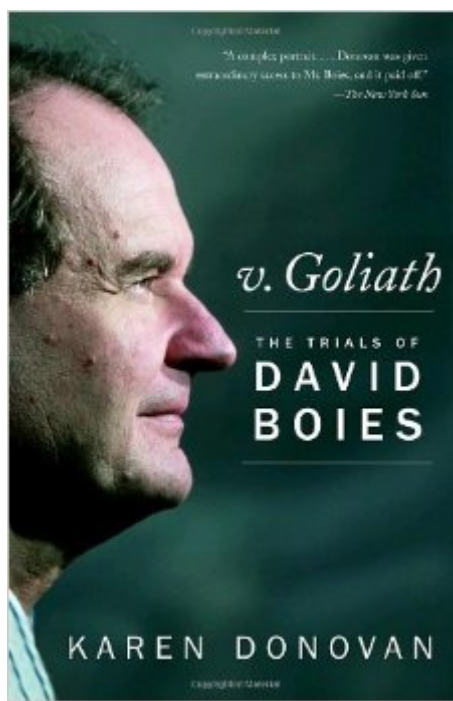


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V. Goliath: The Trials Of David Boies



Synopsis

David Boies, the star trial lawyer in a country obsessed with legal drama, proves endlessly fascinating in this compulsively readable account of his extraordinary career. A man of almost superhuman accomplishment, Boies argued a string of headline-making cases before being catapulted to international prominence when he represented Al Gore before the Supreme Court in *Bush v. Gore*. Brash, reckless, and prideful, he is also charming, charismatic, unerringly articulate in the courtroom, and supremely comfortable in the public eye. Legal journalist Karen Donovan, herself a lawyer, had unprecedented access to Boies for nearly two years. In *v. Goliath* she gives us a scintillating chronicle of the legal dramas in which Boies has played a crucial role and a riveting, up-close portrait of a singularly gifted lawyer.

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Customer Reviews

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 â œmiracle yearâ • 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 youâ™re in law, and especially litigation, the books are littered with industry history and practice points. But even if youâ™re not, the books are accessible, well edited, and interesting. Itâ™s rare to have two first-hand accounts written so well about such a deserving career. I highly recommend them in tandem.

Karen Donovan's book is something of a biography, a Grisham novel, a history book, and a litigation primer all wrapped into one. (As a litigator, I'm actually thinking that some of the strategies related in the book would be helpful for me in court.) Thoroughly engaging and entertaining, Ms. Donovan has a great deal of respect for her subject's talents but is careful not to gloss over his significant flaws.

In this insightful and yeomanly researched book, Karen Donovan paints a vivid picture of a man who has achieved iconic status among America's trial lawyers. Thanks to the access granted the author by David Boies, we get not only a ringside seat for some of the last decade's most high-profile trials, including, of course, the one that put the current occupant of the White House in office, but we're there for pre-trial strategy sessions and post-trial dinners as well. Throughout, Donovan maintains a keen-eyed objectivity and isn't afraid to deflate balloons of bravado when need be. All in all, it's a compelling read.

David Boies probably has the most varied and storied career of any litigator alive, capped now by his recent work on the California Prop. 8 case. Unlike many top litigators profiled in previous books, who are workaholics with boundless energy but few quirks or outside interests, Boies is also a bit of an eccentric in his career path, world view, hobbies, and even shoe preferences. This combination helps make Karen Donovan's book such a compelling read, and Boies such a compelling subject. Interspersed with incisive analysis of major cases Boies has handled, particularly the Microsoft antitrust case, are snippets and anecdotes about this colorful figure and about the practice of high-stakes lawsuits today. Donovan's book is thus a must for anyone who aspires to litigate at the top levels, or who just wants to learn more about how one of the greatest litigators of all time manages to pull it off in this conformist world and profession of ours.--Ross Guberman, author of

Point Made: How to Write Like the Nation's Top Advocates

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.

I like the fact that Ms. Donovan had such close access to Mr. Boies in writing this biography. It is a little embarrassing but fun to read that Mr. Boies' jaw 'locks' when he is angry. There are a lot of meals in this book, so do not read it on an empty stomach. The book talks about Mr. Boies' formative years. We learn he is dyslexic, but we do not learn what he did to counteract this and graduate from Yale Law School. A good book.

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