



The Sheriff of Babylon, Volume 2: Pow. Pow. Pow.

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The War on Terror still rages in Baghdad as cop-turned-military consultant Chris Henry must solve a deadly murder. He is forced to align himself with Nassir, the last policeman in Baghdad to try to unravel the bloody mystery. While Henry and Nassir search for answers there are forces in the shadows pulling strings that these men don't even know they're tied to.

The series continues with the wonderfully brutal script by Tom King (*Grayson, The Omega Men*) and devastatingly beautiful art by Mitch Gerads (*The Punisher, The Activity*), this wartime crime drama takes you deep into the underworld of the city of Baghdad in one of the most tumultuous times in modern history.

Collecting: *The Sheriff of Babylon 7-12*

The Sheriff of Babylon, Volume 2: Pow. Pow. Pow. Details

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From Reader Review The Sheriff of Babylon, Volume 2: Pow. Pow. Pow. for online ebook

47Time says

The second part of the story dedicates a great deal more time to explore religion. The long, tense scene at the end reveals the event that started it all and almost names the party behind it all.

A man named Franklin puts Chris, Saffiya and Nassir in contact with Jim from Ops who promises to help get to Abu Rahim. Jim's people schedule a meeting between Rahim, Saffiya and Nassir. Rahim shows up with a bomb strapped to his chest while Chris and the Americans anxiously await Saffiya's signal to move in.

(view spoiler)

Nick says

This wrap up to "season 1" of Sheriff was profound in the sense that it ends much like it started. In fact it ends almost exactly where it started. Violence, chocolate, and a body dumped in the same spot. The cyclical nature of the character arcs and violence in the name of vengeance being book ends is a perfect theme when exploring Iraq.

Sometimes you just shake your head and smile at how terrifying and sad, yet beautiful and full of life it is. The people aren't heroes here they are just making sense of a senseless war.

Frédéric says

Shady conclusion, of a shady intrigue, in a shady country, during a shady war.
Good guys, bad guys? Morals? Responsibility?
Who knows? Does anyone care but the victims?
And who are the victims exactly?

If you like clear-cut stories with uni-dimensional characters and definite morals you might want to NOT read this book where gray is declined in way more than fifty shades.

Is it a thriller? Is it *noir*? Is it military fiction? A little bit of all that and more.

One of the very best fiction in comics I've read these last months. The King/Gerads team rock and gives us a brilliant fiction told with an amazing sense of storytelling.

James DeSantis says

I needed a few moments after I finished this one. Goddamn it King, can you write something that sucks please?

So yeah. After volume 1 I took a long time to read this because it's only 2 volumes and wanted to stretch it out. Well damn I read this in one sitting in 25 minutes. I was GLUED to my seat reading this amazing book. So what happens? Well our three main characters are all coming together to take down the "big bad terrorist" but is he really that? Who really is the bad guy? Who deserves to die and live? What is a HERO? So many questions begin to pile up, and those aren't simple answers you can give, and by the end you basically have NO action scenes and yet one of the most enthralling and nail biting books I read in a LONG time.

Good: The dialog. Oh sweet Christmas (watching Luke Cage Season 2 right now) it's so damn good. It's done in a realistic way yet the questions they ask, it's hard hitting, and the way the character's don't have that "I'm the good guy here" vibe is perfect. The art is fantastic, and works on so many levels, and let me just say the ending...damn it. I fucking loved it. Everything about this, pacing and plotting, is perfect.

Bad: Not a damn thing.

This is a classic. While I loved volume 1, it was volume 2 that solidified it for me. This is a scary book to read because of how much gray is here, but it's well worth it. You want a powerful, hard hitting, and thought provoking book? Look no further than this.

Rory Wilding says

Inspired by his time in Iraq as an officer for the CIA, writer Tom King's Vertigo title *The Sheriff of Babylon* shows a graphical and compelling depiction of Iraq in the aftermath of the 2003 American invasion. During the first volume, it sets up a compelling murder mystery that unites three authoritative figures, each from a completely different background, to collaborate with one another to investigate.

Following a tragic incident that shakes up the central trio, they have tracked down the man responsible for the murder of one of military consultant Christopher Henry's recruits for the post-Saddam police: the lethal insurgent commander Abu Rahim. As the investigation approaches its climax, Chris, Nassie and Sofia confront the demons from their respected countries.

Although there have been plenty of conspiracy stories about the lies and deception from the opposing sides during the Iraq War, what makes this tale unique is the dynamic between the three protagonists, who may not have the same skin, come from different countries and work for governments whose agendas frequently change, these are three human beings who have seen the horrors of war and try to prevent any more people from dying, whilst they confront the enemy within.

Amidst the strong violence from torture to military raids (stunningly and grittily drawn by Mitch Gerads), this book is primarily wordplay and in fact the most compelling sequence is not the climax, which may be intense, but a conversation between the eponymous "sheriff" Chris and a soldier who was directly involved the aforementioned tragedy that concluded the first volume. What's great about this sequence is how this soldier shows a lack of responsibility towards his violent actions, which leads to him telling a story to Chris

about an operation that doesn't go down well due to misgiven information and how they resolved by handing the wrong-doer to the wolves. While all of this is going on, you can see Chris boiling up at the sight of this man, and how his emotions might get in the way of his profession.

As always with these types of stories, no one comes out as the victor as the previous volume began with the "BANG. BANG. BANG", this ends the story with the "POW. POW. POW" as our trio unified to commit an act of conflicting justice. If Tom King and Mitch Gerads can bring out twelve brilliant issues about the Iraq War, it'll be interesting to see this dynamic duo will do for Jack Kirby's *Fourth World* in twelve issues.

Kenny says

War fiction does not get better than this.

Ill D says

I wasn't impressed with the first one. So I forwent an initial review to read the sequel. (Uncharacteristically) Charitable (of me) right? Unsurprisingly enough, the same problems that plagued the predecessor are amplified here to dismal effect. Whoop-de-fugging-do.

Copying a similar typography (in more ways than one) to Lucas' atrocious Episode I, although centered around a small group of people, there is still no main character. Without a central focus, things are happening within and without this panoply of peoples that includes an American CIA employee, a female faux-love interest (community organizer?), and something of a local low-level warlord/strongman who are all sucked into the jumbled mess that was/is the Iraq War. While these revolutions around this cluster (which include the American Department of Defense and the Indigenous) very well might reflect the accuracy of the intrinsic chaos of war, this does little to ground us in something stable to connect us to the story (let alone make sense of it all).

Untethered from anything resembling the firmness of a terra firma, the story itself is Convolution: The Next Generation. Apparently sampling Aaron/Guera's experimental temporal distortions in *Scalped* and Moore/Gibbon's uniform 9 panel arrangement in *Watchmen*, the location of derived material is transparent (and obvious) but the story itself could be anything but. With time chopped up beyond belief, a lot of things are happening contemporaneously or not-so-contemporaneously (in weirdly distorted (and usually pointless) recollections (all punctuated with insipid tribal aphorisms and fables)) that do little to tie the story together. The formula is simple and yawn-inducingly repetitive. Things happen, bodies become perforated with bullets and large snippets of dialogue and interrogations increase the internal gunk to a level around 11.

While ostensibly the plot can be summarized as, "...an American cop-turned-military consultant as he attempts to solve the murder of one of his Iraqi police recruits" (according to Wikipedia) I find it incredibly hard to believe that anyone could arrive at that same conclusion. No matter how well developed your reading/critical thinking faculties are, its utterly mind-boggling anyone could sum up the story as such once the end of the road is reached here.

With little of the way of background stories (that could've helped forge an emotional connection to the actors within), anecdotal intros (that could've helped elucidate the author's reason for writing this tale), or even a simple dramatis personae (which would've done wonders to help us keep track of who's who and what's what) The Sherriff of Babylon is an awfully complex series that is as baffling as it is ultimately boring.

Without any connection at all to the peoples within, the themes themselves are weirdly unrepresentative as well. I. It's definitely not propaganda because the American forces within aren't presented in a light that is the least bit flattering. II. The local insurgents/revolutionaries/terrorists aren't glorified either since they are presented as primitive morons trapped in the tribal rivalries that clearly pre-existed the invasion (which have only been exacerbated). Without anyone to love, hate or commiserate, anything approaching a theme is non-existent. And even when war is presented as the shit-storm it certainly always has been, the ending feels as unheroic and empty as the story itself.

Disdain all the Kool-Aid drinkers here, Sheriff of Babylon is the Sheriff of Shit.

11811 (Eleven) says

Emotionally exhausting. I need a Xanax or something. That was intense.

Steve says

I received this from Edelweiss and DC Comics in exchange for an honest review.

More of the same as in volume 1: cynical, depressing, realism. The hardest part about this plot isn't that it's set in Iraq in 2004, as the Iraqis are preparing take over sovereignty. It's the disturbing attitudes of the Americans in charge, completely self-centered, failing to take responsibility for their actions, and completely careless about how the Iraqis are treated. Everything, and I mean everything, that doesn't go according to plan is collateral damage. And that's disturbing to me, because it's so close to the truth.

I was at CENTCOM during this time, deployed to help establish the handover of power. I saw this attitude every day, even though I was thousands of miles away in Tampa, Florida. It's like living in the classic book, *The Ugly American* with Americans forgetting that they are the foreigners.

I will keep reading this series, but I probably won't like it very much.

Jennifer says

The story and storytelling of this series are still fantastic. The lies, moral ambiguity, and surrealism/absurdity of I enjoyed so much in the first volume, are present in spades in this volume as well. This series is definitely a cut above the rest of many of the titles out right now.

I have to admit, though, that I wasn't as much a fan of the art in this one as the first volume. In general, I like the "cinematic" (as the *Washington Post* quote on the cover says) art style, especially the way in which both Tom King and Mitch Gerads take advantage of graphic storytelling's ability to tell stories in parallel that sometimes elevates novel-to-film adaptations. The muted noir color palettes for the different locations and situations also makes it effortless for the reader to intuitively know when there is a location/situation switch, which also communicates the tone of the different scenes, while retaining a unity in the look of the book. However, although I appreciated the minute changes in facial expression, there were just too many close-up facial expression panels and layouts. Instead of feeling intense to me, it felt lazy, like Gerads was actually

too "cinematic" in the sense that some parts felt too much like a storyboard for a TV series or movie (who knows, maybe one is in the works), rather than layouts that were taking advantage of the potential of graphic storytelling.

I did LOVE the collage, urban/graffiti art reminiscent covers by John Paul Leon.

P.S. I wish that Tom King's Batman ad half as much "it" as this series.

Chad Jordahl says

Outstanding in all respects

Craig says

Great artwork, though the spare storytelling has left me at something of a loss...not sure exactly what happened.

Donovan says

"I am **shock** and **awe**."

That was fucking crazy.

I know the double cross isn't new. But it seems pretty damn realistic here in war torn Iraq. As Tom King is ex-CIA, I can only imagine what he saw. And what he wrote is crazy intense and graphic.

It's a tangled web. Sofia, Nassir, and Chris are the trifecta main characters. Diplomat, ex-cop, and military. In a nutshell: kidnapping, truth seeking, and revenge, involving military contractors, CIA, and extremism. That's all I can say to avoid spoilers.

Mitch Gerads' artwork is excellent, perfect for the dark tone. Gritty and sketchy. And damn, that violence though. Blood, gore, action. Brilliant work.

King and Gerads are "killing" it. I'm not sure how long the story can keep going, but I'm excited to read it as long as it does. Gritty, dramatic, and heartbreaking. Don't miss this one.

David Schaafsma says

Wow. Former cop and military consultant Chris Henry is hired to solve a murder in Baghdad. And from the first, this proves to be an absolutely brutal task. Former CIA King would seem to know the territory, and as a storyteller is able to convey well the layers of complexity. Who is responsible? What is the right thing to do?

We are in a kind of chaos in 2003 Iraq, one we who were not there have barely read anything about on this level.

Chris is joined as main characters in this one by Nassir, a shady ex-cop, and Sofia, a smart and tough diplomat. We alternate their stories throughout. There's an interrogation scene that is as tough to read as it is amazing in getting at the moral complexities and near-impossibility of truth-telling here. There's also a meeting with suspected terrorist Abu Rahim that is powerful and complicated. How can we know what is going on? How can we know the truth? How can we know what to do here?

Mitch Gerads' artwork is excellent, real and sketchy. Why is it history can't be written and depicted with this kind of gritty honesty? This story succeeds because it preserves all the complexities. Everyone is flawed. A great series; hard to read and see in places, but if you want to know "how it was," this is one team's way of showing you. This series has to be on a list of the Literature of the Iraq Wars.

Matthew Quann says

My review here is for both the first and second volumes of King's *The Sheriff of Babylon* as I consider them a single story (obnoxiously) separated over two collections.

Tom King has been the most consistently enjoyable new mainstream comics author I've read this year. His *Vision* series was a welcome departure from classic superhero tropes and structure, while *The Omega Men* was a much appreciated adventure into the horrors of war as seen through space opera. There's no doubt that King has lofty aspirations, and so far he's got a perfect batting average! I decided to try *The Sheriff of Babylon* just to get a hold of more King, but this early Vertigo series is perhaps his most accomplished.

From the get-go, you know that King has a great sense of pacing, structure, and doesn't mind messing around with how panels are laid out. The story, set in 2004 Baghdad after the American invasion, follows US consultant Chris Henry as he tries to train the new Baghdadi police force. When one of his trainees is found murdered in the "green zone", Henry becomes involved in the web of parties potentially involved. In his quest joins local cop Nassir and political mover-and-shaker, Sofia.

All of the details within the book are bolstered by King's credentials as former CIA operative. The small details in the story's telling give it a realistic depth that I've found many of these narratives often lack. There's as much time given to the populace of Baghdad in small moments as there is to the larger mystery. Mitch Gerads is also a terrific choice as artist as his realist lines and colouring help to bring Baghdad to life.

One of the things I love about King's plots is that they rarely offer easy answers. Characters are irrevocably changed by the narrative's end, and the challenges throughout the story have brought them toward that core alteration. I really enjoyed the moral ambiguity presented in the final chapter and the rest of the tangly bits of questionable decision making on the way to the end. Overall, this one gets a thumbs up!
