



The Ultimates, Volume 2: Homeland Security

Mark Millar (Writer) , Bryan Hitch (Pencils) , Paul Neary (Inks) , Andrew Currie (Inks)

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From Reader Review The Ultimates, Volume 2: Homeland Security for online ebook

Anne says

My 2nd time reading this and I *still* think it's a pretty awesome conclusion to Super-Human.

Plus, it has one of the best Captain America one-liners ever:

Apologies to my French friends - we know you guys are ass-kickers.

This one does a good job introducing Hawkeye and Black Widow as the badass black ops agents signing on to work with the superheroes. Millar shows you that they're able to *not only* hold their own, but they're also needed because of their skills and experience.

And let's face it, it's no easy task to make a guy with a bow look relevant on a team like this.

Sadly, this is also the first peek we get at the *twinsest* storyline.

I can't...ew.

I love the evil alien Nazis more than I should, because seriously, enough with the Nazis already. But it still somehow works for me here. I guess because the story is tied to Captain America I give it a pass? I don't know - it's fun!

Millar's Ultimates just hits my sweet spot.

If for whatever reason you haven't given it a whirl, I'd recommend you try it out. Good stuff.

Dimitris says

Better than volume 1 but still not good enough

Alice says

The Ultimates is the closest I've seen to a comic being a movie. The plot was kickass, the writing + illustration were awesome, and I was just a huge fan of it. V2 was def better than v1, but mainly because there was a lot less random sexism, AND Black Widow showed up. A+.

Mike says

For the record, these are not your father's Avengers. Mr. Millar manages to kill hundreds with the Hulk, and sacrifice 20,000 good guys to a red herring. There is blood, violence, gore, brutality in abundance, and nevertheless, the situations are more real than most other 4-color sequential art! Make Mine Marvel!

Arun Divakar says

Following the adventures of the hooligans from vol.1, Mark Millar's characters steps into territory which finally does bring out their heroic side. It left me feeling discontented completely with the only saving grace being the art.

Even before getting into my thoughts on the book, I must admit that the whole gamut of superhero team-up's have started to become very stale to me. There could definitely be exceptions but then so far what I have seen has been rather clichéd versions of fighting aliens. JLA, JSA, Avengers, Ultimates, Power Puff Girls – everything is about fighting aliens ! A former semi-Nazi/semi-Chitauri foe of Captain America returns with a huge army to take over earth (rolling eyes !) and our misfit heroes beat the crap out of them. Sure enough, the name dropping from the first volume has disappeared to be replaced with the team finally forming an integrated fighting force.

Cap, Tony and Thor do gel together to fight well but that is only for about three panels towards the end. There also seems to have been inexplicable transformations and omissions from the first book to the next with the entire arc on Iron Man disappearing, Thor becoming milder to the mortals and Cap America turning into someone whose dialog resembles a lamentable B-movie ('*You think this A on my head stands for France* ? ' - cheesiness overload). A reviewer here on GR captured it perfectly when she said – We don't need American realism in Captain America. We have Iron Man for that and Cap is for the American ideal.

Where do I even begin to talk about the Hulk ? The character is not one known for his intellectual skills while in the green giant form and yet here whatever remains of his brains is firmly lodged between his legs. In the last battle the Hulk bellows - '*Hulk not sissy ! HULK STRAIGHT !*' and this was my tipping point. I completely detested the book at this point.

Gritty realism in comics is quite a fancy name to use but the execution by Mark Millar is piss poor. I am done with his run of Ultimates.

Not recommended ! Nope...nope...nope.

Kemper says

A little movie called *The Avengers* came out last week and grossed all the money that's ever been printed by the US Treasury according to the entertainment news.

This will probably mean that a bunch of people who don't ordinarily read comics will see the flick, get all

excited to get more stories so they'll rush to the comic book stores and grab something with *Avengers* in the title, and then probably be extremely disappointed when they don't see anything that looks close to the movie because Joss Whedon smartly boiled his film down to several core members that have been on the team in it's nearly 50 year history.

As a public service to people who don't have boxes of comics preserved in Mylar wrappers in their basements, but who would like to read some of the funny books that inspired the movie, I humbly suggest you try *The Ultimates*.

"But wait, that's not even called *The Avengers*. What's that got to do with the movie?"

A lot actually, especially this volume. Marvel realized that their regular line of comics with decades of history was putting off potential new readers and launched a line that rebooted some of their most popular characters like Spider-Man and X-Men. For some reason they decided to rename the team in this version The Ultimates instead of The Ultimate Avengers like they did the other books in this line. I don't know why. Maybe they got tired of everyone asking what exactly they were supposed to be avenging.

Anyhow, when it comes to the Marvel movies, the film makers have used elements from both the original and Ultimate lines, and Whedon borrowed several elements from this series for his film like the idea that Nick Fury and SHIELD essentially create the team, and this one involves huge alien invasion by the same guys that they fight in the film so this book will at least seem recognizable to the film fans.*

**Marvel has launched a tie-in book with the same characters as the movie called *Avengers Assemble*, too, but it's only been out for a few months so there's only going to be a few issues available.*

Plus, it's just a great comic story. Millar's rebooted heroes are a slight twist on the original versions. Captain America is still a legendary hero from World War II, but he's a bit more of a grumpy old Republican than the original Cap. (Millar has said that Ultimate Cap looks like Brad Pitt but smells like your grandpa.) Thor uses his hammer and lightning to lead anti-war and environmental protestors, and he may be an escaped mental patient rather than a god of thunder. Bruce Banner's anger at being a geeky nerd make this version of the Hulk apt to eat people rather than just smashing them. Tony Stark is even more of a crazy drunken playboy than the Robert Downey Jr. portrayal of him. This also includes Hawkeye and Black Widow as well as original Avengers who didn't make the film Hank and Janet Pym, but they've got severe domestic issues.

The fine folks at Onion's AV Club have also provided some helpful info here.

Travis says

The good: very nice art. Everything looks like a big screen comic book movie.

The bad: everything else. The entire cast is either jerks, seriously messed up or unable to speak unless they have something clever or snotty to say.

The only stable characters are Sam Jackson... I mean Nick Fury and Captain America, and they spend most of their time playing babysitter to the other 'heroes'.

Millar basically took the original heroes, found their most negative trait and made that the personality for the Ultimate version.

The heroes spend a couple issues being messed up and fighting each other, then Millar decides their should be some bad guys and the story gets slightly more interesting. Liked the WW2 flashbacks.

There are some good ideas here, but Millar is another writer who equates 'jerk' with 'realistic' and makes us wait too long before anything actually happens, and by the time it does I found it hard to really root for the guys that I'm told are the heroes.

He does write a pretty badass Cap, but otherwise it was pretty unsatisfying.

Hermina Oláh Vass says

Spoilers ahead: Much, much, much better than the first volume. Betty's behavior takes an unbelievable turn. She's actually likable in this one, the slutty edge remains, but never mind that. Also, Cap kicking Dr. Pym's sorry ass takes away the awkward tension. The ending is as close to a happy one that you can get in a universe full of superheroes.

kim hannah says

????

Oh man! That was epic!! A lot better than the first 6 issues. It was action-packed and with a good plot line. The graphics are also pleasing to the eyes! ?? Can't wait to see what's next!!

Black Widow:

"Would you please just **shut up** and do as you're **told**, you disobedient, little man?"

Just fangirling a little bit! (*I just recently picked up comics but am a big fan of Marvel movies. I think I need more Black Widow comics!! Anyone got any recommendations? Cheers!*)

And Jan at the end. Good on you girl. Stand up to that bully and misogynist prick, don't call yourself a superhero when you're beating your wife behind the scene!!! Grr.

Amal El-Mohtar says

Ye flippin' gods. Where to even begin.

Millar phoned in this dialogue by carrier pigeon. It clunks when it's not laughably bad, which is basically the whole second half. Female characters are (further) reduced to sexual jokes. Sterling lines like "Hulk not Sissy! HULK STRAIGHT!" and the infamous "SURRENDER?" bit are representative samplings, but also

kind of over the top in ways that gloss over the more mundane inadequacies of writing: repetition, the inexplicable and unironic use of the word "darling" as a dialogue quirk for EVERY SINGLE CHARACTER, the fact that every character ultimately sounds just like every other.

Just a big ol' meh, overall, when it's not a big ol' AUGH WTF.

Art, though: still great.

Aldo Haegemans says

No bullshit Just save the world wathever the cost!

Trieu says

Slightly better than the first volume, but not much. I still couldn't connect with any of the characters. I understand they're humans after all and they have flaws, but I don't want to see that when I'm reading about superheroes, especially when it came to Captain America. I just couldn't tolerate his action on the battlefield.

Maree says

Really? Nazi aliens? And there's a second book? Where else could that possibly go?

Sam Quixote says

Following the devastation wreaked by the Hulk in the first book, Bruce Banner is locked up for his irresponsibility. Nick Fury reveals a secret that could destroy Earth. And alien Nazis are running rampant! This could only be a job for - the Ultimates!

Mark Millar follows up his popular first book on the Ultimates with another strong volume. Homeland Security is in a way the ultimate distinction between good and evil - evil aliens intent on destroying Earth who are inhabiting the bodies of Nazis versus Captain America and co. The bad guys seem to have stepped out of a David Icke fantasy into the Marvel Universe.

The action is fantastic and the story good fun to read - Cap has a great line: "Surrender? Do you think this 'A' stands for France?". I'm still not sure what Jan Pym brings to the team though - Wasp? A woman who turns into a wasp? How does that possibly match Hulk, Iron Man, or Thor? Also Betty Ross' personality seems to have completely changed from the first book (which is good as she was a completely different character then). But small quibbles aside, this is great, action-packed comic book.

Brad says

I've never been one to fear change, but reading *The Ultimates: Homeland Security* makes me wonder if that creeping illness of aging is starting to catch up with me because I don't like what Mark Millar's done to my favourite comic book hero and my favourite super team.

Now, I get that the Ultimates aren't the Avengers and that the Ultimates universe is some sort of weird parallel land or something, but no matter how we dress it up, *The Ultimates* is an attempt to "reboot" the Avengers in an age of reboots. The problem for me is that the rebooting hasn't added depth; instead, it has made the story shallow and seems to be taking Captain America and the Avengers back to the days of Rah! Rah! propaganda.

When Frank Miller gave us *The Dark Knight*, changing Batman forever, he took a glossy, rather silly, detective-style superhero and gave him real angst. The comic went from light weight action fluff, to heavy weight psychological drama, and that change was healthy.

But Mark Millar isn't doing the same thing here. The thing I have always loved about Captain America was that his ideals didn't always match the prevailing political mood. Captain America has often done what he thought was right even if it pitted him against his friends, the law or the government. He wouldn't follow orders just because they were given to him. They had to be right too. Yet, in the Ultimates we see him actively joining in the cover-up of Bruce Banner's identity as the Hulk, and even covering up the Hulk's intentional Manhattan tirade – a raging Hulk smash fest that killed several hundred New Yorkers – because to blow the whistle on the Reichstag Fire moment would cost SHIELD and the Ultimates their funding. The Captain America I know and love would never let that stand.

Captain American has always embodied American ideals, not American reality. We have Iron Man for that.

In the Ultimates, my Avengers have become a government run, government supported, government funded "defense system." Gone is their autonomy. Gone is their honour. They are government thugs working, quite literally, for Homeland Security, and suddenly Marvel Comics is beating the propaganda drum – and not all that subtly – for the Patriot Act and everything else that makes me sad about the USA.

I will give this series one more chance. I'll read one more graphic novel, but if it doesn't improve I will bury the experience deep inside and pray that this isn't the direction Joss Whedon's Avenger film is headed. That would be one of my saddest cinema experiences – ever.
