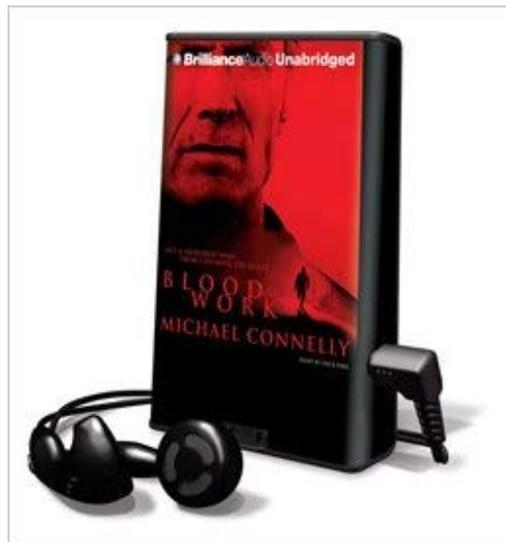


## Blood Work by Dick Hill, Michael Connelly



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Thanks to a heart transplant, former FBI agent Terrell McCaleb is enjoying a quiet retirement, renovating the fishing boat he lives on in Los Angeles Harbor. But McCaleb's calm seas turn choppy when a story in the "What Happened To?" column of the LA Times brings him face-to-face with the sister of the woman whose heart now beats in his chest. From her, McCaleb learns a terrible truth: that the donor of his heart was not killed in an accident, as he'd been told, but was murdered. Wracked with guilt over the fact that he's alive because another human being was killed, McCaleb embarks on a private investigation of his donor's murder - a crime as horrific as anything he ever encountered as a serial killer investigator for the FBI.



## Reviews of the Blood Work by Dick Hill, Michael Connelly

Kamuro

This first book with Terry McCaleb was extremely entertaining. Blood work in this case has a double meaning.

Terry is a former FBI analyst who was medically retired due to a bad heart. He has an extremely rare blood type and the chances of a transplant is just as rare. Unfortunately someone has to die in

order to donate an organ. The trail of how he achieves this gift is twisted and not an easy one to follow. The sister, Graciela, of his donor figures out he is the recipient of her sister, Gloria, and makes contact with him. How did she figure out who he was? That is where the mystery begins. She wants him to find Glory's killer. He is reluctant, but takes on the case as a favor to her and to satisfy his own curiosity. Of course he is blocked by the "real police" since he no longer carries a badge. He overcomes with the help of multiple people and chases the clues to the end, in spite of blocking from the police.

There were two deaths prior to Glory's murder. Were they somehow connected? If so, why and how did their paths cross?

Arlana

When I purchased *Blood Work* online, I thought I was buying the sequel to *Trunk Music*. "The Also By Michael Connelly" page in the front matter of *Trunk Music* listed Connelly's books by publication date, however, not by which character series they were part of. So, when *Blood Work* arrived, I was surprised to be reading about former FBI agent Terrell "Terry" McCaleb instead of LAPD detective Hieronymus "Harry" Bosch.

Surprised, but not disappointed. *Blood Work* is a good story in its own right (with an prospective reference to Michael Haller Jr. seven years before *The Lincoln Lawyer* was published). It follows McCaleb's investigation into the murder of Gloria Rivers. At first, her murder appeared to be the random act of a convenience store robber. As McCaleb digs into the case at the request of Gloria's sister Graciela, he uncovers a deeper, more sinister background to the case that hits a little too close to home.

*Blood Work* was not quite the page-turner other Connelly books have been, at least not in my opinion. That only means it took me a weekend to read it instead of a day. Connelly is a great storyteller and has become my favorite crime novelist.

I close with a piece of dialogue between McCaleb and his neighbor Buddy Lockridge. It describes perfectly why crime novels and murder mysteries are so popular:

[Lockridge:] "Good books are fast reads. You read crime novels?"

[McCaleb:] "Why would I want to read made-up stuff when I've seen the real stuff and can't stand it?"

Buddy started the car. He had to turn the ignition twice before it kicked over.

"It's a much different world. Everything is ordered, good and bad clearly defined, the bad guy always gets what he deserves, the hero shines, no loose ends. It's a refreshing antidote to the real world."

"Sounds boring."

"No, it's reassuring. Where to now?"

Reassurance that the good guys beat the bad guys in the end. That's why I continue reading Michael Connelly. If you're interested in other books involving Terry McCaleb, check out *A Darkness More Than Night* and *The Narrows*. And if you want to read Connelly's Bosch books in proper order, make sure to check out his website.

Felolak

Terry McCaleb has retired from the FBI and is slowly recuperating from the heart transplant that

saved his life. Terry has retreated to his boat, which he is gradually making seaworthy. His rest is interrupted by Graciela Rivers, who requests that he investigate the convenience store robbery that resulted in her sister Gloria's death. McCaleb starts to refuse, but is stunned to learn that Gloria was the donor of his transplanted heart. He begins to investigate the case and grow closer to Graciela and Gloria's young son, Raymond.

There are several mysteries to be solved and one or two surprises. Those who have seen Clint Eastwood in the Blood Work movie adaptation will find themselves on familiar ground. Author Michael Connelly credits Eastwood for offering helpful criticism while the book was being written. It seems possible that Connelly intended McCaleb to be played by Eastwood from the beginning. The book also offers a sensitive portrayal of the emotions that organ recipients and the relatives of organ donors experience. The author expresses his gratitude to a personal friend who underwent a heart transplant and was willing to discuss and reflect on this experience.

It's a reasonably entertaining read. Readers who develop a liking for Terry McCaleb can find him again in Connelly's *A Darkness More Than Night*. He also appears briefly and is the subject of an investigation in *The Narrows*.

Ielonere

Excellent book by top of the class author of police stories. As of now I have read all of Mr. Connelly's fictional stories that include main characters like Harry Bosch, the most intelligent LA police department problem solver detective; Michael Haller, the astute and risk taker LA lawyer; in the Poet story which is one of the best books I have enjoyed from Mr. Connelly, the main character performed at his highest capacity (I don't recall his name); and now Blood Work, where Terrell McCaleb, took an early retirement from the FBI due to heart failure. However, later a woman Graciela Rivers hooks with him with the story of unsolved murder of her sister. This sister's heart had been donated to Terry for his survival. The encounter with this woman leads to a series of investigations and he is on a trail of the murder whose crimes are horrifying. At the end he discovered the killer and kills him, despite the encounters and problems he had with the LA Police Department and the FBI personnel who had classified the crime as random murder. It is a thrilling writing as its best, which reaches the Poet book intrigues level, and I hope the author continues writing new stories with this new character, Terry McCaleb. This book deserves a 5 Stars+.

Joseph

Joseph

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