



# The Scarecrow

*Michael Connelly*

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**The Scarecrow** Michael Connelly

**A standalone crime thriller featuring Jack McEvoy, hero of *The Poet*, from the global bestselling author of THE LINCOLN LAWYER and BRASS VERDICT.**

Jack McEvoy is at the end of the line as a crime reporter. Forced to take a buy-out from the Los Angeles Times, he's got 30 days left on the job. His last assignment? Training his replacement, a low-cost reporter just out of J-school. But Jack has other plans for his exit. He is going to go out with a bang: a final story that will win the newspaper journalism's highest honour - a Pulitzer Prize.

Jack focuses on Alonzo Winslow, a sixteen-year-old drug dealer from the projects who has confessed to police that he brutally raped and strangled one of his crack clients. But as Jack delves into the story he soon realises that Alonzo's so-called confession is bogus. The investigation leads him to a serial killer known as The Scarecrow, who has worked completely below the police and FBI radar.

Jack is soon off on the crime beat and running on the biggest story he's had since The Poet crossed his path twelve years before - but The Scarecrow knows he's coming . . .

## The Scarecrow Details

Date : Published (first published May 26th 2009)

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Author : Michael Connelly

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# From Reader Review The Scarecrow for online ebook

## Lisa says

Michael Connelly has done it again with The scarecrow a brilliant book that takes the reader on a ride of their life a well written book & the 2nd in the Jack Mcevoy series.

Jack Mcevoy is a reporter who is virtually thrown to the scrap heap due to budget cuts angry & defiant he wants to go out with a bang using his final days at the paper to write a final murder story of his career.

Alonzo Winslow a 16 year old drug dealer in jail after confessing to raping & strangling one of his crack clients the case has all the elements of a winning novel a kid from the projects born into society with no hope while looking into Alonzo's case he has doubts that Alonzo did it & believes he is innocent.

So Jack believes that the killer is still out there a killer with some very special skills that have enabled him not to be caught after twelve years leaving no trace a killer who takes a perverse pleasure in destroying his enemies,

I absolutely loved this series Michael Connelly is a genius of this genre & keeps you enthralled from beginning to end.

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## Jim says

Another fantastic book in the Harry Bosch universe, although this one stars Jack McEvoy & Rachel Walling. There's not much mystery, it's more about when & how they'll catch The Scarecrow rather than who he is or what he's done. We learn that from The Scarecrow's point of view, but that doesn't hurt a thing. It was beautifully paced; a wild chase with a nail biting climax. I had bring my MP3 player into work to finish it up this morning - I couldn't wait for the ride home. Great ending that ties up the immediate mystery, but I was a little disappointed that there was little to no reference of previous crimes.

The characters, as usual, were excellent. The realism of the CNN interview made me feel as if I was there. It was handled beautifully as was the whole downsizing of the paper. The computers & lingo was well done too, although there were quite a few oversights. I put them down to Jack not being computer savvy, but still wish a bit more attention had been paid to them. (view spoiler)

Harry & Mickey Haller are never named, although referred to. The references are minor, so reading this one out of order wouldn't be huge deal except for Rachel's time line.

Harry Bosch Universe reading order:

17.6 - One Dollar Jackpot(2007) in Suicide Run, 2011

18 - The Brass Verdict (Harry Bosch #14, also Mickey Haller #2), 2008

19 - Nine Dragons (Harry Bosch #15, Mickey Haller appears briefly), 2009

**20 - The Scarecrow (Jack McEvoy #2), 2009**

21 - The Reversal (Mickey Haller #3, (Harry Bosch #16), 2010

21.5 - The Perfect Triangle, 2010 Mickey Haller short story

21.6 - Blue on Black - Harry Bosch Short Story 2010

22 - The Fifth Witness (Mickey Haller #4 – Harry Bosch appeared only briefly, 2011)

For the full reading order, see my review of The Black Echo here:

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

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## Bonnie says

2 ½ stars

This is a very popular book at the library; I waited months to get it. Michael Connelly has many fans, doubtless because of his acclaimed Harry Bosch character. I know I've read Connelly before, because I remember Bosch – though it's been so long that I can't remember details. I used to read books in this genre by many authors – for escapism.

But Harry Bosch does not figure in this book; *The Scarecrow* is the second of two books featuring Jack McEvoy. McEvoy is the highest-paid crime reporter for the Los Angeles Times, having earned his reputation by breaking a big story about a serial killer, then writing a bestseller about it, “The Poet” – ten years ago. But now the newspaper is losing money; staff cuts are unavoidable, and Jack gets the pink slip. He can stay on for two weeks if he agrees to train his lower-paid replacement, the lovely Angela Cook. Just before he meets the cub reporter, he picks up a call from ‘Moms’, a grandmother who claims her gang-member boy is innocent of the murder of Denise Babbit, found in the trunk of her car, *her face behind a clear plastic bag pulled over her head and tied tightly around her neck with what looked like common clothesline*.

Wesley Carver works at a computer farm where data is stored for prominent laws firms and businesses. His “scarecrow role” is to scare off hackers. He's also a serial killer. (Not a spoiler: we know this right from the start.) When Angela Googles ‘trunk murders’, she sets off Carver's digital trip wire, and the Scarecrow is on to her.

Meantime, Jack, who of course, knows none of this, has decided just how he's going to go out: with a story that will *stand as a tombstone* on his career. His plan is not, though, to find the boy innocent; it's to profile the mind of a young killer for his next novel.

While looking into the case, he discovers the kid, Alonzo, may not be guilty of the crime after all. And when Angela Cook is murdered, and her body planted in Jack McEvoy's house, he and former lover FBI Agent Rachel Walling, who played a critical role in “The Poet” case, team up to find out the true story of the serial murders and just who the Scarecrow is.

My timing was off here: reading *The Scarecrow* the day before leaving to participate in a Writer's Festival was not such a good idea. I should instead have been immersing myself in good literature. As it was, when it came time to write in the first couple of workshops, I felt like a scarecrow myself, the Oz one with no brain.

No, not only not good literature, but there were just way too many coincidences in *The Scarecrow*, and the clues were too obvious. But I suspect Connelly was simply off his “game” here. So the next time I'm ready for something in this genre, I will either read the first Jack McEvoy book, *The Poet*, apparently the superior book; or else I will check out *Nine Dragons*, another Harry Bosch novel, due for release next month.

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## Sandra ~ ♥ Cross My Heart ♥ says

Jack McEvoy is a seasoned L.A. Times reporter known as the reporter who brought about the demise of a serial killer called The Poet. Unfortunately, the Times is being forced to trim their budget, and Jack's being replaced by a young, cost-effective, social media savvy reporter and worse yet - he's forced to train her in his last two weeks on the job. In the course of doing so, Jack receives information that leads him to investigate a "trunk murder" in which a sixteen-year old supposedly confessed to the crime. Jack knows this could be his last hurrah - a chance to go out in a blaze of glory while sticking it to the newspaper that is letting him go. Jack stirs the pot, uncovers some stones, and soon finds himself isolated and in the bullseye of a tech-savvy serial killer - one thus far unknown to the FBI. When things escalate, Jack calls his ex-lover FBI Agent Rachel Walling for back-up, and unintentionally draws the killer's attention to her also. The story that unfolds is intense and chilling.

I decided to read *The Scarecrow* because it's part of the Harry Bosch Universe, and I'm reading all the books in order according to the Universe. While Harry Bosch does not appear in this book, there's a connection that avid fans will recognize. While my love affair with Harry continues, I've also come to greatly appreciate the other main characters in books that are part of this world like Mickey Haller & Jack McEvoy. Each character is unique, intriguing, and flawed in some way, some more than others.

*The Scarecrow* is a chilling story in which the identity of the cold-blooded, cunning serial killer is known early on through his own pov. This in no way lessened my reading experience as I stayed glued to the pages with my heart racing until the very end. As always, Connelly is meticulous with details, all of which bear noting as all will prove important by the end. While I wasn't surprised in this one, I was kept on the edge of my seat all the way. Connelly's expertise as a writer and storyteller continues to amaze and delight me. Another Must Read in the Bosch Universe! I'm so happy I didn't skip this one!

4.5 Stars

\*Reviewed at Cross My Heart Reviews

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## Rob says

Number two in the Jack McEvoy Series.

This is real scary. The story is yet another epic from Michael Connelly but the really scary thing is seeing just how vulnerable the internet has made us all to identity fraud and cyber stalking.

Jack McEvoy has been given two weeks notice to quit his job at the LA Times. Jack has seen the writing on the wall for some time. News print is becoming a thing of the passed. So Jack is determined that his last story will be his best story.

He starts investigating a story about the body of a young female found dead in a car trunk. Before long things in his life turn really bad. All his credit cards have been cancelled, his mobile phone no longer works, all his savings have been removed and the account closed, but worst of all, his new rookie trainee, is found dead under Jack's bed. The very bed where Jack and Agent Rachel Walling have just had hot steamy sex.

The Scarecrow, a computer genius, is the one responsible for all this murder and mayhem. But; who is the Scarecrow? Jack and Rachel are now working together but no matter what they do the Scarecrow is always a

step ahead.

This is a page turner of the first order. It's easy to empathise with Jack whose world just gets blacker and blacker.

At the same time the book highlights the demise of printed news papers. And will we be better off with out them???

Also, just how scary the cyber world is.

I give this 5/5 and highly recommend it.

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### **Nicky says**

Every few years I go through a thriller phase - I can't get enough of the pulpy stuff that authors like Grisham and Dan Brown churn out. The matchmaking feature on my Kindle thought I might enjoy The Scarecrow (still not sure why), so I took the bait, and now I'm prepping myself for a summer full of legal and newspaper-centric thrillers.

I guess I like these sort of books because they don't require anything from me - they're entertaining and procedural, they provide a glimpse into life as an investigator (a life I'd secretly love to have), and the morality is usually cut and dried. I don't have to think, I can just go along for the ride. The Scarecrow is particularly fun because it involves both the death of newsprint (no, that's not fun, but old-school reporters are) and a new, high tech world. Basically, a cyber-genius is brought down by the might of the old fashioned BIC pen. A good summer read. My main problem is that I'm now compelled to read the rest of Mr. Connelly's canon. Sigh.

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### **Jeanne says**

I am working my through the "Harry Bosch Universe" and this second book featuring Jack McEvoy turned out to be one of my favorites. H0pe to see Jack return one day.

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### **?Susan? says**

I liked the first in the series (The Poet), so much, so I was happy that it was followed up by another great read. Jack is down on his luck as a reporter and is going to be layed off when he gets a call about a murder he covered. The caller insists that the suspect is innocent and was tortured into a confession. Jack starts to look into the case himself and red flags start to pop up all over. His investigation starts to upset someone and crazy things start happening to him. This is when he knows he is on the right track. Rachael is also back and her FBI skills come in very handy the closer they get to the truth. Great characters and smart suspenseful story.

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## **Arah-Lynda says**

This marks the fourth Michael Connelly book that I have read. I was drawn to this particular choice because of the main protagonist, a reporter, Jack McEvoy who I first met in Connelly's, *The Poet*.

In the *Scarecrow* Jack is still a reporter, writing for the LA Times, but one who has just been served a pink slip. Adding insult to injury Jack is given two weeks notice providing he agrees to train his successor, Angela. Jack sucks up his pride and decides that during the time he has left he will write a killer story designed to make the executive at the newspaper rethink their decision to lay him off.

In the process of investigating the arrest and incarceration of a young, drug dealer who confessed to the brutal murder of a young, Los Angeles woman found strangled in the trunk of her car, Jack begins to realize that all is not as it seems. As he digs deeper Jack finds a new connection to another brutal murder, this time in Las Vegas.

And he is off and running on the tail of another serial killer and chasing a huge lead the likes of which he has not had since his encounter with *The Poet*. What Jack does not realize is that in the process he has tripped some digital traps, traps designed to let the killer know who he is and what he is up to.

Unlike most thrillers Connelly exposes the killer to his readers right up front and allows the perpetrator to narrate the story from his own perspective, while Jack, who has by then teamed up with FBI agent Rachel Walling, is hot on his trail.

Don't get me wrong I love a good thriller and was blown away by *The Poet*, but while *The Scarecrow* certainly contained all of the requisite elements and was quite successful in keeping me on the edge of my seat throughout most of this story, in the end I found it to be quite anticlimactic. I wanted to know more about the scarecrow himself, what motivated him, what fuelled his insatiable need to commit such heinous acts. Instead I felt a little cheated and found myself wondering (and I do hope I am wrong) if this was not intentional on Connelly's part.

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## **Kathy says**

I'm gratified I found it necessary to do a bit of backtracking/filling in of books I missed in this series as this Jack McEvoy + Rachel W of FBI coupling to catch a serial killer was a satisfying read for a couple of reasons. Both were under fire at work, losing and regaining their jobs. Then the added attraction of vibrant, gritty scenes of the newspaper business as it was.

With Jack instrumental in earlier *Poet* investigation, this serial killer, "the scarecrow" was well aware of who he was up against and thought he was up for the challenge.

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## Amanda McGill says

Meh, not Connelly's best.

This is the second book in the Jack McEvoy series, which has nothing to do with the Bosch series. I enjoyed the first book in the series, *The Poet*, but didn't enjoy *The Scarecrow* as much. Since the readers know who the Scarecrow is, it takes a lot of the mystery out of the novel. I liked Jack as a character, but he doesn't compare to Connelly's other leads, Bosch and Haller.

For Connelly fans I would suggest picking up the *Poet*, but skip the *Scarecrow*.

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## Donna says

This is the 25th book by Michael Connelly that I've read. He is my second most-read male author. I loved his Harry Bosch series. He is consistent and solid in his writing.

This book is the second book in the Jack McEvoy series (I haven't read the first one yet.) I enjoyed this one, like I do most of his books. I like the characters Jack and Rachel. I also liked that Jack worked for the newspaper and tried to navigate within that dying industry.

Michael Connelly writes a great story. They are full of twists and turns. And just when I expect the expected, he changes it up. I admire that. It keeps me rooted in the story. Rachel's sudden appearance was a nice surprise too. She helped propel the story forward. I will have to track down the first book in this series.

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## Chris says

If this book only had a brain.

Ok, check this absurd shit out. Below is a quote from the second page of the book -- all you need to know for context is that Carver is the head of computer security at some company that protects its clients from hackers:

*All the while he spoke, Carver was thinking about the intruder they had been chasing. Out there somewhere, not expecting the comeuppance that was speeding toward him. Carver and his young disciples would loot his personal bank accounts, take his identity and hide photos of men having sex with eight-year-old boys on his work computer. Then he would crash it with a replicating virus. When the intruder couldn't fix it he would call in an expert. The photos would be found and the police would be called.*

Two points I'd like to make:

1. How much respect does Michael Connelly have for his reader here? After the third sentence about putting porn on the intruder's computer, I'd say that the vast majority of this book's readers would get the point trying to be made. Maybe some would need to know that he'd crash it with a virus to get the point, but is there anyone out there who could possibly need the last two sentences to get it? Why stop there, Mike? What about adding: "The police would show up and arrest the intruder. The intruder would go to jail for a very



long time. The intruder would probably get violated in jail and while in the middle of one such violation the intruder would probably wish that he had never learned how to be a hacker."

2. What sort of hacker would need to call in an expert? Isn't the hacker an expert? Wouldn't he know how to re-format the hard drive? If the hacker worked for a company that had an IT division, wouldn't he most likely work in the IT division?

I should have stopped reading right then and there.

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## **David says**

I've said it before, I will say it again: it's tough to be Michael Connelly. His writing is so consistently excellent -- I'm on track to have read all of his existing novels in about 11 months -- that when he writes a book that is simply good and not spectacular, it is tempting to see it as a letdown. If you have never read a Connelly book before, and pick up this one, you will be pleased. But faithful readers will recognize that this is an average effort for Michael Connelly -- not his best work.

Jack McEvoy is back, the first book about him since "The Poet". He has just been laid off by his paper and is assigned to train his replacement. Some of the most enjoyable passages in the novel have to do with Connelly's descriptions of the newsroom. They are both nostalgic (Connelly got his start as a journalist) and cutting. He shows us both the good and the bad. McEvoy is looking to score two weeks pay and do a good story as he walks out the door forever.

From there, a plot unfolds around an initial murder. By the way, this murder is depicted from FBI Agent Rachael Walling's point of view in the short film "Conflict of Interest" on YouTube. One murder eventually leads to something that is a lot more serious. McEvoy is taken into the world of hacking, trolling and cyber-crime, eventually teaming up with his old flame, Walling.

Unfortunately, while easy to read and entertaining, the book has a by-the-numbers feel to it. It seems as though Connelly brought back McEvoy and Walling, brought in computer crime, then did some research on sexual fetishes and brought in a serial killer angle. All these parts of the book are interesting, but they don't quite fit together. The bad guys in this book, from the gang bangers to the killers, seem a bit stale. One reason Connelly is so great to read is the reality of his characters, and here, they don't seem too real.

In addition, there is a logistical issue with getting McEvoy as a journalist into all of these criminal investigations. Connelly has to resort to the same device from "The Poet" to get McEvoy involved. It was a stretch the first time, but the second time around it really seems far-fetched. If you don't believe me, call your local police department and ask if you can tag along on a few calls and get involved in some murder investigations.

All that being said, this is an entertaining book. Like watching old movies, you get the sense that a lot of this has been done before, but you can still go along for the ride and enjoy it.

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## Michael says

Michael Connelly's continues to expand his fictional universe beyond the confines of Harry Bosch--and that's a good thing. It's not that I don't like Bosch, but it really seems that Connelly's better efforts these days are when Bosch isn't the central focus of the novel.

At the front and center of his latest book, "The Scarecrow" is former Rocky Mountain News reporter, Jack McEvoy. As the book begins, Jack has been downsized from his beat at the Los Angeles Times and given two weeks to train his replacement for the crime beat. Jack is famous for his involvement with the events detailed in "The Poet" (which if you've not read, you should, but it's not necessary to enjoy "The Scarecrow"), but that fame and his salary have put him on the chopping block. After taking a call on a seemingly innocuous crime story, Jack begins to look into things and decides to go out with a story to remember. The story concerns a young man, arrested on suspicion of murder, though the young man swears his innocence. Jack finds some troubling details in the confession as well as a larger pattern to the a potential serial killer.

Jack's investigation sets off the alerts of the Carver, who initiates an all-out attack on Jack through technological means. The Carver wants to cover his tracks and begins to set up Jack for a fall.

"The Scarecrow" alternates perspectives between Jack and the Carver as the two engage in a cat-and-mouse race-against-time. The deadline for Jack's career at the L.A. Times as well as Carver's pursuit help give the narrative the drive it needs and the suspense builds with each passing page. Equally frightening is how easily the Carver is able to use technology to cut off Jack from contact with world--including cutting off e-mail access, draining his bank account and canceling credit cards. It will make you think about identity theft and just how apparent your passwords really are in a whole new light.

Connelly is an author whose grown on me with his recent works. His stories are more than mysteries. They're character driven and the biggest success is how he's expanding his universe. He has a wide variety of interesting, fascinating characters--all of whom have their own voice. It'd be easy to just have all the characters be a derivation of Bosch, but Connelly doesn't settle for that. He may not be at quite the nirvana-like level I hold Laura Lippman or Elizabeth George, but he's getting closer with each book.

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