



## Batman: Bruce Wayne, Murderer?

*Greg Rucka , Kelley Puckett , Chuck Dixon , Devin Grayson , Ed Brubaker , Pete Woods (Illustrator) , Trevor McCarthy (Illustrator) , Steve Lieber (Illustrator) , more... Phil Noto (Illustrator) , Lonardo Manco (Illustrator) , William Rosado (Illustrator) , Dave Johnson (Illustrator) , Rick Burchett (Illustrator) , Roger Robinson (Illustrator) , Scott McDaniel (Illustrator) , Rick Leonardi (Illustrator) , Damion Scott (Illustrator) ...less*

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After being found with the dead body of Vesper Fairchild in his arms, Bruce Wayne is arrested for her murder. Looking to prove Bruce's innocence, Nightwing, Robin and Batgirl quickly begin an investigation to discover the true killer. But as the mystery unfolds, evidence of Bruce's guilt mounts and even his closest allies begin to question their mentor's innocence. Tired of portraying himself as someone he is not and further embracing the freedom of his masked identity, Bruce decides to lay his millionaire playboy alter ego to rest and live life only as the Batman.

This new edition includes stories that have never been reprinted before and collects Batgirl 24, 27, Batman 599-602, Batman: Gotham Knights 25-28, Batman: The 10-Cent Adventure 1, Birds Of Prey 39, 40-41, 43, Detective Comics 766-767, Nightwing 65-66, 68-69 and Robin 98-99.

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# From Reader Review **Batman: Bruce Wayne, Murderer?** for online ebook

## Chris says

This impressively thick collection runs a crossover threaded through the major Batman titles in the early 2000's in which Batman's alter ego Bruce Wayne is accused of murdering a former love interest. The crossover spanned the major Batman titled (Batman, Detective) and some of the other books under the publishing umbrella (Nightwing, Batgirl, Robin, Birds of Prey, Gotham Knights).

Crossover spanning collections like this are always a bit of a tough sit, as creative teams vary wildly from book to book, but the early aughts were an especially good time creatively for the Bat-books. Ed Brubaker and Greg Rucka were in charge of the main titles with assists on some of the side series from talented writers like Chuck Dixon and Devin Grayson, among others.

What's most interesting about *Batman: Murderer* is how uninteresting it is as Batman story. Sure, he's the main character but for the most part, Batman is kept firmly off stage as his extended cast of fellow superheroes does the heavy lifting of investigating the crime. There are some fun stories collected here and DC is to be somewhat commended for remembering that many of the ancillary titles had a rooting interest in being involved with this crossover. Indeed some of the issues of *Batgirl* and *Nightwing* collected here are vitally important to the overall narrative of the story.

Having said that, there are some problems with this as a collected edition. By its' very nature, the central narrative is a bit meandering especially once (Spoiler) a wrongly accused but expertly framed Bruce Wayne breaks out of prison to resume his Batman duties. I must admit, I found my mind wandering when the focus shifted back to Batman. That's probably an issue. I don't know I would recommend this to someone looking for a "Batman" story which is a little strange, given how much time and space the narrative takes up. Having said that, what is collected here is solid genre comics and I'm definitely interested in seeing the next collection, *Batman: Fugitive*.

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## J says

Gotta admit this one zipped by. These multiple title, multiple author crossover storylines mostly leave me cold when there's more than two titles involved. This has the saving grace of the thread of Ed Brubaker stitching the whole thing together and keeping the story tight.

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## Andrew says

I've come and gone into and out of the comic book hobby since the late 80s when I was a teenager discovering that yes, I too could become obsessed with a hobby now that I'd outgrown being a lead singer in an air-band. The danger of leaving and returning, though, is that titles one used to like will become huge families of titles suddenly, and it's daunting to catch up. This is why I am very grateful for big omnibus kinds of books like this. During the period when the whole "bat family" (I don't recall that concept from the late

80s) is trying to figure out what happened that led to Bruce Wayne being framed for a murder, continuity apparently required that he be dealing with that issue in all the Bat-titles. So thank you, D.C., for helping me out here. I'll never catch up, but I can at least enjoy some storylines this way.

The creators did a nice job NOT being too jarring between titles, it turns out. Good teamwork, good editorship, perhaps? I admire it though, regardless. The shifts in visual-art style was the only off-putting thing here, but I'm a grown-up and can adapt. I won't say I liked the styles in their entirety, but I must stress that this is not a criticism, but more about preference, though I wondered how the more cartoonish styles were supposed to fit with the writing at times.

The only storyline I didn't care for was that of Nicodemus. His motive was familiar and cliché. The story felt tired. I was also unsure of why (view spoiler), but perhaps the next volume, which I will definitely read, will reveal something about this.

I have to say I really enjoyed the way the Bat-family has fleshed out. I like the characters, and the roles they have taken on. They have a really great team of writers and artists across the board. Reading this volume brought me back into actually *liking* mainstream comics again. Most of my comics reading is more adult lately, fewer superhero titles. It feels like kind of a homecoming for me.

<http://darkmagnet.blogspot.com>

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## **J. says**

The storyline of Bruce's framing and what follows is a good idea, and all the various books fit together well. But this volume collects EVERYTHING, so it's just way too much stuff. Most of the issues are only about half related, and half follows characters I don't know in the middle of action I don't understand. So, overall, it's only ok.

Also, note that the plotline is definitely unresolved in this volume, even at 600 pages. There's at least one more necessary volume, if you want the resolution.

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## **Siike Donnelly says**

### **Good, but a bit sloppy.**

My only complaint is really just the editing for this collected edition. Its not a coherent story as it has too many tie-ins that just feel off and not essential! Even some of the Batman stories don't seem well constructed in this collected form. I'm sure reading this monthly was fine and fun to see some things bleed into the bat family books, but as a single read its a big sloppy. Still, the premise and execution in the parts I liked are still strong enough to make this a decent read. Still, I'd take maybe 5 issues of this book and just splice it in with Batman: Fugitive and it would probably be a stronger, more fast-paced read. 3/5 makes it worth any Batman fan's time though, for sure.

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## **Teunen Lorenz says**

The main story is fun but not every side story is that great. Also the artwork goes from pretty good to weird.

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## **Brad McKenna says**

This was ultimately a disappointing collection. In what has become the norm in comics, the story-arc spans all the titles related to Batman, Detective Comics, Robin, Nightwing, Batgirl, Birds of Prey. The first third of the book was good because Batman's allies all wondered if he really had done it. Then Bruce escapes from jail and Batman is seen roaming the streets again. I'll leave aside the obvious conclusions that people should have drawn from that, because...comics.

Once free, the story of who framed Bruce fades and it becomes business as usual with just one caveat, Batman refuses to answer to Bruce. He's even more bitter than before and decides he need to do away with being Bruce, rather than doing away with being Batman. The kicker is that after 600 pages we don't find out who framed Bruce. Fortunately, they get into that in the next collection, Batman: Bruce Wayne: Fugitive. I've actually started that one and it's a whole lot better. But you can't really skip this volume and start on that one. Just read this one knowing that it's basically a stretched out story in the name of the almighty dollar.

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## **Lexxi Kitty says**

It's an overall interesting story. Bruce Wayne is out with his bodyguard, Sasha, as Batman. Patrolling. Batman has a bodyguard because Bruce Wayne has a bodyguard. And Sasha is as stubborn and intelligent as Batman, so when Wayne heads off by himself, Sasha has to figure out what's going on. And finds out Wayne is Batman. Therefore she goes out on patrols with him.

So. Batman and Sasha out on patrol. Two different crimes occur right when they are about to head back, so they separate. Both arrive back safely, though Batman is already changed back into Wayne and all showered and stuff. Wayne heads upstairs and finds . . . the body of his ex-girlfriend. He kneels over the body, lifting it up. Sasha stands there stunned. Police break in right then and arrest Wayne and Sasha. And that's the start of the 624 page volume.

The rest of the book follows various Bat related people, Tim Drake as Robin, Nightwing, Batgirl, Black Canary, Oracle, Spoiler, and Alfred the butler attempt to figure out what has happening and to try to help Batman. Though Batman doesn't want their help.

It's interesting to bump into characters I know and don't know. Judging by the other characters reactions, Sasha is relatively new to their gang. I've personally never heard of her before. Though it is possible I meant a later version of her after she got out of prison. I've meet Robin, Nightwing, Batgirl, Black Canary, Oracle, Spoiler and Alfred before. But not specifically the same ones as are in this story. I don't think I've meet Tim Drake as Robin before. Not sure. The prior books that I read that included Robin seemed to involve Dick Grayson (or whatever Dick's last name is), who is Nightwing here (and Nightwing in other Nightwing related things I've read). Batgirl is yet another new woman in the role. No clue who she is. They never give her name. Other than Batgirl. Black Canary, Spoiler, and Alfred have all been meet by me before, but mostly as cameos/guest starring roles. So I don't have a good feeling of them.

It's one of those things that pop up in the Batman universe. That Batman doesn't kill. And doesn't like guns. So it seems a no brainer that he didn't kill his ex-girlfriend, right? Since she was shot three times. Except . . . she was shot by Wayne's gun. In his house. And Wayne was found with blood on him. And the dead girl's shoes in his bedroom. Then there's a 911 recording of Vesper Fairchild, the dead ex-girlfriend, moments before she is killed. Could Batman kill? Could something push him over the edge? Most of the characters have to confront the idea that Batman actually did kill. Nightwing can't stand the idea that Batman could kill, or that others might suspect that he could. The others are not so sure.

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## LEVI says

Having seen this in physical copy a few years ago, I forgot how big it actually was. Altogether, it didn't take that long to read, but 600 pages of a comic is a lot of comic to read.

The concept intrigued me. I knew I'd be missing a bit of info since I didn't and probably won't ever read the comics that lead up to this. I wasn't missing as much as I thought, because the comics I have read before were somewhat in line with the timeline of this one. But still a fair bit, like the new Batgirl and Spoiler.

I figured the whole case would be solved in this one volume, too, given it's size, but nope, there's a sequel. I just care about who framed Batman, so the comics that come in between with Batman kicking bad guy butt and taking down drug triads is kind of whatever for me. They aren't bad, but I'm not inherently interested in them. I don't entirely see how they connect to the plot as a whole, either, other than the fact that it is a Batman comic and we need to know what he's doing while his team cleans up his mess, I guess.

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## Martin says

I re-read this years after my first read-through, and I realised it is probably one of my favourite Batman storylines ever. It was like visiting an old friend: even though I know where this is going (having already read the storyline/event to its conclusion), I enjoyed every minute - or *page*, whatever - of it.

Reading this, it also reminded me that - back then - one of my favourite artists was Scott McDaniel! I have to admit I haven't thought about him much recently (does he even work in the field anymore?), but back then he was definitely one of my favourites. His Batman was especially badass. Consider this, the cover of Batman #600, one of my all-time favourite covers:

Ed Brubaker and Greg Rucka, with Chuck Dixon, Devin Grayson and Kelley Puckett all collaborated on this 'whodunit' storyline, and by the end of this volume, Batman himself has come to a shocking decision: (view spoiler)

The first 14 (of 24!) issues collected in this book are the main draw. A lot more seems to happen (and of more importance, too!) than in the last 10 issues, which have basically 2 main things going on:

[1] Batman's 'family' (ie: Nightwing, Robin, Alfred, Oracle, Batgirl), Spoiler and Black Canary are investigating in the hopes of finding proof that *someone else* murdered Fairchild, effectively clearing Bruce Wayne's name. Allen & Montoya [very] briefly question Alfred regarding Wayne's disappearance.

[2] Batman is just being Batman - punishing thugs and what not - without actively doing *anything* about Fairchild's murder or the investigation surrounding it.

So that's 5 stars for the first part of the book, 3 stars for the second part, for an overall rating of 4 stars.

This omnibus collects *Batman: Bruce Wayne, Murderer?* and *Batman: Bruce Wayne, Fugitive, Vol. 1*. The main difference is that the omnibus reprints *all* the pages of *all* the included issues, whereas the older editions reprint only the *relevant* material from these issues, leaving out quite a bit of unnecessary 'junk'. That's actually a plus, as it keeps the narrative more focused. I personally could care less about the other plot lines going on concurrently, as they do not impact the 'Murderer/Fugitive' story arcs.

The story continues in *Batman: Bruce Wayne, Fugitive, Vol. 2*, then in *Batman: Bruce Wayne, Fugitive, Vol. 3*. Alternately, you may opt to follow the story to its conclusion in the *Batman: Bruce Wayne, Fugitive* omnibus, which collects the two books mentioned just previously.

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### **Shannon Appelcline says**

This volume starts off quite good. One of Wayne's ex-girlfriends is found dead at the mansion, and he looks to be the main suspect. Not only is Batman taken off the playing board, giving everyone else a chance to shine, but we also get a pretty great mystery that's slowly being unraveled book by book.

Then the whole thing falls apart in the last section of this volume (which I suspect marks the end of the original *Murderer* arc and the beginning of the longer *Fugitive* arc). Batman breaks out of jail, for no particular reason. Much of the mystery and some of the focus on secondary characters grinds to a halt (with Wayne's body guard treated the worst; she just disappears). Some of the stories we get are totally off-topic: they feel irrelevant and not that interesting. The organization of the collection becomes bad, with closely continuing stories split apart, and two critical issues, part 1 of a 3 part story and part 2 of a 2 part story are missing entirely. DC's collection department has been pretty bad in recent years, but this is a new low. (The missing-issues problem was immediately corrected with a reprint, by the by, but obviously the original printing is still out there.) As a whole, what was a promising arc goes badly off the rails.

So, call the first two-thirds of this volume a strong "4" and the last third a "2" or "3". The overall rating is probably about 3.5.

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### **Lonno says**

I should start by saying that this is the new "new" edition which included two issues that were left out of the original "new" edition which was released several months ago, only to be recalled several weeks later. While the omissions probably shouldn't have happened in the first place, DC really scores points for replacing any copies sold to customers with this edition without any bullshit.

On to the book itself. This is a MASSIVE collection including all of the bat-titles that tied into Bruce Wayne-Murderer? And it was about as good as I remembered it when I collected it in single issues years ago. Ed Brubaker, Greg Rucka, Chuck Dixon, Devin Grayson, and Kelly Puckett all contribute on the writing chores in this one. Issues of *Batman*, *Robin*, *Nightwing*, *Birds of Prey*, *Batgirl*, *Detective*, and *Gotham*



Knights all make the cut and are included in this volume. Overall I felt the story was a well written and entertaining. Some portions were better than others. This was some of my first exposure to Ed Brubaker and Greg Rucka (both of whom I have grown to love) so I do have a soft spot for this collection. I can see why the issues included in the collection are in there, however, several issues really don't add much to the overall story ("Purity") and probably could have been left out. Completists will appreciate their presence.

The art, much like the writing, is a mixed bag. Good overall, but certain issues certainly shine in my opinion. Echoing Goodread's reviewer, Martin, Scott McDaniel owns this collection. Batman issue 600 has a GREAT sequence involving Batman and Nightwing that is awesome. I've loved Scott's stuff since the 90's (Daredevil and Nightwing) and his pencils (with Andy Owens's inks) didn't disappoint in this book. Some other standouts are Rick Leonardi (Birds of Prey), Damion Scott (Batgirl), and Phil Noto (currently of Black Widow fame) has a standalone issue. Couple of issues that weren't as strong, but in a collection of this size it's almost unavoidable to have a few that aren't to your tastes.

That said, Bruce Wayne – Murderer? is a pretty good "who dunnit" and any Batman fan will probably find something to enjoy. It digs a little more deeply into idea of whether Batman or Bruce Wayne is the "mask" and does it in a unique way. Practically all of the extended bat-family (including Supes) make appearances and an emphasis is placed on their varying relationships with Bruce/Batman while each investigates the mystery both together and alone. Be prepared that the story does end on something of a cliffhanger and DC is eventually collecting Bruce Wayne – Fugitive as a follow up to the collection.

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### **BigJohn says**

Great lead-in to the Bruce Wayne: Fugitive series. The new edition is a little too faithful in reproducing all of the comics that contain any story piece, which ends up establishing a bunch of plot threads that don't pan out or resolve within this series, and that's a little distracting.

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### **María Eugenia says**

Está bien, es la recopilación de cómics de Batman y la *bat familia* alrededor de la historia "Bruce Wayne, Murderer?". Hay números de Greg Rucka, Chuck Dixon o Ed Brubaker y personajes que me gustan. El único problema... es que no sabía que no era autoconclusivo y no tengo el siguiente volumen. ?

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### **Noetic\_Hatter says**

Intriguing story. This Bruce Wayne is not remotely likable, but it is indeed a logical outgrowth of the 90's paranoid loner Batman. (The Justice League animated Batman might act this way, for instance.) The Brubaker Batman and Rucka Detective issues are quite good, both art and story. I find myself looking forward to them because most of the crossover books - especially later in the volume - only barely deal with this mystery. So I am thrown into other characters' plots and supporting casts with little explanation. And I hate hate hate the art on the Nightwing issues.

Some really good scenes with various Batfamily members, especially Alfred and Bruce, Dick, and Tim. Also

a solid scene between Dr. Thompkins and Batman.

Re not-nice Batman: I certainly don't want silly 1950-60's Batman, except on my TV. I don't mind angry post-Crisis Batman. It's right for the character, and it's frequently done well. (especially in the DCAU) This MURDERER characterization is consistent with that. I'm fine with that, but I don't like him in this story - especially the way he treats his Batfamily, who genuinely care and want to help. But then again, I don't think we're supposed to like the way he's behaving. And there's enough convincing doubt from Tim and Babs to make the reader wonder what's really going down about the murder.

That's the arc. I expect it to work out in Batman: Bruce Wayne, Fugitive. It doesn't take me out of this good story. His attitude here is the story. Only that crappy Nightwing art truly takes me out of the story. . .

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