



Scene of the Crime: A Little Piece of Goodnight

Ed Brubaker , Michael Lark (Illustrator) , Sean Phillips (Illustrator)

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Sardonic, sentimental detective Jack Herriman has moved in with his Uncle Knut, and award-winning crime-scene photographer, in an attempt to rebuild his shattered life and career, putting his checkered past behind him. Jack takes on a missing-persons case that quickly turns into a murder investigation, dragging him into the midst of a family scandal and a lascivious -- and potentially deadly -- New Age cult. Jack's only hope for survival rests with his uncle and Molly, the woman to whom Knut has been perpetually engaged for decades. This decidedly modern take on crime fiction, with a classic film noir feel, is part of the grown genre of crime comics from Vertigo.

Scene of the Crime: A Little Piece of Goodnight Details

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Author : Ed Brubaker , Michael Lark (Illustrator) , Sean Phillips (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Scene of the Crime: A Little Piece of Goodnight for online ebook

Blindzider says

For a first book this was pretty darn good. It's a little formulaic but you can't help but be vested into the mystery and I thought I had almost everything figured out but there's still a couple twists I didn't see coming. A private investigator is hired to find a missing girl but uncovers some hidden secrets and it doesn't take long for you to follow along with Jack as he hunts for clues. Everything is narrated by him in captions so you really get to understand not only the investigation but his motivations and feelings. There's also a slow reveal of some events in his background which ties to other people in the story.

There isn't much here that's really new, at this point in time (the story is over 15 years old now) but it's so well done and you can see the beginnings of both Brubaker, Lark and Phillips' careers. It's worth a read, check it out.

David Schaafsma says

Man, Brubaker hates hippies. As a 90s grunge guy, this makes sense, but as a former hippie, ouch. :)

So before Criminal and Fatale and Fade Out was this, begun in 1998 with Michael Lark, with whom he worked on Gotham Central and some superhero comics. Sean Phillips designed this deluxe edition, with whom Brubaker would team in producing all those (above) terrific graphic crime novels after that, and now for close to 20 years and still going strong.

I had kind of thought I would like this one much less, since it was just Brubaker starting out with crime graphic fiction, and I do for Brubaker's noir stories prefer the artwork of Phillips, but this story is still very good. I think I can point to places where the dialogue is a little sharp than it is in Fade Out, where the story seems a little less crisp or the artwork less refined than it might be now, but you know, this is a high quality Brubaker story right off the bat, with lots of twists and turns and surprises.

This deluxe hard cover edition has an afterword by Brubaker about how it got done and how it led to other stuff he's done.

Like Brubaker? Gotta read it. Like crime novels? Gotta read it.

Sam Quixote says

Think of a clichéd LA noir plot: missing persons, shady organisations, stake-outs, private dicks with drinking problems, the occasional gun-fight; that's Scene of the Crime!

This was a miniseries from 1999, early in the careers of Ed Brubaker and Michael Lark and also their first

collaboration together - years later they would go on to co-create the celebrated Gotham Central for DC and have a successful run on Daredevil for Marvel. Brubaker's greenness really shows though and Scene of the Crime is definitely not one of his better books!

There are far too many panels on each page, each one crammed with unwieldy, clunky exposition as our narrator clumsily meanders through this long-winded narrative. Reading a handful of these pages is like wading through sludge and it doesn't help that you're not reading anything remarkable besides the standard police procedural crap.

The pacing is ultra-slow and it doesn't get more exciting or pick up any as the story nears its end – it's a sloooooow drag all the way through! It also has an extremely convoluted plot whose muddled twists and turns I just didn't care about as it and the characters aren't at all interesting. It ends unpleasantly probably for "dark" and "gritty" reasons.

Even as a big Ed Brubaker fan, I wouldn't recommend Scene of the Crime. Though Michael Lark's art is decent, it's a boring, overwritten and unrewarding trial to struggle through. Check out Brubaker's Criminal series for far better crime comics.

Kurt says

See, this? Right here? This is why we don't start/join hippie sex cults. It only leads to chaos and trouble and great detective stories. This is some very early Brubaker writing, and it doesn't rise to the heights of his Gotham Central or Captain America or Daredevil work, but it's a great Hammett-style noir story about a guy investigating a missing person case that (of course) leads to scandal and murder and sex and drugs and mayhem. The mystery is compelling, with a lot of raw and worn-down characters who are too tired to hide their pain anymore, and Lark's illustrations help everything flow along smoothly. The ending is a bit abrupt, in the TV procedural "then the bad guy just confesses because the story's supposed to end" style that I've hated ever since I started cross-examining real witnesses, but everything leading up to it is good and worth reading.

Much of the appeal of this book, I gather, is that it's been out of print for a decade, so remembering it and loving it were the same thing. Now that it's easy to find, I don't think it will hold quite such a "buried treasure" draw for readers, but it's still a very good crime story, well-paced and well-illustrated, with enough psychology and emotion to satisfy Dashiell Hammett fans.

Steven says

This is a tough one to give a rating to: it's a five and it's a three. So the 5 is for this re-issue of the first collaboration of Brubaker/Lark/Phillips from 1999. The series didn't continue so this went out of print. But now back in print is the story that launched Brubaker's career, as he describes in the awesome afterward. And that's what really makes this a 5-star: Brubaker sharing the genesis of this project, including samples from his original treatment and scripts. Plus some of the original panels showing Lark's pencil, followed by Phillips inking. This window into Brubaker's early writing world, and especially his thoughts on it now, make this a special edition.

The story is just a three. It's a run-of-the-mill private investigator story, but overwritten and a bit slow. As a comic, way too much text on the panels, and the italic font of the lettering is hard to read with so much text on the pages. In the kindle version you can switch to reading it one panel at a time and that make the text more readable, but I prefer to see the whole page, so the lettering was annoying. The Lark/Phillips art collaboration works well and carries the story.

Nick Kives says

Apparently if it is written by Ed Brubaker and isn't about superheroes it is worth a read. Not saying his superhero stuff isn't good either it has been, but he excels at telling a real story, a noir story that is purely character driven. Read Criminal, Vol. 1: Coward (any volume), or read Incognito, Vol. 1.

This is about a PI that is asked to hunt down a missing woman, and after finding her, and then her dying but hours later, then the real story starts. It is no longer about finding her, but finding her killer. The ending seemed a little rushed, and would have liked more "clues" to the conclusion, but still a good story.

Aaron says

While I didn't enjoy this book very much at all as a piece of storytelling, I DID enjoy it as a sort of academic look at the progress of a writer. This is very early Brubaker & Lark (joined by Sean Phillips on colors, who has become Brubaker's best collaborator), pre-Gotham Central, pre-Daredevil, pre-everything, and the greenness shines through bigtime. But, as a writer myself, I found this pretty uplifting. This book is boring. It's slow, it's predictable, it's overwritten. The narrator tells the reader half the plot points without actually showing them, and manages to get out of scrapes constantly via his deus ex machina uncle (I think?) who seems to be able to talk his way out of everything (though we never actually see him do this). The character development is all forced if it exists at all, and the plot unfolds at a snail's pace. But, it's also the work of one of the best comics writers in the business, who has pushed this exact genre to its limits, so seeing that he had to start somewhere is inspiring. He wasn't born writing perfect crime stories. He had to get better at it, and it's cool to see how far he's come.

Mayank Agarwal says

I enjoyed the story and the art, a typical detective crime-solving story in art noir style. Nothing I can complain about but it does feel too generic, it's not that the book is bad, just that it didn't leave an impression on my mind. With about 120 pages most with very few dialogues, the series is a quick read. I am a fan of Ed Brubaker and Michael Lark and it does feel like it's one of their earlier works.

The Deluxe edition of the book has a short story at the end of another case by the same detective based in Chicago around Christmas. I found this one to be better than the main story with its unexpected ending.

Amanda says

"It wasn't a unique tragedy by any means, but it was still a tragedy."

This was a super solid, very well told, self contained, noir story. It had a beginning, middle, and end. I also love seeing how Sean Phillip's art work has evolved from 15 years ago. Highly recommend. Well done Ed Brubaker. Well done.

Josh says

Brubaker... Lark... Phillips...

'Nuf said!

Sud666 says

Ed Brubaker has written an excellent crime noir tale. The first story, the main story arc, is called the "A Little Piece of Goodnight". Jack Herriman is a P.I. One day he is asked to look into a missing girl. Her mother and sister have not heard from her in awhile and hire Jack to find her. What follows is a detective story set in the late 1960s. More than this I will not say, but this was a good detective story with great noir elements.

The PI is annoying to me- he whines, can't/won't use a gun, can't fight and has issues. So in a nutshell-I wouldn't hire this burnout to deliver my pizza let alone investigate a case. But, he's the one that gets a hold of this complicated mess-and no one is telling the whole truth, not even Jack.

There is another small short story at the end called "Gods and Sinners" which is also good (dark though). But it again shows Jack to be a clod. He seems to be over his head in most situations. Still my disdain for the PI doesn't detract from what a fine example of the crime noir genre this is. Brubaker's story is grim and the all-to-human and all-to-fallible characters do a good job of rounding out this crime tale. The artwork is decent and the story is quite good. I did enjoy this tale and I will look forwards to more of Brubaker's crime-based tales. Highly recommended.

Alicia Riley says

Know for his work on Captain America, Scene of the Crime A little piece of Goodnight is one Ed Brubaker along with Michael Lark and Sean Phillips (who would team up with Ed Brubaker repeatly with comics like Fatale) created mystery//nori about Jack Kerrmiman who started with case of missing person turn into case about sex drugs and murder.

William Thomas says

I've been saying it for years- Ed Brubaker couldn't write a superhero book for one of the Big Two to save his life. But let him pump out a pulp for an indie press and its as close to gold as we can hope for.

This is an earlier work of Brubaker and that point is glaringly obvious by how stiff everything is on the page, from the monologue to the dialogue and even the scripted action. Nothing in it is remotely conversational and it all feels very rigid. Even so, it's a damn good read if you're into pulpy books and the art by Larkin isn't too shabby.

There's nothing phenomenal here. You won't get anything quotable out of this book. In a week or so most of it will feel pretty vague except for a few key story points. But it's strong enough to make for an entertaining read, even if it doesn't demand to ever be re-read.

Writing: B-

Art: B

Relstuart says

Very solid effort by Brubaker. This is one of the first longer than one issue things he ever wrote. And it's really good for early work.

Brandon says

Scene of the Crime follows private investigator Jack Herriman as he's tasked with tracking down Maggie Jordan, a missing person in the California Bay Area. Jack's efforts lead him to a commune where it's believed Maggie had last been seen. From there, it isn't long until a trail of clues takes him to a motel in which he locates Maggie alive but heavily under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Once Maggie sobers up, Jack questions her about her disappearance. After some coffee and conversation, Jack drops Maggie off at her room and heads home for the evening. Events take a turn the following morning when Maggie is found murdered, shot to death in her room, with about ten thousand dollars in cold, hard cash.

Despite only being hired to locate her, Jack is not content to let sleeping dogs lie and begins a second investigation, this time into Maggie's murder.

Scene of the Crime was Ed Brubaker's first series with what would become his long-time collaborators Sean Phillips (Incognito, Criminal, The Fade Out) and Michael Lark (Gotham Central, Daredevil) and they clearly quickly developed an undeniable chemistry. The story has plenty of excellent twists and turns that match up perfectly with Lark's gritty art and Phillips deep, dark inking.

There's also a short tale tagged on at the end that details Jack heading to Chicago around Christmas to find a material witness in a court case. I liked this one just as much as the main story, so I'm glad it was included. Also inserted as extras are Ed's notes for pitching the series and an essay that details his love of crime fiction

and what attracted him to the genre.

I've become sort of a Brubaker/Phillips completist and to date, have yet to read something by them I haven't liked. This one is definitely worth a look.
