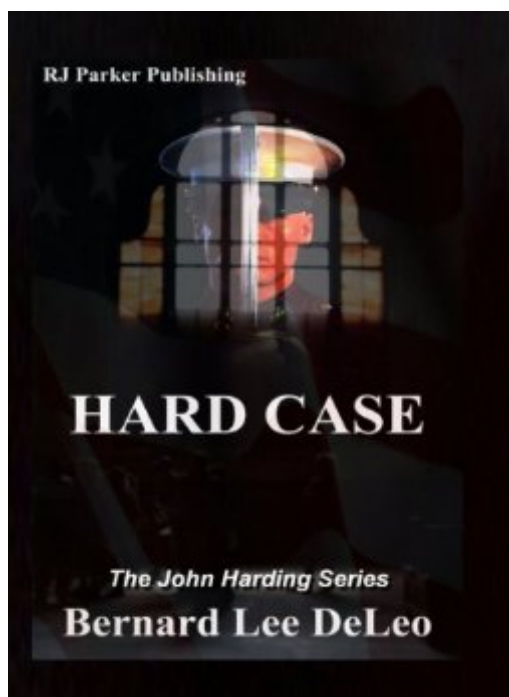


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Hard Case I (John Harding Series Book 1)



Synopsis

"Jack Reacher fans, say hello to John Harding, in a series you won't put down: He grew up mean, running away from his alcoholic father at the age of 14. With a little help in the form of a new identity, the runaway becomes John Harding. While in special ops overseas, he's recruited by CIA agent Denny Strobert, who sees something besides a knack for languages and combat skills: he knows he's found a killer." - Kindle Nation Daily

HARD CASE begins in a back alley warehouse in East Oakland, CA, where Harding fights for money, and to keep his skills honed, coupled with the fact he likes it. Harding does odd jobs with the only guy he trusts implicitly, his handler and manager, Tommy Sands. They bodyguard, escort tourists around the Bay Area, and do bail bond, skip trace work for a lawyer named Tess Connagher. Two events throw Harding's seamy life in the shadows out into the light. Strobert is ordered to enlist Tess Connagher's law firm to act as an intermediary with Harding in order to protect an outspoken Afghani woman whose family Harding protected long ago. The woman's father requested him, and the state department realizes they'll be off the hook if anything happens to Samira Karim while under Harding's care. Secondly, Harding fights a particularly brutal fight with a Russian mob backed fighter named Van Rankin who hates Harding. They'd had words. The YouTube video of Harding's subsequent beat-down of Rankin goes viral along with many of his prior fights. When Rankin's Russian mobster backer, Alexi Fiialkov pushes for a rematch on the UFC circuit, CIA Agent Strobert sees infinite possibilities since the United Arab Emirates has part ownership in the UFC. Some matches would be taking place in Dubai, where the CIA knows targets of opportunity show up from time to time. Tess Connagher, both fascinated and repulsed by Harding, cannot stay away from him. She rapidly finds out Harding is not some East Oakland leg-breaker, and being around him can be very dangerous, whether you're his friend or his enemy. She makes a couple of serious errors in judgment - Tess thinks she can control Harding, and she uses him to help Lora, her older sister.

The John Harding Series

Hard Case 1
Hard Case 2: The Lure of Hell
Hard Case 3: Voyage of The Damned
Hard Case 4: A Violent Life
Hard Case 5: Blood and Fear
Hard Case 6: The Killer Inside
Hard Case 7: Red Waves (Released April 13, 2016)

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Customer Reviews

I was made aware of this book, the first in a series featuring former Marine Corps special ops guy turned freelancer and extreme cage fighter John Harding, through an .com offer to download it for 99 cents. I'm not even sure why I took a closer look, except it was the first in a series, so if I liked it, I'd be able to look forward to more; and, I liked that it had earned an average of 4-1/2 stars from 76 reviewers. The clincher, though, was learning that Harding spent his teenage years in Leavittsburg, Ohio. Say what? Leavittsburg is a very small community of a couple of thousand residents along the Mahoning River in Trumbull County not many miles from my home - and it's so small that it's unlikely anyone would mention it in a book unless he or she were familiar with it. So I did a little sleuthing of my own; I didn't unearth much except that the author at one time attended the now-closed Western Reserve High School in nearby Warren, Ohio, and thus Leavittsburg would have been almost in his back yard. But that was enough for me to say what the heck? It was less than a buck, and I was intrigued. And now that I've finished it, I'm hooked. Harding, it seems, ran away from his Leavittsburg home and an extremely abusive father at age 14; with a little age adjustment, he got into military service, where he performed spectacularly and learned several languages. Subsequently, he's recruited by a CIA agent to take on special projects that must remain under the government radar - most of which involve utilizing his special skills and killing bad guys. To supplement that income and satisfy his need for violence, he earns money as an extreme cage fighter and takes on odd jobs doing bodyguard and skip trace work for his manager.

Didn't quite know what to expect with this one but loved it from page one. John Harding is a 6'5" tall. He's one big guy. A guy with loads of know how. He was a Spec Ops Force Recon Marine, He does work for the CIA and he's a Mixed Martial Arts cage fighter. Harding had one bad childhood. He ended up in the Marines. A good move for him. He has a penchant for languages and is hell on wheels when it comes to survival and taking out the bad guys. After he got out of the Marines he got into the MMA in a big way. During his first fight a slow ref caused the death of his opponent. Because of that most of his fights are impromptu, pick up fights. He makes money. His agent is Tommy Sands. He's a good agent and friend. Harding beats a guy in a MMA bout. A guy he wasn't supposed to beat. This gets the Russian Mafia involved. They had backed this guy big time. Lost loads of money. The Mafia leader wants a rematch. He's a guy Harding can do business with. A guy who turns out to be a pretty good friend. Of course the monster has to recover first. It will be a while before another fight.. Tess Connagher is another sometime employer for Harding. She works for a law firm and uses John to go after bail jumpers. Tess also has the hots for Harding. A fact Harding is willing to go along with. That is until Tess uses her closeness with John to set him up for a meeting with Dennis Strobert. Harding and Strobert do Govt business together occasionally. The fact that Tess is involved in this meeting is something Harding is not happy about. Good thing. Tess is too pissy for my money. Don't like her at all. Glad she's gone in Book 1. Good Gawd what an idiot she is.

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