



So Nude, So Dead

Ed McBain , Evan Hunter

Download now

Read Online →

So Nude, So Dead

Ed McBain , Evan Hunter

So Nude, So Dead Ed McBain , Evan Hunter

He'd been a promising piano prodigy, once. Now he was just an addict, scraping to get by, letting his hunger for drugs consume him. But a man's life can always get worse - as Ray Stone discovers when he wakes up beside a beautiful nightclub singer only to find her dead... and 16 ounces of pure heroin missing. On the run from the law, desperate to prove his innocence and find a killer, Ray also faces another foe, merciless and unforgiving: his growing craving for a fix...

So Nude, So Dead Details

Date : Published July 14th 2015 by Hard Case Crime (first published 1952)

ISBN : 9781781166062

Author : Ed McBain , Evan Hunter

Format : Paperback 192 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Noir

 [Download So Nude, So Dead ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online So Nude, So Dead ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online So Nude, So Dead Ed McBain , Evan Hunter

From Reader Review So Nude, So Dead for online ebook

Tony says

SO NUDE, SO DEAD. (1952). Ed McBain. ***.

There's some history here. This novel was first published as, "The Evil Sleep," under the pseudonym Evan Hunter. It was then re-issued as "So Nude, So Dead," as by Richard Marston. It was, indeed, Ed McBain's first crime novel, but there was always the question of attribution. It's what you might expect of an early novel directed to the pulp trade. Still, it was head and shoulders above most of the rest of them at the time. A man wakes up in the morning after a night of booze and heroin and finds a dead woman next to him. He also realizes that 16 oz of heroin that was there the night before is now missing. He becomes the obvious suspect in the murder – and in the theft of the horse. He now has to become his own detective. There are some interesting twists and turns by McBain until the solution is found. I'm glad that this novel was successful enough to launch McBain in his writing career. Without this one, we would have missed out on the 87th Precinct series and the other fine novels that came out of his pen.

Michael Fredette says

So Nude, So Dead was first published in 1952 with the title *The Evil Sleep!* under the name Evan Hunter (two years before he found success with *The Blackboard Jungle*), then reprinted four years later with its current title under the pseudonym Richard Marsten, and finally re-issued in 2015 by Hard Case Crime with the name Ed McBain. *So Nude, So Dead* is McBain's first crime novel, and first book for adults. The protagonist, Ray Stone is a former piano prodigy who becomes a heroin addict. He meets a nightclub singer named Eileen who shares his habit and spends a night with her in a hotel. She shows him her stash of 16 ounces of heroin before they nod off. When Ray wakes up, he discovers Eileen has been murdered, her heroin stash stolen, and himself left behind as a fall guy. Ray, now a fugitive from the law, sick from dope withdrawal (but remarkably physically robust for a junkie), investigates who might have wanted Eileen dead. The suspects include her estranged husband, her rich playboy former boyfriend, and the leader of the band she sings with. The Hard Case Crime edition also includes a bonus short story "Die Hard," featuring Matt Cordell (the private eye from *The Gutter and the Grave*), which concerns the murder of a heroin addict's father.

Samuel Tyler says

What's in a name? A lot if you decide to call your book "So Nude, So Dead". This is a title to conjure with, what on Earth is it about? As this is a "Hard Case" title it is likely to be hardboiled and not adverse to a little violence and titillation. However, consider that the book was once call "The Evil Sleep!" and has since been renamed; is this more a case of the title selling the book rather than accurately portraying its content?

When Ray Stone wakes up he has two major problems; where is he going to get his next hit of heroin and who is to blame for the women's dead body next to him? Stone may be a junkie, but he is no killer, but that does not stop the cops from chasing the once talented Jazz singer around the city. Can he find out who really killed the nightclub singer and get himself a fix as well? It's a hard life ...

Crime as a genre often has an addict at its centre, usually this is for alcohol and is more of a character trait than a main plot element. Kudos must go then to one of the masters of the genre, Ed McBain, because he puts Stone's addiction front and centre in this book and uses it as a driving force for the story. You would think that a title like "So Nude, So Dead" would have sex or violence at its core, but in fact these are peripheral elements to Stone's constant craving. Written back in 1956, this book has one of the keenest portrayals of addiction that I have read as it plagues Stone's every thought.

With addiction playing such a major role in the book the crime noir elements could have been lost, but McBain was not known as a talented writer for nothing. The lust for drugs just adds flavour to an otherwise classic feeling noir. There are plenty of twists and Femme Fatales for our 'hero' to meet along the way and the bumbling style of Stone's investigation works well as he is only trying to find the killer so that he can get off and return back to his life of debauchery. Most fans of the genre will be able to work out what is happening before the end, but you will have fun along the way.

One element that does sit a little uneasily is the 50s attitude towards drug addicts. Stone himself is treated quite sympathetically by McBain and his internal monologues hint at a man who knows that he is falling and cannot stop. What is coarse is how the other characters react to Stone – the cops are happy to shoot on sight at any hophead. This is of the era and is in keeping with the context of the day, but readers should be aware.

"So Nude, So Dead" is an excellent piece of exploitation fiction of the 50s, let down slightly by the crass title. This is not a book about nudity or death, but about one man's addiction and the attempt to clear his name. The portrayal of Stone and his drug abuse is one of the best that I have read and the story was originally penned 60 years ago. This is an impressive feat and makes for an impressive book. Original review on bookbag.co.uk

Andrew F says

Another Hard Case Crime book, another four stars. This one was the first crime book by "Ed McBain" and the hook is genius...A junkie "hophead" in 1950s New York must solve a murder he's the prime suspect in...while fighting off his own withdrawals!

Compellingly readable, dependably violent and cool as ice, So Nude So Dead was a top draw read for me, my only slight regret is McBain doesn't murder the momentum a little in that final chapter and shine a light as to what happens to Ray next. As far as I am aware he never reappeared in any future stories and I am loathe to assume he was stuck in a literary cycle of substance abuse forever like Matt Cordell.

Speaking of Matt Cordell, the supporting feature here is a short story ("Die Hard"!) also by McBain, also about junkies in New York and starring everyone's favourite homeless alcoholic detective, Matt Cordell, from the classic *The Gutter and the Grave*.

Josh says

Ed McBain's debut novel is a fun, quasi PI read.

Ray Stone is an addict. A former pianist who has succumbed to his vice. It's while indulging in this deadly habit that he finds himself chief suspect in the murder of young nightclub singer Eileen; the naked blonde who was dead his dead with two bullet holes in her belly.

In order to clear his name, Ray conducts his own drug addled investigation to prove his innocence and find the murderer. As his dependency for his drug of choice dissipates his clarity increases. The pieces of the puzzle form to display a portrait of an unsuspecting murderer.

I really liked this book. The different take on the PI theme is refreshing (despite being originally published well over 50yrs ago) and Ray is a likable protagonist despite his addiction. The pacing is quick and straight to the point and the characters leap off the page.

<http://justaguythatlikes2read.blogspot...>

Mark Kosobucki says

This is a great book that stacks the deck so high against one person that despite Ray Stone's history of addiction to heroin and all the heartbreak he caused the people in his life, you cheer for him to not only clear his name but to also beat his addiction. Awesome book.

Andrew Diamond says

I picked this up in a bookstore the other day because I liked the lurid, 1950s pulp style of the cover, and the opening chapter was good. I hadn't read Ed McBain before, and I was surprised to read a first novel in which the plotting, dialog, and characters are solid throughout.

The main character, Ray Stone, is an addict who finds himself framed for a murder and has to prove his innocence. Some elements of the book are dated, such as the descriptions of fight scenes, which play out exactly as they did in the movies of the forties and fifties--a little slow, with guys in suits kicking each other in the shins and trying to wrestle pistols from each other's hands. Some of the dated elements of the book, however, actually make it interesting. This book was first copyrighted in 1952, and slang of jazz musicians in this novel didn't seem to appear in film until a few years later.

McBain was somewhat ahead of his time in choosing an addict for his main character, and actually portraying him as a sympathetic, fully fleshed out human being. The author accurately describes the trail of destruction and broken relationships a junkie leaves in his wake. When Ray's girlfriend, Jeannie, decides to end their relationship, she gives a dead-on description of what it's like to be close to a junkie. That kind of knowledge can only come from first-hand experience. It makes me wonder what McBain's life was like at that time, and who he was hanging around with.

Many of the people who have reviewed this book say his later books are better. I'll pick some up and see if that's true. This one was pretty solid.

Paul says

Ed McBain (writing as Richard Marsten) takes his first 'stab' at crime fiction. Initially, I thought this may be one man's anti-drug campaign in novel form, but it settles out into an adrenaline fuelled finish.

After just finishing Lawrence Sanders' first novel, *Sinner Man*, I thought McBain's was more polished and less noir-formulaic and comic book. Still, there are some gaffes that McBain would certainly not have made in his later writings. But I enjoyed this, despite it not being a 87th Precinct novel.

Greg says

"So Nude, So Dead" and "Unavailable for over 50 Years" screams the cover. How can you NOT read this early Ed McBain novel, and what's with the pseudonym anyway? Good grief, at about the same time, James Baldwin published "*Giovanni's Room*" under his own name and it was a far more controversial novel (but Giovanni wasn't naked on the cover). Darn these double standards!

Bert says

"There's a monkey on my back, a fifteen-pound monkey and his name is Horse."
Brilliant.

Jure says

Plot is okay and it's development becomes quite enjoyable once you stop paying too much attention to the story holes (like where are the cops?!?), loose ends and coincidences. The final whodunit is decent although far from shocking. All in all, it's a good, honest and unpretentious writing without moralizing or preaching on a difficult subject of drug addiction. I imagine it was pretty ground-breaking 60 years ago.

More here (review includes spoilers!):
<http://a60books.blogspot.ie/2015/08/s...>

Randy says

Originally published in 1952 under the title *THE EVIL SLEEP!* by his, at the time, Evan Hunter pseudonym, it was released in 1956 under this title as by Richard Marsten, another pen name. It hasn't been available in more than fifty years. *Hard Case Crime* is bringing this edition in July.

It was his first crime novel, the story of a man looking for the murderer everyone believed him to be. The hook is that Ray Stone is a heroin addict, waking next to the shot up corpse of the young singer. There's also sixteen ounces of pure heroin missing.

An addict looking for a fix, the cops after him, not mention to the owners of the missing heroin. And Stone desperate to clear his name and find that elusive fix.

Not a bad novel early in the career of a master.

Steve says

Evan Hunter, writing under the pseudonym of Ed McBain, penned this book 60 years ago. It was his first of many, and he shows some surprisingly mature chops as a young writer in this one.

Former pianist Ray Stone is a heroin addict in the midst of severe withdrawal, and on the run as the primary suspect in the murder of a jazz club singer. Pretty standard pulpish noir fare, and a plot that is very common in this genre.

McBain does pretty well at maintain the breakneck pace from the get-go, in which Stone wakes up from a drug-induced stupor so deep he didn't even hear the girl get shot in bed next to him sometime during the night. Over the course of the first few chapters, he decides, in his heroin-addled mind, to kind the real killer, avoid the police and arrest, and find his next hit of the Big H.

Not a bad read overall. The book, like many books of this time, is very dated. Even still, it's an interesting read, especially considering how well the author grew with his 87th Precinct series later on.

James Thane says

This pulp novel from the early 1950s is of interest principally because it was the first crime novel ever published by Ed McBain, who would go on to become one of the masters of crime fiction, best known for his 87th Precinct series. This book first appeared in 1952 as *The Evil Sleep!*, under the name Evan Hunter. (In 1952, either just before or just after this book was published, the author legally changed his name from Salvatore Lombino to Evan Hunter after writing some short stories as "Evan Hunter.") The book was then reissued in 1956 as *So Nude, So Dead*, by "Richard Marsten." It was then revived in 2015 by Hard Case Crime with the authorship finally credited to Ed McBain.

As the book opens, a hophead named Ray Stone wakes up next to a nightclub singer who is lying next to him in bed, nude and dead, having been shot sometime during the night. That's a fairly lousy way for a guy to start his day, but even worse, at least as far as Stone is concerned, is the fact that sixteen ounces of pure heroine, which had been in the apartment earlier, is now missing and Stone is in desperate need of his next fix.

The story follows Stone as he orders his priorities and sets about his day. First he needs to score some H, and then he somehow needs to get out from under the murder rap that is hanging over his head. Neither will be easy. The cops have tagged him as the killer and his face is on the front page of every paper in the city. The dealers are avoiding him like the plague and he's running out of places to hide, let alone score.

This is a fairly typical pulp novel from this era, and it's really not all that special, save for the fact that it was McBain's first effort. As such, it will appeal principally to McBain's fans who would like to see how he got

started. For that reason, I'm glad I read it, but if you're looking for a good pulp novel from the Fifties, there are better books out there, and McBain would go on to write a lot of them.

Raven says

So Nude, So Dead was the first crime novel by the writer most famously known as Ed McBain, and was originally published in 1952 as *The Evil Sleep!* (under the name of Evan Hunter), and again in 1956 as *So Nude, So Dead* under the pen name of Richard Marsten. Thanks to those wonderful people at Hard Case Crime, the book* has been re-published over 50 years later, to mark the tenth anniversary of McBain's passing.

As a lifelong fan of McBain, the re-emergence of a 'lost' book by him has been an absolute treat, and if, like me, you love your American crime with an enhanced sense of 'pulp' this will be as much of a treat for you. With his central protagonist, the mercurial dope fiend Ray Stone, on the hunt for those that would frame him for murder and larceny, supported by a cast of increasingly unlikeable and grasping characters, this is vintage McBain. As Stone traverses the seedy underbelly of New York nightclubs avoiding the police and the bad guys, McBain steadily sets up each possible culprit, male and female, for Stone to interrogate using a number of guises, but all underpinned by Stone's increasing tension caused by his need for one more fix to see him through his quest. His desperation for dope is succinctly and colourfully portrayed, and we get a real sense of how such a promising individual has found his life gone to the dogs by his addiction, and the effects of his addiction on those closest to him. We feel every moment of confusion, every wrenching stomach pain, and cold sweat, as he tries to balance his body's cry for a fix with his search for a killer. McBain also trains a cool eye on the depths of deviousness Stone has employed to fund this addiction, which makes for some harsh reading, and carefully manipulates our feelings towards Stone even as his reliance on his habit waxes and wanes as the book progresses. McBain's supporting cast is terrific too, as he builds up a picture of Eileen Chalmers' life as a nightclub singer, and the host of unsavoury connections she has made behind the surface glitz and glamour of her chosen profession. As Stone encounters each exploitative impressario, slimy musician or jealous female acquaintance of Chalmers' you could put your money on any of them stitching him up....

Shooting straight from the hip the dialogue is razor sharp and as Chalmers' teasingly refers to her and Stone's repartee on their first encounter, "Sparkling dialogue. Refuges from a Grade-B stinkeroo". The dialogue is spare, frank and uncompromising, and delivered in a style that by which what is unsaid lingers in the air like plumes of exhaled tobacco smoke. See he's got me at it now. As I've said before, it was this style of book that got me hooked on crime fiction, with the deceit and failings of some of the most despicable members of society unflinchingly portrayed through the pared down rhythmic simplicity of manner and speech. It's mesmerising, darkly witty and brutally truthful, and that is why I have always adored Ed McBain. *So Nude, So Dead* only compounds my adoration, and it was a joy to discover anew a fledgling work by this most missed of crime authors.
