



# The Great Decision: Jefferson, Adams, Marshall, and the Battle for the Supreme Court

By Cliff Sloan, David McKean

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*The Great Decision* tells the riveting story of Marshall and of the landmark court case, *Marbury v. Madison*, through which he empowered the Supreme Court and transformed the idea of the separation of powers into a working blueprint for our modern state. Rich in atmospheric detail, political intrigue, and fascinating characters, *The Great Decision* is an illuminating tale of America's formative years and the evolution of our democracy.

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### Editorial Review

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**\*Starred Review\*** In 1800, when Thomas Jefferson took office as third president of the U.S., it represented the first peaceful transfer of power from one party to another in the new nation, but it also aggravated growing tensions between the outgoing Federalists and the incoming Republicans. The nascent U.S. Supreme Court, led by John Marshall, Jefferson's distant cousin and sometime antagonist, was caught in the middle when a case pitting the two political parties against each other landed before the court. *Marbury v. Madison* challenged Jefferson's authority to rebuff the court-packing efforts of outgoing President Adams. Sloan and McKean begin by detailing the behind-the-scenes machinations attending the transfer of power to Jefferson. They go on to focus on the particulars of the *Marbury* case and Marshall's efforts to shape the court's tradition by wearing black robes, deliberating, and balancing politics against legal equity, to establish gravitas for an institution that had been a laughingstock. An astute politician, Marshall managed to avoid a confrontation with Jefferson but firmly established the Supreme Court as the last word in interpreting the Constitution. In this highly accessible book, the authors skillfully build suspense and tension around an outcome readers may already know. --Vanessa Bush

### Review

"Kirkus," December 15, 2008

"Former Supreme Court clerk and Slate publisher Sloan and veteran political aide McKean bring to life one of the most important legal cases in American history.... Sloan and McKean supply *Marbury's* historical context and unravel the complex fabric of personalities, politics and law that animated the case.... The authors' enthusiasm and clear prose vivify the contention that, as Marshall said, 'It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is.' A crisp, color examination of the case that established the formidable power of the federal judiciary."

Walter Isaacson, author of "Benjamin Franklin: An American Life"

"The Supreme Court case of *Marbury v. Madison* is the most important key to understanding the separation of power in American government. "The Great Decision" makes the tale come alive. It's filled with intrigue, colorful personalities, and political maneuvers that seem astonishingly relevant to our world today."

Douglas Brinkley, Professor of History at Rice University

"What a deeply intelligent and well written analysis of the *Madison v. Marbury* case. Anyone interested in constitutional law must read this fine book by Cliff Sloan and David McKean."

Laurence H. Tribe, Carl M. Loeb University Professor, Harvard Law School

"As our nation emerges from a dark decade of disrespect for the Constitution, nothing could be more fitting than a new picture of the great decision that made the rule of law a living part of the American legacy. Forests have been felled writing about that decision as a legal landmark, but its place in the turbulent politics and psychology of the time has never been painted in colors more vivid than those with which Sloan and McKean created this historic portrait."

Ken Burns, Filmmaker

"Cliff Sloan and David McKean have taken the story of Marbury v. Madison and revealed it to be what it always was: a drama of the first order--superbly and fluidly rendered here--and a decision that would cement the power of the third and most neglected leg of the tripod that still to this day supports us all."

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"Booklist," 3/1

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About the Author

**Cliff Sloan** is a former Supreme Court clerk. He has written about the Supreme Court for many publications, including *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, and *Slate*.

**David McKean** is a top-level Senate aide, a veteran political strategist, and the author of *Friends in High Places* and *Tommy the Cork*.

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Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important action, like looking for your favorite reserve and reading a publication. Beside you can solve your short lived problem; you can add your knowledge by the guide entitled The Great Decision: Jefferson, Adams, Marshall, and the Battle for the Supreme Court. Try to stumble through book The Great Decision: Jefferson, Adams, Marshall, and the Battle for the Supreme Court as your pal. It means that it can for being your friend when you experience alone and beside that course make you smarter than in the past. Yeah, it is very fortunated for you personally. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know every little thing by the book. So , we should make new experience along with knowledge with this book.

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