

## Blu-Ray Review: 'Superman Batman: Public Enemies' Features Superhero Dream Duo

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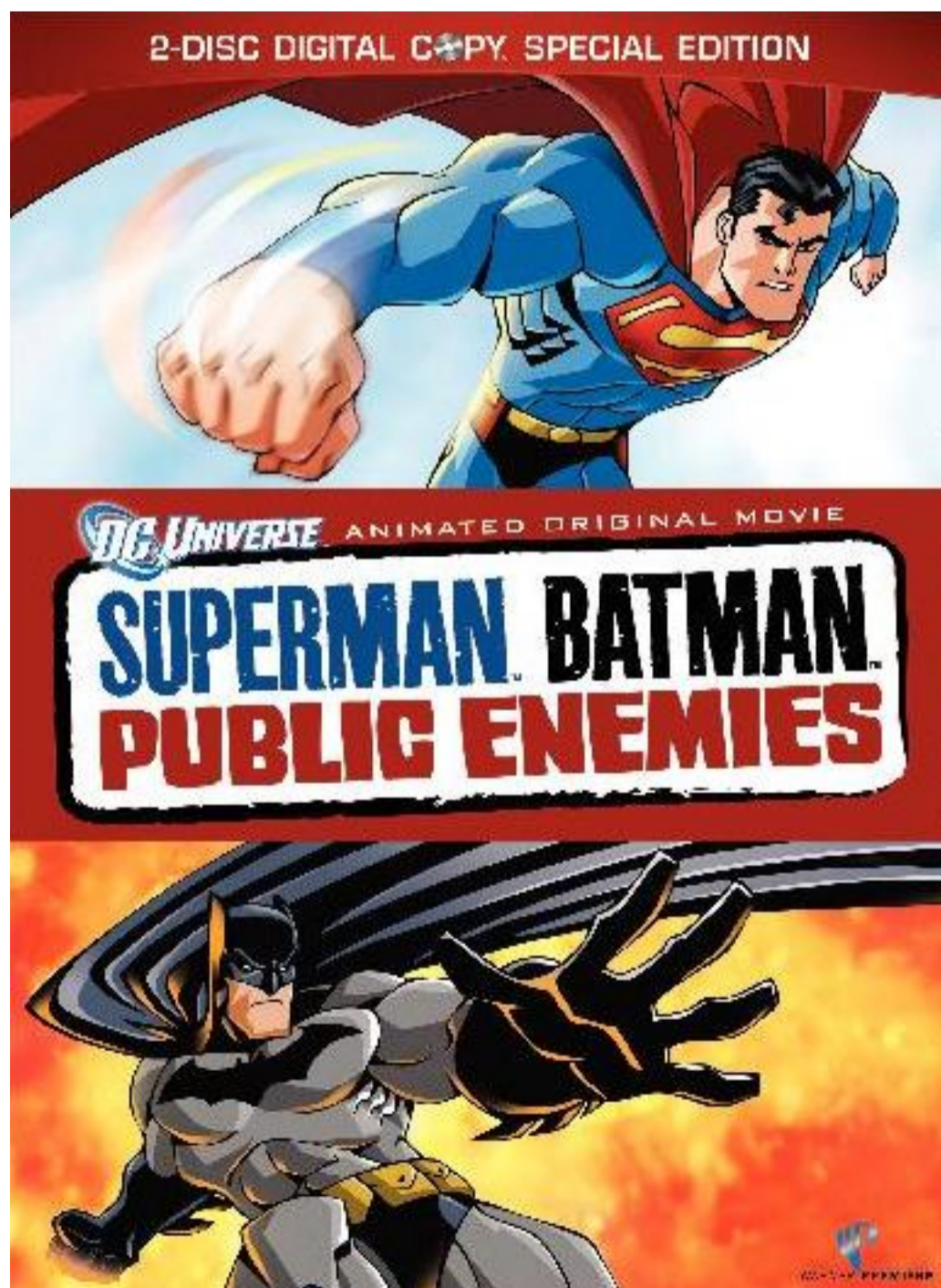
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CHICAGO – Batman and Superman have more in common than you might think and it's not just that they both wear capes and try to stop evil from triumphing over good. The Dark Knight and The Man of Steel are both forced to hide their true selves and deal with significant personal demons. Superman has the power to destroy the world, something he has to rein in every day, and Batman struggles with his moral code, one that keeps him from getting the true revenge he needs for the death of his parents.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.5/5.0**

The comic book writers of Batman and Superman recognized that these two popular heroes could make an interesting duo years ago and started teaming them up in printed form, including a popular Jeph Loeb/Ed McGuinness comic series/graphic novel that inspired the latest DC Universe Animated Original Movie "Superman Batman: Public Enemies". The resulting film is certainly more accomplished than the last two entries in the franchise - "Wonder Woman" and "Green Lantern: First Flight" - but the series has yet to return the form of "Batman: Gotham Knight" and the franchise-best "Justice League: The New Frontier".



Superman/Batman: Public Enemies was released on DVD and Blu-Ray on September 29th, 2009.

Photo credit: Warner Brothers Home Video

The sixth entry in the popular DVD series of DC Animated Original PG-13 movies works because it brings back the all-star team that made several of its predecessors so critically and commercially popular. It features a script that was to be used for a "Justice League" arc of episodes that never happened when that great show got cancelled and features the voice talent of Superman, Batman, and Lex Luthor from the landmark "Superman: The Animated Series" and "Batman: The Animated Series" - Tim Daly as Superman, Kevin Conroy as Batman, and Clancy Brown as Lex Luthor. They're all fantastic, particularly Brown.

In "Public Enemies," Luthor has become the President of the United States and sold America under the idea that this life-long criminal has gone good. Of course, everyone knows that's ridiculous. Luthor plans to use the oncoming trajectory of a Kryptonite asteroid to frame Superman and declare a \$1 billion bounty on the Man of Steel and his partner in crime, Batman. Heroes and villains are forced to take sides and many side with the supposedly-good Luthor and try and take Superman and Batman down after they're framed as super-villains.

"Public Enemies" is a largely action-based DC Universe movie, something that helps after the way-too-talky "First Flight," but it feels a little incomplete as a full film experience, something the best of these entries have tried to be. It only runs a shockingly short 67 minutes and about 50 minutes of that is made up of Superman and Batman kicking ass. The plot of "Public Enemies" is shockingly thin and it ties up just as you think it would get going. Most episodes of "Justice League" ran about 22 minutes and it seems clear that "Public Enemies" was once a three-episode arc of that show that hasn't been expanded enough to really stand as a film.

Despite the lack of storytelling, "Public Enemies" is still mostly effective. It's essentially just a series of fight scenes, but they're all very well-designed and look stunning in HD. The colors are all perfectly mixed and the line detail is crystal clear. Visually, "Public Enemies" is the best DC Universe Blu-Ray to date and the "wham-bang-boom" of it all can make an unsatisfying story easier to overlook. It also doesn't hurt that the thin narrative that is included features some of the best voice work in the history of these timeless characters.

The Blu-Ray release of "Public Enemies" includes an excellent short featurette exploring the dynamic of the relationship between the two classic super heroes called "A Test of Minds: Superman and Batman". Honestly, the analysis of the commonalities and differences between arguably the two biggest heroes in the history of comic-dom is more interesting than the film itself.

Other special features include a neat-but-way-too-long "Dinner with DCU and Special Guest Kevin Conroy," exclusive sneak peek at DC Universe's upcoming "Justice League: Crisis on Two Earths," behind the scenes of "Blackest Night," the epic DC Comics Super Hero event in which the dead shall rise, exploration of 4 other DC Universe Animated movies, and 6 bonus cartoons (from "Superman" and "Justice League") hand-picked by Bruce Timm.

*'Superman/Batman: Public Enemies' is released by Warner Brothers Home Video and features voice work by Kevin Conroy, Tim Daly, and Clancy Brown. The Blu-Ray and DVD were released on September 29th, 2009. It is rated PG-13.*



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