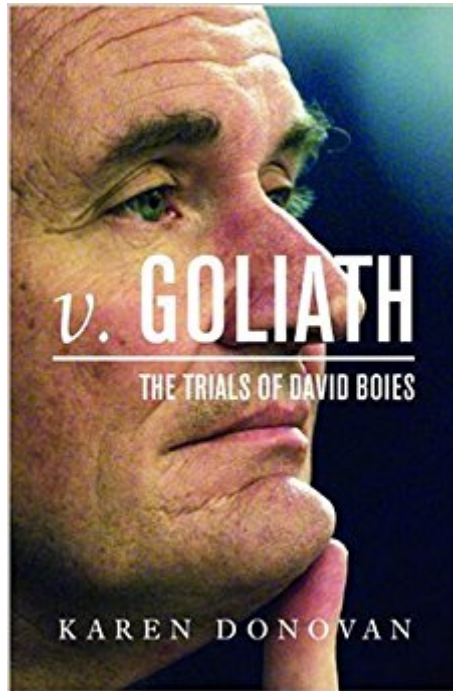




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V. Goliath: The Trials Of David Boies



Synopsis

In a society ever more obsessed with legal drama, David Boies, the star of a thousand press conferences, stands head and shoulders above the rest. The most prominent trial lawyer in the United States, Boies was catapulted to international prominence when he represented Al Gore before the Supreme Court in *Bush v. Gore*, in the aftermath of the 2000 presidential election. But well before the word "chad" entered our lexicon, Boies had participated in a string of headline-making cases, representing the Justice Department against Microsoft, CBS against General Westmoreland, and Napster against the recording industry. Brash, reckless, and prideful, he is also charming, charismatic, unerringly articulate in the courtroom, and supremely comfortable in the public eye. He is the epitome of the celebrity attorney and a peerless practitioner of the art of law. Legal journalist Karen Donovan, herself a lawyer, had unprecedented access to Boies for nearly two years, accompanying him on his high-profile cases and recording the workings of his brilliant yet erratic mind. She gives us a scintillating chronicle of the legal dramas in which Boies has played a crucial role. And drawing on extensive interviews with his former colleagues, she provides insightful analyses of his strategies, his skills, his effectiveness, his penchant for personal renown, and his flaws. The story of a singularly gifted lawyer—his ambition, judgment, and sense of justice—*v. Goliath* is also an illuminating examination of a profession that, increasingly, confuses ideals and celebrity.

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Customer Reviews

As Donovan shows in this insightful biography (a notable counterpoint to Boies's own recently

published autobiography, *Courting Justice*), power attorney David Boies has been at the fulcrum of the culture of legal celebrities for 20 years. Best known as the lawyer who represented the Democratic Party and Al Gore during the 2000 postelection battle, Boies has been involved in other high-profile cases: he represented the U.S. Justice Department in its suit against Microsoft, and CBS when it was sued by Gen. William Westmoreland. Donovan, a former attorney and editor at the *National Law Journal*, underscores Boies's brilliant mind, his ability to work long hours and his gift for persuasion. But Donovan, who tracked Boies with his approval, also knocks the lawyer off his pedestal, exposing the "myth" that he spearheaded IBM's defense in the 1975 *U.S. v. IBM*. Tracking Boies's losses as well as victories (and noting some disingenuousness when, in losing the *Napster* case, he blamed the judge), Donovan highlights such struggles as a bias case brought by several women staffers against his law firm, which was settled. Donovan seems to believe he's too cozy with members of the media who report on him and that he basks rather too much in the media's glow. While sometimes focusing on irrelevant personal details, she offers a sure, skeptical account of Boies's rise to the top of the legal realm. (Feb. 8) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

“A complex portrait. . . . Donovan was given extraordinary access to Mr. Boies, and it paid off.” • *The New York Sun* “Incisive. . . . [An] invaluable depiction of a man as complicated and contradictory as he is gifted.” • *New York Law Journal* “Insightful. . . . A sure, skeptical account of Boies’s rise to the top of the legal realm.” • *Publishers Weekly* “Here a colorful life takes on some color [with Donovan’s] significant access to Boies and his inner circle.” • *Los Angeles Times* --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

So the stories in this book are phenomenal. Boies' legal life and achievement is almost without equal. As such, each trial is a super cool story. However, the writing is terrible. It's really bad. This is true for a few reasons. Stylistically, the author is just not a very apt writer. Hundreds of paragraphs in this book simply don't make sense. On countless occasions, it felt like the author didn't edit certain parts, as though she just published her first draft. Substantively, the author just doesn't know anything about the law, and that is painfully obvious. That matters a lot in a book about trials. Whenever the author tries to speak about the legal issues of a case, she clumsily fumbles it. Consequently, the book doesn't really shine any light on the "legal" trials of David Boies. The book is simply a cursory overview of Boies' major cases with a few interesting tidbits about his opponents

and a couple zingers from the bench. I wouldn't recommend this book. I haven't read "Courting Justice," but I can't imagine it's worse than this rag.

This excellent book is best read alongside Boies's own memoir, *Courting Justice*.

I've been interested in Boies for a while, after seeing Charlie Rose interview him about the Prop 8 litigation last year and, more recently, after reading Malcolm Gladwell's excellent (as usual) profile of him in his last book on underdogs. Boies's career is remarkable — he was already a go-to Wall Street litigator before the DoJ hired him to prosecute the Microsoft antitrust litigation, leading Al Gore's legal campaign in Florida and eventually to the Supreme Court, and now heading the Prop 8 fight. What makes these two books stand out is not just their subject, it's that they manage to cover that subject from two perspectives that are independently fantastic. Donovan is a legal reporter who was assigned to cover the Microsoft trial, got to know Boies and pitched the book idea to him. He agreed, and she followed him for the "miracle year" following that, through *Bush v. Gore*. In the middle of that year, Boies was approached by a book publisher to write a memoir. In *Courting Justice*, we get a first hand view of Boies and how he thinks. Standing alone, the memoir manages to avoid the self-masturbatory tone that ruins too many other autobiographies. Then, in *v. Goliath*, Donovan paints an honest picture of Boies with a little distance. Donovan is clearly taken in by his charm, but is also not shy to point out criticisms of his work. If you're in law, and especially litigation, the books are littered with industry history and practice points. But even if you're not, the books are accessible, well edited, and interesting. It's rare to have two first-hand accounts written so well about such a deserving career. I highly recommend them in tandem.

As a trial lawyer, I found the details of Boies' life really interesting, not because they are so unique but because they are not so. The cases are bigger. The spotlight brighter but this book reveals that David Boies puts his suit pants on, one leg at a time just like the rest of us. That I found to be inspiring.

Good deal, good shape, price and delivery was timely

Very, very interesting story of David Boies. Well written.

David Boies has an amazing story. This was a gift and was greatly enjoyed. Would recommend to someone with an interest in law or an interest in a great lawyer.

this a great behind the scenes look at one of the country's best lawyers. It is a fascinating read that lawyers and non lawyers will enjoy

The author of this book, a lawyer turned journalist, spent a lot of time with David Boies in 2000 and 2001. The book is biographical but concentrates on Boies' time as a lawyer with the Cravath firm, and his creation of his own firm. She details the Microsoft case, where Boies was working for the Government in trying to show Microsoft was in violation of anti-trust law. He won that case in the first instance, but the judge did stupid things and the victory fizzled out. Boies started his own firm which quickly grew to 100 lawyers. The book tells of cases Boies handled and shows his methods--which were flashy and highly successful. His handling of his practice has to make one admire the fact he could be so successful when spreading himself so thin. One is astounded that he took family vacations as if he had all the time in the world and then had important events in the trials piled on top of each other, seldom seeking to have trials or hearings postponed. Working for him reminds me of a madhouse and I know I would never have been at ease in his employ. The doleful events of November and December 2000 are of course explored at length. I found I did not enjoy reliving those days as I read the book. It is indeed disturbing that under some scenarios Gore would have been elected--and the thought of how different the world would have been had that happened makes the reading of the book indeed upsetting. The complexity of the trials that Boies was involved in I did not think were handled too well by the author--but maybe no one could do better than she did. Donovan does not hesitate to show defects in Boies' behavior, and the fees he was able to obtain seem almost obscene to an old lawyer like me, well realizing that I lived in a world having no resemblance to his.

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