



Batman Vol. 1: The Court of Owls (The New 52) (Batman Graphic Novel)

By SCOTT SNYDER, Greg Capullo

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#1 New York Times Best Seller!

Following his ground-breaking, critically acclaimed run on Detective Comics, writer Scott Snyder (American Vampire) alongside artist Greg Capullo (Spawn) begins a new era of The Dark Knight with the relaunch of Batman, as a part of DC Comics—The New 52!

After a series of brutal murders rocks Gotham City, Batman begins to realize that perhaps these crimes go far deeper than appearances suggest. As the Caped Crusader begins to unravel this deadly mystery, he discovers a conspiracy going back to his youth and beyond to the origins of the city he's sworn to protect. Could the Court of Owls, once thought to be nothing more than an urban legend, be behind the crime and corruption? Or is Bruce Wayne losing his grip on sanity and falling prey to the pressures of his war on crime?

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Q&A with Scott Snyder and Greg Capullo

Q: What is it like working on a huge initiative like *The New 52*?

Scott Snyder: For me it was exciting because we were given the opportunity to work on characters we love with no restrictions. So if the best story meant making changes to a character's history, there was flexibility to do so. With an initiative this big, seeing how many new readers came to the table to read comics after having lapsed, or never having read one at all, was a real thrill.

Q: What would you say defines the characters you are working on?

SS: For Batman, what defines him is his relentless determination, which is both his most heroic quality and his most pathological. For Swamp Thing, I'd say what defines him is his inability to give up his humanity even when he's at his most monstrous.

Q: What stories or creators inspire you most when working on your character?

SS: For Batman, I have my favorites: *Dark Knight Returns* and *Year One*, but it's hard to only pick a couple because he's a character who grew up alongside me, where the kinds of stories that were being told about him were becoming more sophisticated and complex right as I was coming of age. And now the fun thing is that I have a five-year-old son and I get to fall in love with some of the tamer versions of Batman all over again.

Q: Do you keep up with any of the other New 52 books? Which ones and why?

SS: My favorite of *The New 52* would have to be *Animal Man* by Jeff Lemire, who is also one of my closest friends. And I'm really excited to be a part of everything happening in Gotham between *Batgirl*, *Batman and Robin*, *Nightwing*, and all the great books in our neighborhood. I particularly like *All-Star Western* for its interesting mix of old west and gothic horror.

Q: Has social media and increased direct interaction with DC Comics' fans changed your writing/drawing approach at all in regards to *The New 52*?

SS: It hasn't changed my writing approach; it has made me appreciate how much the fans love these characters. I always knew it, but seeing the responses online through Twitter and Facebook is overwhelming and inspirational. It's like being at a con all the time. I brought my wife to her first con last year and when I asked her what she thought, she said--and I was nervous to hear her response--that she was really moved by how passionate the fans were about these characters, and I feel the same way.

Q: When it comes to writing Batman, are you distinguishing this version from the previous one? Is your approach to the character different than the pre-New 52 Batman?

SS: No, my version of Batman is as different as the version that came before, just like every version is,

because the truth is, the only way to write a character as iconic as Batman is to accept that you're going to have to make him your own, almost as if you were writing fan fiction and no one is ever going to read it. If I started thinking of all the amazing versions of the character that have come before, I would be paralyzed.

Q: You and Jeff Lemire tend to Twitter war each other often. How has this affected you when it comes to writing Swamp Thing and its ties to Animal Man?

SS: For me, our Twitter war is fun because while we insult each other online, usually we are texting each other offline, laughing about the whole thing. Jeff is one of the creators who inspire me the most for his sense of story and his dedication to characters.

Q: Greg, what's it like for you to work on the iconic Bat-Family and Batman villains? You even redesigned the Batman Rogues in the very first issue!

Greg Capullo: Well, everyone has probably heard me say by now that I first drew Batman and Robin when I was four years old. My mom has it somewhere. It was crude, but clear who they were, so to be drawing them professionally all these years later is really cool. I can tell you that I'm super excited to be drawing Batman and, though I admit to being a bit jaded, I was never so nervous (except for maybe my first work for Marvel) as when DC asked me to relaunch Batman from issue no. 1. Terrifying, is what it was. Especially being that I was aware of some of the fear out there that I was going to be turning Batman into Spawn, as I'd worked for years on that book. I really felt like an underdog. I was always confident (after the nerves settled) that those fears would be replaced with joy. I mean, I love Batman the same as you. I don't want to mess him up!

The Rogues, Ah, the Rogues. Well, they weren't really redesigns. I guess to some extent they were. But, they were locked up in Arkham. So, it was more like: what ways might a prisoner come up with to maintain his or her persona behind bars? That became the question. Speaking of, how about the Riddler's mohawk? HA! I think some Batman fans actually wanted to lynch me for giving him that! The Joker was the closest I got to a redesign. I'd love to get my hands on him for a story arc!

Q: *The New 52* introduces a younger universe of heroes and I think your art very much reflects that. Is this a conscious thought when you're working on the title?

GC: Absolutely. I was given the characters' ages up front. Some complained that I draw Bruce and the family too young. The fact is I'm drawing them exactly as the powers that be want them to appear. As a professional, you want to give the client, in this case DC, what it is they're looking for. However, I listen very closely to the fans. After all, without them, we're nowhere. I've tried to make subtle changes based on what some of them were saying. My hope at the end of the day is that everyone will be pleased, even though that is completely impossible. Still, I'll always try. Now, I'm off to the Bat Cave to draw me some more Batman!

Review

“A+. The hero's got personality (and is unafraid to release a quip as sharp as a Batarang), a horde of supervillains, gumption to spare and a whole host of high-tech gadgetry to suitably impress longtime fans and those new to the Dark Knight.”

—*USA Today*

“This is one of the best comics of the week.”

—*The New York Times*

“[Writer Scott Snyder] pulls from the oldest aspects of the Batman myth, combines it with sinister-comic elements from the series’ best period, and gives the whole thing **terrific** forward-spin by setting up an honest-to-gosh mystery for Batman to solve.”

—*Entertainment Weekly*

“Scott Snyder, already the company’s greatest asset over the last four weeks, spins a stack of plates immediately.... Too often Batman comics focus heavily on the hero persona ... Snyder sets up equal amounts of conflict for both Wayne’s public and private personas.”

—*Time Out Chicago*

“**A stunning debut....** Snyder knows these characters, sets up an intriguing mystery, and delivers some action that Capullo realizes stunningly. This is definitely in the top rank of the revamp.

—*The Onion AV Club*

“**Hits all the right notes.** I enjoyed the living hell out of this.” —*io9*

“Bruce Wayne is a **badass**. The end.”

—*IGN, 9.5 Rating*

“**A+.** **Incredible** tone and enough twists, turns and character appearances to keep us hooked.”

—*UGO*

“There’s enough here, kept at a high enough level to make it interesting and viable across media and digestible enough for even the most novice DC Universe reader.... **Score one for DC and score one for Snyder and Capullo in finding a new fan.**”

—*Comic Book Resources*

About the Author

Scott Snyder is the bestselling and award-winning writer of *Batman*, *American Vampire* and *Swamp Thing* as well as the short story collection *Voodoo Heart*. He teaches writing at Sarah Lawrence College, NYU and Columbia University. He lives on Long Island with his wife, Jeanie, and his sons Jack and Emmett. He is a dedicated and un-ironic fan of Elvis Presley.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jack Baldwin:

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