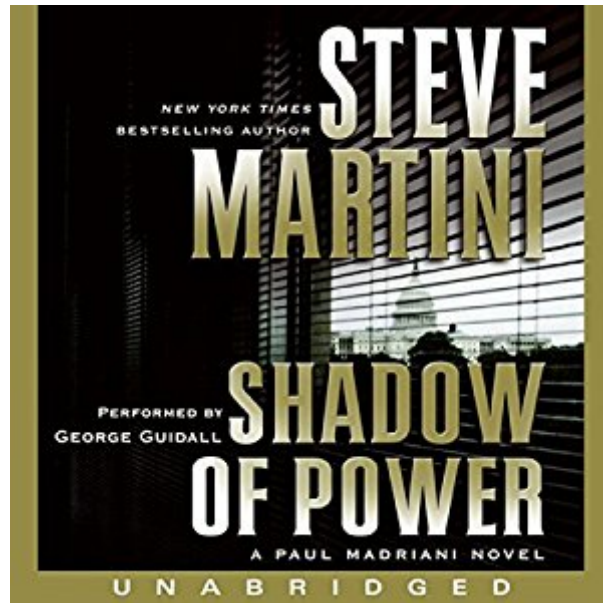


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Shadow Of Power: A Paul Madriani Novel



Synopsis

The Supreme Court is one of our most sacred and secretive public institutions. But sometimes secrets can lead to cover-ups with very deadly consequences. Terry Scarborough is a legal scholar and provocateur who craves headline-making celebrity, but with his latest book he may have gone too far. In it he resurrects forgotten language in the U.S. Constitution and hints at a missing letter of Thomas Jefferson's that threatens to divide the nation. Then, during a publicity tour, Scarborough is brutally murdered in a San Diego hotel room, and a young man with dark connections is charged. What looks like an open-and-shut case to most people doesn't to defense attorney Paul Madriani. He believes that there is much more to the case and that the defendant is a pawn caught in the middle, being scapegoated by circumstance. As the trial spirals toward its conclusion, Madriani and his partner, Harry Hinds, race to find the missing Jefferson letter and the secrets it holds about slavery and scandal at the time of our nation's founding and the very reason Scarborough was killed. Madriani's chase takes him from the tension-filled courtroom in California to the trail of a high court justice now suddenly in hiding and lays bare the soaring political stakes for a seat on the highest court, in a country divided, and under the shadow of power. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

I've been a Martini/Madriani fan for years. Martini has perfected the craft and art of the legal thriller far beyond the purported master, Grisham. In that particular arena, he fully realizes his capabilities in this novel. The problem with this particular book is that the whole plot is predicated on the

absolutely ridiculous idea that the murder victim has somehow turned one clause in the US Constitution dealing with the census apportionment of slaves -- which has been sitting there and been taught and explained in depth in every public school in the country since the Constitution was ratified in 1787 -- into a brand new and riot-inducing racial controversy that threatens the very fiber and existence of this country. I mean....c'mon! It's so laughable I had to wonder what the guy'd been smoking! I'd get all involved in the murder case and the investigation and the forensics and the personalities and the legalities of evidentiary matters and strategy.... and all of a sudden he'd write something that would once again remind me of the "motives" of the suspects, and I'd have to put it down until I stopped laughing! Ah, well..... put THAT aside (yeah...ignore the elephant in the room) and it's a pretty good book.

Steve Martini is a legal thriller author who at once time was branded the next John Grisham. While Martini never quite reached that level of success, he has still produced a series of enjoyable courtroom thrillers involving a criminal defense attorney named Paul Madriani. *SHADOW OF POWER* is the most recent entry in the Madriani series, and it's just an okay read. Nearly all of Martini's novels involve a high-profile criminal trial, and about two thirds of *SHADOW OF POWER* takes place in the courtroom. Martini is a criminal lawyer himself, and he usually does a solid job of describing the minutiae of court procedure, especially when it comes to the complex process of admitting evidence to the jury. Unfortunately, I think Martini goes overboard in this novel, spending countless pages on procedural maneuvering that made my eyes glaze over in spots. I think a good writer knows what to leave out, and Martini gets a bit too long-winded with his detailed explanations of forensics and evidentiary law (which often trump character development). Some readers might find this material fascinating, but I just wanted Martini to get on with the story. As other reviewers have mentioned, *SHADOW OF POWER* contains an over-the-top plotline involving the US Constitution that is hard to swallow. I think Martini decided to borrow a page from Dan Brown's playbook by promising to uncover a centuries-old historical conspiracy, but the whole concept really falls flat by the end, leading me to feel kind of cheated. I hope that Martini's next novel offers a more realistic plot than what I found here. Overall, *SHADOW OF POWER* is an okay read, especially for those who enjoy a good courtroom story. You can do much worse than this book, but I think this isn't one of Martini's best efforts.

I really liked all of the Martini books I have read up until this one. I have to agree with most of the negative reviews here. The premise is outlandish and not believable. The trial details are somewhat

interesting. The biggest problem for me was that precious little is revealed throughout 99% book, including through the trial verdict, and then the complete details of what happened are disclosed in the final five or ten pages, by the guilty party. I wouldn't recommend it. I do like Martini's writing style and I will read new books by him. I hope he takes some of the criticism of this book to heart and responds accordingly.

This courtroom thriller rests upon a ridiculous and even laughable premise--that the words in the US Constitution sanctioning slavery could be used by a modern writer to produce a book that shoots to the top of best seller lists and causes race riots all over the country. The words in the Constitution that sanction slavery are clear to every high school student who actually pays attention, and Martini makes a most unconvincing case that anything new can come out of those eighteenth century words. The "Jefferson letter" turns out more like a Hitchcock McGuffin than anything realistic on which a genuinely genuine thriller would thrill. One final quibble--Martini glancingly refers to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's effort to pack the Supreme Court in 1937, and says that FDR was trying to amend the Constitution. Untrue. FDR was not trying to amend the Constitution because he didn't need to. Under the Constitution the Congress is empowered to establish a Supreme Court and to determine how many justices the Supreme Court will have. Over our history the number of Supreme Courts justices has varied from five to ten; in 1869 Congress set the number at nine, where it has remained. So, what FDR was seeking in 1937 was not a constitutional amendment but a simple Act of Congress to increase the number of justices from nine to 15. Congress refused. The point is that Martini should have researched his history more accurately.

I have been reading all the Paul Madriani books in order for the last few months. They are good, not great. but this one is not only bad, it is insulting. It's central premise is that Americans are so stupid that they don't know what's in the Constitution, and that Black America is so fragile that it will resort to rioting when it discovers what the Constitution says, and that the language of the Constitution does not change. This would have been excusable if it served a good mystery, but this time it does not. Simply a bad novel, with a payoff that does not satisfy. I ordered the next book in the series, but I cannot bring myself to begin reading it. Seriously, that's how bad this one was.

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