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New York Times bestselling author Michael Connelly presents his most ambitious, most gripping achievement to date--a novel of masterly suspense and righteous obsession that will never let you go.

When Graciella Rivers steps onto his boat, ex-FBI agent Terrell McCaleb has no idea he's about to come out of retirement. He's recuperating from a heart transplant and avoiding anything stressful. But when Graciella tells him the way her sister Gloria was murdered, it leaves Terry no choice. Now the man with the new heart vows to take down a predator without a soul. For Gloria's killer shatters every rule that McCaleb ever learned in his years with the Bureau--as McCaleb gets no more second chances at life...and just one shot at the truth.

Blood Work Details

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Author : Michael Connelly

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From Reader Review Blood Work for online ebook

Sandra ~ ♥ Cross My Heart ♥ says

Fantastic Read! I read this book to prepare for *A Darkness More Than Night*, Harry Bosch#7/Terry McCaleb#2 as I continue my journey through the Bosch series. *Bloodwork* introduces McCaleb thus leading into book #2, *A Darkness More Than Night*, where Bosch & McCaleb work a case together. I am so glad I didn't skip this book! It is suspense at its best! Absolutely A Page Burner!

Vicki says

Terry McCaleb, an ex-FBI agent, is recovering from life-saving heart replacement surgery when he takes on a pretty unlikely job. The sister of the woman whose heart now is keeping Terry alive wants him to help find the killer of her sister and the convenience store operator who was killed at the same time.

At first reluctant to take on the task, he is drawn in by Graciela's charm and persistence, and by the cuteness of Raymond, Graciela's nephew and the son of the deceased woman. When McCaleb starts to look into the case, he rubs the LAPD the wrong way. Though he is no longer with the FBI, the officers who originally worked the case are resentful of his intrusion. McCaleb notices some unusual similarities with some older cases, and soon it seems that there is some kind of connection between shootings of people with seemingly nothing in common except the weapon used in the shootings.

He determines that what the shooting victims all have in common is a relatively rare blood type, and Terry concludes that some unseen individual is killing, or having killed, people who might provide an organ for some unknown recipient. Amazingly, Terry becomes one of the suspects eventually, since he stood to gain tremendously by acquiring a strong young heart when his need was so pressing.

Because of Terry's informal connections (friends still employed in key jobs with the FBI), he is able to get some information that helps move the case forward, though the LAPD remains skeptical of his help. As his investigation progresses, the danger to himself as well as Graciela and Raymond, increases exponentially, as he comes to realize that the prime mover behind the crimes is a serial killer out of his own past...someone who sees McCaleb as a worthy opponent and is inserting himself back into Terry's life in a most unusual way.

Connelly is great at plotting, at character development, and in detailing the workings of the LA Police and the FBI. His other novels featuring detective Harry Bosch and lawyer Mickey Haller are just as intriguing, even more well known, and those protagonists have gotten more of Connelly's attention than has McCaleb. I'd like to see more of McCaleb, myself, but really, whatever Connelly has written will be right up my alley, I'm sure.

Tom says

Best Connelly book ever! I could not stop listening to this book. Terrel MacCaleb is a retired FBI profiler who recently had a heart transplant. He gets a visitor at his boat, a woman who tells him his heart came from

a murder victim. She wants him to find the killer since the police have hit a wall. He can't keep himself from feeling guilty and inserts himself in to the investigation. Little does he know how connected he has been to the case all along.

The characters in this story are some of the best that Connelly has created so far. You can't help but become invested in their challenges and celebrations. The story takes some of the most unpredictable turns. When I thought I had things figured out Connelly throws me for a loop and blows my mind.

I made the mistake of watching the movie after I listened to this. The story had been changed to actually be more predictable and the things I thought I saw coming in the book actually happened in the movie. Skip the movie, read the book.

Albert Riehle says

What I'm learning, as I continue to read these Michael Connelly books is that outside of his Harry Bosch books, he really tells a good story and this book is no exception. This one is the story of Terry McCaleb, a retired FBI agent and serial killer hunter. Heart disease forces him into early retirement and it takes a transplant to keep him alive. When he finds out, during his recovery, that he got his heart from a woman who was gunned down in a senseless act of violence, his old instincts kick in and he can't help but look into the case--and quickly realizes that nothing is as it seems.

Some of the twists are predictable, but I think Connelly knows that, so he throws in a few more that aren't and it makes for an interesting read. The main character is compelling and filled with frailty. His physical limitations make him all the more interesting. The secondary characters were a bit pale. For instance, there's a sidekick type of character who winds up playing a key role in a few scenes, but other than that, he's not drawn out in any way. He's not sharply drawn enough to add some comic relief to the plot. He's just sort of there. You could substitute any person into that role and the book doesn't change a bit. McCaleb treats him like a teenager, even though he's not and this guy just keeps coming back for more. It's actually really bothersome. The same is true of the other cop characters in the book--there's the good one, the arrogant one who gets in the way and the studious one but that's all we learn about them. Each of them is a genre archetype and none of them ever gets past that point.

The plot makes up for it though. This is a good 3.5 book and I'm happy to recommend it. It's not great, but it's well worth the read. Enjoy!

James Thane says

Terry McCaleb was once a top-ranked F.B.I. agent, but then a heart attack brought him down and forced him into early retirement. After an interminable wait because of his very rare blood type, McCaleb has finally had a heart transplant and is recuperating aboard his boat which is docked in the harbor at San Pedro, California.

Terry is still early in his recovery when a beautiful woman named Graciella Rivers shows up at his boat and begs him to investigate the murder of her sister, Gloria, who was shot to death in the robbery of a convenience store. Terry explains that this would be impossible and that his condition would not permit it. Then Graciella drops the bomb that leaves him no choice.

Against the advice of his doctor who is enormously upset with him, McCaleb agrees to investigate Gloria's death. It's going to be an uphill battle, given that he's now a private citizen and, ex-F.B.I. agent or not, the local cops who investigated the crime originally are going to stonewall him. They've written off the case as a run-of-the-mill homicide in the course of an armed robbery. They have no suspects and aren't looking particularly hard to find any. The last thing they want is for some outsider to come in and show them up.

McCaleb pretty quickly concludes that there is probably more to this crime than a simple robbery gone wrong and his investigation turns up several interesting developments. He's a unique and sympathetic protagonist, and it's fun watching him work his way through all of the obstacles thrown in his path. It's a taut compelling story--basically what anyone who reads him would expect from Michael Connelly.

I'm giving this three stars rather than four, however, because of something incredibly stupid that happens near the end of the book. (WARNING: Do not read the following unless you want a good idea how the book ends.)

(view spoiler)

J.A. Kahn says

Very neat, clever plot. Fast paced and gripping from start to finish, and boy what a beginning - so original. If you like detective stories this one is not to be missed.

Kathrina says

This title was included in last year's World Book Night -- thousands of copies of reader favorites were published and distributed at no cost to encourage literacy. A stack of this one ended up at our public library (not enough takers?) and then donated to our prison book group. Connelly's written a lot of books, and since this was the only one of his on Book Night's list, I figured it must be representative of his best.

I'm not entirely disappointed. The plot is thick with detail, and the first two-hundred pages build slowly on a clever mix of fact and intuition. But my usual response to crime procedurals was repeated -- the climax was satisfying, but the closure was too much, and I wished the tale had ended 50 pages earlier. It felt like an attempt to answer every question, but the page count was getting too long, so our hero began making huge, miraculously accurate assumptions that, earlier in the book would have been justified on every detail, but, coming at the end, the reader is expected to just go with it to help us all get to the end without too many explanations.

Connelly does a nice job of researching his work, with a major exception to all things digital. Connelly is clearly uncomfortable with the details of computer hacking, and glosses over some major inconsistencies, and I don't believe it's to protect the reader from too much info, but rather to hide Connelly's lack of knowledge. It doesn't ruin the story in any way, but his lack of specificity here stands in contrast to his detailed explanations elsewhere. This book is older now, so maybe he's stepped it up since, but if your thriller hinges on digital skills, you should be able to express them with a little more finesse.

Connelly has that rare skill of working a story backwards, then peeling it layer by layer, so that the end product is a vastly different idea than the one we started with. That's the skill that makes a thriller so much fun to read, and for that reason, I enjoyed this one. We'll see what they guys thought this weekend...

Pepa says

Me ha gustado, y el suspense es bueno. Aunque admito que habiendo visto la película, la sorpresa y el misterio ha sido 0. Eso me ha fastidiado un poco la lectura. Pero es una lectura recomendable y está bien escrito.

Me he quedado un poco descolocada, porque el final de la película no es igual al del libro... no sé si en todo porque con los motes ando perdida.... eso ha sido muy bueno jajaja

No había leído nada de este autor y la experiencia ha sido muy entretenida

Nada como estar de vacaciones y con mal tiempo para dar un estirón a las lecturas pendientes ;)

Jeff Dickison says

An excellent introduction to Terry McCaleb, ex-FBI agent. Book is very fast paced and intricately plotted. The only flaw I found: I do not believe a new heart recipient could have kept up the pace McCaleb did without compromising his health severely. Recommended to action fans.

Robin says

Former FBI Agent Terry McCaleb is under doctor's orders to take it easy while recovering from a heart transplant. But Graciela Rivers has other plans. She appeals to McCaleb to find the man who murdered her sister in cold blood. Terry is reluctant to get involved, until he discovers that the new heart he was given belonged to Graciela's sister, Gloria Torres. Terry talks to the detectives on the cold case and reviews the file, including the security tape that shows the murder. Terry doesn't know if he will be able to turn the case around, but he will do anything in his power to find who killed Gloria Torres.

This is the first book in the Terry McCaleb series and an excellent police procedural. Terry picks apart the evidence to find any little thing that the police may have missed. There are a few red herrings along with several twists and turns in this investigation. I highly recommend this book. My rating: 4.5 Stars.

Richard says

5/10

This is one of those times that the book is let down by the authors name. For me, Michael Connolly is one of the best crime writers out there and I've not come across a poor novel from him. Until now.

High expectations don't usually help when you go into a book but after reading about 10 or so of Connolly's other work and every one of them a finely crafted crime tale with interesting main characters you think that you are in safe hands. I'll also caveat that I had just finished Lonesome Dove before reading this which would probably ruin any following book(s). Damn you Gus!!

I was keen to read this as I knew the main character from this novel turns up in a Harry Bosch novel which I'm planning on reading this year so I thought it would be good to read about this guy and see what he was like etc. so I wasn't blindsided when going into the Bosch novel. Unlike all the other novels, the main character just isn't all that likeable. I find it hard to read a book with a poor lead, it just doesn't let the story flow and you're not rooting for them when they come a cropper.

The plot is quite unique in that Terry, an ex-FBI agent is tasked with hunting down the killer of the woman who has donated her heart when she dies which happens to be the heart that is currently inside Terry's chest. Interesting enough but then it just fizzles out a bit and drags on. When the climax happened I read it and then sort of thought "was that it?". There were a few interesting moments but not enough to keep me interested throughout and at times it was a chore to read.

A rare blip from Michael Connolly but in no way will this put me off picking up anything further from him. I know this guy can write and everyone has a bad day at the office once in a while. I will try and watch the movie with Clint Eastwood too as this might translate better into a 2 hour film.

If you like this try: "Lincoln Lawyer" by Michael Connolly

Rob says

Number one in the Terry McCaleb series.

First up, this is a great read.

It takes the donor organ theme and turns it evil.

Terry is a retired FBI agent and the recipient of a new heart, the reason for his early retirement.

Terry is approached by the sister of the donor of Terry's heart. The reason Terry was able to receive his new heart was because the donor was murdered. Graciella Rivers, the donor's sister, now wants Terry to find her sister's killer. Graciella is at her wits end because the police are not taking her sister's murder seriously enough.

Terry, who is still recovering from his heart transplant, is not happy at the prospect of running down a killer. But feels he owes Graciella, to at least look into her sister's murder.

The FBI and the LAPD are none too happy at Terry's interference in the case and try hard to keep him on the outside. One officer, Sheriff Jaye Winston, does what she can to help Terry.

What Terry discovers will change his life forever.

The story has a strong, intense plot that will keep most readers turning pages into the night.

Highly recommended.

Jane Stewart says

4 ½ stars. Wow. This was good. A lot of things I didn't expect. I didn't want to stop reading.

STORY BRIEF:

McCaleb is 46 years old, retired from the FBI, and lives on a fishing boat in a Los Angeles Harbor. Two months earlier Gloria was killed in a convenience store hold up. Her organs went to several people. McCaleb got her heart. Gloria's sister Graciela, a nurse, figures this out and asks McCaleb to help find the shooter. The police have stopped working on the case and are either incompetent or don't care. Partly out of guilt, McCaleb begins investigating. Since he no longer has a badge it's difficult for him to get information, but he's resourceful and effective.

REVIEWER'S OPINION:

This definitely is not a formulaic slowly uncovering the clues kind of story. Yes it is a police procedural and we do slowly uncover clues, but it is fascinating and entertaining during the process. The only reason I didn't give it 5 stars was because it was almost too good in the following ways. (1) Toward the end, it kept me awake one night. I couldn't stop thinking about it – too much anxiety and fear. (2) For a while, Terry is being framed. That plot device is not a favorite of mine. It's such a helpless victim feel when a killer plants evidence and then calls the police. I'm fine with good guys being in danger, but doing it that way is more frustrating than entertaining.

It's interesting to think about how times have changed. The characters didn't use cell phones in this story - the way we do today. The cops used pagers. McCaleb used pay phones a lot. This is not a complaint, just something I noticed.

THE MOVIE:

Clint Eastwood played McCaleb in the 2002 movie of this book.

NARRATOR:

Dick Hill was very good.

SERIES:

The author has four series. The characters sometimes overlap and refer to each other. So far each book I've read could be read as a stand-alone, but I like doing them in chronological order. The chronological order is as follows.

Harry Bosch books 1 through 5 (Harry is LA homicide detective)

McCaleb book 1 (this book – he is former FBI)

Bosch book 6 – Angels Flight

Bosch book 7 and McCaleb book 2 – A Darkness More Than Night (They're working on the same killer.)

DATA:

Unabridged audiobook length: 12 hrs and 41 mins. Narrator: Dick Hill. Swearing language: strong but not frequently used. Sexual language: none. Number of sex scenes: two, told not shown. Setting: 1995 or earlier mostly Los Angeles, California, plus Mexico. Book Copyright: 1998. Genre: crime mystery thriller. Ending:

Satisfying. The good guys win.

*** Crystal * says**

5 stars. I loved it. Very suspenseful and I love how it all came together. It was perfect!

Marisa Meiga says

Interesante libro de intriga, con muchos giros en la trama. Muy recomendable.

Jonetta says

Terry McCaleb is a retired FBI agent in L. A. who's just undergone a heart transplant. He's recuperating on his boat and figuring out what he's going to do with his new lease on life. When he's approached by Graciella Rivers to help investigate her sister's murder, Terry's reluctant until she gives him a compelling reason to go all in.

Typical of a Connelly procedural, this story winds around the bend and back before things start to fall in place to make sense and provide motive. Still, I was a bit blindsided by the revelations even though the clues were there (along with some convincing red herrings). I liked Terry and the hype about his skills were well founded. It's a good story with some interesting secondary characters.

I'm a big fan of Dick Hill so the narration just works for me in this series (Harry Bosch Universe). I listened to this one as McCaleb shows up in the next HB story and I wanted the background. It was well worth my time and I'm looking forward to seeing what happens to him.

Judy says

Part detective tale, part police procedural, "Blood Work" is the story of a retired FBI agent who takes on one last case for a very personal reason. I finished it and enjoyed it well enough, but this book is not as good as the other Michael Connelly novels I've read. The main character is okay, and his rationale for taking on the case is believable. The 'love interest' stretches the bounds of believability somewhat.

But little niggles here and there ding it. (Nobody would do that. That's just outright stupid. Etc.). And a couple of major ones seriously damage it. For example, for medical reasons he's supposed to take umpteen medications twice daily and not drive (and a big deal is made of this early in the book) yet he seems to forget all that as the story goes on (a matter of a few days), and no mention is made of it as he drives hither and yon and confronts bad guys.

Bottom line: "Blood Work" is an okay read, but if you're new to Michael Connelly, try one of his Harry Bosch novels first. They're way better.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

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3 STARS-2007

"'Blood Work' - that's what Terry McCaleb used to call his job at the FBI. Eight weeks ago he was a dead man, but now someone else's heart is keeping him alive. Then a newspaper report of his brush with death brings him an unwanted visitor. Graciela Rivers reveals to McCaleb that the anonymous donor of his heart was her murdered sister. Knowing that he lives because of a cold blooded killing, McCaleb takes the moribund investigation on. Nothing about the seemingly random killing makes sense but McCaleb is a tenacious man and little by little he realises that someone is watching his every move - someone who has killed before and will kill again..." (From Amazon)

I think this storyline works better as a book than a movie. I had the killer figured out within 30 minutes. I read the novel years later and it took me a little longer. A good suspense novel.

Supratim says

The author never disappoints. I have enjoyed many of his Harry Bosch novels and also Lincoln Lawyer and this book was no exception but I have to say it fell short of being great.

The protagonist of the novel is Terry McCaleb - an ex-FBI agent who recently had a heart transplant and now is staying in a boat. One day he is visited by a lady, Graciella, who wants Terry to investigate her sister's murder. Terry, who has to avoid anything stressful is reluctant to take on the case, but when Graciella reveals something about her sister Terry simply had to get involved.

Then the story continues with Terry's investigations and we get to meet arrogant and egoistic cops, hear stories about the cases (and the horrors) handled by Terry during his tenure in the FBI, we get to learn more about Terry the human being. The complex relationship that develops between Terry and Graciella was a bit predictable though.

Michael Connelly has given some great clues through out the book and you have to read carefully and think to connect the dots. There are twists and red herrings as well. One thing I have to say - that the villain was a pretty complex and dangerous character. The book shows the research the author had put in to create the story. This is true for many of his books.

This is a pretty decent mystery novel but I was expecting something more -- the story had enough ingredients to create an atmosphere of fear but I felt it was not there. The story would hold your interest no doubt about that but it could have been much more better. The end was also a bit "hurried" for a lack of a better word.

Overall, a decent read if you love mysteries. If you have enjoyed other books by Michael Connelly then do give this one a try and if you have never tried any of his books then why not - it will be a good time pass.

Jamie says

4.5 stars.

I read this first installment of the Terry McCaleb novels last, as I doubled-backed to read the sidebar Bosch Universe novels. I wasn't blown away by McCaleb as a character in *A Darkness More Than Night* and *The Narrows*, but I enjoyed him much more in *Blood Work*.

Great plot and excellent writing, as is the case with all Connelly books. I really like Jaye Winston as a character so it was nice to be exposed more to her in what was also her introduction to the Bosch Universe.

It's telling that before the novel was even published Eastwood picked it up to direct and star in as a film. Connelly is great at interweaving love story arcs into his stark and gritty world, and this was a great example of just that.
