

MICHAEL CONNELLY

I can't say enough good things about Michael Connelly. The former Miami and L.A. crime reporter who turned mystery writer more than 18 novels ago is simply one of the best in the business. Besides, how can you not like an author who names a homicide detective Hieronymus (Harry) Bosch and plunges him into a Los Angeles straight from the nightmarish panel of "The Garden of Earthly Delights"? Pick up *Concrete Blonde*, *Angel's Flight* or *City of Bones*, and you'll soon be hooked. Connelly's most recent Bosch outing, *The Overlook*, is a finely crafted suspenseful investigation into the murder of a medical physicist—a doctor who deals with hazardous substance in the treatment of cancer. The tie-in with possible Islamic terrorists brings the FBI to the scene, reuniting Bosch with his former lover, Agent Rahel Wallinger. Their relationship took a turn south in last year's gripping *Echo Park*, which gives their dialogue here plenty of snap, crackle and pop.

Connelly has also written several books about Terry McCaleb, an ex-FBI agent turned private eye. Try *Blood Work*, in which McCaleb is recuperating from a heart transplant when a beautiful woman asks him to track down the killer of her sister. McCaleb isn't interested until he discovers that his new heart belonged to the victim. It's a quirky, twisted tale. Made a pretty good Clint Eastwood movie, too.

Saturated with surprises and betrayal, Connelly's crime novels are addictive page turners. The prose is tough and terse—not a word wasted—with flights of wit and dark lyricism. Because of his journalistic background, Connelly has an eye for telling details. Not only does he get all of his facts and clues right, he manages to weaver them seamlessly into the narrative fabric.

At the same time, the books have an emotional depths and honesty because the characters are so well-drawn. Especially Harry Bosch, an obsessive cop with a big heart, who lets nothing stand in his way, whether that means bucking bureaucracy and self-serving politicians or neglecting friends and lovers. Bull-headed in his pursuit of truth, Bosch is more often right than wrong, but when he screws up, both personally and professionally, he does it big time, and the consequences are devastating for everyone

involved. As a result, he ends up living a haunted, lonely existence, which makes him all the more human and appealing. And primed for another case.

N.B. In recent years, Connelly has started another series with attorney Mickey Haller. The first, *The Lincoln Lawyer*, was made into a very good and satisfying B-movie, starring Matthew McConnaheigh and the delectable Marisa Tomei.