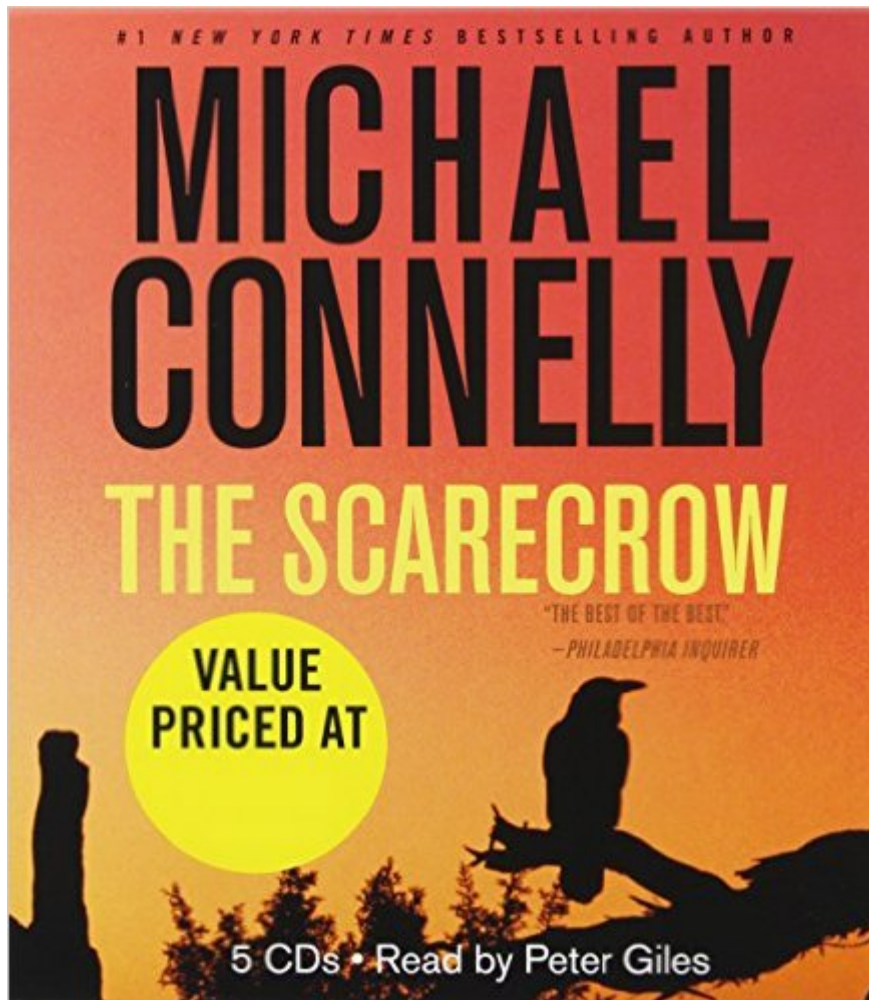


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# The Scarecrow



## Synopsis

Forced out of the Los Angeles Times amid the latest budget cuts, newspaperman Jack McEvoy decides to go out with a bang, using his final days at the paper to write the definitive murder story of his career. He focuses on Alonzo Winslow, a 16-year-old drug dealer in jail after confessing to a brutal murder. But as he delves into the story, Jack realizes that Winslow's so-called confession is bogus. The kid might actually be innocent. Jack is soon running with his biggest story since *The Poet* made his career years ago. He is tracking a killer who operates completely below police radar--and with perfect knowledge of any move against him. Including Jack's.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Michael Connelly is easily one of the best crime fiction authors working today and *The Scarecrow* is a solid read, although I have to admit that after a great start the ending is a bit of let down. It isn't that the ending is bad (it isn't) - it's just that it follows a standard formula and was just too 'ordinary'. The first half of *The Scarecrow* is exceptionally good. Connelly gives readers an insider's look at the inner workings of the newspaper business and the devastating effect that the internet and 24 hour cable news is having on it. I appreciated that our hero, reporter Jack McEvoy, starts chasing a story for reasons that are not entirely noble. When the grandmother of a gang member charged with murder insists her grandson is innocent, Jack follows up, not intending to prove the boy innocent, but rather to gain access to the family so he can profile the mind of a young killer. Of course, he does find evidence that leads the story in a different direction. The greatest strength of Connelly's fiction is how thorough he is as a writer. For example: the killer is planning to frame

someone (I don't want to give too much away) and Connelly has him address any holes in his plan, like the transportation of a firearm. Lesser authors would simply ignore the problem(s) and assume that readers wouldn't notice or would be willing to overlook the inconsistencies. Connelly though has his killer find a solution so that his plan is as realistic as possible. I appreciate that. I also appreciate that McEvoy and his partner FBI agent Rachel Walling don't just stumble around - they actually investigate, detect, and solve things. The criminals are intelligent too, which makes for a refreshingly smart read.

I added this up last night and discovered that I have read more books by Michael Connelly (15) than any other author I've read. So I guess one could say I'm a huge fan. The amazing thing is that they were all five star books (except for *Chasing The Dime*, of course). I find this almost hard to believe but it's true. And I'm actually one of the readers who started reading Connelly before his real fame came into being with the publication of *The Poet*. I guess it's only fair then that his latest offering features journalist Jack McEvoy....the same Jack McEvoy who appeared in *The Poet*. Connelly's true fans have been awaiting a reappearance by one of their favorite characters for years now and in *The Scarecrow*, Jack's return does not disappoint for one minute. I loved this book from the beginning to the end. Having started his career as a journalist, I'm sure this book is close to Connelly's heart as he watches the slow demise of the newspaper industry. The fact that technology is killing newspapers becomes only too clear as the book starts off with Jack getting a pink slip from the LA Times. But "our" Jack is intent on going out with a bang and makes it his business to come up with one last story that will be Pulitzer prizeworthy. He will set out to prove that a sixteen year old gang member is not guilty of the murder for which he is being accused. The good news to Jack's fans is that he will need to ask FBI agent Rachel Walling for her help as he starts to get too close to the answer to the mystery and much too close to *The Scarecrow*. Their "coupling" in this book is well worth the wait as they make such a great team.

If you're departing on a short trip or vacation then this is the book to take. A four-day excursion to South Carolina last week had me immersed in this wonderful, Connelly strong, murder mystery. My go/no-go meter for these thriller genre books has always been one of entertainment and interest...do I find myself held by the book and do I find myself having a difficult time putting it down. And the answer to both is an emphatic YES. Connelly, with this work, weaves an intricate plot full of compelling and persuasive developments, with characters that are believable, although admittedly not Dickensian, while masterly tying all points together to form a gripping page turner that literally

had me rushing back to my hotel to finish. I cannot imagine anyone wanting more. Jack McEvoy is our protagonist again, the L.A. Times reporter now on the downside of his career, years departed from his pinnacle, the killing and reporting/book writing of serial killer "The Poet." In fact, with the rapid emergence of on-line news, The Times has found itself having to downsize its paper journalism swiftly, to the point where veteran journalists are even being ousted. McEvoy's comes, predictably, soon after the story opens...but there's a stipulation...he's allowed to hang on an extra two weeks if agrees to train his replacement, a young blonde named Angela Cook who has no experience but who is techno-savvy and has a significantly smaller salary. Through their turnover process, they take on a story of a woman's body found in the trunk of her car and the admitted perpetrator, a sixteen year-old gang-banger and investigate it through the discovery of a highly intelligent, techno-savvy serial killer who executes his victims and who leaves behind his "Scarecrow" signature.

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