



## Ghosts

*Ed McBain*

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A young woman stops at the grocery store after work, but she never makes it home—at least not all the way. She is stabbed to death in front of her building, her groceries strewn across the cold pavement. Upstairs her neighbor and popular ghost story author Gregory Craig lay dead as well, stabbed in his apartment. When Craig’s publisher is found murdered just days later, Detective Steve Carella has a deadly mystery on his hands, one unlike any he’s ever had before.

Searching for clues, Carella instead finds Craig’s girlfriend, a medium whose spooky predictions keep him guessing. When some leads take him to a “haunted” house on the New England shores, strange events turn even stranger...until, back in the city, he turns up the crucial evidence he needs to track down the killer.

A rare twist in Ed McBain’s 87th Precinct series, *Ghosts* weaves the haunting uneasiness of the supernatural thriller with a classic, tightly plotted police procedural. Stephen King hails *Ghosts* as “excellent. It’s a fine—and creepy—mystery, and a fine novel.”

## Ghosts Details

Date : Published 1981 by Bantam (first published 1980)

ISBN : 9780553145182

Author : Ed McBain

Format : Paperback 212 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction

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## From Reader Review Ghosts for online ebook

### David Highton says

An 87th Precinct book with a supernatural twist. Carmella is the lead character with Hawes in support and seemingly appraising all the women in the investigation as they solve 3 murders

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### Don says

I did not especially enjoy the last two entries in this series. So when I started this book, I told myself that if I didn't like it, I would not spend more time with the members of the 87th Precinct. Fortunately, I thoroughly enjoyed this rather complex mystery which deals with the death of Gregory Craig, an author who recently wrote a bestseller about ghosts.

As with many of the books in this series, several connected murders are being investigated. In this instance, a woman who lived in Craig's apartment building and Craig's publisher have also been murdered. While I doubt that there are actually as many instances where several murders connect to each other as there are in these books, this device certainly allows for some fascinating plots; so I can forgive McBain for using it, (smile.)

The earlier books in the series devote more time to the interactions between the detectives of the 87th. I really miss that interaction in these later books. It's interesting because, if I weren't reading these in order, I probably would not have noticed that change.

At any rate, I'm glad to see that McBain has returned to his usual quality writing and I look forward to the next entry in this series.

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### Nigel Bird says

I'm a big fan of Ed McBain's 87th Precinct novels and the truth is that the more of them I read, the bigger the fan I become. The central characters are brilliant conceptions, the plots are strong, the tangents and the humour always a treat and the police teams always manage to overcome the chaos of their departments and of the city in which they serve.

Ghosts has just become my favourite of the bunch I've tackled. That could be because of the growing warmth I feel for the detectives, but I think there's more to it than that.

It's Christmas and Chanukah all wrapped up in one. Carella and Meyer Meyer take on the case of a couple of murders in a swanky apartment in a wealthy part of town. One of the victims is the writer of a successful ghost book. He's survived by his wife Hillary who claims to be a medium, has a twin sister and happens to be the spitting image of Carella's wife Teddy. As the case continues, there are more murders to contend with. There's also a heavy snow that's making life difficult for everyone and which is creating openings for Carella as he is forced to spend time apart from his family. The net of the investigation tightens and is complicated by the contributions of Hillary who is determined to use her powers to get to the bottom of what is going on. The weaving together of these two strands leads to a superb and rather unusual ending.

In *Ghosts*, the process of tracking down the criminals is as strong as ever. What I very much enjoyed about this one was its sexy edges and undercurrents. The book also flirts with the supernatural and rather than detract from the tensions of the tale it really does enhance the drama and the flavour of the piece.

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### **Jared Shipley says**

My first, but hopefully not last, 87th Precinct novel. A quick, entertaining, suspenseful read.

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### **Weldon Burge says**

This was the first McBain book that I read, back in 1980. I've read most of the Ed McBain/Evan Hunter books since then, but this one is still one of my favorites. How can you go wrong with a murdered ghostwriter, a psychic, and a haunting? Steve Carella, the lead detective in the story, is wonderfully defined in this novel. Looking back over the 57th Precinct novels I've read since, I think this novel was a perfect introduction to the series. If you've not read McBain, *Ghosts* is a great place to start!

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### **nick says**

read half the book before the filler slash multiple quick side storys grew more frequent an where boring all along, there was other filler as well. a little hard to get into with the character names being odd and or similar, plus writting style wasn't neo-noir but had an air that wasn't done well. to descriptive about almost every single thing and name dropping, none of which iv herd of or meant anything to the story. occasionally a little funny. occasionally quotable lines. main story was interesting enough. police procedures seemed well researched

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### **L says**

The 87th Precinct and ghosts! Or are there really ghosts? You have to read it to find out. And now it's time to get another book from this series for tonight. It's a good thing there are many of them.

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### **Nikmaack says**

McBain liked to mix it up now and then. But I signed up for a police procedural, not whatever you want to call this. (I'm trying not to give any spoilers, but this strays from the realm of the cops to a world beyond theirs, so to speak.) Not one of his better books.

Still, as with all the 87th books, even when it's bad, it's still pretty good. Why else would I keep reading them?

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## **Diane L. Woodbury says**

### **All these 87th precinct books deserve five stars**

Ed McBain has created a vast of characters who never fail to fascinate! Steve Carella is the favorite of most readers, but I also like Meyer Meyer! This book has a strong touch of the supernatural, which adds to the interest. Great read!

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## **Orient says**

[The ghost scene made me uncertain as it seemed not real, the thing is, if it was really a ghost house so it must have been widely known! The ghosts make an important role in this book and what I liked is that they don't 'interfere' into the detective part. Also, the title proves to be an intrigue as i

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## **Mehmet says**

This is the 3rd novel I have read in the 87th precinct series. I brought four of the books in a second hand market stall. I am so glad to have found these stories as I am enjoying them so much. These books pleased me and surprised me in two ways.

First I must praise Ed McBain (Evan Hunters) in his amazing narrations, he captures the very essence of our make up. His characters are very realistic and believable. From the books I have read, the author created a mini world, set in a New York style city and makes stories based on the police in 87 precinct. Each person living in this imaginary city of America have traits we can see in people surrounding us in real life, each novel in the series has a title which is what the story is woven around. In this case "Ghost" is the key word. I will not give away the plot or story, but suffice to say I would recommend this book highly. The series are crime stories and mysteries.

Secondly since I have started living in my own house (flown the coup so to speak) I have read two novels which had genuine scary moments. Scenes which are emphasised when you are all alone in the middle of the night. Ghost provided the 3rd such scene to freak me out.

Please, please read this book if you like crime novels or if you have similar taste to me.

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## **Donna Davis says**

As has been indicated by other reviewers, this is written in a setting that no longer exists; it's definitely a period piece. That doesn't mean you shouldn't read it, because the work of a strong writer from way back in the day is better to read, than the work of a contemporary hack. The wording in this dated yet clever novel is like word-painting, and the pacing and plot are put together with an experienced hand.

It contains sexual content. I used excerpts from it to teach metaphor, simile and other figurative language, but in a conservative district full of devoutly religious families of various sorts, I kept the book itself behind my desk.

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### **Chris Gager says**

Too funny ... yesterday I was at work and on break and trying to put this one up on my "currently reading" list but I couldn't remember the title even though I'd already started it! Mr. Ed's book list was no help as there seem to be about a hundred books on it. And those are just the ones under "Ed McBain" - talk about prolific! Anyway, it's pretty solid so far, with the emphasis on police procedure. We know everything that Carella knows ...

As is usual for me, I find the sex lives of the heroes/protagonists to be unnecessary and gratuitous filler. Do we need to know that they're "normal" in "that way"? There MUST be some gay detectives out there in lit land by now ...

Finished last night. This one stayed true to the end. The reader never knows more or less than Steve Carella - interesting. The ghosty was done well too. The author concluded the book in a blizzard of "you see"s. There were seven in all throughout the book. The killers confession had five of them!

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### **wally says**

just finished this one...#34 87th Precinct. great story. 4/4/17 call it 4.5 stars. nicely done. i enjoyed the comedy in this one. what else? tasashi fujiwara is a patrolman in this one, becomes a detective. ghosts, too, some ghosts. four or five or them, maybe six. a seventh? maybe. good read.

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### **Chad Malkamaki says**

From 34 books in, I'm guessing McBain is hitting his high stride. The last two were great reads with interesting plots. There is a formula to the 87th Precinct series, but each books crime is unique and with Ghosts one of the most unique of all. Carella and the team find two murders at the same location days before Christmas. The girlfriend of one of the victims looks like a younger version of his wife Teddy, and is a twin like the Carella's children, but there's a twist, she's psychic.

I always feel a book is a fun read when you start to imagine the casting for the movie as you go along. I'm amazed that Hollywood hasn't tried to put these crimes and the men who solve them on the big screen. I know there's been televised series and episodes but this one in particular I think would translate well.

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### **Skip says**

A pop writer is found stabbed to death with nineteen separate wounds, in his locked apartment, and a women is stabbed in front of his apartment building from a single thrust. Are the deaths related? Detectives Steve Carella and Cotton Hawes are drawn into unraveling the mystery, including the apparent robbery of the writer's girlfriend's jewelry. The girlfriend (and her twin sister) look just like Carella's deaf-mute wife, and seem to crave his attention. Meanwhile, it is snowing both in Isola and up in the remote Massachusetts town

where the writer's ex-wife drowned. The ghost stuff seemed a little forced to me or I would have rated this a 4.

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### **Paul says**

Ghosts take place in the middle of the Christmas season, very apt timing considering the subject matter. The use of snow and ice play a major part in the novel's ambience, and McBain's use of description here is bar none. He vividly illustrates city streets and lonely beach houses with such precision that I could easily picture the snow dusting the pavement and bitter winds howling across the ocean. The author artfully makes Carella family scenes come alive, nailing the little things down so you can almost feel the heat from the fireplace and hear the clink of the ice in the whiskey glass.

The novel starts with two stabbings that take place in the same vicinity, one a rich author in his home, the other, a seemingly unrelated victim, a woman on a city street, just a short distance away. The author is a novelist of paranormal fame, after writing a bestselling book about ghosts. Indeed, McBain brushes with the supernatural in this one: Carella's aide in this novel is a talented medium who uncannily resembles his wife, Teddy. The trail leads them to some pretty eerie places, including a hair raising scene reminiscent of the great horror movie, *The Changeling*. Kudos to Ed for making this a pretty chilling encounter, as good as any superior horror writer could write. (Yes, Mr. King)

McBain always manages to throw a little something different in each of his novels, and you can see the improvement of his craft with each proceeding entry. His voice here is confidant and relaxed, making this an easy and enjoyable read.

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### **James Thane says**

This is another very entertaining entry in Ed McBain's 87th Precinct series and one of several through the years that take place during the holiday season.

As Christmas approaches, Steve Carella is called to the scene of a murder. A woman, on her way home from work, stops by the grocery store and is then stabbed to death on the sidewalk in front of her apartment building. As Carella and other detectives gather at the scene, a second call comes in, reporting another murder in the apartment house itself.

The detectives enter the building and find that a best-selling writer has been bound and then repeatedly stabbed to death. They conclude that the woman killed in the street outside was most likely an innocent bystander who got a look at the killer as he or she raced out of the building and was murdered so that she couldn't identify the killer.

The dead writer specialized in ghost stories and his very attractive girlfriend claims to be a medium who communicates with the spirit world. At the apartment she shared with the victim, she picks up strange vibrations that prove eerily prescient. Strangely, the medium very closely resembles Carella's wife, Teddy, which Carella finds very disorienting. Even more troublesome, the medium has a twin sister who seems to be starved for sex, which presents problems for Carella as the case progresses.

McBain deviates from his usual formula to include a bit of supernaturalism in this story, but it's all in good fun and this turns out to be one of the more interesting books in a very entertaining series. McBain is getting better and better as the series progresses, and now, thirty-four books into it, he's hitting the mark with virtually every effort. Fans of the series will want to be sure to find this one.

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### **Michael says**

I've enjoyed the other Ed McBain 87th Precinct novels that I've read previously. One of my favorite things about McBain's fiction is the dialogue he wrote for his characters. *Ghosts* did not disappoint in any respect with an interesting (and slightly atypical) plot. I'll look forward to reading other novels from this series which I haven't read yet.

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### **Ron Hefner says**

I was pretty sure I'd read everything McBain ever wrote, but I somehow missed this 1980 book.

It's everything we expect from McBain: intriguing plot, vivid sense of place, well-developed and beloved characters, and a good dash of wry humor. He just instinctively knows how to blend these elements together.

It's so great to read through the 87th precinct series and see how McBain grew and matured. And he always addressed America's social issues throughout the decades.

I think the best and most mature books of the series were in the 90's and 2000's. But even going back to the earliest ones, considering the eras in which they were written, I've never read one that was less than five stars. Same goes for the great Matthew Hope books and the stand-alones.

There are plenty of other writers doing police procedurals, but McBain was the grandest. The Boss.

I once tried to do a formalistic study of McBain and figure out his prose style. I realized that his magic lay in the avuncular and witty voice--like your favorite uncle telling you a story. Very much like Dickens.

And the Evan Hunter books are treasures, too.

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