



The Fade Out: Act Three

Ed Brubaker (Writer) , Sean Phillips (Artist, Letterer) , Elizabeth Breitweiser (Colourist)

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The final act of the bestselling Hollywood noir comic from the award-winning team of Brubaker and Phillips!

Collecting: *The Fade Out* 9-12

The Fade Out: Act Three Details

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Author : Ed Brubaker (Writer) , Sean Phillips (Artist, Letterer) , Elizabeth Breitweiser (Colourist)

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From Reader Review The Fade Out: Act Three for online ebook

Sesana says

Good Lord, this was dark. And to be fair, it has been from the beginning. This has always been a grim look at the seedy side of Hollywood glamor, and the ending was entirely in keeping with that. Satisfying? Well, maybe not, but I sincerely doubt that Brubaker meant it to be so. I think he meant it to be depressing, and he certainly succeeded on that point.

He also succeeded with developing his characters, even the victim who spends the vast majority of the series dead. There are a lot of characters in this series, actually, and Brubaker did a fine job of juggling and balancing them. There are forks and false starts all over the place, of course, but they remain more than interesting enough as divergences.

Phillips's art remains top notch, and perfectly suited to the story. Brubaker and Phillips are a perfect noir comic team, and I don't doubt that they'll continue to successfully return to the genre.

Suvi says

Ok, first: the last issue's article about Cary Grant's love affair with acid is fucking hilarious. Good Housekeeping let him describe his experiences? Unreal. I definitely won't be telling my mom about Grant taking a dump on his doctor's floor, that'll crush her dreams.

Anyway.

The Fade Out. The ending gave me shivers. It's perfect, because in the tradition of the best film noirs, it's not hopeful and doesn't wrap everything into a tidy little bow. It leaves you unsure of what will happen next, yet sure that whatever will occur, it won't be anything nice. The lingering doom is upon every character, and some it reaches far quicker than others.

The art deserves yet another mention, because the colors and linework are just amazing. The lights of L.A., whether natural or electricity, either pop from the background or loom ominously through a window into a dark and musty room.

The movie industry is full of tragic fates, and I feel sad that there's plenty of material where you can take inspiration from. I wonder what secrets have never come to light? When you know something about what went on behind the scenes, watching even the most sweet and saccharine black and white movie from the golden age of Hollywood makes you a bit of melancholic.

Roxanne says

I've really enjoyed this whole series and was actually surprised to hear that it was ending at twelve issues so

i'm sad to see the end of it. Usually i hate noir, i hate mysteries i'm far too impatient i just wanna know who did what and how. So if you're the same as that you'll actually probably enjoy this because it doesn't string you along, it's not overly convoluted, there are a lot of characters but not to the point where you're like well who the hell is this guy and by the end it does give you an appreciation of the genre.

This volume begins to wind the story down, that's not to say there's no shocking moments because obviously there is, but it wraps up the story in a way that is believable, it made sense and it was probably the best way to end the series, some may be disappointed if they wanted a huge shock reveal ending like maybe maya did it or you know the butler did. Also just how grim the characters were really added to the story, Charlie is just a complete trash bag you're with him from the start trying to find out who killed this actress but by volume three you're just like charlie get your shit together, just get all of your shit and get it together.

Overall definitely worth picking up especially now it has finished, they're such quick reads and the artwork is amazing and yup you're missing out otherwise.

Jan Philipzig says

The Fade Out is a meticulously researched, seedy yet stylish period piece set in post-WWII Hollywood. At the time, a small number of studios dominated the American film industry, producing movies on their own lots with the help of creative long-term personnel that usually also lived on the lot. Like all closed systems, the so-called studio system was a breeding ground for corruption and exploitation, and *The Fade Out* is all about one studio's dirty underbelly. It is arguably Brubaker's most tightly scripted and most fully realized story to date: a must-read for Brubaker-Phillips fans and film buffs alike, and especially for anybody with a passion for film noir!

Tristan says

Now this is vintage noir *pur sang*. Dark, nihilistic, with a fitting yet bleak ending. The 1940's Hollywood setting is just icing on the cake for a film buff like me. This spectacular miniseries should be granted the oversized deluxe edition treatment with tons of bonus material. It truly deserves that. Get on it Image, will you?

Brubaker and Phillips both are bringing their A game, aided by the gorgeous colouring of Breitweiser. A lot of time, love and effort went into this book, and it clearly shows. Let's hope projects like these won't be a rarity in the future. Highly recommended.

Andrew says

A satisfying conclusion to a very interesting crime novel. I loved the characters and the setting. I'm not typically interested in crime/noir novels - that is unless Brubaker's name is on the cover. He's very entertaining. This was perhaps the least visceral I've read from him. Its not action based - the main characters are not hardened criminals or crime fighters. I think Brubaker shows his writing chops here more than any other work I've read by him - not to suggest that he blindly relies on action in his other books.

Lauren Stoolfire says

The Fade Out, Vol. 3: Act Three by Ed Brubaker wraps up this great graphic novel series in perfect (and depressing) noir fashion. If you love classic film noir, the behind-the-scenes of classic Hollywood, and a compelling mystery, you'll enjoy this superbly crafted graphic novel series by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips.

Matthew says

Warning: The ending was complete and utter crap for me!

For *Act Three* this should have gotten a perfect 5 stars and win the title as one of the best Graphic novel miniseries of 2016 in my humble opinion and I was already looking into buying the deluxe edition that includes all the volumes in one book but now I have my doubts. The last 5 pages went into the garbage and destroyed my faith with it came to this murder mystery. I have barely read anything or seen films that deal with the Noir genre so I do not know if these type of endings are the norm with it comes to this genre but I was thoroughly disappointed enough to drop my rating to a 3 or lower but I decided to rate it 4 because until those last few pages *Fade Out* was close to perfection.

Act 3 begins right after where Act 2 ends which is Charlie putting the pieces together and finds that Gil was blackmailing the heads of the studio and all hell is breaking loose. The beginning deals with a flashback with Charlie's past and you find out that he was married once and how WWII completely changed him as a human being and still suffers with PTSD till this day. Then flash forward we see Charlie beating the living daylights out of Gil without letting him explain himself. When he finally calms down Gil tells him that he was not blackmailing them instead making them scared and see where their actions would lead them.

Sure enough all the heads of Victory Street Pictures are running all over the place and dumping valuable information which Gil was lucky to recover and they discover a photograph that shows Al Kemp having sex with minors at the height of his prime and for Gil & Charlie that means there is a possibility that Valeria was molested or rape when she was a child star and now certain memories are starting to resonate with Charlie.

Both Gil and Charlie decide to embark on this wild goose chase to become the detectives of this mystery and finally put an end to the heart ache that surrounds Valeria's murder. They take a trip to Al Kemp's place and discover it to be deserted and Al Kemp meeting his marker in the bath tube. Charlie visits Phil Brodsky's office who is the Studio Security Chief aka the man who covers up the dirty secrets of Victory Street Pictures to see what Phil has on Valeria and discovers that Dottie knows more about what is going around at the lot than the general public.

Charlie connects two-and-two together and gets the general idea of who kills Valeria but it is not a guaranteed deal and while they were at Al Kemp ranch they find other intruders quite possibly FBI agents and Gil gets caught in the crossfire and sadly dies. I am not heartbroken by his death and Charlie makes the perfect point when it comes to Gil's wife that she was waiting for the inevitable and is finally relieved that he

is gone. Not because he was a bad man or anything but its gotten to the point of this dysfunctional relationship that you just want to put an end to the misery and move on with your life and I agree with that feeling over Gil. His character suffers so much bad luck that you begin to start having pity for the man but then you discover that he never learns his lesson and while his intentions are not awful, he is the one that landed himself and Charlie into the predicament of being slaves for Victory Street Pictures.

Charlie's relationship with Maya is a fantasy and the big reveal of her true identity flew right over my head when it was clearly obvious from the beginning and throughout major scenes in this book. I found it interesting how the writers shifted perspective on Phil Brodsky because he is portrayed as this awful man (which he still is) but when he helps Charlie to cover up his mess and these other dilemmas, the narrative shifts from someone who is portrayed as a villain to one arrogant guy who is paid major bucks to cover up the messes of others and you cannot blame him if he leaves his conscious at home in order to dig down and get dirty to resolve the mistakes of his bosses and clients.

*****BEWARE SPOILERS DOWN BELOW BEWARE SPOILERS DOWN BELOW BEWARE*****

We never get the guaranteed death of Valeria but you can draw your conclusions by the revelations of Phil Brodsky's predication about her death to Charlie. Basically she was choked to death by the FBI agent who was disguised as a Producer and the death was an impulse. Valeria refused to reveal anybody who was affiliated with a communist essentially she was protecting Charlie and Gil and the agent believed by scaring and torturing her that she would give in and reveal the sources but she never did and the price to pay was her life. Since he is an agent and undercover in this major operation her murder gets scooped under the rug and nothing to avenge for. When Charlie connects the dots it is already too late because the man is vanished and never to be traced meaning that Valeria died in vain and with nothing to show for it.

Charlie tries to move on with his life and we see some progress for our characters but for the most part it ends on a depressing note. I would love to see a flash forward and witness what happens to the characters, how they die, and if they were truly successful or only got their 15 mins of fame. I love how this series incorporates real famous celebrities like Humphrey Bogart, Clark Gable, and countless others because it makes the story feel real. Even though it is a sad murder I would love for this case to be real and see the inner workings of these characters and their impact on pop culture.

****END OF SPOILERS****

I believe the ending was crap because of the way I believe and think. I always believe justice wins in the end whether it be in the real world or in the afterlife and when that does not happen especially in this series that I invested myself in it gets me mad because I wanted Valeria's death to be meaningful and a major surprise for the characters. It was not a surprise at all because it was referenced countless times throughout the three volumes and while it was a bit obvious I still did not want to believe it was him.

I hope Ed Brubaker invest in these characters again and we get more action with Charlie and the gang especially the sacrifices these characters made to be famous and deal with Old Hollywood as owners, directors, and countless other people in the higher ups of film making abused and tortured actors to act like God and how they are untouchable because they control the media, the directors, writers, actors, and their crew. In the end this is a wonderful graphic series to invest yourself in for a couple of hours and I highly recommend everyone to read it. A bit graphic in the illustrations department but worth every penny. Until next time...

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Any golden dreams about Classic Hollywood I have are gone. Not that that I had many, but the ones that were there have floated away, evanescent as air. This series is well-written and beautifully illustrated, but it's dark and cynical and sad. Charlie is a hero who is deeply flawed, and he is fighting a losing battle against the corruption that has consumed the lives of those around him, and is slowly rotting him inside. With his PTSD, he's already got a lot of baggage. More information is revealed about his troubled relationship with his writing partner, Gil, and that whole situation is so messed up right there. But that's not the most messed up thing about this story, by far.

Another cliffhanger ending that leaves me wondering where this story will go next.

David Schaafsma says

I picked this up today and read it through without moving from my chair. It's the concluding volume of a three volume story. I'm calling it now the best series from the best comics crime duo, Brubaker and Phillips, and give Elizabeth Breitweiser credit for the Golden Age coloring. Saying it is the pinnacle of their work so far is saying a lot--check out Criminal as just one other example of a terrific noir crime series.

This one's a period piece, a send up of Hollywood with cameos from various famous people. There's a dead actress, there's cover-ups, and two unlikely people decide to figure out what happened: A screenplay writer and his blacklisted screenwriter friend, who in the great noir tradition smoke and drink and bumble their way to the edge of disaster after disaster.

It's not super-violent as some of Brubaker's work can be; it feels more thoughtful and even more carefully crafted than usual. It has corruption and greed and secrets John Q. Public will never know about, and one of the most successfully bleakest and most fitting noir endings you will want to read. I say yeah!

Edwin says

The darkest, grimmest and most profane noir I've read in a while. As expected, everything goes to hell in these final issues and the creators do a great job pulling it all together to a satisfying ending. The ambitious work covers a lot of bases, alcoholism, sexual abuse, child molestation and post traumatic stress all in a well researched 1948 Hollywood setting. Brubaker, Phillips, and Breitweiser make a superb creative team. Great stuff.

HFK says

What an depressive but very much glorious ending to this three volume series that really did respect all the tiny details of solid, addictive noir while offering it from a deliciously battered silver plate that is everything Hollywood and its whispering rumors of the ever changing history of time.

Dave says

The Final Fade

Volume three is the final volume in the Fade Out trilogy, a dark noir-inspired stroll through forties Hollywood with blacklisting, Corpses, Fake marriages, kinkiness, amnesia attacks, studio toughs, cover-ups, and twists and turns.

Liv (???) says

Eh.

Not really a satisfying ending.

Sam Quixote says

“The past is a knife...”

Though Charlie and Gil edge ever nearer to uncovering the murderer of starlet Val Sommers, with the studios owning the papers and the police, any attempt at revealing the truth would be futile and mean destruction for the pair – unless they destroy each other first!

Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips’ The Fade Out comes to a brilliant but very dark and depressing end with this third and final volume. The essence of nihilism hangs heavy over this book’s narrative: two broken men living a lie doggedly pursue the murder of a troubled young woman in an incredibly corrupt business run by people who did whatever they wanted without consequence. Death, sexual abuse, death, child molestation, death, alcoholism, death, movies, death – don’t read The Fade Out if you’re looking to cheer yourself up!

While I found the flashback-y start to be a bit slow, things quickly ramped up afterwards and ended strongly. But though The Fade Out is a very disturbing story of Golden Age Hollywoodland and all the hidden misery behind the glitz’n’glamour, it’s an enormously interesting tale done in Brubaker and Phillips’ signature noir style. The characters are all falling apart but their unhappiness only makes things more compelling. We see more of Charlie and Val from before (to remind us why Charlie’s so determined) and their scenes of doomed romance are exquisitely bittersweet - Brubaker has the noir tone/writing style down COLD!

It’s weird how in murder mysteries more often than not after finishing one the reader tends to remember the murder victim rather than the murderer. I think that’s because the enjoyment comes from the investigation rather than the solution as well as the bulk of the story being focused on the former with the latter dropped in only at the end. That’s why I’m more forgiving of The Fade Out’s finale – we find out who killed Val Sommers but the identity’s not shocking because the murderer’s only been on the fringes of the story. But getting to the solution has been a blast and that’s the real mark of a quality whodunit.

That said, the murder mystery has been emblematic of what The Fade Out is really about: the sleaze and corruption of old Hollywood, and Brubaker and Phillips have illustrated this thoroughly and artistically.

Those last couple pages are great but so tragic for poor Charlie – the grim legacy of the movie culture for those who survive within it.

Sean Phillips' artwork is beautiful from the gorgeous painted covers to the uncanny character expressions - Maya, the starlet who replaced Val, has some striking panels as we see her heart breaking behind Charlie's back caught within her face. Elizabeth Breitweiser's colours are gorgeous, bringing the captivating lights of Hollywoodland to life as well as the murky depths of its depravity.

The Fade Out has been a fantastic limited series from one of the finest creative comics teams of all time, Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips, and arguably their best collaboration to date. The third volume ends the story well and, if you've enjoyed the series so far, it won't let you down - recommended to all noir/murder mystery fans with an interest in the Golden Age of Hollywood.

Brubaker and Phillips' next project sees them returning to their most famous series, Criminal, for a one-shot similar to last year's special. Out in April, the '70s-set issue features.... a Kung-Fu werewolf?! Take my money right now!!
