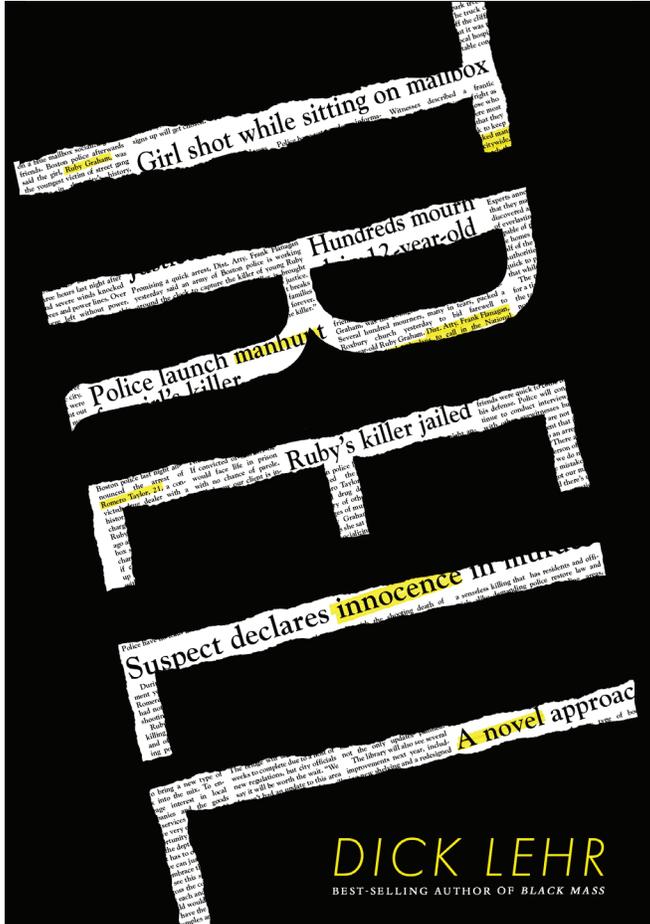


From the co-author of *Black Mass* comes a gripping YA novel inspired by the true story of a young man's false imprisonment for murder—and those who fought to free him.



# TRELL

**DICK LEHR**

On a hot summer night in the late 1980s, in the Boston neighborhood of Roxbury, a twelve-year-old African-American girl was sitting on a mailbox talking with her friends when she became the innocent victim of gang-related gunfire. Amid public outcry, an immediate manhunt was on to catch the murderer, and a young African-American man was quickly apprehended, charged, and—wrongly—convicted of the crime. Dick Lehr, a former reporter for the *Boston Globe's* famous Spotlight Team who investigated this case for the newspaper, now turns the story into *Trell*, a page-turning novel about the daughter of the imprisoned man, who persuades a reporter and a lawyer to help her prove her father's innocence. What pieces of evidence might have been overlooked? Can they manage to get to the truth before a dangerous character from the neighborhood gets to them?

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## ABOUT AUTHOR DICK LEHR

Dick Lehr is a professor of journalism at Boston University. For nearly two decades, he was a reporter at the *Boston Globe*, where he was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in investigative reporting and won numerous regional and national journalism awards. He served as the *Globe's* legal affairs reporter, magazine and feature writer, and as a longtime member of the newspaper's investigative reporting unit, the Spotlight Team. Before that, Lehr, who is also an attorney, was a reporter at the *Hartford Courant*.

Lehr is the author of *The Fence: A Police Cover-up Along Boston's Racial Divide*, a nonfiction narrative about the worst known case of police brutality in Boston, which was named an Edgar Award Finalist for best nonfiction. He is coauthor, with Gerard O'Neill, of *Black Mass*, a *New York Times* bestseller and Edgar Award Winner about Boston crime boss Whitey Bulger that was made into a film starring Johnny Depp. That book's sequel, *Whitey: The Life of America's Most Notorious Mob Boss*, was released in 2013. His most recent book is *The Birth of a Movement: How Birth of a Nation Ignited the Battle for Civil Rights*, which *Booklist* deemed in a starred review "a remarkable look at the power of mass media and the nascent civil rights movement at a pivotal time in American history." The book was adapted into a PBS documentary that aired on the network's primetime show, *Independent Lens*, in February 2017.

*Trell* is Dick Lehr's debut young adult novel. He lives outside Boston with his wife and four children.



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# A NOTE FROM AUTHOR DICK LEHR

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*Trell* has its origins in one of Boston's most notorious murders—the shooting death of twelve-year-old Tiffany Moore on a hot summer night in 1988. Tiffany was seated on a blue mailbox on Humboldt Avenue in Roxbury, swinging her legs and socializing with friends, when masked gunmen approached. Their targets were boys in a competing street gang, but they hit Tiffany. She died instantly—the youngest victim of street gang violence in the city's history.

Tiffany became known as “the girl on the blue mailbox.” Her murder instantly came to symbolize the cocaine-fueled lawlessness rocking Boston. Some officials even called for the deployment of the National Guard to cope with soaring violence. Police launched a massive investigation, and two weeks later, they arrested a young drug dealer named Shawn Drumgold. The next year, Drumgold was convicted of the murder. He was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. The city breathed a sigh of relief. Tiffany's killer was in jail. Justice had been served.

Except it hadn't. Fourteen years later, I reinvestigated Drumgold's conviction. I was a reporter at the *Boston Globe*, where I'd mostly served on its Spotlight Team. Contacts in the legal community had been telling me I should look into the case, saying police had rushed to judgment to quell public hysteria. In May 2003, the *Globe* published the results of that investigation, a story revealing prosecutorial wrongdoing. Special court hearings followed, where witnesses from the 1988 murder trial came forward and testified to how officials had berated them and coerced their testimonies. By summer's end, the Suffolk County District Attorney, who had previously opposed all of Drumgold's legal appeals, joined his lawyer in requesting that the hearing judge overturn his murder conviction “in the interests of justice.” The judge did so, and Drumgold went home on November 6, 2003.

During my investigation, my focus was journalistic—exposing flaws in the murder case. Even so, I couldn't help but notice the women in Drumgold's life: his attorney, Rosemary Scapicchio; his mother, Juanda; his wife, Rachelle; and his daughter, Kiara. I learned Kiara was a newborn when Shawn was arrested in the summer of 1988. She'd grown up marking time with regular visits to see her father in prison. I learned that in saying good-bye, Kiara would always ask, “Daddy, when you coming home?”

It became the seed for this novel. I wondered periodically what it must be like to grow up with a parent wrongfully imprisoned. I also wondered about telling a story for a younger audience, a story showcasing the themes in the *Globe*'s stories—about gross injustice and the eventual search for justice, about journalism and the difference it can make. I began asking, what if the daughter were the central character? What if she possessed the true grit required to push for justice against a system that has failed? What if she convinced a reporter to help her, and together they uncovered the truth? Therein came *Trell* and Clemens. The two of them took over, and the novel's story line began to take shape. It's a story intended to be inspirational. It's also intended to honor the memory of Tiffany Moore, the resolve of Shawn Drumgold, the tenacity of Rosemary Scapicchio, and the loyalty and love of Juanda, Rachelle, and Kiara Drumgold.