



Blitz

Ken Bruen

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The South East London police squad are down and out: Detective Sergeant Brant is in hot water for assaulting a police shrink, Chief Inspector Roberts' wife has died in a horrific car accident, and WPC Falls is still figuring out how to navigate her job as a black female investigator in the notorious unit. When a serial killer takes his show on the road, things get worse for all three. Nicknamed "The Blitz" by the rabid London media, the killer is aiming for tabloid immortality by killing cops in different beats around the city.

Blitz represents Ken Bruen at his edgy, lethal, and sharp-tongued best, and will reward fans of his Jack Taylor novels with another astonishing, smart, and brutal vision from a writer rapidly becoming one of the best of his generation.

Blitz Details

Date : Published September 5th 2000 by St. Martins Press-3pl

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Author : Ken Bruen

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From Reader Review Blitz for online ebook

Sarah says

this is actually fourth in the series but it's the first one I read. I am really looking forward to reading the next 3 and will soon. I found the cop's lives to be really fascinating, the characters very interesting (some likable, some not) and this book focuses more on the cops themselves than the crime. Toward the ending it got a little unrealistic, but I liked this book a lot anyway.

Sylvia says

I'm not sure I like this book. I'm not even sure I'm *supposed* to like the book, what with the assholes for characters and the rather thin plot.

But oh, Brant and Nash - I would have loved to read more about their blossoming... work relationship ;)

Kathy Davie says

Fourth in the Inspector Brant suspense series set in London and revolving around Sergeant Tom Brant, a corrupt, brutal cop with a heart.

My Take

Oh, I was so hoping the opening scene with the shrink would be Brant! It's one of the things I like about Brant---he has no compunctions about destroying self-righteous know-it-alls like Dr. Hazel. Then there's Falls' treatment of a group therapy leader...oh yeah....

It's an interesting mix of cops helping each other and, metaphorically, beating on each other. Bruen writes such a realistic "day in the life" for cops that you can't help but feel the brutality, the frustration, and the negativity even as Bruen slides in bits of hope.

Very unexpectedly Brant and Nash seem to be developing a friendship??? As a result of their tenuous friendship, Nash asks Brant to come to his dad's wedding---hoo boy! It's pretty obvious that Brant considers Nash a friend when you read his putdown of Nash, Senior. Nelson's concern for Falls also seems to be hopeful, eventually.

It's fascinating how beautifully Bruen writes a scene, a story with so few words and yet totally conveys the atmosphere, the slogging frustrations, the despairing hopes. The truths.

The Story

Brant puts the department shrink in his place even as Falls asks Nash for backup the night she fails her sergeant's exam. The same night the Blitz strikes for the first time. WPC Sandra Miller is the first victim. Roberts is on leave with his wife's death and Porter Nash is put in charge bypassing Brant---the powers-that-be are hoping he'll screw up and they can get rid of Nash. Hey, maybe hit the Trifecta and get rid of Brant as

well.

We get a peek into Falls' friendship with a skinhead even as she sinks into alcohol and drugs in an attempt to ward off the depression of her recent past. It's her friendship with Metal that saves her life...again and again. Metal has confessed to beating a sand nigger and Falls reaches out to the assigned detective---with an ultimatum for Metal. A detective whom Falls was not expecting to be such a hunk, at least from Roberts' description. Good thing for Falls that Nelson is attracted...it's all that'll save her ass even if she is angry at him over nothing.

Meantime, pensioners are getting mugged the day they pick up their checks at the post office and Roberts, as part of his increased energy, points McDonald in the right direction. Too bad, McDonald just can't seem to engage his brain on the work side; his emotions end in disaster.

The reality of police work intrudes with arresting Barry and having to let him go in the morning, in spite of McDonald's pathetic attempts at empathy, but it all comes "right" in the end.

The Characters

Sergeant Brant rips off shopkeepers and criminals and has the back of his fellow cops. **Chief Inspector Roberts** is another corrupt cop with fewer redeeming values than Brant, but his wife's death seems to spur him on. Says something when his own daughter rags on him to sell the house because she wants her share of the money! **WPC Falls** has had a slew of ups and downs: her best friend on the force's suicide, a beating that results in a miscarriage, and more. Now she's trying to re-connect with her black side. **Sergeant Porter Nash** is openly gay and works at being supportive with his fellow cops. **PC McDonald** is the unit suck-up. He prefers to get ahead by ratting out his fellow cops as opposed to actually doing the work of detecting. **Superintendent Brown** has ties with crime through his Masonic connections, has all the sensitivity of a dead toad, and hates Brant and Roberts.

Detective Inspector Bob Nelson is the lead on the beating of a young Arab.

John "Metal" Wales is a young skinhead Falls befriends; she figures if you can "turn him, you could turn anything, anyone". **Barry Weiss** is a "misunderstood lad" in his eyes. He plans to make a name for himself killing coppers. **Radnor Bowen** is a lower-class snitch who dresses up to play a better confidence game. Too bad he isn't more careful.

Dr. Hazel is the department psychiatrist. A petty bully who "had the backup of "Brutish orderlies, restraints, straitjackets...[and] Thorazine" until he met Sergeant Brant. **Harold Dunphy** is the news reporter Weiss latches onto to provide the scoop that will set him up.

The Cover

The cover is a bit peekaboo with its white top border and black bottom; the middle strip is tired eyes looking through with a bright red title and deep yellow author's name.

The title is the police work and the name of the serial killer, a *Blitz* of crime and activity.

Roger says

Blitz is part of a series of books by Ken Bruen. It did not detract from my reading experience in any way to have not read any of the other books in this series. I think the best way to describe this novel would be to compare it to a fifteen round boxing match with Muhammad Ali-a young Ali at the height of his prowess. Blitz is written in a staccato style I can best compare to a series of jabs by a skilled pugilist-you are moved round the squared circle and have no recourse but to take it as you are pummeled mercilessly. Supremely enjoyable and visceral read. This book owes a lot to Ed McBain's 87th Precinct novels, which Bruen freely acknowledges quite directly. Good stuff.

Isabelle says

This book was sent to us by a friend from France, and until we received it, the only thing I knew about Ken Bruen is that he had written the story behind the movie "London Boulevard". I am not sure how the book reads in French, but I have to say that I read this book in 2 hours or so and enjoyed myself thoroughly. Actually, I flew through the novel.

It is a simple "whodunit" story with really bad criminals and really bad cops. Everyone bends the rules, everyone blurs the line. Simple, almost formulaic, no twists and turns, no gaping mouths... but an impeccable pace. With its quick chapters packing a good punch, the book just rolls with the pedal to the metal, and the ride is so very enjoyable.

I am starting the other Bruen our friend had included in the package tonight!

John of Canada says

I read this in no time flat. Far too violent, black humor, nasty, nasty people. Just my cup of tea. Or whiskey, or poteen. On to the next Ken Bruen.

Sebastian says

Pure Bruen genius!

When thinking about authors that write noir well, no one comes to mind quicker than Ken Bruen. He has a remarkable ability to present us with characters that are rotten inside but still manages to make us care for them. In the Inspector Brant series we get to read about the despicable policeman who has little regard for the law, tramples over people as if they were a small bump on the road and acts as tough as any character out there. But the mesmerizing part is that once you get to know him you see something in there that makes you a huge fan!

It is not only the main character that drives this series, we have a collection of mesmerizing characters joining the ensemble. From the taciturn Roberts, who hits rock bottom in this book, to the explosive Falls, a police woman that mixes it up with the toughest guys, this series has it all. It is not limited to the normal characters either, since Bruen likes to frequently introduce new faces and the bad guys are a riot and have their own surprising characteristics.

I am convinced. It doesn't matter what the story is in each book, Bruen can take any plot and make it riveting and dark as night. This is no exception, and the cops are in pursuit of a ruthless killer who has picked them as a target. As is usual the case, Bruen has no compunction about killing familiar characters, so brace yourself. Whatever the case may be, those looking for a hard-boiled crime novel cannot go wrong with this one.

Josh says

Blitz, part of the Inspector Brant series reads like a modern day take on Ed McBain's perinatal cop 87th precinct series. In typical Bruen-style the writing pulls no punches, short on content but big on impact.

Despite being the 4th book in the series it reads perfectly well as a standalone, however I wish I had tracked down the first three books to gain a better understanding of where the characters were at in their professional and personal lives pre-cop killer Blitz being thrown into the mix.

My rating: 5/5, I thought I knew what I was going to get with this book, having firstly watched the film adaptation a while back, however, Blitz is a vastly different book compared to the film version (as is usually the case). Where the film focuses on cop killer Blitz and Brant's pursuit of him, the original story is more character-centric.

Maciej Muszalski says

I didn't have high expectations, but come on.

I felt like the book is trying so hard to be as badass and as violent as possible. It really wanted to show the bad villain and descent but also bad cops, which nevertheless have some morality when it comes to fighting crime, although their methods don't differ that much from being the acts of crime. This took the whole attention for the author, who apparently forgot all about the plot. The main plot was a bit hmmm cliché? but the subplots are just terrible. I have no idea why would there be a subplot with McDonalds (the worst one for me, killing that student? come on) or even Falls drug addiction and her Nazi friend. Roberts losing his wife? Falls losing her friend? Yeah, let's just get drunk legless everyday and hit the rock bottom just to be saved by one friendly conversation with someone. Because every human being reacts this way. The villain? Please, his motivation for killing cops is getting stopped for DUI and urinating under the church? Of course he could be mental, but is he really depicted like that? Every character in this book has the same personality, which is being a stone cold drinking-all-the-time action-movie-motherfucker.

I also felt like there's no CCTV cameras (although mentioned once specifically not to be working *on the main train station*), no cellphones in this world. What year is this? Is it supposed to be like this? Or does it just cover the plot hole of some guy going around London and killing everyone in the broad daylight.

I have yet to see the movie, which could actually turn alright if it focuses on showing some action and dynamism of the main plot and completely disregarding the side plots, which are totally unnecessary.

Pros? Big font on 200 pages, might be good for a quick skim, but I had enough after 10 pages.

TheRavenking says

Just like the title would indicate this was a quick read.

Having already seen the movie I was surprised how faithful it was to the book. Though I thought the character and motivations of the killer were better fleshed out in the film and the plot was a bit more streamlined.

Bruen manoeuvres about a dozen characters in this book and somehow he makes them come alive with only a few lines of description. This was my first Brant book and it was a lot faster and less contemplative than the Jack Taylor novels, which almost seem like Dostoevsky in comparison. The literary references were absent as well, mainly because Brant is more a man of action and he only reads Ed McBain.

There was a lot of violence but it was softened by the author's usual wit. Bruen's characters are quite unlikeable but somehow he always manages to find some humanity in them.

Although I enjoyed Blitz, I feel like it could have been better with a bit more effort. It felt a bit rushed, almost like a skeleton of a book or a screenplay. I hope this is not the direction Bruen will be taking in the future. Still, you forgive the man a lot, because he is so damn funny.

Maddy says

RATING: 3.5

PROTAGONIST: Detective Sergeant Brant

SETTING: London

SERIES: Follow-on to The White Trilogy

SUMMARY: Ostensibly, the book is a police procedural with the police squad chasing down a serial killer who is targeting cops in different beats around London. Nicknamed "Blitz", he is not a particularly brilliant killer. In fact, Brant and company are on to him rather quickly. Where the book excels is in its character studies. Brant is a confounding, rough, tough but somehow, against all odds, intriguing character; the other members of the department are all well drawn and have their very individual quirks and outlooks. The unexpected humor incorporated in the book is very welcome, as well as Bruen's unflinching way of looking at life.

Lee Hannah McDonald says

I'm pretty much obsessed with this author now and especially love this series. Good, good stuff.

John says

They made a film of this. Jason Statham. Not too shabby. Bruen doesn't mince words.

Eric says

Read the whole book in one day while home sick. Hardboiled and fastpaced - soon to be a movie starring Jason Statham.

Ammar says

Another instalment in Inspector Brant series.

The blitz ... A cop killer haunts the police in London. Would Brant be able to catch him ?

The cast and characters are still as they are ... Binge drinking and enjoying the life of a copper

Snitches are hard to maintain and some go out of their way and something nasty happens to them

Bruen is as good as always... I enjoyed the quotations Between chapters and how they gave a hint to the chapters content.

It sucks that there are only 7 books in this series and now I'm heading to start the 5th book The Vixen about a female serial killer
