Grant knew, no other Marvel writer was working with at the time. Unbeknownst to Grant, the Punisher, as it turned out, was the lead in a black and white magazine being written by Archie Goodwin, making the character unavailable for Grant's use. A couple of years later Grant began writing for Marvel after another friend, Roger Stern, became a Marvel editor there and asked Grant to write something for him. In 1979, Marvel began considering publishing miniseries, which Grant had been lobbying for some time. Grant began pushing for a *Punisher* miniseries, but this was met with disinterest from editorial, as the character was not thought of as one that readers would care about. The following year, Grant collaborated on *Marvel Team-Up* #94 with artist Mike Zeck. In 1984, Zeck illustrated Marvel's first *Secret Wars* miniseries, which raised his profile in the Marvel offices, where editors were thinking in terms of talent "stables" that worked exclusively for each editor. A new editor, Carl Potts, was looking for projects, so Grant and Zeck pitched a *Punisher* miniseries to him, and Potts accepted it, over much objection from Marvel management, who told him that he bore full responsibility for it.^[19]

The miniseries premiered with a January 1986 cover date. It was bannered on the cover as the first of four; although the series had always been intended to be five issues long, and the banner was an error that recurred throughout the entire run.^[20] The plot changed from Grant's initial story, though the basic concept remained the same.^[19] An important element of the story was a retcon that explains that many of the Punisher's more extreme actions to this point were the result of being poisoned with mind-altering drugs.^[21]

An ongoing series, also titled *The Punisher*, premiered the next year. Initially by writer Mike Baron and artist Klaus Janson, it eventually ran 104 issues (July 1987 – July 1995) and spun off two additional ongoing series — *The Punisher War Journal* (80 issues, November 1988 – July 1995) and *The Punisher War Zone* (41 issues, March 1992 – July 1995), as well as the black-and-white comics magazine *The Punisher Magazine* (16 issues, November 1989 – September 1990) and *The Punisher Armory* (10 issues, no cover dates, starting 1990), a fictional diary detailing "His thoughts! His feelings! His weapons!" (as stated on the cover of issue #1). The Punisher also appeared in numerous one-shots and miniseries, and made frequent guest appearances in other Marvel comics, ranging from superhero series to the Vietnam War-era comic *The 'Nam*.



The Punisher debuted in *The Amazing Spider-Man* #129 (Feb. 1974); art by Gil Kane and John Romita Sr.

During this era, the Punisher was assisted by his then-partner, Microchip. Serving as a Q type figure, he would supply the Punisher with high-tech vehicles and equipment such as armored combat "battle vans" specially built and customized.

Over the next decade, the Punisher would be shown fighting virtually every known, criminal organization, including the Italian Mafia, the Russian Bratva, the Japanese Yakuza, the Columbian and Mexican drug cartels, the Aryan Brotherhood, the Chinese Triads, Jamaican Yardies, the Irish Mob, biker gangs, street gangs, gunrunning militias, muggers, killers, rapists, psychopaths, violent racists, sadists, pedophiles, and corrupt city officials . He also assaults criminal business enterprises such as drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, money laundering, and human trafficking.

Due to the Punisher's homicidal nature, few of his foes became recurring antagonists, the most notable of these being the severely-scarred enforcer Jigsaw. The Punisher also acquired a nemesis in the form of the Kingpin,^[22] a longtime Spider-Man and Daredevil foe, and developed enmity with Daredevil himself, who likewise abhorred and fought against the Punisher's brutal methods. Villains such as the Jackal, Bushwacker, Doctor Doom,^[23] The Reavers and Bullseye would be used to provide more of a challenge for the character. In addition, heroes such as Spider-Man, Captain America, Daredevil, Ghost Rider,^[24] the Hulk, Wolverine,^[25] Nick Fury, and Moon Knight^[26] – and, on at least two occasions, the preadolescent team Power Pack^[27] – would appear. Often the stories would use the appearance of those heroes to provide commentary on the difference between the Punisher and those more colourful characters. During Don Daley's run on *The Punisher* title, his version of justice was described by the editor as "an eye for an eye".^[28]



Cover of *The Punisher War Zone* #1 (March 1992); art by John Romita, Jr.

Decline

In 1995, Marvel canceled all three ongoing Punisher series due to poor sales. The publisher attempted a re-launch almost immediately, with a new ongoing series *Punisher*, under the new Marvel Edge imprint, by writer John Ostrander, in which the Punisher willingly joined and became the boss of an organized crime family, and later confronted the X-Men and Nick Fury. The series ran for 18 issues, from November 1995 to April 1997. Writer Christopher Golden's four-issue Marvel Knights miniseries *The Punisher: Purgatory* (November 1998 – February 1999) posited a deceased Punisher resurrected as a supernatural agent of various angels and demons. This version of the character also appeared in a 4-issue mini-series co-starring Wolverine.

Revivals

A 12-issue miniseries by writer Garth Ennis and artist Steve Dillon, again titled *The Punisher* (April 2000 – March 2001), under the Marvel Knights imprint, revived the character's popularity. An ongoing series (37 issues, August 2001 – February 2004), primarily by Ennis and Dillon, followed, succeeded in 2004 by an ongoing Ennis series under Marvel's mature-readers imprint, MAX. Returning the character to his lone vigilante roots, those series combined crime-focused stories with black humor. The look of the Punisher was modified further removing the white gloves and pairing his traditional skull imprinted shirt with combat trousers, black combat boots and a black trench coat. Castle has used this costume on occasion in mid-2000s stories before *The Punisher War Journal* vol. 2.

MAX imprint

Continuing his run on the character, Garth Ennis used the freedom of the MAX imprint to write more realistic and hard-edged stories than had previously been seen.^{[29][30]} Ennis has stated that he would "like to see less superheroes";^[31] this desire is reflected in the gritty, realistic tone and the anti-heroic portrayals of both the title



Promotional art for *Punisher* vol. 6, #44 (March 2007), by Tim Bradstreet.

character and Nick Fury, who made two guest appearances in the series. *Punisher* also made it explicit that Castle's timeline was fixed, while Marvel adjusted those of its other characters, with his history never altered or moved up in time. Promotional art for the cover of *Punisher* vol. 6, #44 (March 2007), gave his birth date as February 16, 1950, but that was removed for the published issues. After the departure of Ennis as writer, the series was renamed *Punisher: Frank Castle* with issue #66.

The imprint depicts the Punisher being active for almost 30 years, with *Punisher* vol. 6, #19 (June 2005) specifying he had killed approximately 2,000 people. Whereas the traditional Punisher stories remained within the United States and involved antagonists and settings of conventional domestic crime, stories of the MAX Punisher often focus on current events, ranging from corporate fraud to sexual slavery and the War on Terror. Many characters are past or current intelligence and military operatives from governmental agencies like the American CIA, the Soviet KGB, and the British SIS and SAS, as well as various militaries and militias from the Balkans and Middle East, including the IRA, all with agendas rooted in past conflicts like the Cold War or the Yugoslav Wars.

The miniseries *Born* by Garth Ennis and Darick Robertson further examines Castle's roots, tracing them back to his third tour of the Vietnam War, where he undergoes a psychological and possibly supernatural transformation into the Punisher to survive a massive assault on his fortification by the combined forces of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army. The one-shot *Punisher: The Tyger*, by Ennis and John Severin, went even further and showed that Castle had lived with murders, deaths and criminals from his childhood.

The MAX version of the Punisher ends with the character's death. After killing the Kingpin, Castle dies from his own wounds in issue #21 of *PunisherMAX*. He is buried in issue #22 as his death sparks a public uprising and killing of the city's criminals.

***Punisher War Journal* (vol. 2)**

In November 2006, a new *The Punisher War Journal* series, written by Matt Fraction and penciled by Ariel Olivetti, was released. The first three issues of the book are set during Marvel's "Civil War" event. It involves Castle taking on supervillains rather than his traditional non-super-powered criminal antagonists. He has also made appearances in the main *Civil War* series (issues #5–7). Wearing both his traditional costume and his Marvel Knights/MAX attire, and a new costume designed to look like his costume and Captain America's combined, the series pitted the character against a series of super-powered foes while also being involved in crossover events such as "World War Hulk" and "Secret Invasion".

The Punisher* and *Punisher: Frank Castle

Marvel relaunched *The Punisher War Journal* in 2009 as simply *Punisher*, with a thematic link tied to the events of the "Dark Reign" storyline and, following the departure of writer Garth Ennis, retitled the Marvel MAX series (formerly *Punisher MAX*) as *Punisher: Frank Castle MAX* and, more recently, as *Punisher: Frank Castle*^[32] or *Frank Castle: The Punisher*^[33] (depending on the source); launching a new series called *PunisherMAX* by Jason Aaron and Steve Dillon.^[34] As part of his work on the character, Rick Remender wrote the one-shot title *Dark Reign: The List – Punisher*, which, as part of the "Dark Reign" storyline, shows the character dismembered and decapitated by Daken.^[35]

Following this, the main *Punisher* series was renamed *FrankenCastle* and featured a Castle who is resurrected by Morbius and the Legion of Monsters as a patchwork, Frankenstein-like creature.^{[36][37]} He joins up with the Legion of Monsters to help protect the monsters of Monster Metropolis from the Hunter of Monster Special Force.^[38] At the conclusion of the series, the character was transformed back into a normal human.

Punisher: In the Blood

In 2010, a Punisher series was released titled *Punisher: In the Blood*. It is a five-part series that is meant to take place after *FrankenCastle*. In this series, the Punisher faces Jigsaw once again.^[39]

The Punisher (2011)

A violent gang war resulted in the murders of nearly 30 people at a wedding reception, including the groom, leaving the bride, U.S. Marine Sergeant Rachel Cole-Alves, a widow just hours after getting married. Frank had connections with one of the detectives on the case and used the information he gave him to kill members of the Exchange, the group responsible, before the police had a chance to question them.

Later, the Punisher loses an eye while fighting a new version of the Vulture.^[40] The Punisher later confronts a recuperated Rachel Cole-Alves in a Hotel where members of the Exchange were meeting. Together they kill the members. It is later revealed to be part of a plan to lure the Punisher to 727 Varick level 19 suite A. Both Rachel Cole-Alves and the Punisher go to the location only to find it to be a trap. They later find out that Daredevil has the Omega Drive.^[41] Later Rachel Cole-Alves and the Punisher find Daredevil and Spider-Man. They then work together to destroy the drive.^{[42][43]}

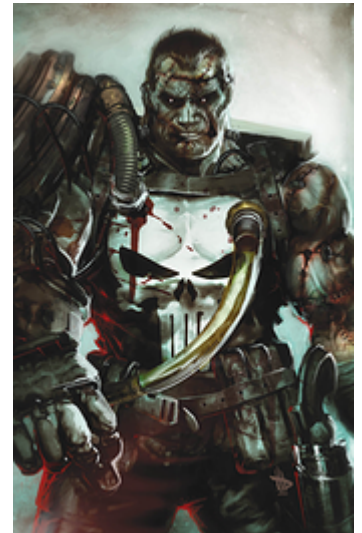
The Punisher and Cole-Alves later succeed in killing the heads of the Exchange, but in the process, Cole-Alves accidentally kills NYPD Homicide Detective Walter Bolt.^[44] On the run from the NYPD, Cole-Alves eventually tries to commit suicide by police, only to be captured and sent to prison. Castle eludes capture.^[45]

Cole-Alves is sentenced to death for her crimes. Meanwhile, Spider-Man confronts Castle, but he manages to escape. Spider-Man then talks to the Avengers, stating that Castle is a problem and needs to be taken care of. Wolverine, believing that lethal methods are sometimes justified, refuses to assist.^[46] Black Widow tracks Castle to South America, where they fight to a standstill before Widow gets distracted by a group of mercenaries guarding a town full of sick villagers, abandoning the fight to help them.^[47] Thor pursues Castle next, although all he wants is to talk Castle into turning himself in.^[48]

Castle sneaks back into the US to try and break Cole-Alves out of prison. The Avengers set a trap, figuring Castle would target a transport unit. Castle sees through the deception, and rescues the real Cole-Alves by disguising himself as Iron Man.^[49] Wolverine was later revealed to be the source of his information, and Logan helps Cole-Alves escape while Castle stays behind to battle the Avengers and buy time. Castle ends up in a special underwater prison, while Cole-Alves resurfaces in Los Angeles, shooting a mugger while wearing the Skull insignia.^[50]

Thunderbolts

As part of the *Marvel NOW!* event, Punisher becomes a member of Red Hulk's Thunderbolts. Their first mission is to take down the civilian-murdering dictator of an island nation.^[51]



Cover of *Punisher* vol. 7, #11 (January 2010); art by Dave Wilkins

The Punisher (2014)

As a part of *All New Marvel Now*, *The Punisher* solo series is written by Nathan Edmondson and illustrated by Mitch Gerads. The Punisher moves to Los Angeles following a drug trail, and he is being targeted by a military hit squad.^[52]

Original Sin

During the *Original Sin* storyline, the Punisher becomes involved in the investigation of the murder of Uatu when he is recruited by an unknown agent – later revealed to be Nick Fury – to track various deceased eldritch creatures with Doctor Strange, their combined occult and firearm knowledge allowing them to determine what killed various creatures that Fury had killed in his career as 'the Man on the Wall'.^[53]

Secret Wars

During the *Secret Wars* storyline, the Punisher crashes the Kingpin's viewing party of the incursion between Earth-616 and Earth-1610. He informs the villains present that since he cannot take them with him, he is going to have to do something with all of his bullets.^[54]

After massacring the supervillain gathering, the Punisher is approached by the Howling Commandos, who request his aid in completing one final mission before the world ends. The Punisher agrees to help, and is airlifted to Tikrit, where he works on "punishing" the Black Dawn, a terrorist group that had been filming themselves executing American hostages, including a former associate of the Punisher's.^[55] The Punisher decimates the Black Dawn, and dies from gunshot wounds as the Earth is destroyed by the Incursions.^[56]

All-New Punisher & Civil War II: Kingpin

After Earth-616 has been restored, Frank Castle returns from the dead and comes back to New York City, to continue his personal war against criminal organizations and enterprises.^[57] His first target is a former mercenary outfit called Condor, that is currently selling a drug called EMC to terrorists and gang members because it gives users enhanced confidence, perception, strength and pain tolerance.^[57] During Frank's first bust on a Condor drug warehouse, he runs into his former Special Ops C.O. Ray Schroder (aka Olaf) who is currently working for Condor but gives Frank a folder of important intel on Condor's EMC operation, before departing.^[57] With his new mission to take down Condor before they can get EMC into the worst hands, the Punisher is followed by a D.E.A. Agent whose drug bust on Condor was disrupted by his, as well as, a sadistic killer named Face who is also second-in-command of Condor.^[57]

In the *Kingpin Civil War II* storyline, Castle goes to eliminate Fisk and his criminal empire. During the fight, Castle wounds Fisk's legs with his combat knife, and falls out of a window.^[58]

Secret Empire

During the *Secret Empire* storyline, after Steve Rogers - his history 'rewritten' by the sentient Cosmic Cube Kobik so that he believes that he has been a Hydra sleeper agent since childhood - arranges a mass coup of America,^[59] Punisher eventually appears targeting the former criminal Boomerang - now acting as an information broker for the underground Maria Hill - and apparently loyal to Hydra.^[60] He then reports to Steve Rogers about his mission.^[61] Punisher later crashes Black Widow's attempts to take down Hydra Supreme Steve Rogers. Punisher and Black Widow continue to battle until Black Widow stabs Punisher in the shins. Punisher explains Hydra Supreme Steve Rogers's overall plan to use the Cosmic Cube is to put everything back to the way it was. Not just the Axis victory in World War II, but bringing back all of the dead as a result of Hydra like Rick Jones, Jack Flag, and Frank Castle's family. Black Widow rejects this idea and sees Miles approaching Hydra Supreme Steve Rogers causing Black Widow to stop Hydra Supreme Steve Rogers and Miles Morales.^[62] After the real Captain America defeated his Hydra Supreme counterpart, Punisher expresses regret for his actions in an inner monologue, calling his involvement with Hydra Supreme Rogers

as probably the worst mistake of his life. He is shown atoning for his involvement with Hydra by killing every Hydra agent he can find. Upon Punisher blowing up the abandoned warehouse where some Hydra agents were hiding, he is being observed by Nick Fury Jr. who speaks over the comms that Punisher is ready.^[63]

Characterization

The character has been described as being obsessed with vengeance;^[64] Garth Ennis noted that the character of the Punisher "sees the world in very black and white terms, he solves his problems with utter finality" and that "his response to any problem: when in doubt, hit back hard."^[65] The writer Steven Grant noted that:

Heidegger, who took Kierkegaard's philosophy further, comes even closer to describing the Punisher: 'Since we can never hope to understand why we're here, if there's even anything to understand, the individual should choose a goal and pursue it wholeheartedly, despite the certainty of death and the meaninglessness of action.' That's sure the Punisher as I conceived him: a man who knows he's going to die and who knows in the big picture his actions will count for nothing, but who pursues his course because this is what he has chosen to do.^[66]

Punisher co-creator Gerry Conway stated that "He's a great Rorschach test. What's given him some sustainability is, you can put into him whatever you want, as opposed to Spider-Man, who truly is who he is and shouldn't be changed. The Punisher is a thin character on his own merits, but that allows for a lot of interpretations and different angles of approach."^[17]

Skills, weapons, and abilities

The Punisher is the recipient of multi-disciplinary military training from the United States Marine Corps, United States Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance. While a Marine, he also received training from the Airborne School and U.S. Navy SEALs as well as cross-training with the Australian Special Air Service Regiment during the Vietnam War. In addition, since beginning his work as the Punisher, Castle has used his military discipline and training techniques to update and expand his skills in areas that aid in his mission (disguise, acting, use of non-military weapons, etc.). From this training, Punisher is proficient in not only basic infantry skills, but in special operations, which includes the use and maintenance of specialized firearms and explosive ordnance. He is highly trained in infiltration into heavily guarded enemy territories and structures for the purpose of assassination, capture, and military intelligence. Also, he is trained in various forms of camouflage and stealth. He is also highly adept at hand-to-hand combat, and has been trained in multiple forms of martial arts such as Nash Ryu Jujutsu, Ninjutsu, Shorin-ryu Karate, Hwa Rang Do, and Chin Na.^[67] Both Nick Fury and Tony Stark have commented on how extraordinarily high his pain tolerance is. He does not take painkillers, as he feels that their benefit of dulling pain is not worth the side effects of drowsiness and slowed reflexes.

He maintains multiple safehouses and vehicles around the greater New York City area as well as multiple forged identities and bank accounts (most of the funds and equipment aiding him in his work being taken from the criminals he hunts). The Punisher has a Kevlar uniform which protects him from most gunfire, though he can still suffer concussive injury or penetration from sufficient or repeated impacts. The white skull emblem on his chest is used both to intimidate his enemies and to lure their fire to the more heavily protected area of his armor. The design was supposedly taken from either a Vietcong sniper,^[68] or the demon Olivier.^[69] The Punisher has been using technology derived from super-villains and other costumed characters, such as the Green Goblin's pumpkin bombs,^[70] a modified Goblin Glider,^[71] and a Doctor Octopus tentacle that he can shrink down for easy storage via Pym Particles.

Aside from his physical prowess, the Punisher also has complete control of his mind and consciousness, providing a strong resistance against psychic and telepathic powers that are used against him. When Letha and Lascivious try to control Punisher's mind, Punisher scoffs at their attempt, saying "It doesn't feel different from any other day".^[72]

Reception

The Punisher was named the 19th Greatest Comic Book Character of All Time by movie magazine *Empire*, saying that he is the "grimmest and most compelling of characters" and praising the *Punisher MAX* series.^[73] IGN ranked Punisher at #27 in Top 100 Comic Book Heroes, describing him as "no superhero".

"Frank Castle has spent years exacting vengeance for the deaths of his family by punishing criminals everywhere. His skull insignia inspires fear throughout the underworld. But Punisher's appeal rests on more than his ability to do what the rest of Marvel's heroes won't. He's a tragic figure – even a profoundly selfish one in some ways. The sad truth is that Frank Castle can't survive without killing, and his new job fulfills him in ways his family never could."^[74]

He is ranked #39 in *Wizard Magazine's* Top 200 Comic Book Characters. IGN later listed the *Punisher* series #15 in their 25 Best Comic Runs of the Decade, praising Garth Ennis's ten-year timeline of the character.^[75] Writer and director Joss Whedon has been critical of the character, referring to the Punisher as "a coward" in an issue of *Wizard*,^[76] and stating in an interview with Jeff Jensen of *Entertainment Weekly*,

"One of the things I like about the X-Men is they're not killing people. I miss the idea of... heroes who stop that kind of thing from happening. Here's why I'm not running Marvel: If I was, I would kill the Punisher. I don't believe in what he does. The Punisher just shoots up places. And if you're telling me he's never hit an innocent, then I'm telling you, that's fascist crap".^[77]

Supporting characters

Despite wanting to work alone, the Punisher has a few supporting characters to help fight crime. Microchip assisted Castle by building and supplying weapons and technology and providing friendship. During the "Civil War", he was aided by Stuart Clarke for a short time. Various police officers and detectives have assisted the Punisher, most notably Lynn Michaels and Lt. Martin Soap. Lynn Michaels was a police officer who teamed up with Castle to take down a serial rapist and later quit the force to become a vigilante. Martin Soap was secretly allied with the Punisher and gave him information on his targets from the police database.

Other versions

In other media

The character of the Punisher has appeared in many types of media. Since his first appearance in 1974, he has appeared in television, films, and video games — each on multiple occasions — and his name, symbol, and image have appeared on products and merchandise.

See also

- Human skull symbolism

Notes

- ↑ Francis "Frank" Castle's full name as seen in this *New Avengers: Letters Home* panel (<http://www.i-mockery.com/comics/longbox21/pics/castle-duty.jpg>), also more info [here](http://www.i-mockery.com/comics/longbox21/) (<http://www.i-mockery.com/comics/longbox21/>)

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