

# Bryon Quertermous

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## Author Photos



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### Short Author Bio (50 words):

Bryon Quertermous is the author of the novels *Murder Boy* and *Riot Load*. He currently lives outside of Detroit with his wife and kids.

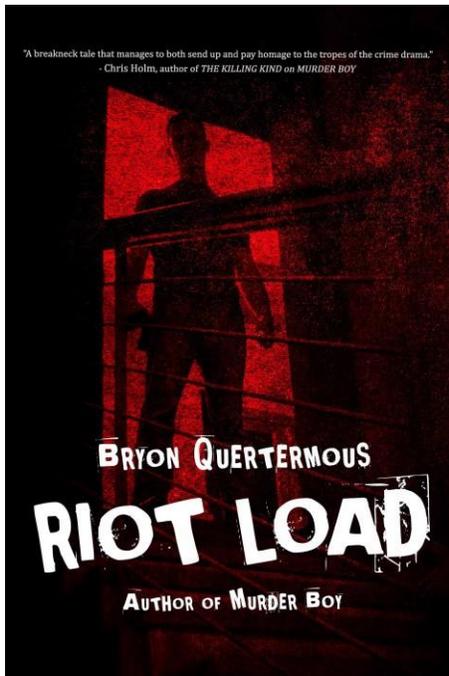
### Medium Author Bio (100 words):

Bryon Quertermous is the author of the novels *Murder Boy* and *Riot Load*. His short stories have appeared in a number of journals of varying repute and he was shortlisted for the Debut Dagger Award from the Crime Writers Association. As an editor, Bryon has worked with traditional stalwarts as well as more cutting-edge operations. He's worked as a freelance editor for *New York Times*-bestselling authors and books he's edited have been chosen as the best of the year by *USA Today*, *Library Journal*, and others.

### Longer Author Bio (150 words):

Bryon Quertermous is the author of the novels *Murder Boy* and *Riot Load*. His short stories have appeared in a number of print and online journals of varying repute. He was shortlisted for the Debut Dagger Award from the Crime Writers Association. As an editor, Bryon has worked with traditional stalwarts as well as more cutting-edge operations. He's worked as a freelance editor for *New York Times*-bestselling authors and books he's edited have been chosen as the best of the year by *USA Today*, *Library Journal*, and others.

Bryon lives somewhere between Ann Arbor and Detroit (metaphorically as well as physically) where he can be found screaming at the TV during football and baseball season and playing *Ninja Turtles* and *My Little Pony* with his kids the rest of the time.



## **RIOT LOAD**

June 2016

Trade Paper

ISBN: 781940610689

Published by Polis Books

Dominick Prince went through hell to make his dreams come true. He finally has a book deal, time and money to write whatever he wants, and a marriage to his college crush with a child on the way. But instead of working on his next book, Dominick spends his days as a mindless office drone at the university cancer center while his wife chases bail jumpers. When an old friend reappears to call in a favor, Dominick sees an opportunity for a little excitement.

The plan seems simple enough. Dominick will use his access at the hospital to help his friend steal the last remaining piece of her murdered lover: a sperm sample left during prostate cancer treatment. Standing in their way are a pair of brothers who find

kidnapping potential children far superior to kidnapping actual children, and Dominick's wife who has her own plans for the sample. Torn between his wife's wrath and the debt he owes his friend, Dominick taps into the most devious parts of his crime fiction training to write himself a proper ending where he saves the day, saves the girl, and lives to write another day.

### **Reviews for *Riot Load***

"Fans of gonzo noir will find a lot to like." – *Publishers Weekly*

"[Readers will] enjoy ... the way one absurd situation flows into another...we can't quite stop ourselves from reading." – *Booklist*

"RIOT LOAD will no doubt grab readers with its sticky premise. But the book – and its author – show surprising depth and emotion." – *Crimespree Magazine*

### **Praise for Bryon Quertermous**

"I found *Murder Boy* disturbing in a good way, the best possible way. It's hilarious, yet incredibly aware of its own twisted reality. Personally, I don't know of another book like it."

–**Laura Lippman**, *New York Times*-bestselling author of *Wilde Lake*

"Bryon Quertermous has the thing that every writer strives for and many never find: a truly unique voice. The balance of the comedic and the dramatic in his work is a rare treat, reading like a deliciously blood-soaked crime novel rewritten by Christopher Moore."

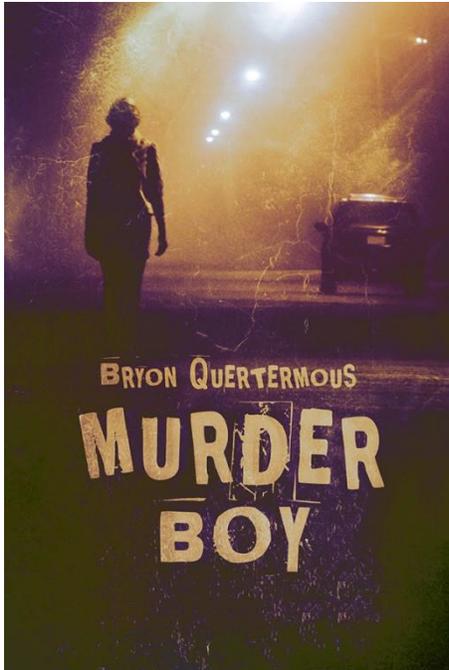
–**Michael Koryta**, *New York Times*-bestselling author of *Rise the Dark*

"Dark, brutal, and irresistible."

–**Kelly Braffet**, author of *Save Yourself*

"An awesome debut from a talented, assured voice."

– **J.T. Ellison**, *New York Times*-bestselling author of *When Shadows Fall*



## **MURDER BOY**

March 2015

Trade Paper

ISBN: 9781940610276

Published by Polis Books

Dominick Prince is out of options. He's lived in Detroit long enough to use his experiences of crime and poverty to fuel his writing, but he's ready to move on to bigger and better things. Dominick's thesis advisor, the elitist Parker Farmington, refuses to let Dominick pass his class, thinking the genre of potboilers beneath him. Which means rather than becoming the next literary sensation, Dominick will spend his life asking customers if they'd like fries with that. And if that's the only plan, kidnapping doesn't seem like such a bad plan B.

So if Farmington won't pass him willfully, Dominick will make him do it forcefully. And once he has Farmington's signature, fame and fortune are within Dominick's grasp. But while Dominick may have a devious and brilliant mind on the page, in reality he's more Betty White than Walter White. And before he can write 'the plot thickens,' Dominick's plan begins to go

horribly wrong. Teaming with Farmington's jilted mistress and her loose-cannon bounty hunter brother, Dominick finds that if even the best laid plans go awry, then his doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell. And being a great writer won't matter much if he's six feet under.

### **Reviews for *Murder Boy***

"Welcome to the literary rock-tumbler that is Bryon Quertermous' mind. One part manic and one part meta, *Murder Boy* is as much a meditation on love, loss, dashed hopes and second chances as it is a crime-filled, gonzo-pulp fever dream fueled by booze and bodily fluids."

—[The Maine Suspect](#)

"Stream of consciousness narration is nothing new, but Quertermous gives Dominick an almost continual output of insightful, and often times laugh out loud funny, narration that stands apart from the pack."

—[Crimespree Magazine](#)

"Quertermous has created a work which exists simultaneously as both a classic example of the noir thriller and as a unique dark comedic attack against the hypocrisy of academia. This would be no easy feat for a veteran author, but still Bryon Quertermous manages to makes it seem like a leisurely stroll down a dimly lit corridor."

—[BOLO Books](#)

"*Murder Boy* is a deliciously dark skewering of crime fiction, academia, ambition and envy."

—[Florida Times-Union](#)

# Crime author's anger, flaws woven into his characters

[Darrell Clem](mailto:dclcm@hometownlife.com), [dclcm@hometownlife.com](mailto:dclcm@hometownlife.com) 9:27 a.m. EDT June 10, 2016



*(Photo: Bill Bresler | staff photographer)*

Bryon Quertermous admits he spent his 20s in an angry, mean-spirited mood.

He wasted career opportunities. He wrote second-rate, never-published detective novels. He was obsessed with becoming a loner, an eccentric author who needed no one.

Then, he channeled all that negative energy into "Murder Boy," the Canton author's first in a trilogy of crime fiction novels featuring lead character Dominick Prince, himself an aspiring crime writer who makes bad decisions with violent consequences.

"It was me reliving my 20s and having the characters pay for all the mistakes I got away with," Quertermous,

39, said, sitting inside a Canton McDonald's restaurant where he often goes to write. There, he's less distracted than he is at home, where he has a wife and three children ages 19 months to seven years.

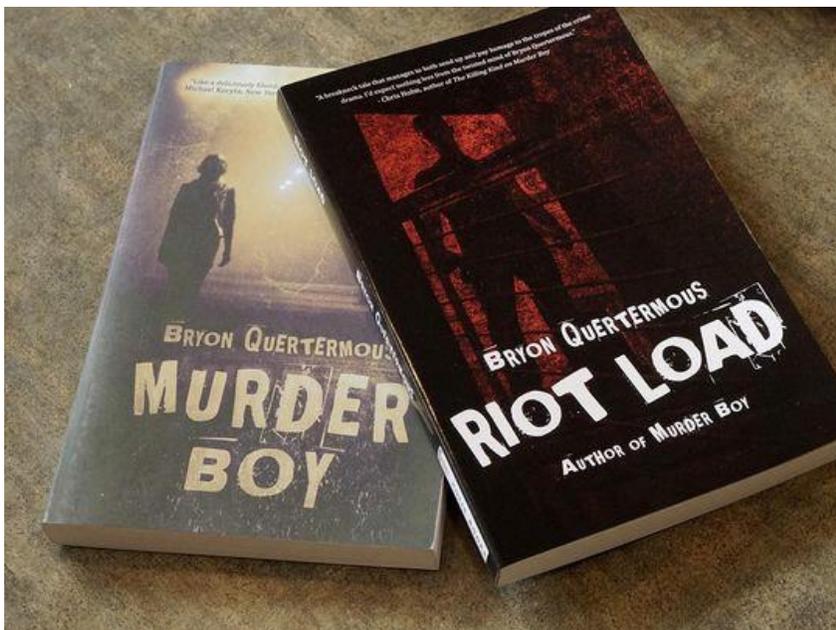
Quertermous describes Prince as "a bad writer" from Detroit who is "eternally in his 20s." Though he is critical of Prince, he also is unkind to other characters — a once-aspiring ballerina who becomes a stripper, rock star wannabes who play dive bars, a failed cop who becomes a bouncer. They are based on people he has actually met.

A year after "Murder Boy" was published in 2015 by Hoboken, N.J.-based Polis Books, Quertermous returns June 14 with "Riot Load." In it, Prince has found success but tends to slack off. Woven together by violence and dark humor, the book plunges Prince into situations such as helping an old friend, a woman, steal her murdered lover's sperm from a sperm bank.

"She wants to have a baby with it," Quertermous said.

Never let it be said he lacks imagination, this author who grew up in the Flint area.

He began writing in second grade, when he penned a story about superhero candy bars. He confesses that, at 19, he wrote the script for a play that shamelessly ripped off "The Maltese Falcon." He didn't take offense when the producer turned it from a serious endeavor to satire.



**"Murder Boy" and "Riot Load" are the first two in a trilogy featuring main character Dominick Prince.** *(Photo: Bill Bresler | staff photographer)*

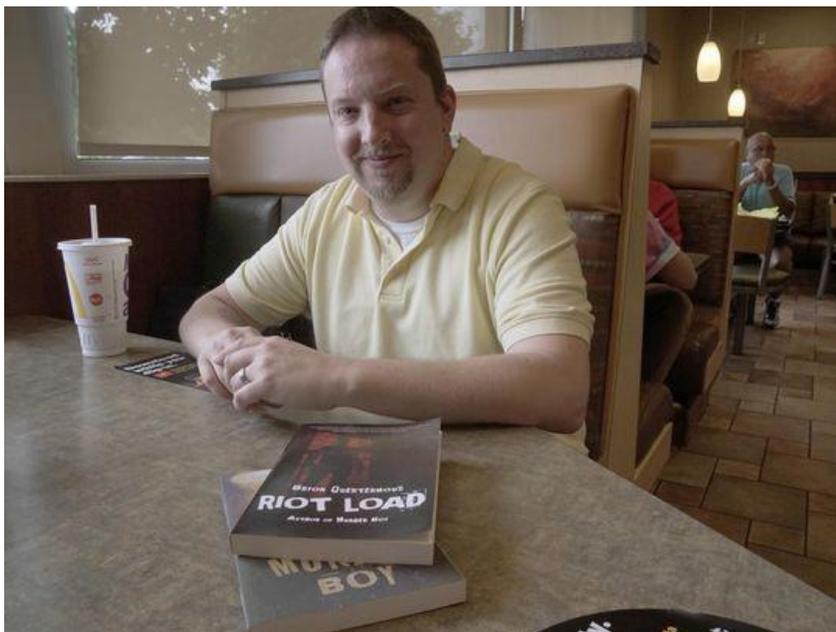
He was editor of the Mott Community College newspaper and, while studying English and creative writing at the University of Michigan-Flint, landed an internship with Random House, the huge publishing company in New York City.

While there, he helped choose manuscripts that made the cut and those that didn't. His internship inspired him to begin writing again, and one of his manuscripts got him on the short list for the Crime Writers Association's Debut Dagger Award. He attended a ceremony in London but didn't win the award.

Quertermous once enrolled in Eastern Michigan University's graduate program for creating writing but dropped out. Now, he works as an editor in digital communications as he continues to pursue his writing career. As an editor he works as a freelancer for Amazon Publishing and for independent authors. In a digital era, he can do this and stay at home with his family in Canton.

"I can edit from a McDonald's in Canton," he said. "I don't have to live in New York."

As an author, it also helps that his publisher, Polis Books, was started by one of his friends, Jason Pinter.



Canton author Bryon Quertermous often writes at the McDonald's on Ford Road, near Sheldon. (Photo: Bill Bresler | staff photographer)

In his books, Quertermous exorcises his own demons by thrusting them upon his characters. In "Riot Load," main character Prince starts to become more violent than he was in "Murder Boy," a trend that only worsens as Quertermous is now writing "Trigger Switch," the last novel in the trilogy.

As "Riot Load" officially arrives June 14, he is preparing to embark on bookstore signings in Phoenix, Houston, Seattle and, closer to home, at 3 p.m. Saturday, June 25, at Nicola's Books, in the Westgate Shopping Center in Ann Arbor. He also plans to promote it online, through social media and on <http://bryonquertermous.com>, [here](http://bryonquertermous.com/). (<http://bryonquertermous.com/>)

Quertermous still draws inspiration from anger fueled by a dream editor's job that passed him by and, from a larger perspective, the divisive presidential election cycle and the level of violence close to home and across America.

Writing, it seems, is his therapy.

"I'm able to work out a lot of problems and fears and anger and issues without paying for a therapist or hurting the people around me," he said.

It's a lesson Dominick Prince should learn.

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# MysteryPeople Q&A with Bryon Quertermous

**MysteryPeople Scott: What made you want to write a violent crime novel about writing?**

**Bryon Quertermous:** For a long time I didn't and it drove me insane. I was writing violent hardboiled PI novels that sucked and didn't have any spirit or heart while I was also writing these twee literary stories starring writers that didn't have any structure and couldn't get past 2-3k words. It was a handy metaphor for how I was feeling as a writer at the time. I was in a graduate creative writing program but not fully committed to an academic writing career and then at night I was writing crime fiction that I wasn't respecting and was trying to knock out for the money (ha!). It wasn't until I started reading the online crime journals from guys like Neil Smith and Victor Gischler and others who did a great job of mixing transgressive crime fiction with the fun of meta literary stories. Once I finally went all in on merging all of my experiences and influences and ideas into one book instead of several I hit my stride and finally had a novel I think really represents my whole self as a writer.

**MPS: What kind of effect does academia have on writing, genre writing in particular?**

**BQ:** I don't think it has as big of an affect as some would like to believe. I was lucky to be in a good program that really wanted writers to grow, regardless of what they were writing, but like I said, part of the reason I was able to find my voice was this wealth of transgressive fiction coming out of really prestigious writing programs like Columbia and Iowa. I think crime writers get a little bent out of shape too easily (and I'm just as guilty as anyone) about being snubbed in the broader literary scene instead of focusing on the fact that genre writers, for the most part, are in a much better place for making a living writing and having fun writing than literary writers. I will say though that unless a writer has an interest in teaching or publishing, majoring in creative writing or going to grad school for creative writing is probably a waste of time. If you want to be a genre writer, read great genre writing and crappy genre writing and write a lot of your own genre writing.

**MPS: The plot has a careening momentum with more than a few absurdist moments. How much was planned out before writing?**

**BQ:** Not a lick of it. This is why it took my 8 years to write. I've tried outlining and it just sucks the joy out of it for me. I know I need to work more on this because I get distracted easily and I tend to really veer off course a lot, but also, I'd say that is one of the things that makes my writing unique so I'm not too keen on fixing it so much that I ruin that style. I'm in the final stretch of completing the sequel that has only taken me 18 months to write, so I'm getting better, but I need to get A LOT better if I'm going to make a career of this I think.

**MPS: We are never quite sure how good a writer Dominick is, there is even some doubt planted. Was that intentional for a reason?**

**BQ:** Yes, that was intentional, though in my own mind I'm pretty convinced he's a mediocre writer: better than a lot of bad writers, but not as good as he thinks he is or wants to be. That was important to me because this is something I love in my characters in general. I don't like characters who are awesome at what they do. I like failures or has-beens or almost-weres. I like ballerinas who couldn't cut it and became strippers and musicians who weren't good enough to be stars and work the dive bar circuit and cops who couldn't cut it and end up as bouncers. So when it came time to write about a writer I always knew he'd be on the bottom rung of the literary world.

**MPS: This being your first book, did you draw from any influences?**

**BQ:** I drew from everything. Once I realized that spreading my influences across multiple books wasn't working I poured everything I had seen and experienced and heard and eaten and done and imagined over the course of my life. This book was influenced as much by *Catcher in the Rye* and Dave Barry as it was by the work of Jim Thompson and Donald Westlake. It's also influenced heavily by theater and film. I started as a playwright and that's how I learned dialogue and how to bring people into a story in an interesting way. The quick and brutal violence of guys like Quentin Tarantino and Sam Peckipah was also really influential. I've never liked long drawn out action scenes in novels and love the idea that no character is off limits from a violent death.

**MPS: what advice would you give a would-be author like Dominick?**

**BQ:** Get a real job. This business sucks.