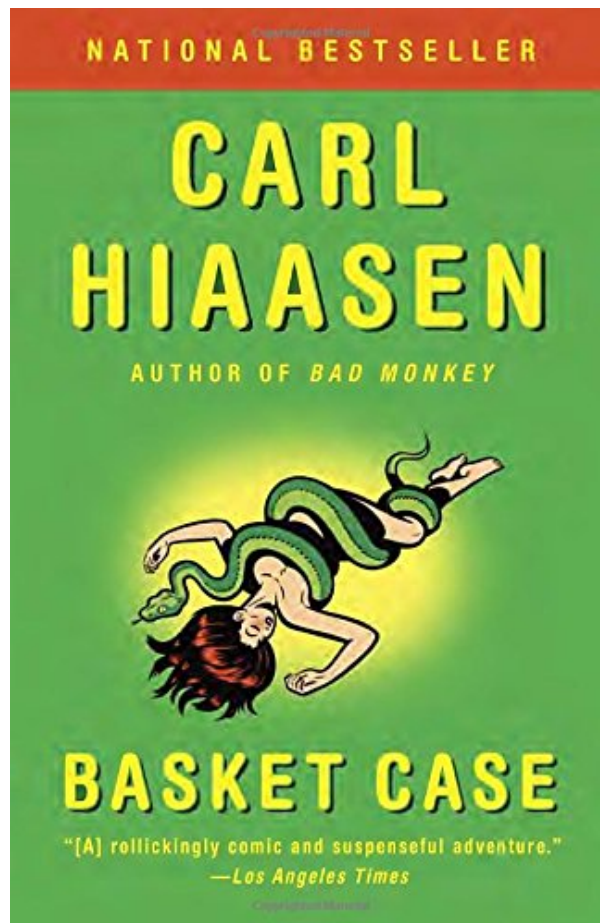


# BASKET CASE (VINTAGE CRIME/BLACK LIZARD) BY CARL HIAASEN



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# CARL HIAASEN

AUTHOR OF *BAD MONKEY*



## BASKET CASE

"[A] rollickingly comic and suspenseful adventure."

—*Los Angeles Times*

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Jack Tagger's years in exile at the obituaries desk of a South Florida daily haven't dulled his investigative reporter's nose for a good story. When Jimmy Stoma, the infamous front man of Jimmy and the Slut Puppies, dies in a fishy scuba accident, Jack sees his ticket back to page one—if only he can figure out what really happened. Standing in his way are, just for starters, his ambitious young editor, who hasn't yet fired anyone but plans to “break her cherry” on Jack; the rock star's pop-singer widow, who's using the occasion of her husband's death to relaunch her own career; and the soulless, profit-hungry owner of the newspaper, whom Jack once publicly humiliated at a stockholders' meeting. Following clues from the late rock singer's own music, Jack tries to unravel the lies surrounding Jimmy Stoma's strange fate.

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## Features

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## Amazon.com Review

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Most helpful customer reviews

61 of 64 people found the following review helpful.

Not As Wacky As Previous Efforts, But Fun Nonetheless

By K. Palmer

I have read Carl Hiaasen novels for over 10 years and do because I love the off-the-wall humor he brings to his novels. Previous efforts have reflected interesting uses of weed-wackers (in Skin Tight) and "The Club" (in Stormy Weather), not to mention the periodic exploits of a former Florida governor turned road kill connoiseur (Skink). He is a terrific storyteller who is passionate about the Florida environment as all of his previous novels had some type of "Save the Everglades" bent to them.

However, Hiaasen has taken a different turn with "Basket Case". First of all, this is his first novel written in the first person as he assumes the voice of Jack Tagger, former hotshot investigative newspaper reporter who has committed career suicide by publicly humiliating his boss and has been relegated to writing obituaries. Tagger is obsessed with the ages of people when they die and judges his life based on the famous people who died at his current age, which drives the people who care for him crazy. Tagger gets the chance to investigate the death of Jimmy Stoma, a washed-up rock star who was attempting to make a comeback at the time of his demise. You get to meet his wacky widow as well as several folks who help him in his quest. Hiaasen handles the limitations of the first person narrative pretty well, primarily through crisp use of dialog. It's a nice first effort for this style, although he can open himself more by staying in the third person as he has done previously.

I also credit Hiaasen for staying away from the environmental issues in this novel. I have stated in previous

reviews of the recent Hiaasen novels that this subplot, present in all his novels in some form, was getting old, a sentiment agreed with by many other faithful readers. I think it's great that he has the forum of a novel to get his anger with the over-development of South Florida out, but it was time for a break. It's not his best work (Native Tongue and Stormy Weather are his best in my opinion), but Basket Case is just plain fun without a lot of messages being sent.

I look forward to the next novel, which if form holds, will bring back Skink. But I enjoyed this one nonetheless. You will too.

42 of 45 people found the following review helpful.

Obit Worthy.

By A Customer

Like many Nelson DeMille novels, Carl Hiaasen writes his "Basket Case" from the first person viewpoint. And like many of DeMille's protagonists, obit writer Jack Tagger tells us the story with a smart-assed dialogue.

Dead is James Bradley Stomarti, also know as, Jimmy Stoma. You know. The Jimmy Stoma, lead singer in his band, Jimmy and the Slut Puppies. The Slut Puppies were famous for the hit single "Basket Case" from the "Floating Hospice" album. That Jimmy Stoma. Anyway, to bring you up to date, he died.

It seems that Jimmy was a regular rocker too. Like many of his peers he was into alcohol, drugs, and had a rap sheet longer than his Fender guitar. He'd been arrested on a regular basis for such things as; indecent exposure, (he was caught wearing a rubber Pat Robinson mask and a day-glow condom), he crashed his SeaDoo in to the SS Norway, gets popped for whizzing on Englebert Humperdink's limo, got busted for stealing a bundt cake, you name it. All in all, this makes for a very interesting and "obit worthy" character. According to Jack Tagger, anyway.

Jimmy's death may not have been an accident, and so the mystery begins. Jack, the obit writer, has his suspicions. While Jack's editor, Emma, has the "hots" for Jack. This is where the sexual tension weaves its way into the storyline.

I mention Emma because Carl Hiaasen is a master of great dialogue and great characterization. Taggar describes Emma: "Emma has the bearing of an exotic falcon." Those eight words told me everything that I needed to know about Emma.

This one is five stars and highly recommended. I know you will enjoy "Basket Case" as much as I did. Cammy Diaz, lawyer.

28 of 30 people found the following review helpful.

Yet another hit for Hiaasen

By brian warden

Once I picked up this book (after buying it the day it came out) I could not put it down. The plot is typical Hiaasen -fast paced, lots of twists, plenty of shady (and funny) characters. But the book is actually different than previous Hiaasen books in two respects: First, it is written from a first person, narrative, perspective, unlike all of his previous 8 novels. Secondly, it is a little more serious, and a little less twisted, than previous books. It has a more realistic feel (with the exception of a hilarious scene involving a frozen lizard); there aren't any dead animals hanging off characters arms (Double Whammy, Lucky You); or weed whackers (Skin Tight).

There are lots of rock-n-roll references which I found entertaing, and the main character-obituary writer Jack Tagger-is a likable, flawed individual, that is easy to root for. Overall, I'd definetly recommend this book.

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