



Gotham Central, Book One: In the Line of Duty

Ed Brubaker , Greg Rucka , Michael Lark (Illustrator) , Lawrence Block (Introduction)

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The first ten issues of the Eisner and Harvey Award-winning series written by Ed Brubaker (*Captain America*) and Greg Rucka (*Detective Comics*, 52) pit the detectives of Gotham City's Special Crimes Unit against the city's greatest villains - in the shadow of Batman himself.

1. In the Line of Duty by Ed Brubaker, Greg Rucka:

Mister Freeze kills a cop, and the squad is in a race against time to bring him in without the help of the Dark Knight.

2. Motive by Ed Brubaker:

Bonnie Lewis 14 disappeared after babysitting Friday night, ransom note faxed to dad next day. Body found, dead since Friday, so someone close to her was trying to divert suspicion.

Meanwhile, convicted Firebug sold his special fire-powered suit as memorabilia on internet.

3. Half a Life by Greg Rucka:

Detective Renee Montoya is outed as a lesbian and finds her work environment and personal life turned upside down, complicated when she is kidnapped by Two-Face.

Gotham Central, Book One: In the Line of Duty Details

Date : Published September 16th 2008 by DC Comics (first published 2004)

ISBN : 9781401219239

Author : Ed Brubaker , Greg Rucka , Michael Lark (Illustrator) , Lawrence Block (Introduction)

Format : Hardcover 240 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Comics, Graphic Novels, Dc Comics, Batman, Superheroes, Mystery, Crime

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From Reader Review Gotham Central, Book One: In the Line of Duty for online ebook

Ivan says

Line of duty: 3.5 stars

Motive: 4 stars

Half a life: 5 stars

Gotham police department, those poor guys who usually serve as canon fodder for Gotham's many crazies or play role of victims waiting to be rescued by Batman, finally got the spotlight and chance to prove they are not always incompetent schmucks waiting for Batman to do all the work.

Premise sounds interesting and with writing duo of Ed Brubaker, who's Criminal is one of my favorite graphic novels, and Greg Rucka, who's Lazarus also has place on my favorites shelf, my expectations couldn't have been higher. I can say they were mostly met although Gotham Central doesn't reach as high as those two.

Because of its weird premise this graphic novel is a bit hard to classify but one thing is for sure, this isn't superhero comic and it isn't Batman comic although he also makes appearance. I think it's closest to crime noir and if you are looking for gloomy atmosphere found in Brubaker's and Rucka's best works look no further.

Tristan says

A police procedural set in the Batman universe? Pretty much a perfect concept. In Gotham Central, the focus is squarely on the city's Police Department, with its inner dynamics and challenges as a result of operating in a world where its sense of self-value and pride is constantly being undermined (not with malicious intent, of course) by the existence of a vigilante with seemingly supernatural powers. That sort of thing does tend to cramp one's style quite a bit.

Rucka and Brubaker both prove themselves to be avid students and skillful practitioners of detective fiction, and manage to blend those core elements in nicely with the overall Batman mythos. Batman himself hardly figures at all in this, which is a wise choice. This might be controversial to some, but the Batman character never was terribly interesting in and of itself. At least not to me. Once you get beyond his traumatic childhood, he assumes a far more symbolic meaning. He's more of a constant presence, a force of nature, not a character of flesh and blood you can invest in on an emotional level.

What has always been interesting though, is his effect on Gotham. The tragic, eccentric supervillains his mere existence has spawned and how he irrevocably altered all strata of its society among which most importantly the cops that have bled and died in service of Gotham for ages before he came along. Rucka and Brubaker understand this dynamic very well.

One can't praise the plotting of these tales enough, in my opinion. They move like a high-speed train, yet are never confusing. It's pure comic crack. Lark's understated, seemingly unspectacular, yet highly effective

artwork (very reminiscent of David Mazzucchelli's on Batman - Year One) completes the package, making Gotham Central (even after having only read the first volume) one of the best DC series of the noughties.

Stephen says

This **Eisner** and **Harvey** Award-winning collection is truly **impressive** and demonstrates once again why **Ed Brubaker** is among the **elite writers** scribing comics today. Add to that a smart, well structured story by Greg Rucka and art that compliments the **dark** and **dank** emotional vibe of the plot and the result is a **must read** for fans of graphic novels and/or crime fiction.

The premise of the series is a street-level, "on the beat" look at the rampant criminal activity of Gotham City through the eyes of the cops and detectives working at Gotham City Police Department. Central to these stories are the relationships among the detectives and the tension and animosity that these working class peace officers have toward the exploits of the aloof vigilante known as the Batman.

Brubaker does a superb job of exploring this rift of philosophy and provides a wonderful fleshing of this relationship that has always been alluded to but never really given form in the Batman stories. I found this treatment to be compelling and added a much-needed dimension to the Batman mythos. Also impressive was the way Brubaker made the Dark Knight an ever "present" aspect of the stories despite the fact that he is rarely ever seen in these stories. It is quality story-telling from someone whose chops are well bloomed.

PLOT SUMMARY:

This Volume encompasses issues 1-10 of Gotham Central and includes the first 3 complete story arcs.

In the Line of Duty by *Ed Brubaker* (Issues 1 and 2). Marcus Lewis' partner, Charlie Fields, is brutally killed by **Mr. Freeze** while the detectives are following up a lead on an unrelated case. Marcus takes the loss extremely hard and wants the department to bring Freeze in WITHOUT the Dark Knight's help. This story wonderfully establishes the tone and direction of the stories and immerses the reader into the world beyond the heroes in skilled fashion.

Motive by *Ed Brubaker* (Issues 3-5). Marcus Lewis, still recovering from the loss of his partner in the previous story, works to solve the kidnapping/murder of a little girl while an arsonist runs amok in the streets of Gotham City. Crisp, evocative story-telling that continues to flesh out this cast of characters.

Half a Life by *Greg Rucka* (Issues 6-10). Detective Renee Montoya is "outed" as a lesbian and finds her personal and professional life turned upside down. To make matters worse, someone is trying to frame her for murder. Avoiding any sentimentality, Rucka does a marvelous job with this story and Montoya became an early favorite character of mine.

Each story is terrifically written, deftly told and peopled with genuine, well-drawn characters. In a word...outstanding.

4.0 stars. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!

Kemper says

Being a cop isn't easy, but the men and women of the Gotham City Police Department have it tougher than most. This is a town where the most routine call can leave an officer facing a crazy cold blooded scientist with his own freeze ray, or they may be targeted by a murderous former district attorney desperately in need of some plastic surgery. You know things are out of control when the cop's best weapon is a psychologically scarred vigilante who dresses like a bat.

It seemed like an interesting idea to do a book from the point of view of the GCPD's Major Crimes Unit, but I thought that this might be an idea only worthy of a story, not an entire series. I was wrong about that in a big way.

In the hands of Ed Brubaker and Greg Rucka it's already obvious that there's a wealth of untold Gotham stories about a group of cops just trying to do their jobs in the face of batshit (Get it?) craziness.

For example, the first story centers on the horrible death of a detective at the hands of Mr. Freeze. Usually in a bat comic, we'd get the brutal murder and maybe a little bit of the department's anger and fear as a subplot while Batman goes after him. By focusing on the crime's impact to the cops, it turns what could be a typical comic book beginning into a tragedy that makes you see the GCPD as more than just cannon fodder that routinely gets caught in the crossfire between Batman and his enemies.

I also liked the way that the cops have a love/hate thing with Batman because they recognize that they need him to deal with these threats, but there's an undertone of anger that he may be causing half of their problems by inspiring super villains as well as resentment at the way that he's taken it on himself to do their job.

In addition to the Mr. Freeze plot, there's a mystery to solve as the detectives look into the murder of a teenage girl and deal with a costumed firebug. The final story that revolves around a closeted lesbian cop being outed as part of a scheme to destroy her life is an exceptionally heartbreaking piece of writing that I will be using in the future to refute anyone who wants to sneer at me for reading funny books.

Terrific concept and great story telling make this a must read for fans who will see a side of Gotham City that we never have before in the Batman titles.

Stewart Tame says

Wow! I can't believe it took me so long to get around to checking out this title. "Eisner and Harvey Award-Winning Series," indeed.

Gotham Central focuses on the Gotham City Police Department. What's it like to go after colorful villains like Mr. Freeze and Two-Face? How does it feel to see Batman doing your job for you? Just what is the procedure for turning on the Bat signal anyway? Brubaker and Rucka take a police procedural approach to

things. These cops are real people with hopes and dreams and lives and families. They do their jobs to the best of their abilities, fighting to make Gotham a safer place. It's a cop show that happens to be set in Gotham City.

The story arcs are well-written, and flow together nicely. An officer is killed in the line of duty by Mr. Freeze. Can the GCPD take him down without Batman's help? A fourteen year-old girl is murdered, and it begins to look like Firebug is responsible, but things get complicated when bringing him in seems a little too easy. And a detective is framed for murder as her whole life comes crashing down, but just who is behind it all?

This is the Batman book I've been wanting to read my whole life. It's set very firmly in the real world. It takes lessons from Astro City and Top 10 and applies them to the DC Universe. I was caught up in the story to the point where the end of the third tale actually brought a tear to my eye. This is quality work. Highly recommended!

Brandon says

There's very little reason this should work.

Ed Brubaker and Greg Rucka want you to sit down, pick this up and become captivated by the stories of the Gotham City Police Department. A force that has become all but neutered by the exploits of The Dark Knight. Honestly, who wants the cops to come save you when Batman is on the prowl?

It had to be tough to try and write this without the reader asking the question, "Why not just flip the switch and let the bat-signal flood the sky?" The answer: this is their job, not his. The GCPD struggle with the fact that they're always overshadowed by The Caped Crusader and that they have a lot of resentment deep in their system. In fact, that's basically the subject of the first arc, In The Line of Duty.

Detective Lewis needs to capture Mr. Freeze following the brutal murder of his partner, Charlie Fields. Feeling guilt over Charlie's death, Lewis wants just this one victory without the help of Batman and refuses to let the beacon shine.

In The Line of Duty is important in establishing just why you should care about these people. It gets the reader right down to their level, sympathizing with their feelings of inadequacy in relation to Batman. After that connection is established, Rucka and Brubaker get the wheels going with some top-notch stuff.

The two arcs that follow are gripping stories, especially Half A Life. They do a good job setting the tone of where this series intends to go throwing red herrings all over the place, keeping the reader guessing until the big reveal.

This is the perfect example of why people should never write off comics as a storytelling medium. Even if you're not a fan of the superhero genre, this is a series that can fit snug on the bookshelf of any crime fiction aficionado.

Anne says

Gotham Central tells the stories of the different police detectives in the GPD. Batman makes a few cameos, but really he has little to nothing to do with what goes on in this book.

This was not my cuppa. I thought the art was ugly, and I like a heavy dose of spandex-clad superheroes in my graphic novels, so I really doubt I'll be revisiting these books any time soon.

But.

Even though I don't care for this kind of crime drama story, it *was* really well written. If you enjoy reading stuff like *Whiteout*, then I have a feeling you would *love* Gotham Central.

Dan Schwent says

Detective Driver's partner is killed and the department wants to apprehend the killer before Batman gets called in. Only the killer is Mr. Freeze. An arsonist plagues the city and Driver and his new partner have to catch him and a missing girl is found dead. Detective Renee Montoya is outed and framed. All in all, a normal week at the GCPD.

When enough of your friends give a book high praise, sooner or later you have to stop being a stubborn asshole and give it a try. In this case, Gotham Central is the book and the stubborn asshole is me.

The core concept behind Gotham Central is a fairly simple one. If Batman was patrolling your city, how would the cops deal with it? They'd probably resent and respect you simultaneously, as is repeatedly shown in the pages of Gotham Central.

There isn't a whole lot more I can mention about the plot without spoiling too much of it. It's basically a series of crime stories set in Gotham City, centering on the GCPD.

Brubaker and Rucka knocked the ball out of the park and into the river in this one. The writing is superb and at times I forgot I was reading something set in Gotham City. I cannot recommend this enough to fans of comic books and crime fiction.

Agn? says

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

Ed Brubaker and Greg Rucka's "Gotham Central, Book One: In the Line of Duty" is a collection of ten first issues of an award-winning comic book series "Gotham Central" with an introduction by Lawrence Block. "Gotham Central" offers a closer look at professional as well as personal lives of police officers from the Gotham City Police Department (GCPD), who deal with vicious big-city criminals and homicidal super villains, racing to solve the crimes before Batman takes over.

"Gotham Central, Book One" consist of three story arcs: "In the Line of Duty" (issues #1-2), "Motive" (issues #3-5) and "Half a Life" (issues #6-10). In the first story, Mr. Freeze kills one of the GCPD's officers, and the squad assumes the duty of hunting the villain down without Batman's help. In "Motive," Marcus Driver tries to solve the kidnapping/murder of a teenage girl while the rest of the team is after a costumed

arsonist Firebug. The last story features detective Renee Montoya, who is outed as a lesbian, charged with a murder and kidnapped by Two-Face.

THUMBS UP:

1) *Realistic and relatable.*

Even though “Gotham Central, Book One” features super villains and Batman in fictional Gotham City, the story focuses on GCPD’s officers, and thus the plot details as well as characters, their actions and emotions are surprisingly realistic and relatable.

2) *Action-packed mystery.*

In addition to being very realistic, the plot in “Gotham Central, Book One” is dynamic, intriguing and well-thought-out. Although the end of “Motive” was a tiny bit predictable, I enjoyed the story nonetheless. In fact, “Motive” was my favorite out of all three story arcs.

3) *Organic conversational flow.*

I especially loved beginnings of individual episodes, which often start with fragments of random conversations. Most of these conversations are totally irrelevant but they set a natural flow for the rest of the dialogue.

4) *Mood-reflecting artwork.*

Although I’ve seen some criticism regarding the artwork in “Gotham Central, Book One”, I personally thought that rough lines and grim colors complement the dark vibe of the plot and suit the mood of the series perfectly. Besides, the looks and postures of the characters seem down-to-earth. However, I did notice that the same characters not always look the same in different scenes, even though they are all drawn by the same artist Michael Lark.

VERDICT: 4 out of 5

“Gotham Central, Book One” collects three realistic, dynamic and intriguing stories from GCPD with relatable characters, organic conversations and aptly grim artwork. It’s a great first installment in a cop series set in the superhero universe but told solely from the perspective of mortals.

Garrett says

I would give this an extra star if I could. The writing is great, the characterization is great, and above all the art is fantastic and this is so much fun to read. Great noir driven detective fiction

Chris says

My favourite thing about Gotham Central is that it felt like a TV show in book format. The pacing, the character development, it all builds steadily and starts to pay off the further you get into the book. This isn't a series that tries to do anything flashy, it's a crime drama that largely ignores Batman and his superheroics and instead focuses on telling good stories. Set in the Major Crimes Unit of the Gotham City Police Department, the detectives attempt to solve some of the worst crimes the city can throw at them. The dialogue is superb

and thanks to the steady pacing, I couldn't help but become more engrossed with each issue.

Writers Ed Brubaker and Greg Rucka didn't win me over straight away, though. I felt that the opening two-partner *In The Line Of Duty* was the weakest story of the bunch. It attempts to start the series with a bang, but I couldn't help thinking it would have been more effective as a mid-season finale, if you'll excuse another TV comparison (I can certainly see why readers wish we'd got this instead of the Gotham TV show).

It took me a while to get used to the artwork, too. Artist Michael Lark appears to have a very basic style, but I eventually warmed to it and came to appreciate his detail. It's more impressive when you consider just how many panels he draws. Characters converse at length, but the settings (particularly the GCPD) and the individual touches to each appearance make it all feel natural and easy to take in. Again, it has the rhythm of a TV show. Colourist Lee Loughridge uses an appropriately muted colour palette, the only downside to which is the occasional change in hair and skin colour. It might have been to show varying tones in different light, but it was a bit distracting with so many characters to follow.

Minor shortcomings aside, I was quickly hooked by Gotham Central and I definitely want to read more. With two great writers onboard and an artist who won me over during the course of the book, I'm hoping this will be a series I'll continue to enjoy in future. Recommended.

Cyndi says

So let's get something out of the way first: I have a deep love for anything Batman and I think Brubaker is in the top 3 noir comics writers. Glad that's off my chest.

This series has a great perspective, a cast of characters that tug at your senses and have some interesting tales to tell...and The Bats is only a peripheral spectre who, seemingly, has a foothold in the psyche of each GCPD officer on duty in one way or another.

My take away boils down to this: be mindful of the extensive ripples caused by each and every action you make. The ripples are far reaching and never quite expected. The Bats' single minded pursuit of justice, the co-dependence of GCPD and the individual officers perspective on our resident masked "vigilante" all form a seamless work of art.

BTW did I mention how fabulous I think Brubaker is...I did...well it's worth repeating...daily!

Strap in and on citizens, this series kicks ass!

StoryTellerShannon says

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

There are many graphic novels about superheroes and their world and how important it is for them to save the regular mortals but rarely do we get a perspective of the mortals unless they're family or lovers. In this series we focus almost exclusively upon the detectives (morning and night shifts) of Gotham who sometimes resent "The Bat" for solving their cases. It's a fresh and interesting approach with

Batman showing up less than 5% of all the tales.

BOOK ONE

Story focuses are upon two detectives discovering Mister Freeze in hiding and then the whole force trying to stop him from doing something sinister. There's another tale of a missing teenage girl while a villainous "Firefly" returns to Gotham and the last and longest tale is about the return of Two Face who proceeds to capture and torment Detective Montoya.

There's a lesbian detective who fears being disowned if her parents find out, another detective is guilt ridden that his partner died on his watch and a host of other personal stories. Truly is this about the characters. The "Sarge" is a great sub character who goes off on some interesting arguments here and there.

ARTWORK

I found the artwork hit or miss. Yes, it's dark and gritty looking but sometimes it feels like only 80% of the normal details are there in the artwork. Batman doesn't look terribly impressive though maybe that's intentional to add to the mundane setting. That alone didn't make me give it a "B" grade so much as my former reason.

STORY/PLOTTING: B plus; ARTWORK PRESENTATION: B; CHARACTERS/DIALOGUE: B plus to A minus; WHEN READ: early June 2012; OVERALL GRADE: B plus.

Diz says

This book provides a street level view of life in Gotham City from the point of view of police detectives. Batman very rarely appears, and when he does, he comes across as mysterious and a bit menacing. The detectives have a lot of personality, and it's interesting to see how they deal with super villains without powers (not very well at times). The writing is sharp, and the art style really suits the type of stories being told. I'm looking forward to reading more volumes of this.

Sandra says

what i look like when my friend recommends me batman books.

why?

because holy shit, **he's filling my tbr pile again and i can't fucking keep up!** even if i want to read all of them so bad. oh god! why'd you make only 24 hours in a day, why not make it 48 or 50 hours so i have more fucking time to read???. why are you doing this to me???. am i complaining? nope. not at all. **keep em coming bro.**
