



The Punisher: Welcome Back, Frank

Garth Ennis , Steve Dillon , Jimmy Palmiotti

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A white skull on a field of black.

In the Marvel Universe, no symbol inspires fear in the hearts of criminals like the stark calling card of the Punisher. His wife and children killed in a mob shootout, former serviceman Frank Castle wages a one-man war on crime, and he won't stop until he's won no matter how many bullets it takes.

Originally a character who rose to popularity in the law and order Reagan 1980s, The Punisher has made a spectacular and astonishing return to the top of the comic book charts. Reinterpreted through the eyes of visionary creators Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon the masterminds behind DC's Preacher this ultra violent urban vigilante is taken over the top in stylish, Tarantino-esque fashion. This time around, the mountains of ammunition are heavily sprinkled with black humor and stinging social commentary that Ennis and Dillon have become famous for.

The story is pure mythic archetype, with a several post-modern twists. After a long absence, the Punisher has returned to the streets of Manhattan, and a criminal elite that has grown over that time is set on guard. In particular, Ma Gnucchi and her crime family have been targeted by Castle. Can one man take down an entire criminal organization with heavy armament alone?

Includes the limited series Punisher (2000) #1-12.

The Punisher: Welcome Back, Frank Details

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Author : Garth Ennis , Steve Dillon , Jimmy Palmiotti

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Comics

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From Reader Review The Punisher: Welcome Back, Frank for online ebook

Lono says

Punisher: Welcome Back, Frank was my first exposure to the wonderfully twisted and violently deranged mind of Garth Ennis. The Punisher was always a character I wanted to like, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. All I could picture forever was Dolph Lundgren's corny ass. That monosyllabic version of Frank still gives me the shits. Frank always fell at least a little short of the hardcore killer I wanted him to be. Dirty Harry wouldn't use rubber bullets. Rubber bullets are for pussys. I thought I had forever labeled Frank Castle as a B-list character with sporadic glimmers of potential greatness.

Garth changed all of that. As far as I am concerned, Garth Ennis created the Punisher. A merciless, unrelenting soldier that is single mindedly focused on his mission to kill as many criminals as possible by any means necessary before meeting his own fated end. Warms my heart.

This was the seed that ultimately blossomed into Ennis's defining run on Punisher Max. While this book, much like Garth's work on Preacher, has more of a dark comedic feel to it than the Max series, Castle's inner voice clearly started out here.

Ennis resets the clock again and puts Castle back where he belongs. In New York, taking down the Gnucci crime family with any and all tools at his disposal. Garth introduces a bunch of fun characters in this one. Many of whom continue to appear throughout his Marvel Knights Punisher run. The luckless Detective Soap, the unstoppable Russian, the thoroughly pierced Spacker Dave, and the Bloodthirsty Ma Gnucci to name a few. I really appreciated the way that Garth resisted using Marvel heroes extensively throughout his run on this title. Wolverine, Hulk, and Spidey all make brief appearances down the road, but not in any kind of regular manner. In the first 12 issues only Daredevil makes an appearance, but it's a doozy. That, along with Frank taking on Ma Gnucci's hit men in unsophisticated ways, jackin' a polar bear's jaw, and steppin' to the Russian mano a mano made for just a couple of my favorite moments in this collection.

This is **NOT** a serious book. In fact it's often funny. But Castle always remains straight faced and true to character. Never cracking a smile or changing course regardless of the bloody craziness that ensues. Frank is also starting to show his age a little. He's not invulnerable and is forced to rely more on his cunning than brute force. His meticulous planning and execution of the mission are part of what makes him so fuckin' cool.

Steve Dillon does a good job here. I've never been a huge fan of the man, but he works well with Garth and I've grown to appreciate his simple cartoony style. Tim Bradstreet's covers for the series are the shit.

Fans of Ennis's irreverent and black comedic style will almost certainly find something to enjoy here.

Welcome Back Frank is what started this fan-boy on his pilgrimage towards seeking out all of Garth's extensive catalog of work. While most probably recognize Preacher as his highest achievement (and it is awesome), I would respectfully disagree and point towards the vast majority of his work on this character as being the high water mark of his career to date. Start here and ease into his more serious Punisher Max series. Hands down some of the best stuff out there. This is the place where Garth started to cut out his own little corner of the Marvel Universe. As for **Welcome Back Frank**, it's deliciously violent ridiculousness and the start of something really, really special.

I would like to dedicate my 100th crappy review to the only Marine I like more the Frank Castle, my son **Ryan. Oorah!**

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Sergei Moska says

The only other Punisher book I read was Essential Punisher vol 1, which I enjoyed a lot. This book was a fun read but some of the changes they made threw me off. In Punisher's original incarnation, as presented in EP v1, he's set in a world where there are superheroes and ordinary folk. Crucially, ordinary folk are just that - ordinary. The world in The Punisher v1, on the other hand, is one where normal assumptions about ordinary people don't apply.

Here are two examples. At one point people are looking for Frank Castle, and they describe him as a big guy, "about 8 feet tall and 500 pounds". This didn't seem to be intended as hyperbole. At another point, an elderly (or nearly so) woman gets her arms and legs amputated after getting mauled by bears, and yet 10 days later she's perfectly lucid and giving orders.

None of this makes the book or the character intrinsically flawed, but it did detract from my enjoyment of Castle's interaction with the world. The rules of reality change in this book, and I just don't like the changes. To the extent that things become surreal, The Punisher's appeal as a gritty badass fades.

Conclusion: if you thought The Punisher was a good idea but a little too dull, or if you're a die-hard Punisher fan, then definitely get this book.

Mike says

Puerile, brutal, entirely to the point with the scum. Narration feels a little off compared to the silent feral animal that we've seen before and later, but I'll let it pass since it's so to the point.

The violence at the beginning is pretty over the top with some cheesy Ahnold-style one-liners, so it takes a little time to get past Ennis' contract with the reader. And it's a bit hard to have to look at Frank's face by Steve Dillon and not think, "Who pissed in Frank's cereal, shat in his shoes and soaked his undies in motor oil?"

But holy crap is it fun to watch Frank play the mob like a master fiddler (who has a friggin splinter in his picking finger). And Ennis does a great job with minimal-monologue action.

Ennis and Dillon have a great time making books like this, what with weirdo asides like Spacker Dave to keep the story from getting too grim.

But when they get down to business, they don't f**k around. Take the Daredevil story. A simple mess-around with a mob guy who wanted to use Murdock's love of the law in his favour, Ennis tarts it up with a great treatise on the fundamental difference between the Punisher and Daredevil's way of achieving justice. There was no better way of illustrating the irrevocable tension between the two.

How the creators treat Ma Gnucci is even worse - class Ennis & Dillon, dignity isn't the first deadly sin (or close relative anyway) to go, but it's sure one of the brightest stars of the show.

Punisher becomes a virus, corrupting society around New York. The knock-offs are some cocky weirdos but I like 'em, especially the Payback dude. (But then I'm a born Canadian, so socialism runs deep in my blood.)

Y'know, I should worry about Ennis more than I have. This guy knows more gruesome ways to kill people than I'd ever imagined - all sorts of tricks with military weaponry, simple extreme torments, ugly fantasies of taking out people who really aren't that likeable. Ballistic knife? Check. Zoo animals? Yep. The loving caress Ennis' words place on his beloved Claymore, every time that emerges from the arsenal.

Or a character like The Russian. Times like this I know Ennis has love in his heart somewhere, because he brings such life and joie de vivre to the big laughing beasts like Love Sausage or Barracuda.

In a way, this book reads like a sicko's version of the Three Stooges. Pratfalls, exaggerated punishment and amazing resilience in the face of pain. I didn't realize Ennis was such a fan of the classics.

In a way this is a clear, simple book. I know it gets deeper, to the point that the subsequent runs by Aaron & Rucka stand alongside it (not ahead of it). Still, this isn't quite the original romp I had remembered, and it isn't nuanced enough to stand out as an instant classic (again, not without considering the later books). It's not quite unrepentant though - in that Frank's thoughts include a little mercy and consideration for the innocents around him. Making Frank a bit more human is odd in the face of the slapstick, but in the end it's a good move.

I'm taking my original rating down a peg, but this is still a great Ennis book.

Dan Schwent says

The Punisher is back from the dead and ready to take out the Gnucci family. Meanwhile, the unluckiest cop in NYC is on his trail and several copycat vigilantes have arisen.

I was never a fan of the Punisher but I read this series in single issues as it came out because I was a huge fan of Preacher, and consequently, the tag team of Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon.

It's not Preacher set in the Marvel Universe but it has some of the same flavor. There's a lot of humor for a Punisher book and the usual amount of violence. The Punisher disposes of the Gnucci family in some

creative ways, such as using piranhas and polar bears. He also kills about 100 mobsters, The Russian, and disposes of some copycats and random street criminals. Pretty par for the course.

Ennis does a lot to expand the Punisher's supporting cast. Soap and Molly, and all the Punisher's neighbors are a lot more fleshed out than I'd expect in a comic that's primarily about criminals getting mowed down by a vigilante. The art by Dillon is much like his art on Preacher. It sets the tone and gets the job done.

Garth Ennis' run put the Punisher back on the map after he was over-exposed in the eighties and nineties and turned into some kind of avenging angel, bringing him back to his roots. If you're a fan of the Punisher post-2000, this is a must-read. 4 out of 5 stars.

Paul Mirek says

"He kills criminals because he hates them. It's not exactly brain surgery."

In a genre often criticized for its slavish dedication to the status quo, the Punisher may be the worst offender. There's only one story to tell when you put a gun in the hands of an idealist, and Frank Castle's been running through the same narrative paces for decades.

But Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon share a "secret" in this opening arc of their multi-year run that was all but neglected previously: Frank Castle doesn't want to win his war. Here we see a Punisher that's a pure engine of hate, protecting the innocent only by way of chasing his own addiction.

So how do you root for a walking arsenal for whom "rehabilitation" is a dirty word?

Well, you don't, really, and that's where the magnificence of this 12-part epic comes in. Although cloaked in Tarantino-esque black comedy and ultraviolence, this is really a deconstruction of tropes that are all too often taken for granted.

I originally read this some years ago, but I'm glad I returned to it again. The magnetic attraction of the avenging hero with a gun is even more worrying in today's climate (have you seen the news from Oregon today?). Ennis and Dillon's run offers a reminder of why this concept is such an enduring archetype, and why it might be the most dangerous one there is.

Brenda Burns says

I really like Garth Ennis, he has some kind of brutality to him.

Punisher is back, not sure where he went but he's back and after the Gnucci family. While he is running through Ma Gnucci's men there are 3 wannabees out killing who they think to be bad guys, and they are, corporate scum bags and drug dealers.

Well when Ma Gnucci calls in the Russian to deal with the vigilante and when the Russian finds him, it takes hot pizza and a really fat guy to kill the monster Russian. The supporting characters in the apartment Frank lives in is something I have come to expect from Garth. A giant man named Mr. Bumpo, what a name, then there is Spacker Dave with a face full of jewelry that gets pulled out by the bad guys hoping to find the Punisher.

I can see why people love comics so much, you get cool art with your amazing story and each issue ends with a mini cliffhanger. On to find the next comic.

Pinkerton says

È proprio il caso di dirlo: “Bentornato, Frank”. Questo è un personaggio dal grandissimo potenziale incorso troppo spesso in gestioni infelici, Ennis l’ha portato alla ribalta con stile, il suo. Il Punitore, pur conservando la sua natura di ‘o.m.a.c.’ in guerra contro il crimine quindi, assume connotazioni volutamente esagerate che sfociano spesso nel comico - un umorismo nero ma dannatamente divertente. Ai disegni c’è Dillon, ha un tratto molto personale che però si sposa perfettamente alle storie di Ennis (come hanno dimostrato in più di un’occasione).

Il nostro protagonista rientra a New York e solleva un vespaio, spinto dal noto desiderio di vendetta che gli dona una fonte inesauribile di energia: odio allo stato puro. La sua presenza dà subito un forte scossone ai delinquenti che si erano adagiati sugli allori, e per mandare chiaro a tutti il messaggio che il Punitore è tornato designa come suo bersaglio Ma’ Gnucci. Questo lo porterà ad affrontare un nemico molto... diciamo pittoresco, il Russo :D E non è tutto, legate alla sua ricomparsa ci sono pure diverse sottotrame che si collegano alla storia principale, ognuna delle quali degne di nota: Discutibili vigilanti fai-da-te che malauguratamente lo prendono a esempio, i rapporti di buon vicinato e, una scalcagnata ‘task-force’ (sempre che due soli individui si possano definire tale) che gli dà la caccia. Non dimentichiamoci poi il team-up XD Un perfetto comitato d'accoglienza per dare letteralmente il bentornato al nostro Frank Castle.

Pablo Bueno says

Garth Ennis es genial. Cuantas más obras leo de él, más me gusta.

Jason says

[Note: recommended for older teens]

This is not a Punisher story that could be written today, I don't think. Ennis starts out by reminding us that it's not some kind of psychological treatise on the character, but meant to be taken as pure entertainment. And as soon as I saw the NYC skyline profile partway through, graced by the towers that defined it for most of my life, I realized that's why. Violence is so much closer and more real in the post 9-11 world that attempts to make light of it in the way that *Welcome Back, Frank* so brilliantly and successfully does seem a lot meaner and more inappropriate. I imagine that it's good to take such things more seriously, but at the same time there is a loss of innocence along with the luxury of being able to read about such excesses of violence in a book that is, or was, as close as you'll ever get to the real thing.

That said, this book is funny. Like laugh-out-loud, show-your-wife-who-doesn't-read-comics-but-loves-dark-humor funny. There's enough tongue-in-cheek here to remove it distinctly from reality and make it a pretty effective psychological pillow to shout into. This makes it a little ironic that a Punisher story that wouldn't and probably shouldn't be written to today can in some small way provide some relief from the awful present reality of violence and vengeance and vigilante justice (I mean, after all, isn't that what terrorism at its root is?) that seems relentless and inescapable these days.

Rituraj Kashyap says

An enjoyable read. I could see that the 2004 movie took some inspiration from this one, and even the scene in Season 2 of Daredevil in which Frank ties up Daredevil and gives him a choice has been taken from this story.

After Preacher and this one, Ennis is quickly becoming one of my favorite writers. Took me some time to get used to Dillon's art in Preacher, but did not face any such problem in this book.

There were some pretty badass moments, but sometimes it felt like the character is a bit overpowered.

Sam Quixote says

Garth Ennis is rightly credited with bringing the Punisher series back to life with his interpretation of the character and writing his best work and some of the Punisher's best books. "Welcome Back, Frank" is Ennis' first book that takes Frank Castle from bizarre and frankly boring stories about angels and Heaven, and putting Frank back on the streets with a gun in his hand pointed at gangsters, where he belongs.

Ennis writes in his "mission statement" that he wanted to simplify the Punisher's adventures - great, interesting, exciting action with none of the droning introspection about "how many is enough, Frank?" and meandering thoughts on Frank's dead family. Here, and in Ennis' entire 10 book run on Punisher Max (each volume of which is highly recommended by the by), we see the Punisher do what he does best - taking bad guys down!

The Gnucci gangster family, the taskforce created to take down the Punisher, 3 copycat vigilantes, and a mad Russian make up this excellent comic book and continually set Frank up with a number of entertaining challenges to take out in increasingly entertaining ways (death by fat guy is the funniest). Ennis' trademark humour is also present in the character of Detective Soap, heading the taskforce of 2 to take down the Punisher, and a joke in his Precinct, and one of the copycat vigilantes named "The Holy" whose crimes are covered up by a senile old woman.

Having re-read this book after reading Ennis' numerous other books on the Punisher (he's written over 90 issues of this character), I'll say this is one of his most entertaining books he's ever written, counting everything he's done. Engaging, entertaining, fantastic action, compelling story, Ennis deserves all the credit for reinstating a fantastic character to his glory. His longtime collaborative partner Steve Dillon also contributes his usual high quality artwork to the book.

This is a great starting place for new readers to the Punisher and a must-read for existing fans. A brilliant comic book and a great read. If you loved this, you'll enjoy the sequel, "The Resurrection of Ma Gnucci".

Jordan says

Moving into the new millennium, the Marvel Comics character Frank Castle, AKA The Punisher, was not in a good place. Part of his problem was that he didn't really fit with the rest of the Marvel pantheon of heroes and villains—he wore the standard-issue spandex, but that take on the character seemed just a little.....off. For the uninitiated, Frank Castle was one of the last American troops out of Vietnam when we jumped ship, finally returning home for good at the end of his third tour of duty. Soon thereafter, he and his family are having a

quiet picnic in Central Park when a gangland hit goes bad, catching Castle and his family in the crossfire. With his wife and kids dead and several new scars to add to his collection, Castle does what he does best: goes to war. This time he's declared war on the entire criminal underworld, and he intends to off every criminal he can get in his sights. Except that a good amount of his time in the early days is spent chasing supervillains....Okay, yeah, they're criminals, but there's a question of tone here. Castle's thing is guns. Doctor Doom uses an army of androids that look like himself. So he dresses like a superhero/villain to go after common criminals, and uses his very plausible military skills to take on a variety of superpowered beings. Are you seeing the disconnect here?* Sales fell, series were canceled, and in 1999 Marvel made the.....interesting.....decision to kill the Punisher and bring him back as a supernatural enforcer. Things looked bleak for Punisher fans.

Then, in 2000, Marvel relaunched the character with a twelve-issue miniseries written by Garth Ennis and drawn by Steve Dillon. And it was good. With just a throwaway line about how the Angels had found him less than cooperative and returned him to Earth as punishment, Frank Castle is back in the game and gunning for the Gnucci crime family. Gone are the white gloves and more "super-heroey" elements of the costume, in their place are trench coats and combat pants. The series thrives on a sense of dark humor running through. There are some real great moments here, including a gunfight in the morgue between a bunch of Gnucci goons and the Punisher ("Gunfight in the morgue, rule one: Don't hide behind the thin guy."), a wounded Punisher being pursued into the New York zoo by more goons ("I have a forty-five. He has a machine gun. The night goes downhill from there....") and having to improvise ways to take them out using the animals—piranha, boa constrictors and even polar bears get pressed into service here, resulting in my single favorite comic book panel of all time...

This particular miniseries is probably best rated PG-13, although compared to a lot of the stuff that followed it was fairly mild. Profanity is missed out in the traditional comic book swearing form (\$#!^), although it is always perfectly clear what this is standing in for—specifically, rather than "villain mumbles cursing" or however they wrote the scripts for the book in the 60s. There is no overt sexual content, although there are a few particularly sleazy insinuations made by one of the Gnucci boys in the first issue. Maybe other innuendos, nothing that stuck out at me. Violence, however, is another issue. This is a Punisher comic. People will die, in a variety of interesting and gruesome ways. As I said, PG-13—the violence is mostly seen in shots of Castle or the villains blazing away, silhouette shots of characters being hit, shots of the aftermath, or some combination thereof. I want to say its not graphic, but it is to a degree. Compared to some other Punisher I've read its not bad at all, but objectively its not for those who don't handle gore well. Injured characters bleed. The art is moderately stylized and simple (see above), not photorealistic, but its there nonetheless.

For readers who check this out and like it, Ennis and Dillon continued the plot and revisited a number of the background characters with the ongoing series of the same name that started soon after. This mostly kept the same style and level of content as the miniseries. When that ended, Ennis moved on to writing the Punisher for Marvel's line of MAX comics, not technically part of the main Marvel canon, but much freer with content restrictions (MAX comics were not sold at newsstands, and so were able to be essentially R-rated content-wise without getting into trouble). As I say, great writing, probably the best version of the character, but not for the faint of heart. Also, the 2004 Punisher film starring Thomas Jane and John Travolta draws a lot of subplots and background characters from this miniseries. A lot of people hate on it; I think its a great treatment of the character, personally. It is, however, VERY R-rated, so be forewarned.

I will say once again, this is a comic for adults, or at least for teens. Not a work intended for kids! But well done nonetheless.

*To be fair, there have been some great stories pitting the Punisher against supervillains. Frank Miller did some great things on his run with DareDevil, contrasting the two characters and their approaches to fighting crime. Also interesting, Castle's most recent thing is tricking himself out with toys stolen from his enemies....His favorite is a Goblin Glider stolen from one of Norman Osborne's old caches....

Also, it should be admitted that this is written from a bias of having read a lot of the more recent, grittier comics where Frank Castle takes on mobsters, drug runners, serial killers and sex slavers. I feel this is a better take on the character. It should also be noted that this is a much more adult-themed take on the character, getting Marvel's equivalent of an R-rating.

Karolina Zych says

i love comic books but this one is definitely not for me

Julie says

My second Punisher read, as he embarks on a one-man mission to take down the Gnucci crime family! It's a bit of a mixed bag, in that it doesn't seem *as* good as the later MAX series, but there's still some good stuff here: Frank's cautious relationship with the other residents of his apartment building, his connection to them despite his intent to remain a brooding loner. The Punisher accidentally inspiring a wave of over-the-top vigilantes who want to emulate him in cleaning up their neighbourhoods (unsurprisingly, he is Not Impressed). And again, two cops mired in a corrupt department and trying to fix the broken status quo.

It's a bit too off-the-wall and kooky, but there's admittedly some darkly funny moments: Frank punching polar bears. Ma Gnucci as criminal queenpin & matriarch is hilarious. The Russian as an oddly jovial murdering monster.

It makes for a relatively enjoyable tone to intersperse the horror of the violence, but I still prefer the more srs feelsy storylines, which personally docks this to 3.5 or 4 stars.

But man, his neighbours. Frank's small touches of sentimentality, though he tries to come across as stone-cold. And the wonderful issue "The Devil by the Horns", which pairs him against Daredevil in a riveting scene known as "The Choice" and which was adapted pitch-perfectly to the Netflix series:

(Also, other small touches that made it into the TV show: Frank hiding in plain sight in a crappy diner, baseball cap pulled low over his face.)

I'm not a huge fan of Steve Dillon's art here -- I felt like his cartoony style worked a bit better in *Hellblazer* because John Constantine is a nonstop wisecracking troll, unlike the more grim straight-man that is Frank Castle -- but it's fine. And at least there are still Bradstreet covers! HE'S THE BEST.

'kris Pung says

This was just nuts and the ending was totally unexpected. I swear I've picked this up about 5 times thumbed through it and set it back on the library shelf. Really glad I gave it a chance this time.

Alejandro says

Deadly good reading!

This TPB edition collects “The Punisher” (2000) #1-12.

Creative Team:

Writer: Garth Ennis

Illustrator: Steve Dillon

Inker: Jimmy Palmiotti

Covers' art: Tim Bradstreet

BACK WITH A BANG! (ACTUALLY SEVERAL BANGS!)

Solo act again. No micro. No gimmicks: no fancy ammo, no battle-vans, no hi-tech surveillance. Just the basics. Been gone a while. Distracted. The scum of the city need a wake-up call. And here it comes.

Frank Castle aka The Punisher returned to the Big Apple...

...and the worms are starting to run away.

The Punisher declared war against the Gnucci Crime Family...

...why?...

...Why not?

The Punisher hates criminals and he plans to eliminate them so beginning with the Gnucci Crime Family is as good point to begin as anyone else, so nothing personal, no sworn vendetta, no secret motives. The Gnucci Crime Family just got the short straw in The Punisher's War on Crime.

Ma Gnucci is the lady who runs the Gnucci Crime Family along with her sons, but soon enough she'll notice how fast her blood relatives are starting to fall along with her minions, so she'll call to "her people" inside of the NYPD to deal with The Punisher...

...but there are two problems in that scenario...

...first, the NYPD isn't dumb to go against The Punisher, oh no, siree, and second, the NYPD loves Punisher's work since thanks to him, they have a lot less things to deal with, so while they don't say it aloud, they are quite okay with Punisher's work in the streets.

However, they need to cover appearances to the public and media that are demanding a response against violence unleashed by the Punisher, so the NYPD forms a "Task Force"...

...a task force of two individuals. Good luck with that!

Even Daredevil will mess into Punisher's blood path, but maybe the Man without Fear would prefer to stay in Hell's Kitchen since Frank isn't in the mood to deal with him.

And of course...

...there's The Russian. Oh, boy!!!

I'LL BE THERE FOR YOU

Frank Castle needs to live somewhere, so with his return to New York, he is taking an apartment under a false name (John Smith... smooth, Frank) and slowly he will get used to his eccentric neighbors: Mousy Joan (fearing of everything), Spacker Dave (pierced punk) and the massive humanity of Mr. Bumpo (with a too healthy appetite).

Between casual brief talks in the corridors and odd offerings of food, Frank Castle slowly started to enjoy (in his own particular way) to have this "friends" in the place that now he is living.

However, wherever The Punisher goes, mayhem follows him, so the apartment building may turn into a war zone, more than once, but don't worry for good ol' Frank, since his pals are there to back him up...

...not, really! I'm not kiddin'!

If you mess with The Punisher, you mess with them too! Oh, yeah!

WHAT PSYCHO SEE, PSYCHO DO

Maybe The Punisher wasn't actually the role model for certain "outlaw abiding citizens" but you can't blame the media if they think that Frank Castle's work was the inspiration for a sudden vigilante viral spree where three different individuals started to show their own particular hate against specific kind of criminals...

The Holy: A priest in the Spanish Harlem who is killing with an axe (yep) to any schmuck dumb enough to go to his church to tell him their crimes and expecting an absolution.

Mr. Payback: A working man of low status who is killing any white collar bandit who makes sneaky strategies with their companies gaining profit at the same time of causing damage to innocent poor people.

Elite: An upperclass man who is killing anybody who dares to make the slightest mess in his “clean” neighborhood.

A whole bundle of serial killers who think that they are justified of their actions, and maybe you think that Punisher isn't any better, but maybe the actions of these wackos will help you to ponder about it.

Saga Norén says

And the unforgettable song with Amy Lee 'Broken'.

Eric says

Ennis is a boss. This run is a must read.

Garrett says

Awesome Punisher comic! This comic was a major inspiration for the shitty 2004 movie and the second season of the Daredevil Netflix series. Unfortunately the other books are out of print though so I won't be able to read them :(

João Jorge says

“Welcome Back, Frank” is a funny and entertaining Punisher story. Written by the wacky Garth Ennis, this is like an 80's action flick, with one liners and loads of cartoonish violence. In fact what I found was that the whole volume was far too cartoonish, from the cheery art and colors to the lack of significant gore or any truly shocking moments. Everything here was written and drawn to look cool and I guess that's okay. The comic is very light on plot and there is no attempt to touch anything remotely serious about “The Punisher”, what he does or what he stands for. The comic is divided in two halves. The first part is basically Frank Castle on a killing spree, destroying a mobster family with some inventive and cool deaths and “The Punisher” looking badass. The second part we're introduced to “The Russian”, a sort of unstoppable hitman hired to take out Castle. We then have a really long fight where “The Punisher” is completely destroyed and made a punching bag and finally the rushed ending where I suppose there's no spoiler in telling you, “The Punisher” wins again! There are three other subplots in the comic but none of them work. There's a few moments about three neighbors of Frank's, typical outcasts who end up becoming his friends and who I suppose were there to give him some humanity but it's all very underdeveloped and the characters far too bland. Also underdeveloped is a group of three other vigilante's who are inspired by “The Punisher” to follow his footsteps in dealing with criminals but after a few cool death scenes it all ends rather abruptly and they end up serving absolutely no purpose in the comic. The final subplot deals with two cops, outcasts in their own job who are sent to capture Frank. They're another waste of time and after a while Ennis just puts

them in their car on a stakeout for what seems half the comic. None of these plots or characters really seem to have any point other than to take up a few pages. After the initial overdose of violence and mayhem, Ennis seems to be making time until the final confrontation with the mob boss which is a bit too underwhelming considering some truly magnificent set-pieces earlier in the comic.

But what really made an impression on me was how silly the whole thing was. From the stupid mobsters to the fight with the russian or an over the top main villain, it was (as always with Ennis, I guess) a bit too extreme in its... well silliness. Even with all the killing and violence, the comic ended up harmless and even somewhat childish and even with a lot of superbly written and drawn pages and some very funny situations it never really rose to something worth remembering. Like a cheesy 80's action flick, its fun but maybe not for the right reasons.
