



## Gotham Central

*Ed Brubaker , Greg Rucka , Michael Lark (Illustrator) , Stefano Gaudiano (Illustrator) , Kano (Illustrator)*

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Gotham City: a town teeming with corrupt cops, ruthless crime lords, petty thieves ... and just a small handful that would oppose them. Grizzled veteran Harvey Bullock, Captain Maggie Sawyer, Detective Renee Montoya and the GCPD are the law force that stands between order and complete anarchy. Gotham's Finest work around the clock to not only keep the world's most psychotic criminals off the street... but also cleaning up the mess left behind by Batman's one-man war on crime.

Written by critically acclaimed authors Ed Brubaker (Captain America) and Greg Rucka (52, Detective Comics), this Eisner Award-winning series follows the detectives of Gotham City's Special Crimes Unit as they navigate against the city's greatest villains--in the shadow of Batman himself. This Eisner Award-winning series is now available in its entirety in this Omnibus edition. Collects issues #1-40.

## Gotham Central Details

Date : Published May 4th 2016 by DC Comics

ISBN : 9781401261924

Author : Ed Brubaker , Greg Rucka , Michael Lark (Illustrator) , Stefano Gaudiano (Illustrator) , Kano (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 968 pages

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

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# From Reader Review Gotham Central for online ebook

## Richard says

You know that Gotham City must be a pretty screwed up place when a story focusing solely on the city's cops is just as compelling as the ones focusing on it's cape-wearing, billionaire vigilante. That's the case in this multiple award winning series by now superstar writers Brubaker and Rucka (splitting the writing duties between the day shift and night shift, and rotating story arcs). The detectives of the GCPD Major Crimes Unit are the stars here, in a constant struggle to navigate the dangerous criminal world of Gotham, all while dealing with sometimes playing second fiddle to a crazy person that runs around in a bat costume, overshadows their efforts, and undermines their authority, leaving them to constantly clean up his damn mess.

I loved seeing the Bat-world from this point of view of regular Joe's just trying to make a living: whether it's seeing the lasting effects that a super-weapon like Mr. Freeze's gun would have on a person, the day-to-day bureaucracy behind who will turn the switch on the Bat-Signal, or seeing how the mad chaos caused by The Joker could put the fear of god in a whole town.

Although I wish all of them got equal attention, all of the characters are enjoyable and well-drawn, lending to further ground the comic book atmosphere. Most of the story arcs were great but the standouts to me were:

**"Soft Targets,"** about the unit trying to hunt down the Joker as he holds Gotham hostage during Christmas.

**"Dead Robin,"** about the investigation of a serial killer dressing up his victims as the Boy Wonder.

**"Corrigan,"** where Det. Renee Montoya must clear her partner's name after evidence is removed from the scene of an officer involved shooting by a corrupt forensics officer

And of course, the award-winning **"Half a Life,"** in which Montoya's life gets turned upside down after being targeted by an unknown stalker.

This series is a must-read, and you don't need to be a Batman fan or reader to really enjoy this. The character is barely in this and only once in a while makes an appearance. It's less of a Batman book and something closer to *NYPD Blue*, *Homicide: Life on the Street*, or even *The Wire*. So get on this quickly, especially if you enjoy police procedurals!

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## Max's Comic Reviews and Lists says

### "Gotham is Damned"

Damn this was a long ass omnibus. I know it's nothing compared to something like Jack Kirby's *Fourth World* or *Big Damn Sin City* but this was the first omnibus I have ever read and I gotta say I'm glad it was this one. Gotham Central was frickin great. Emotionally potent, smart, compelling, and does something I've

always wanted to see. It shows the terrible effect of one of Gotham's villains to someone else besides the Bat Family or Gordon. This is not a perfect run and I will explain them throughout the review.

Our MAIN characters, Marcus Driver, Renee Montoya, Crispus Allen, Romy Chandler, and Josie MacDonald are all fantastic characters you empathize with. Even all the side characters are great like Captain Sawyer, Simon Lippman, Stacy, and the other cops as well. This does bring me too a problem I constantly had while reading this book though. There are A LOT of fucking characters and I never usually could tell them apart unless someone said their name. The art doesn't exactly help because it was also quite inconsistent with the colouring. Especially with the character of Driver. Damn I didn't know if I was looking at Nate, Driver, Vincent, Burke, or whatever. Also besides Montoya, Romy, and Allen the characters are sadly undeveloped. I wish that the book had shown more of their homelife or had made them have more character arcs.

All of the stories are consistently entertaining and incredibly easy to read. I was really surprised how quickly I blitzed through pages sometimes. Something that definitely impressed me was the amount of research Brubaker had to do to make all this police stuff legit. Their phrases, process's, rules, positions ect. All of it was very very well done. And the dialogue is fucking fantastic as well. Sometimes it was a bit to good man. Brubaker captures everything in a normal human conversation brilliantly. Every award pause to extra witty comments to enrich and make every conversation just as entertaining as the next. Something I wish was captured as well as most of everything else was the feel of Gotham. I think more of the villains should have been used especially when Brubaker had freedom to do that I presume.

Batman is the very definition of a BAD-ASS in this book. You really get a feel for how the cops in Gotham feel about him. Just like the last story I reviewed *Batman Prey*, this story also delves deep into the many opinions on Batman. Batman was also kind of terrifying in this story which I think is frickin great. Although their was an argument that happened between Batman and a very important character that never really goes anywhere. Nothing was really built off this interaction. Yes this book is almost 1000 pages and I remembered that. And with this massive page number it did start to drag after about 700 pages but when I was almost finished I did kind of feel sad it was ending. Just before my thoughts on the ending I will say that the best and most standout stories in this *Gotham Central* are

- Half a Life*
- Soft Targets*
- Unresolved*
- Nature*
- Dead Robin*
- Corrigan II*

(Even though in *Half a Life* the ending is reeeeeeally cheesey)

Now if you think that for one second that I am one of those dimwits that hate endings that aren't happy you'd be VERY VERY wrong. My favourite movie scene of all time is the entire last 15 minutes of *The Dark Knight* and one of the best and most shocking endings to a movie I've ever seen is from *Avengers Infinity War*. So ya I can deal with a sad ending as long as it's well written. And this is just not a well written ending. Reason being is that there is no finality or closure for any character besides Renee Montoya, Daria, Crispus Allen, and James Corrigan. Every other character is just cut off. Examples being Driver, Romy Chandler, Montoya's father, Captain Sawyer, Stacy, and EVERYONE ELSE. If you start the book saying that these are very important characters, go through the entire book proving that these are in fact important characters, why not end the book like they are important characters? I just don't understand why this book had to cut off so goddamn quickly.

Micheal Lark's art is something you have to get used to. It starts to fit after a while but again can be quite inconsistent with the look of it's characters making a lot of them blend together. The art style does change a few times but the worst style had to be the art for *On the Freak Beat*. With this being one of the more popular stories in this run, I wish the art wasn't so messy.

In the end this was a great read with characters from my favourite universe you end up loving, extremely realistic dialogue, great mysteries, amazing work by Brubaker in terms of making this like a legit police force and so much more. Again this ain't a perfect book by any means and I listed more problems than I was hoping for. But the good definitely outlays the bad here. **Letter Grade: (A-)**

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### **Lestat says**

Excellent story and plotline. Loved the varied and diverse cast of characters. Some of the stories were better than others (Dead Robins and Corrigan worked better than the Two-Face story - the latter trod the familiar line of women just being 'others', it was quite disappointing).

The cast of characters are believable and vivid. I like that you can relate to all and none at the same time. Honestly, if more books like this were written and were then adapted for Television and Film, the conversation about whitewashing in Hollywood would go away. But alas, no such luck.

The characters are all flawed, yet real. There's a realistic viewpoint throughout the stories, despite the fantastical elements of Batman, the Rogues Gallery, Metahumans, strange chemicals et al. This is the kind of superhero police procedural you can really get behind and enjoy.

It's strange that the series ends on a low, sad point, with no real resolution given. I would have expected it to end with closure for the characters, but the open ending leaves a lot to think about.

After Marvel's 'Civil War: Frontlines', this has got to be my favourite comic series not involving actual superheroes. But again, these are some of the guys who created the 'Winter Soldier' comics, we can hardly expect any less.

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### **Aildiin says**

Really an amazing comic...

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### **Derek says**

Really enjoyed the two stories by Brubaker. Didn't enjoy the third story as much but it was still good.

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### **Rumi Vd says**

4.5 stars

one of the best Batman related comics i have ever read. mix the Wire with the world of Gotham and you have gold in your hands, its 95 percent about the cops and how they deal with super villains like The Joker, but also how they deal with the Batman. its very well executed by two of my favorite writers, Ed Brubaker and Greg Rucka, with perfect artwork by Michael Lark, that compliments the story so well. Batman also Works so much better, in the background making a much bigger impression when you see him, also you really care about the police crew, in there day to day struggles, with crooked cops, deaths, and internal affairs. highlights of this book are hard to pic, but The Joker holding a entire city hostage while random sniping people was really intense. let me stop rambling. just read this one, you wont regret it.

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### **Joe Lenihan says**

This collection is definitely something special. It's so interesting to have a whole series based around the police and how their jobs are challenged and changed in a world where someone like Batman and his many villains exist. I have only recently gotten into Brubaker with this and his Criminal series, but gotta say he's quickly becoming one of my favorite writers in the graphic novel form.

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### **Timothy Shea says**

I loved this book so damn much. It's like law and order but with Batman villains. The characters and scripting are so wonderful. The art is appropriately gritty and dark and the colors make it all come alive. I loved this book from cover to cover.

I'm a little heartbroken that it's over.

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### **Zachary Henez says**

This was amazing. A police procedural in Gotham. Brubaker and Rucka do a great job exploring the inner working of the GCPD. This is more than regular cops trying to enforce the law in a city with super villains. This run is compared to the comic book version of "The Wire" and I have to agree. Worth a read for any DC fans who also love procedurals.

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### **Drucilla says**

I really liked the premise here and each character is developed very well. This series gives readers a peek at a different side of Gotham. Have to admit, I'm not a fan of the art at all. It does have a bit of a noir-ish feel, but I found it very difficult to tell characters apart. For the most part, all the white guys look the same. It also makes the action hard to follow once bullets start flying. The stories here are pretty awesome, though, and a good mix of single issue tales and multi-issue arcs. However, I'm not very happy with the ending. I understand what they were going for, but it just feels too abrupt.

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## **Pavel Simeonov says**

My original plan was to review each book and each little story in that book, but I got lazy after the second book and stopped. If you've read my reviews on the first two - you know I gave them 4 stars. So why do I give this series 5? Two reasons:

1. The series gets progressively better and books 3 and 4 would've probably gotten 5 stars.
2. While some story arcs may be flawed and detract from the score of that particular book, the series as a whole is amazing. Each story maybe 4 or even 3 stars, but the series is fantastic ( I know it sounds weird, but try to understand what I mean. ). The series is amazing and absolutely deserves to be read by you. This omnibus is great, not because of the bonus content ( Of which there is hardly any. ), but because I think the series is a much better experience if read in one go ( Or at least, between short takes. ).

Anyways, read this! It's amazing! The characters are sympathetic and you get invested in them, most of the stories are awesome and creative, the art is pretty good ( Even if some replacement artists are much weaker than Lark ) and the series is very well written. Clever, entertaining and very sad in the end - this series needs to be read.

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## **Blindzider says**

Love it! Similar to some of the best TV police dramas, *Hill Street Blue* and *NYPD Blue*, this series delves into the personal and professional lives of the detectives in the police force. Each member of the squad is developed so that the reader can determine their personality and how well they investigate a case. Like any work place, though, differences in demeanor, attitude and aptitude, creates interpersonal conflicts, making all of them more "real". The stories are grim and gritty, at times horrific, and the ambiance and tone are gloomy which all fits because Gotham is a difficult, dangerous and crazy city. This series is about the detectives themselves, and while Batman does play a part, it really isn't about him, and more about how his presence alters the attitude and perception of the police force. In the end, after completing the entire volume, you'll agree the series was really about one detective in particular.

Michael Lark draws about 3/4 of this book and his work is fantastic. Each character has a distinctive look and his storytelling is masterful. When he leaves the book, his replacements are noticeable but they were able to maintain the style of his art. The color palette is appropriately dull and washed out, with lots of browns, greys and blacks.

Fantastic stuff. There's a cliffhanger at the end, and I'm not sure if another book picks up where this lets off.

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## **Steven Matview says**

Have you ever wondered what "The Wire" would be like if, on top of illegal drug trade, city government and corruption and dealing with dishonesty on the force the officers also had to worry about Batman getting in the way and the Joker's latest super-scheme?

If so, "Gotham Central" is the book for you.

Writers Ed Brubaker on night shift duties and Greg Rucka on day bring together a diverse group that includes longtime Batman supporting characters Renee Montoya and Crispus Allen anchor the series with newcomers like Nate Patton and Romy Chandler. There's also CSI agent/epic jerk Jim Corrigan, a guy you will love to hate.

We get all the classic cop archetypes here – the workaholic, rogue good guy, the corrupt jerk and so on. It's fun seeing these "types" interact in Batman's world. It makes them feel fresh.

The development of Renee Montoya as a character, someone many of us grew up with on "Batman: The Animated Series" is also wonderfully handled.

When a case involves both squads the authors co-write. This dynamic duo is practically peerless when it comes to noir comics. Rucka has “Queen and Country” and "Stumptown" and Brubaker? “Criminal,” “Fatale,” “Fade Out”... need I go on? These guys know noir and bring their A game here.

*Batman approves.*

Michael Lark is the lead artist on the series and his gritty style is the perfect fit. For a book without costumes to differentiate the cast, Lark succeeds at giving everyone a unique look.

The concept is wonderfully simple and perfectly executed. Cops have enough to worry about but when you add in the fact that you and your partner might, say, show up for a routine disturbance call and end up staring down the barrel or Mr. Freeze's freezeray, well, it creates a tense environment.

Another way to look at it is “Marvels” or “Astro City” in the DC Universe – the series puts Batman's world in an entirely new context by viewing it through the eyes of its normal citizens.

My one gripe with this series is at its conclusion, when the book was forced into participating with the company-wide “Infinite Crisis” storyline. The tonal shift is jarring, with the street level cops dealing with some alternate dimension fallout. It would've been nice to see the book go out with something a little more grounded.

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## **Dan Schwent says**

### **Tell me you did not just shoot Batman!**

Gotham Central tells the story of the detectives of the Gotham City Major Crimes Unit.

I read and reviewed Gotham Central in individual collections. This was my second time reading the entire run. It's just as good on the reread.



The cops of Gotham City have it rough, what with the spectre of Batman looming over them. In this massive tome, the cops of the Gotham City Major Crimes Unit have their hands full with Mr. Freeze, The Joker, Poison Ivy, Catwoman, Doctor Alchemy, and others, all the while trying not to involve a certain Dark Knight Detective.

The book tells the tale of the downward spiral of Renee Montoya, outted as a lesbian and disowned by her family, seeking out violence for relief. It's also the tale of Crispus Allen, Marcus Driver, and others. The GCPD tackle super villains, corruption, and a bunch of dead Robins with good old-fashioned police work. It's basically *The Wire* set in Gotham City.

The artwork, particularly Michael Lark's, perfectly suits the tale, painting Gotham in grimy, dark, subdued colors. Brubaker and Rucka weave a realistic tale about what it would be like operating a police department in a world full of super heroes.

Even though I'd read the entire run before, Renee's tale jabbed me right in the feelings quite a few times. It's a gritty road to an unhappy ending. It's a shame there aren't many comics like this but we can still get bombarded with multiple flavors of Justice League and The Avengers every month.

That's about all I want to say. On the second read, *Gotham Central* is still one of the best comics of the 21st century. 5 out of 5 stars.

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## **Brandon Forsyth says**

These days, between the groan-inducing films and the constant brand relaunches, it's hard to remember that DC Comics used to be the premier comic book company in the industry. It's a company that has well and truly lost their way. But it's OK. If Marvel could make it out of the Roger Corman era, there's hope for DC. And I think I know how: the first step is a relaunch of *GOTHAM CENTRAL*, one of the best properties ever to come out of the Batman franchise.

For those unfamiliar with it, *GOTHAM CENTRAL* was an ingeniously-conceived and ultimately short-lived series created by Ed Brubaker and Greg Rucka, two of the best writers of the genre. The hook is deliciously simple: *HOMICIDE: LIFE ON THE STREETS* mixed with Batman. You followed murder police through the streets of Gotham, and you maybe also got a nice cameo from Batman every once in a while (which also had the side benefit of reminding you how awesome a Batman splash page could be). It was a book about law and order, and about what it took from the people on the front lines (the series begins and ends with investigations into murdered police).

What made the series so fantastic was Brubaker and Rucka's commitment to long, ongoing arcs. Ten years ago, they were doing to comics what HBO and Netflix are doing now for TV, and the culture has finally caught up to this format of storytelling. The characters here, especially René Montoya, the gay detective who is the spine of the series, feel incredibly alive, because they are given the time and space to develop, and the dramatic impact of this choice is heightened because of it. It's truly amazing work, and if you like graphic novels at all, or crime procedurals, you owe it to yourself to check them out.

*GOTHAM CENTRAL* only ran for 40 issues, which is partly why I'm so passionate about it - it really feels like it was cut short in its prime. So, DC: you've tried to bring back everything else under the sun (I'm looking at you, *SUICIDE SQUAD*), why not bring this back? The culture is ready for this, and with true crime making such a comeback, there's a rich content vein to mine, too.

I'll expect my job offer in my Goodreads messages ;)

