

Historical Interpretation or Ambush Journalism?

CBS vs Westmoreland in *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception (1982)*

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ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 1982, major daily newspapers in Boston, New York, Washington, and Chicago carried a full-page advertisement for a Saturday night documentary on CBS. An artist's drawing placed the reader in a full, high angle position, looking down from the ceiling at a roundtable discussion chaired by a two-star general. Seven members of his staff surrounded the table over which was written in capital letters, "CONSPIRACY." Viewers were promised an exposé which would reveal "a deliberate plot to fool the American public, the Congress, and perhaps even the White House into believing we were winning a war that we in fact were losing" (Benjamin, *Fair Play*, ill. 1; hereafter, *FP*). The advertisement did not reach the masses; the program drew a small audience, finishing dead last in the ratings for that week. However, *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception* (1982) was watched by an important minority audience: some—to include General William Westmoreland, the "heavy" of the show—were incensed by its distortions; unfortunately, many more were convinced by the program that CBS had caught people in high places betraying the public trust.¹

Shortly after the broadcast, General Westmoreland began to receive calls from friends and family, asking him if the thesis of the program—that he suppressed information about Vietcong offensive capabilities—were really true. Even his daughter called! Within days, veterans groups were denouncing their former commander. Understandably, the supreme commander in Vietnam (1964-68) decided to begin a slow, uphill battle to regain his honor. The counteroffensive would not come to a halt until February 18, 1985, when Westmoreland and his lawyer, Dan Burt, received a public statement from CBS attesting that, whatever the contentions of its program, the network did not believe “General Westmoreland was unpatriotic and disloyal in performing his duties as he saw them” (Brewin 345).²

Now, five years later, memory of the “Westmoreland Trial” is beginning to wane. Most people I ask about the struggle remember that the general withdrew and therefore assume that Westmoreland was guilty of the “conspiracy” which *The Uncounted Enemy* exposed. Few remember that CBS withdrew the charge of conspiracy some eight months *prior to* the out-of-court settlement of Westmoreland’s \$120 million suit. Almost no one has seen the documentary which precipitated the struggle. I intend to summarize as fairly and fully as space permits the charges presented by *The Uncounted Enemy* (hereafter *TUE*) and then to critique the program under some basic cinematic rubrics. The program’s methodology was flawed by single-source dependence upon its paid consultant, Sam Adams, a man with an axe to grind. Interviews for the program were edited in such a way as to distort statements by those interviewed or to misrepresent events—in one case, giving the impression that people were on one side of the globe when they were over 18,000 miles away. Editing is perhaps the most powerful tool available to the documentary filmmaker as he interprets history; the device was grossly misused in

TUE to make General Westmoreland appear guilty as charged. Mike Wallace's narration was more dramatic than journalistic, and the media star was guilty of betraying the trust placed in him by his viewers. Finally, there were significant factual flaws in the CBS presentation, all of them contributing to a predetermined thesis. Little wonder that General Westmoreland took umbrage at *TUE* and began to explore ways to tell Americans—including Vietnam veterans and his family—what was so wrong with the CBS program, *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception*.

The Uncounted Enemy: Brief Synopsis of the Program

In his introduction, host Mike Wallace explains that the Tet offensive of January-February 1968 was a surprise because neither the President nor the American public was aware of the actual size of enemy forces before that climactic nation-wide attack:

Tonight we're going to present evidence of what we have come to believe was a conscious effort—indeed a conspiracy at the highest levels of American intelligence—to suppress and alter critical intelligence on the enemy leading up to the Tet offensive.³

The remainder of the five-act documentary attempts to trace the manner by which the “conspiracy” was carried out by General William Westmoreland and his staff at the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) during the spring and fall of 1967.

Act one portrays consultant Sam Adams as an unheeded CIA analyst whose prescient readings of enemy strength figures in 1966-67 were ignored. File footage highlights the kind of domestic political turmoil in the United States over

an unpopular war, which made Adams' news politically explosive. According to *TUE*, President Lyndon Johnson wanted to see "light at the end of the tunnel"; he did not want to be confronted with figures showing unanticipated enemy strength and resilience. General William Westmoreland is then presented in his role as Johnson's salesman of good news about progress in Vietnam during the spring and fall of 1967.

During his interview with Mike Wallace, Westmoreland shows familiarity with the Sam Adams' figures, but the perfunctory manner with which he dismisses them is less than convincing. Furthermore, apparently disillusioned members of Westmoreland's intelligence staff are given sound bites to question the way in which intelligence data was processed at the MACV during the Westmoreland years, 1964-68. Responding to a hypothetical question, General Joseph McChristian states that, as a West Point graduate, he could not participate in the juggling of intelligence figures during wartime; it would be a violation of the Military Academy's code of honor. (The editing makes it appear that McChristian is responding to the points previously made about dubious MACV practices.) Wallace implies at the close of act one that McChristian was rotated back to the U.S. because of his opposition to Westmoreland's immoral effort to suppress new intelligence information.

Act two traces the details of suppression. George MacArthur claims that his superiors in the MACV intelligence chain arbitrarily cut his estimates of enemy strength. George Allen, a crony of Sam Adams, states that the CIA—indeed, the entire intelligence community—was making a grave error by ignoring Sam. Next, CBS' paid consultant, Adams, describes a meeting of the CIA's Board of National Estimates at which his good friend from MACV, Colonel Gains Hawkins, argued for the Westmoreland numbers (called "the command figures") even though

Hawkins' work as an analyst had led him to much higher estimates. Wallace leads Hawkins through a series of reflections on the tragic consequences. Host Wallace then puts words in Hawkins' mouth when he says "American troops are going to have to face a much larger enemy. A lot of them are going to get slaughtered [in the Tet offensive]." Wallace's tone clearly emphasizes that the "command figures" were politically determined while the numbers arrived at by Adams, Hawkins, and McChristian were scientifically accurate.⁴ McChristian ends the second act with another forceful statement of a West Point graduate's devotion to "Duty, Honor, Country" when confronted with a choice between political expediency and truth. Viewers are led to the conclusion that General Westmoreland and his cronies were acting unethically by West Point standards. Needless to say, this kind of rhetoric hurt Westmoreland, who was not only a proud graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, but had been Superintendent of the school immediately prior to assuming responsibilities at MACV.

Act three focuses on the debate over "the Order of Battle," MACV's comprehensive estimate of the enemy's overall *military* offensive capability.⁵ In September of 1967, General Westmoreland endorsed a move to shift the Vietcong's Self-Defense Forces—people in villages who could be used to carry ammunition, dig puny pits, etc.—from the body of the Order of Battle. Instead, these irregular forces would be carried in the narrative portions of a variety of intelligence reports turned out by MACV and the Washington intelligence community. Looking very uncomfortable on camera as he defends this decision, Westmoreland argues that the Self-Defense forces had no offensive capability, that "this is a non-issue." No sound bites are edited in to support the general's views, even though CBS had on the editor's shelf three hours of

supporting material on film supplied by Walt W. Rostow, President Johnson's National Security Advisor.

To the contrary, the issue would become, according to Wallace, "one of the most bitterly fought battles in the history of American intelligence." George Allen (CIA) and George Hamscher (Army Intelligence) are brought back to critique Westmoreland's decision. File footage from 1967 resurrects statements about good news just as the enemy is shown to be planning the nation-wide attacks which would be known as the Tet offensive. *TUE* does an effective job of evoking the sense of a yawning gap between irreducible facts and the government's "cooked books."

Act four shifts the story from the Vietcong strength figures to estimates of infiltration by North Vietnamese Main Force units. The Westmoreland of 1967, appearing on *Meet The Press*, disagrees on the subject of infiltration with the Westmoreland of 1981 (6000 in 1967 vs 20,000 in 1981). Colonel Everette Parkins, we are told, was fired for defending accurate infiltration figures. On this point, Westmoreland is allowed his single ally. General Daniel Graham—whose integrity will be impugned later in the program—is allowed only twenty-two seconds to defend the command position. An apparently flustered and stammering Westmoreland contributes little to support Graham against a montage of criticisms by MACV and CIA lower echelon officers frustrated about the unwillingness of top commanders to accept their interpretations of data.⁶ Wallace concludes act four with an apparently unavoidable conclusion:

And so, the President of the United States, the American Army in Vietnam, and the American public back home were destined to be caught totally unprepared for the size of the attack that was coming the following month.

As the program cuts to commercials, the central thesis about the origins and results of the “conspiracy” have been made. What remains is to demonstrate the tragic consequences of the dishonorable plot.

Act five and the epilogue of *The Uncounted Enemy* spell out lessons about the real reason for our defeat in Vietnam. The Tet attacks surprised everyone in Vietnam and set the Joint Chiefs of Staff into a tailspin; they begged for immediate reinforcements and for President Johnson to mobilize the Reserves. During a special report evaluating the impact of the Tet offensive, Walter Cronkite—“articulating the sentiment growing in the country that Tet was a devastating setback”—called for a turnabout in policy and for immediate negotiations to make the best of a “stalemate.”

Westmoreland, in his interview with Wallace, cites incorrect figures which are then examined graphically on screen to accent the obvious fallacy of the command policy. Wallace asks rhetorically: “If so many Viet Cong had been taken out of action, whom were we fighting?” As in earlier acts, lower echelon analysts then discredit Westmoreland’s claims that he had made the right decision. Sam Adams makes his last appearance to assert that, after Tet, his estimates finally reached the White House where they were used to brief a gathering of Johnson’s council of “wise men,” Dean Acheson, George Ball, Arthur Goldberg, Maxwell Taylor, and others.⁷ Realizing the magnitude of his error, Lyndon Johnson steps down from the Presidency. Less fortunate Americans in uniform cannot drop out: twenty-seven thousand more Americans are to die before the Communist victory in 1975.

The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception concludes on an elegiac note about the lessons of Vietnam. Truthfulness, a greater sense of “duty, honor, and country”

could have averted the Vietnam tragedy. Furthermore, an informed public could have checked our war machine from continuing in an obviously futile direction. In his efforts to please Lyndon Johnson, General William C. Westmoreland betrayed his command responsibilities to his men. With such a moral reaching a “small” audience of twenty million Americans, Westmoreland felt compelled to challenge the CBS documentary.

The Initial Response—Laurels, then Darts

Many intelligent viewers of *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception* did not see any problems with it. Immediately after the program, Burton Benjamin—who would later play a pivotal role at CBS in exposing the flaws of the program—turned off his television set with pride:

I felt that I had just watched one of the most remarkable documentaries that CBS News had ever produced. That this kind of maneuvering could have happened during a war so futile and pointless—a war I had seen first-hand during two trips to Vietnam—sickened me.... I told my wife that *The Uncounted Enemy* might well rank with two of the more celebrated *CBS Reports* of the past, *Hunger in America* and *The Selling of the Pentagon*. (FP 36)

The senior CBS producer was not alone in his high opinion of the program. In an unusual editorial, the *New York Times* lauded the TV special, uncritically accepting its conspiratorial thesis: “Those ‘captured documents’ of which he boasted were in truth packed with accurate information—but the summaries he received were doctored, to keep the press from ‘drawing an erroneous and gloomy

conclusion,' in [sic] General Westmoreland's words'' (Quoted in Benjamin, *FP* 14). In a review for *The Wall Street Journal*, Hodding Carter—who, like Burton Benjamin, would later make an about-face—recoiled from the program's revelations; like the *New York Times*, Carter hoped aloud that similar machinations were not taking place in relation to Central America. Even William F. Buckley joined the short-lived band-wagon for *The Uncounted Enemy* in a syndicated column. Buckley described *TUE* as a "truly extraordinary documentary" which "absolutely" proved that Westmoreland had lied about enemy strength. Lesser luminaries in the press and the Washington political scene followed suit. Westmoreland was thus placed in a situation where he not only had to answer the errant documentary, but to counteract the published judgments of network and syndicated commentators as well.

The following Tuesday, Westmoreland, along with others in the intelligence chain who had been attacked by the program, called a press conference at Washington's Army-Navy Club. For two hours, the press was treated to general statements about errors of concept and fact in the program. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker defended the intelligence work of his "country team." Colonel Charles Morris, the officer to whom Colonel Gains Hawkins reported, denied that Hawkins had voiced reservations during Order of Battle debates of 1967. Westmoreland's Chief of Intelligence during the numbers debates, General Phillip Davidson, dismissed the complaints of junior officers on the basis of their not having access to all relevant information on enemy strength and intentions. (Order of Battle estimates never included highly sensitive electronic intelligence data about troop movements.) General Daniel Graham took over the job of critiquing a series of clips from *The Uncounted Enemy*. Finally, George Allen's supervisor at the CIA, George Carver, revealed that it was *he and not*

Westmoreland who had suggested dropping the Self-Defense forces from the numerical portion of the Order of Battle.⁸ (Ironically, Colonel Gains Hawkins, an important CBS source, had been the first person to make the suggestion to Carver during a Saigon visit in July 1967.)

Westmoreland's press conference received wide coverage, setting in motion a debate which would have two components: Vietnam and the American Press. *Westmoreland* was the dramatic player for the Vietnam veterans and officials; CBS took on the role of the press. Cynical observers like Stanley Karnow would laugh off the confrontation: "They were both losers from the beginning. CBS did a lousy program, and *Westmoreland* never understood what the war was about" (Benjamin, *FP* 202).⁹ Most Americans, however, took an interest in the standoff because they were still trying to sort out the meaning of the Vietnam experience and the relationship of the press to our country's perception of its first "television war."

A Survey of Errors and Distortions

Shortly after the *Westmoreland* press conference, Sally Bedell and Don Kowett of *TV Guide* began an in-depth examination of *TUE*. Initially, CBS granted full access to interview transcripts, outtakes, and personnel. Bedell and Kowett also talked with those who had been interviewed for the program—whether their interviews had been used or not. When their article appeared on May 22, 1982, it bore the dramatic title, *Anatomy of a Smear*, and it came down hard on both Producer George Crile and CBS.¹⁰ Immediately after *TV Guide* hit the checkout counters across the country, CBS called upon its senior documentary producer Burton Benjamin to conduct an internal investigation to test the validity of claims made by *Westmoreland*, *TV Guide*, and a host of other angry voices. The following critique is an

amalgam of these findings, plus insights culled from a research base I have accumulated over the last seventeen years as a Vietnam veteran, media scholar, and television producer.

1. Methodology:

Producer George Crile's key error was his single-source dependence on Sam Adams, the retired CIA analyst. Even friendly students of the Westmoreland controversy agree that Adams was obsessed by the numbers debates; he went to great lengths to force his reports to the top of the government chain. When his reports were rejected, Adams presumed ignorance on the part of his supervisors. His next step was to find ways around bureaucratic roadblocks, always hoping that someone further up the ladder would recognize the validity of his analysis. He would later have the same kind of quarrel at CIA over Cambodian figures (Brewin 12-5; Kowett 43).

Beginning in 1965, Adams was assigned to research enemy strength and morale in Vietnam. During the late summer of 1966, pouches for Adams began to arrive at the CIA headquarters outside Washington, D.C. These pouches contained translations of captured enemy documents. After close examination of the materials, Adams began to question existing Order of Battle figures for Dinh Binh Province and, by extrapolation, for the rest of Vietnam.¹¹ In Gains Hawkins, an analyst counterpart at MACV headquarters in Vietnam, Adams found a kindred spirit. When Adams' superior, George Carver, turned a deaf ear to Adams' speculations, Hawkins listened. By May 1968, Adams was so frustrated at the insensitivity of his superiors that he filed charges with the CIA Inspector General. According to George Carver, "Sam wanted to get Richard Helms fired and Westmoreland courtmartialed" (Kowett, *AMH* 42).

Adams volunteered to appear in defense of Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo during their “Pentagon Papers” trial because he said it made no sense to “hang a man for leaking faked numbers” (Brewin 15). Much to Gains Hawkins’ dismay, Adams also volunteered the services of the recently retired Colonel who swore under oath, contrary to Adams’ expectations, that there had been no “cap” on intelligence figures at MACV. During 1975, Adams carried his crusade to Congressman Otis Pike’s House Select Committee on Intelligence where he received a sympathetic hearing, but not on the issue of a conspiracy. Finally, with the help of an editor at *Harper’s* magazine—George Crile—Adams found a national forum for his theories (Adams). When Crile moved to CBS as a producer of documentaries, he hired Adams to help him shout the message from the top of “black rock.”

Crile was guilty of not revealing Adams’ obsessive background to supervisors at CBS News, specifically Associate Producer Joe Zigman, Executive Producer, Howard Stringer, and the Vice President for Documentaries, Roger Coloff. Most critics of the process believe that any or all of these supervisors would have scrutinized the project more closely had they known about the Pike Committee Report. Unlike the unbalanced assemblage of rushes screened for the news executives, the Pike Committee hearings allowed officials like George Carver to submit the Adams thesis to withering analysis. By 1975, there were some tough statistical arguments to contradict the 1967 numbers vital to Adams’ thesis. For example, when the Tet attacks came at the end of January, 1968, they revealed an enemy force of 80,000 men, not the 600,000-man juggernaut predicted by Adams (Kowett 48; Davidson 481). By mid-March of 1968, the CIA knew that both its estimates *and* the MACV numbers had been too high, not deceptively low.

Based on his work as a researcher for previous Vietnam documentaries, Howard Stringer, the Executive Producer, should have been aware of LBJ's thinking at Tet—especially Johnson's awareness that an attack was coming and that it would be an all-out, nation-wide effort (Benjamin *FP*, 83). The manner in which Crile spoon-fed Adams' findings to network executives precluded independent thinking on their part; frequent interventions by Mike Wallace as Crile's protector within the CBS power structure further interfered with normal oversight by news executives (Kowett 118). Finally, no one seemed willing to heed the warnings of the program's editor, Ira Klein. Klein went to Associate Producer Joe Zigman on two occasions. In despair with the system, Klein finally took his concerns to *TV Guide* (Kowett and Bedell).

As General Phillip Davidson would point out at the Westmoreland press conference, there were fundamental problems with research methods for the show. First, Davidson reminded CBS that it was not unusual for commanders to interpret and modify data submitted to them by intelligence advisors, sometimes as a matter of judgment and sometimes—as in Vietnam—because the commanders had access to top secret information collected by the National Security Agency (NSA) from a variety of satellite and electronic eavesdropping devices:

During the Vietnam War the dissemination of certain very sensitive intelligence was limited to a few civilian and military leaders in key positions. This was necessary to protect the source of the intelligence....Most of the junior officers who appeared on the program had no access to this sensitive intelligence. Their superiors, who did have access, often disapproved the work of the junior analysts because the senior official

knew...that the analyst's views were invalid, inaccurate, or incomplete. (BR 34532)

Commanders in Vietnam had electronically-supplied "sensitive" information which gave them a special edge. (At the Westmoreland trial, the NSA would be referred to as "Source X.")

Second, Davidson pointed to a clear error of approach to the entire intelligence controversy. Davidson, Carver, Westmoreland, Rostow, Taylor, and a host of government and military officials had acknowledged that there was *indeed* a debate within the intelligence community about enemy strength (BR 34533). The debate was so notorious that President Johnson chided Richard Helms, Director of the CIA, about the inability of his experts to come to a consensus. In September 1967, the proposal formulated by *George Carver* (not William Westmoreland) resolved the debate. In his program proposal to CBS News in November 1980, Crile used the word "conspiracy" no less than twenty-four times (Kowett 15). The term mirrored Sam Adams' obsession, Crile's own drive to find malefactors in high places, and the adversarial style of CBS' most popular news series, *60 Minutes*. It did not mirror the truth.

2. Interviews

The Westmoreland interview was central to the production—both as Wallace and Crile prepared for it and after they had succeeded in "rattlesnaking" the retired general. First, Westmoreland was not adequately prepared for the interview. Crile gave him a list of five topics over the telephone but really planned to focus exclusively on the numbers debate, the fourth item on the list (Benjamin, *FP* 54). After the adversarial interview, Westmoreland complained that he had not had adequate time to consult sources from the

1967-68 period; shortly after returning to Charleston, South Carolina, he sent Crile a large packet of materials and a cover letter asking the producer to use his considered responses. (Both *TV Guide* and Benjamin later came down hard on Crile for intentionally ignoring these follow-up materials.) When Crile saw the “dailies” from the Westmoreland interview, he yelled: “I’ve got you! I’ve got you!” (Kowett 83) —hardly the words of a fair-minded journalist.

Some of Westmoreland’s corrections are worth pointing out. When questioned about the relationship between the number of enemy killed to the number of wounded during Tet, Westmoreland in the New York City interview gave the standard Army textbook response of 3:1. *TUE* then went into a long computational sequence with graphics to show the implausibility of these figures, given the low pre-Tet estimate of “enemy strength.”¹² Once back in South Carolina, Westmoreland realized that the figure actually used in 1968 was a ratio of 1.5 wounded for every 1 killed, a ratio with significantly different extrapolative consequences. *In addition*, Crile had on hand MACV’s post-Tet report on enemy deaths and casualties, a document which corroborated Westmoreland’s letter of correction. As an advocate for the Adams thesis, Crile chose to stick with the “gotcha” footage from the New York interview.

Westmoreland realized how badly he had performed on camera. In the hope that others might be more eloquent, he urged Crile to interview leading officers in MACV’s intelligence chain. Many of these experts later appeared at the Westmoreland press conference to reprehend *TUE*: Ambassadors Ellsworth Bunker and Robert Komer, Lieutenant General Daniel Graham, General Walter Kerwin, Jr., George Carver, and William Colby. Graham had been interviewed by Crile but, from two hours of material, only twenty-two seconds escaped the editing room floor. The

three-hour interview with W.W. Rostow, LBJ's National Security Chief, never saw its way to the screen, although Rostow made it clear through letters to the *New York Times* and detailed memoranda for the record that he found *TUE* to be poorly researched. Rostow and others would later have their day on TV when the PBS series *Inside Story* broadcast its controversial exposé of *TUE* with Hodding Carter as host.¹³ Still, CBS guidelines require producers to allow accused figures like Westmoreland the opportunity to defend themselves. The guidelines urge that producers leave up to viewers the matter of conclusions about guilt or innocence. When questioned by internal investigator Benjamin about this lapse, Crile responded: "Westmoreland was not the show." Benjamin's retort was short and to the point: "He came out as the heavy, George" (Benjamin, *FP* 115).

The imbalance in presentations was computed by Benjamin for the CBS internal report: those supporting the Adams conspiratorial thesis were given nineteen minutes and nineteen seconds to present their side (supported by narrator Mike Wallace), while the command position was barely sketched by Westmoreland for five minutes and thirty-seven seconds, and by Daniel Graham for an additional twenty-two seconds. A master of urbane understatement, Benjamin suggested that there was more room for balance in a ninety-minute program:

The premise was obviously and historically controversial. There was an imbalance in presenting the two sides of the issue. For every McChristian, there [should have been] a Davidson; for every Hawkins, a Morris; for every Allen a Carver. (*BR* 34511)

In developing his interview pool, Crile consistently favored friendly sources. General Westmoreland was not alerted in advance about the true topic of his interview. On the other hand, Sam Adams was allowed to sit in for many interviews and even conducted a few himself. This insider privilege violated CBS guidelines. But Westmoreland was not the only witness treated harshly. Graham and Rostow were both interviewed in the prosecutorial style that has made Mike Wallace famous. In addition, the *Benjamin Report* found that supporters of the Adams thesis were given extraordinary attention. Sam Adams was rehearsed for an entire day before his interview; the Adams farmhouse in Leesburg, Virginia was practically redecorated by Crile in an attempt to develop the right *mise en scene* for his key accuser. A transcript of the sessions in northern Virginia reveals that Adams was constantly stroked by Wallace with such expressions as "You're doing fine, Sam" and "That's a great response, Sam." Veteran documentary maker Benjamin labeled such treatment as "coddling" (BR 57). Adams was never identified as a *paid* consultant for CBS, nor was it made clear that he participated in a number of the interviews for the show. An ordinary viewer could assume that Sam Adams was simply one of many historical sources giving spontaneous responses to Wallace's questions.

Crile chose not to interview George Carver on camera. Instead, he focused on George Allen, a somewhat timid friend of Adams who admired the paid consultant's obsession. In violation of CBS guidelines, Crile brought Allen to the editing room where Ira Klein reluctantly screened other interviews in the "pool." Crile encouraged Allen to be more critical of the CIA by showing him that he was not alone. Furthermore, Allen was interviewed repeatedly over the same questions until he proved himself to be a "convincing" witness (BR 57; FP 113-4). The choice to interview Allen rather than Carver suited Crile's

goals for the program. Allen would support the Adams thesis. On the other hand, Carver—not Allen, who was left behind in Washington—had been in charge of the team which travelled to Saigon to negotiate enemy strength figures with MACV. Friend or foe of the program, Carver should have been in it. Benjamin was very unhappy that Crile had shown such solicitude to one side of the controversy (FP 114).¹⁴

3. Editing

CBS News under Frank Salant formulated guidelines for documentaries after a controversy surrounding its *Selling of the Pentagon* (1971) revealed a number of distorting editing tricks. Documented by Marin Mayer in *About Television*, these clever uses of cutaways, reverses, and transitional devices produced statements by Department of Defense officials which supported the thesis of the program, but did not represent what had been said (250-76). In his zeal to prove the conspiracy thesis of his program, George Crile resorted to some of the same tricks and with the same result—he was caught.

In the first act of *TUE*, Colonel Hawkins and General McChristian counterpoint Westmoreland's statements. The program gives the impression that all three men are talking about the same meeting and the same report. Actually, Hawkins and McChristian are talking about two different events, at which only one was present; in addition, Westmoreland seems to be talking about one meeting, but the transcripts reveal that he is talking about two geographically and temporally different sessions, one in Saigon, the other in Hawaii. The flow of images and patter is so deft that the naive viewer—even the expert viewer—would assume that all three men are discussing a single

meeting where a politically unacceptable report was submitted and then summarily suppressed.

The dramatic close of act two seems to address the moral implications of this meeting. General McChristian explains that, although the Uniform Code of Military Justice does not cover such matters, his faithfulness to the motto of West Point assures that he would never suppress intelligence figures. What viewers could not have known was that McChristian was responding to a hypothetical question. Editing of the response into a cluster of statements about the numbers controversy set up a familiar contrast for *TUE*. As a consequence, General McChristian appears as a saint among sinners, a lone moral man at MACV during the latter months of 1967.

Events are manipulated to create an artificial flow at a second crucial moment in the narrative. Toward the end of act three, Colonel George Hamscher appears to be talking about a meeting he had with Westmoreland during which MACV's commander ordered his intelligence staff to cut figures arbitrarily. Actually, the editing combines two unconnected events. Hamscher is describing a National Intelligence Estimate meeting in Washington in August 1967 while Westmoreland is describing a Saigon meeting in September 1967. In exasperation, Burton Benjamin described this legerdemain as creating a scene in which "Westmoreland was put in the context of talking about a meeting he did not attend in a colloquy with an officer, Hamscher, he had never met" (*FP* 81). (Hamscher was an intelligence officer at CINCPAC, the overall Pacific command located in Hawaii.)

Editing is also employed to make Westmoreland appear mendacious. During the prosecutorial interview for act one, Westmoreland made at least ten attempts to defend his decision to discount the Self-Defense forces and to put them into prose segments of his intelligence reports. Rather than

use these sound bites, Crile selected portions of the responses which made the General look confused and guilty. One of the points made by the documentary was that LBJ did not like to receive bad news from the field; the implication, of course, was that Westmoreland created a cap for the enemy strength figures to please his boss. Below (with portions *actually used* in italics) are Westmoreland's responses on the topic of "bad news":

Well, Mike, you know as well as I do that people in senior positions love good news, and they don't like bad news, and after all, it's well recognized that supreme politicians or leaders in countries are inclined to shoot the messenger that brings bad news. Certainly he wanted bad news like a hole in the head. He welcomed good news. But he was given both good and bad, but he was inclined to accentuate the positive.

Later, in an unused sound bite, Westmoreland stated directly that Johnson was given a full and accurate picture of the enemy situation in Vietnam: "that doesn't mean we didn't give him bad news. We did give him bad news." By omitting this last quote and by cleverly cutting into the block quote, above, *TUE* gave the impression that Westmoreland was sycophantically playing to the moods of his commander-in-chief.

Keeping in mind that Westmoreland had not briefed himself on the numbers issues prior to his New York interview in May 1981, it is not surprising that he had problems with details. Toward the end of act four, Wallace apparently catches the General making a revealing slip. Act four begins with narration about the infiltration of North Vietnamese regular troops immediately prior to the Tet offensive. Colonel Russell Cooley comes on camera to state

that there were as many as 25,000 soldiers moving south, a number *confirmed* by Westmoreland during the New York interview. After a narrative transition, the program cuts to a *Meet the Press* clip from 1967 in which Westmoreland says that infiltration is at a rate of 5500-6000 soldiers per month. When confronted with the disparity of his statements, Westmoreland looks confused: “Sounds to me like a misstatement. I—I don’t remember making it. But certainly I could not retain all these detailed figures in my mind.”

Close examination of this juxtaposition of statements reveals some problems for *TUE*. In his full response to the *Meet The Press* panel, Westmoreland had actually said that “*I would estimate between 5500 and 6000 a month. But they do have the capability of stepping this up.*” While screening this response to CBS executives, Crile, according to Benjamin, “went into a frenzy” when he discovered that the qualifying remark had been left in for the editor as an editing “trim.” Subsequent screenings for superiors and later renderings of the quote would leave the qualifier out. In his post-interview letter to George Crile, Westmoreland documented his original response to *Meet the Press* and asked CBS not use his New York figure. When pressed on this matter, Crile told Benjamin that he did not see the correction because it was not in Westmoreland’s cover letter; in addition, Crile said “the fact that we ambushed him a little doesn’t bother me” (*FP* 145). Furthermore, neither *TUE*’s narrator nor its interview sources explain that infiltration figures were typically “soft” until three months *after* the fact—which meant that Westmoreland would never have precise figures for November infiltration until sometime in January.

4. Narrator: Journalist or “Cosmetics?”

It has been rumored that one of the most feared secretarial announcements in the corporate world is “Mike Wallace is here for your interview.” For *TUE*, Wallace was employed to grill the “hostile” witnesses: Westmoreland, Rostow, and Graham. To get him into the program with CBS’ paid consultant and whistle blower, Wallace was also asked to interview Sam Adams. Beyond that, Wallace did almost no original research for the show and was, in his own words, “mostly cosmetics.” Almost all who have written about *The Uncounted Enemy* have speculated on the Mike Wallace approach to this controversial program against the backdrop of the CBS tradition of E.R. Murrow, Fred Friendly, Charles Collingwood, Douglas Edwards, Eric Sevareid, Walter Cronkite, and Richard C. Hottelet. The “old school” at CBS News was concerned with investigative journalism and the understanding of twentieth-century history. As the lead on-camera talent for *60 Minutes* since 1968, Wallace had developed an effective style of interviewing which, combined with the showmanship of Producer Don Hewitt, had made the Sunday night show one of America’s favorite pastimes—not to mention a profit-maker for CBS. George Crile counted on the audience Mike Wallace would bring to *TUE* and relied on the Wallace interview style to “break” the government’s “star”: Westmoreland.

Mike Wallace was *not* a journalist in *The Uncounted Enemy*; he was a hired gun. Just as Crile was totally dependent upon Adams for the thesis of the program, so was Wallace dependent upon Crile for his understanding of the issues. When Wallace did ask questions about the program during the production phase, he was invited to view interviews carefully pruned of information which might weaken the program’s thesis. Wallace did not read the

Westmoreland letter and packet of supporting information; rather, he relied on Crile's assurance that "Westmoreland doesn't bring anything to our attention that is particularly relevant. Certainly nothing that causes concern and requires a new look at anything we have been asserting" (Benjamin, *FP* 115).

Mike Wallace was willing to take credit for the program while it was riding high. During the post-production phase, he was often brought into discussions with supervising executives to back up Crile's editing decisions. When the program became a cause célèbre, Wallace used his personal contacts with Abe Rosenthal, executive editor of the *New York Times*, to assure that America's "newspaper of record" would retract a favorable review of Hodding Carter's *Inside Story* (PBS) investigation of the controversy (Kowett 263). In these actions, Wallace threw his weight around as an influential, neglecting, in the process, to consider the substance of in-house and peer criticism. When Ira Klein, the film's editor, brought up the editing problems discussed in this paper, Wallace darted out of the room; on the other hand, when rumors began to point to Klein as a "leak" in CBS News' effort to stonewall *TV Guide's* investigation, Wallace visited Klein's editing bay for a few memorable finger-pointing minutes. Such behavior was more in the spirit of Watergate than the tradition of Murrow.

Despite his lack of understanding of the issues and despite his lack of research, Wallace added a considerable aura of authority to the exposé. Viewers would naturally associate his role in the program with the countless investigations he had conducted during his fourteen years with *60 Minutes*. Crile placed the host in a library setting with books, lamps, and subdued lighting. The speaker was supposedly reflecting upon the results of intensive research. As narrator, Wallace would provide bridges between interviews; such bridges were not merely neutral. Hostile witnesses could be

introduced or followed by commentary and interpretation which could negate the significance of their statements. On the other hand, friendly witnesses could be presented as authorities. The omnipresence of Wallace as on-camera host, as interviewer of the most important friendly witness, Sam Adams, and as disembodied voice of history was an essential factor in the program—both in getting it on the air and, once broadcast, making it a convincing exposure of malfeasance in high places.

Soon after *The Benjamin Report* was rendered in July 1983, Van Gordon Sauter, President of CBS News, issued a public memorandum about flaws in *The Uncounted Enemy*. While standing by the substance of the broadcast, Sauter focused on the absence of significant involvement by Mike Wallace. Sauter asserted that “The greatest asset of CBS News is its credibility” and linked that credibility to the role of its journalists in major documentaries. Sauter explained that, “on projects of a complex and controversial nature, the full involvement and collaboration of the principal correspondent is vital. Future assignments will take this essential need into consideration” (Kowett 222). Sauter’s memo was a public slap on the wrist for Mike Wallace. Just prior to being called to testify at the Westmoreland trial, Wallace collapsed in his apartment from an overdose of prescribed medication (Boyer 193).

5. Script—Factual Errors

During act three, Mike Wallace confronts General Westmoreland at the New York interview with “his cable” of August 20, 1967. According to Wallace, the General’s cable addressed the numbers controversy within the context of a good news campaign: “We have been projecting an image of success over recent months.” Wallace comes back to the cable at another point. Two problems of fact detract

from this segment. First, Westmoreland was *not* the author of the cable; it had been written by his deputy, General Creighton Abrams. Second, Wallace's reading from the cable was selective for the cable had actually said: "*We have projected an image of success over recent months and rightfully so.*" Further readings from the entire cable would have contradicted in detail the thesis that MACV felt it was losing in Vietnam. Instead of an accurate portrayal of MACV's true estimate of the situation, viewers of *TUE* were left with an on-camera portrait of a sweating and lip-licking General caught with his hand in the intelligence cookie jar. This was some of Crile's best "gotcha" footage.

At the end of act one, Wallace gives the impression that General McChristian was creating too many waves at MACV. The act ends with Wallace explaining that: "Shortly after Westmoreland suppressed his intelligence chief's report, General Joseph McChristian was transferred out of Vietnam. It was at this point, we believe, that MACV began to suppress, and then to alter, critical intelligence reports on the strength of the enemy." Viewers are left with the impression that the last principled opponent to manipulation was McChristian.

In fact, Westmoreland had asked Washington to have McChristian's tour as intelligence chief at MACV *extended*. In keeping with Pentagon personnel practices and the officer's preference, the general was rotated out of Vietnam and assigned to a command billet at Fort Hood, Texas. As McChristian later explained, "I didn't want to remain just an intelligence specialist" (Benjamin, *FP* 83). Transcripts of McChristian's interviews reveal that he repeatedly denied being pressured to manipulate figures. Even the response used in *TUE* was edited to ignore McChristian's qualifications. Uncited was his remark that "nobody ever asked me that [to keep figures down]." Thus, the script was wrong on a major

point—the reason for McChristian’s transfer—while editing other statements to support this incorrect interpretation.

If the primary thesis of *TUE* was that General Westmoreland suppressed true estimates of enemy strength from the public and the President, the secondary theme of the program was that Tet was such a great surprise because of inadequate information. The basic question was: “Did Lyndon Johnson know that the Tet attacks were coming?” Act five of *TUE* makes a number of claims. Repeating the errors of newspaper coverage in 1968, the program asserts that Westmoreland requested 206,000 troops as reinforcements: “it seemed to be an admission that half-million American soldiers already in Vietnam couldn’t cope with the enemy.” The whole matter of the 206,000-man troop request—and the press misunderstanding of its purport—has been treated at length by Herbert Schandler in his *Unmaking of a President*, a book published some five years prior to the broadcast of *TUE*. (Westmoreland would submit portions of Schandler’s book as evidence during the trial.) Schandler explains that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were attempting to replenish the strategic reserve under the guise of helping Westmoreland in his time of need. The full number was not needed in Vietnam. George Crile and Sam Adams should have known that by 1982 (Schandler 105-20). Instead of clarifying a confused historical incident, *TUE* exploited a 1968 misunderstanding to advance its thesis.

Immediately after the troop request fallacy, *TUE* claims that the inner-circle of “wise men,” who shared Tuesday lunches with President Johnson, finally saw the light about Vietnam because Sam Adams’ figures finally got through to them. As a result, the wise men urged the President to find a negotiated solution. The wise men told Johnson “to begin to reduce the American involvement in Vietnam and to find a way out” (Schandler 262). By juxtapositioning

footage, it is implied that Lyndon Johnson withdrew from the Democratic primary because of his shame over Tet. This assertion seemed correct in 1968, but many reports published since—by Dean Rusk, Walt Rostow, and others—have shown the tenuousness of that connection. (Johnson was experiencing health problems.)

Act five concludes with a dramatic statement from Host Mike Wallace about America's defeat in Vietnam. Footage of the April 30 invasion of Saigon by North Vietnamese troops, to include the assault on the Presidential Palace, is shown over commentary. Filmmakers know that conflict between visual and aural elements will always work in favor of the visual; this principle is important because it shows the intent to undercut Westmoreland and to draw connections between his villainy and the suffering that would inevitably follow his suppression of truth. Here are Wallace's closing judgments:

Two months after the President's speech, General William Westmoreland was transferred back to Washington and promoted to become Chief of the Army. To this day, General Westmoreland insists that the enemy was virtually destroyed at Tet. Be that as it may, the fighting in Vietnam went on for seven more years after the Tet offensive. Twenty-seven thousand more American soldiers were killed; over a hundred thousand more were wounded and on April 30th, 1975, the same enemy entered Saigon once again, only this time it was called Ho Chi Minh City.

Writing from the vantage point of 1990, a time when most of the networks have made documentaries *conceding* that Tet was a military defeat for the Vietcong, it is easy to see the error of *TUE's* concluding statement. Still, there

were significant works of journalism and scholarship in book form in 1981-82 which, had Crile performed responsibly as a journalist, would have thrown *TUE*'s concluding assertion into question. The producer came down to a decision about whether to print the facts or the myth; since the myth supported his thesis, he chose the latter course.

The myth or reality dilemma leads back to the basic question posed by history and the documentary: What did the President know and when did he know it? The answer seems clear. Lyndon Johnson's White House was plugged into all sources of information, to include those primary sources feeding MACV, the CIA, and Sam Adams. Walt Rostow, the National Security Chief, had been an Order of Battle specialist during World War II and took a special delight in being the White House "whiz kid" on battlefield statistics. Rostow's enthusiasm and prescience have special pertinence to *TUE*. A lower echelon CIA functionary named Joe Hovey is interviewed in act four. The program gives Hovey credit for predicting the Tet offensive as early as fall, 1967. According to the program, this insight did not move up the intelligence chain—clear evidence that the "diffuse machinery of American intelligence was breaking down." The program neglects to mention that Crile had on his editor's shelf at CBS an unused, three-hour interview in which Walt Rostow explained that Hovey had conducted his special investigation *at Walt Rostow's request*! In other words, Rostow's office in the White House had a better grasp of the likely developments than either MACV or the CIA. But such a possibility had no place in Crile's exposé. When questioned about this problem, Crile dismissed Rostow: "He was intellectually dishonest in the academic community, which is why he wasn't able to get any positions with Northeast universities" (Benjamin, *FP* 118).

The bottom line on Presidential foreknowledge of Tet attacks can be summarized by the adage that actions speak louder than words. As early as November 1967, Lyndon Johnson briefed the Australian cabinet on forthcoming Tet attacks. Johnson, Rostow, the Joint Chiefs, Westmoreland all saw Tet—correctly—as a Battle-of-the-Bulge effort, a sign of desperation. The ultimate difference between the Bulge and Tet, of course, was that the Tet offensive was successful in destroying America's will to fight. What frustrated American leaders so was that despite being a massive military defeat for the Viet Cong, Tet was an enormous psychological defeat for the American efforts in South Vietnam.¹⁵

Many have blamed Lyndon Johnson, retrospectively, for not giving the American people his Australian briefing and for not going on television after the attacks to bring the country together for the next phase of the struggle. If there was an error committed at Tet, it was an error in public relations and leadership—not military intelligence. Certainly the war went on and, sadly, more Americans were killed and wounded, but the onus of Vietnam lies more in a combination of factors: Lyndon Johnson did not perform as a President should in a time of crisis; on the other hand, the American press misreported the Tet offensive and gave the American public melodramatic impressions which truthful, official statements could not effectively contradict. As a result, America began a long process of disengagement from Vietnam after Tet in 1968.

The two major accusations of *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception* were invalid. Not only did the Johnson White House know about the Tet offensive in advance; staff members knew about the forthcoming attacks before any other government agency. Second, the Tet show of force did not discredit Westmoreland or Johnson as liars undone

by history; rather, the media impact of those attacks—especially on television—created a conventional wisdom which could not be refuted. The basic fallacy of these two pillars should remind readers of a notion which surfaces early in *TUE*: General Westmoreland wanted to readjust the Order of Battle because “the people in Washington were not sophisticated enough to understand and evaluate this thing, and neither was the media.” By mounting the Sam Adams hobby horse, by projecting that issue forward in time as a central factor in our defeat in Vietnam, George Crile’s ninety-minute documentary proved not the validity of its two major assertions, but the wisdom of General Westmoreland’s prediction.

More serious for CBS as an institution was the public rancor inflamed by the Westmoreland controversy. From the Left, influential writers like Tom Shales castigated CBS for assigning Burton Benjamin to conduct an internal inquiry. Many other commentators shuddered over the prospect of a “chilling effect” on future crusading documentaries. More dangerous rumblings came from the Right. In January 1985, associates of Jesse Helms filed papers with the Securities and Exchange Commission, declaring their desire to join with others to become “Dan Rather’s boss.” Two months later, Ted Turner began to orchestrate his “junk bond” assault on CBS. Ivan Boesky’s name echoed in the upper-story halls of “black rock” where CBS executives, to defend the corporation, amassed considerable debts (Boyer). Finally, in desperation, the company turned to Lawrence Tisch, a tough-minded business man who promised to protect CBS News. The news division begged for Tisch; unexpectedly, once in power, he ordered massive firings and cut the news budget by \$33 million.¹⁶

While there were many other factors leading to the demise of CBS, certainly the Westmoreland episode did much to

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strip the network of its aura of fairness, balance, and trust. An arbiter of American life became just another interested party in the marketplace of ideas. In the down-sizing of a great institution, George Crile's program was, indeed, the most dangerous "uncounted enemy" of all.

Notes

¹*The CBS Benjamin Report* contains a transcript of the verbal portion of the program (34571-98). Video copies of *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception* are available from the Vanderbilt Television Archive, 110 21st Ave, S., Suite 704, Nashville, TN 37203 (615-322-2927). The ninety-minute program will cost approximately \$100.

²Here are highlights of the agreement reached on February 17, 1985: "General William C. Westmoreland and CBS today jointly announced the discontinuance of the *Westmoreland* suit against CBS, Mike Wallace, George Crile and Sam Adams.... The matters treated in the broadcast—and the broadcast itself—have been extensively examined over the past two-and-a-half years both in discovery and then through documents and witnesses represented by both sides in Federal Court. Historians will long consider this and other matters related to the war in Vietnam. Both parties trust their actions have broadened the public record on this matter.... CBS respects General Westmoreland's long and faithful service to his country and never intended to assert, and does not believe, that General Westmoreland was unpatriotic or disloyal in performing his duties as he saw them. General Westmoreland respects the long and distinguished journalistic tradition of CBS and the rights of journalists to examine the complex issue of Vietnam and to present perspectives contrary to his own" (T9743-4; Brewin 345-6). The statement bears the signatures of W.C. Westmoreland, Samuel Adams, Mike Wallace, and George Crile III.

³*The CBS Benjamin Report* was an internal study conducted by senior producer Burton Benjamin after Westmoreland and *TV Guide* attacked the integrity of *TUE*. Benjamin undertook the task reluctantly, knowing that his investigation would raise hackles at CBS; unlike Crile, however, Benjamin was a loyal and dedicated professional who put the honor of CBS above his own personal career. The seventy-page report never would have reached the public had not Westmoreland filed suit against CBS; the network was forced to divulge the report by Judge Pierre Lavelle. As published by the Media Institute (3017 M St, NW, Washington, D.C. 20007; (202) 298-7512), *BR* includes bibliographical material and a full transcript of the program. Media teachers and their students could profit from this text in conjunction with a study of the program and the trial.

⁴Colonel Gains Hawkins did not fare well at the Westmoreland trial where he appeared on February 12, 1985. For a devastating commentary on his lack of integrity and credibility—indeed, his inability to coherently present any position and then stick to it—see Adler (96-132). Hawkins testified that he had lied under oath at the Ellsberg “Pentagon Papers” trial, thereby severely impugning his credibility as a witness. Although he was brought into the trial to support the argument that there had been orders at MACV to keep the intelligence figures down, he could not identify anyone who had given him such orders (Adler 116-7). *TUE*'s prime witness withered under cross-examination by David Dorsen.

⁵I stress “military” here because *TUE* never clarifies the true basis of the debate between MACV and the CIA. The military intelligence analysts wanted to keep the Order of Battle focused on Vietcong and North Vietnamese armed, maneuver elements. In contrast, the civilian analysts at the CIA wanted to include the “irregular” forces in the Order of Battle. Westmoreland has stated his reasons for the MACV position in his autobiography, *A Soldier Reports*: “Having taught a course on the Geneva Convention and the laws of war at the Command and General Staff College in the late 1940s, I was conscious of the responsibilities they placed on field commanders. Shortly after assuming command in South Vietnam in 1964, I called in my advocate general and instructed him to form a study group to recommend what to do. From that study and from frequent later consultations emerged the strict MACV regulations which established the rules of engagement for the US military forces” (348). In an interview with Cabbage, Westmoreland further explained his approach: “The armed Vietcong were fair game for my forces; unarmed civilians were not fair game. I considered the unarmed Vietcong—the enemy noncombatants—to be in categories outside the order of battle” (footnote 177). Obviously, Westmoreland’s goal was to avoid the kind of tragedy which occurred at My Lai. Since the My Lai Massacre was an aberration rather than the norm, it should be observed that Westmoreland’s humane objective was achieved. *TUE* never chose to consider these goals or their significance for the Order of Battle debate.

⁶The question of infiltration was explored at length during the trial. When it came to estimating enemy “infiltration,” no one in the intelligence chain could have hidden figures. The American military knew that the high numbers of infiltrators during the fall of 1967 were located around the Khe Sanh combat base. Both they and the CIA kept these

numbers in a separate category tuned to what appeared to be an upcoming set-piece battle. Rather than ignoring the Khe Sanh buildup, General Westmoreland and the White House could be accused of spending too much time on the subject. LBJ went so far as to have a six-by-five-foot relief map constructed for the White House situation room so that he could literally touch the terrain features surrounding the Marine combat base. Davidson believes that Hanoi was hoping for another Dienbienphu, but that the use of B-52 strikes and the electronic guidance of artillery missions prevented the enemy from ever mounting a climactic attack (551-71). Pisor describes the electronic sensor system employed at Khe Sanh to track enemy movements for supporting fires (105-7). Khe Sanh was America's first electronic battlefield, a gruesome—but effective—videogame in which Westmoreland could unleash American firepower without hurting civilians, all of whom had been evacuated from the battlefield in preparation for the siege.

⁷This assertion has real problems because the briefing to the “wise men” was given by George Carver, Adams’ boss at the CIA and one of the principal authors of the numbers “conspiracy” exposed by *TUE*.

⁸The Westmoreland press conference was videotaped. A transcript is in the microfiche collection from the trial, JX600.

⁹Karnow is the author of *Vietnam: A History*, a text advertised by PBS as the companion volume for the series entitled *Vietnam: A Television History* (1983). His history and the television series are critiqued by James Banerian.

¹⁰Kowett’s book deepens the study begun for *TV Guide*. It would not be unfair to say that Kowett was harassed by his press colleagues for his criticism of CBS. Even Renata Adler of *The New Yorker* was threatened with suits from CBS—both at the stage of writing up the trial for her magazine, but also later when Knopf was considering the collected articles for book publication. Adler discusses this systematic harassment (229-43). Brewin also deplores the planned harassment of Kowett, Adler, and others (196-9). In these ploys, CBS was acting more like a corporate bully than an institution inspired by the First Amendment.

¹¹General Phillip Davidson says that military analysts who believed “they had a war to fight” were impatient with Adams. Adams’ figures

were based on the experience of one province and were extrapolated from a core of a total of twenty-five documents, hardly a large data base (interview).

¹²At this point, the misuse of language by CBS should be apparent. By "enemy strength," MACV meant armed troops of the enemy's maneuver elements. As used in *TUE*, "enemy strength" means the total enemy capability—including irregulars. To explain these subtleties would have robbed *TUE* of its exposé thesis. See Note 5 for further discussion.

¹³The Hodding Carter critique of *TUE* was broadcast on April 21, 1983. Carter sternly criticized *TUE* for lack of fairness: "CBS is entitled to its opinion, but we are entitled to a more balanced presentation. Even if you are sure of guilt, there is a vast difference between a fair trial and a lynching. It's a distinction that was badly blurred when CBS made *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception*" (Kowett 263). Like his print colleagues Kowett and Adler, Ned Schnurmann, senior producer for *Inside Story* received vicious criticism from his peers for finding fault with CBS.

Beauchamp and Klaidman substantiate many of the points in this portion of my essay. Their appendix uses the transcript of an interview conducted by Crile to show how *TUE* culled only those statements which backed its thesis while ignoring other information. I certainly agree with the conclusion of the Beauchamp and Klaidman article: "Crile's first responsibility as a journalist was to accurately represent to the public a complex controversy. He should not have become an advocate for a cause, no matter how noble he believed it to be. If a cause is just, in the end it will be best served by reporters through unbiased presentation" (178).

¹⁴I have tried to tell the story of the intelligence controversy of 1966-67 through George Carver's eyes in "The Uncounted Expert: George Carver's Views on Intelligence 'Deception' Reported by CBS in *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception* (1982)." The Carver-oriented paper draws heavily from the relatively new microfiche collection entitled *Westmoreland v. CBS*. The fiche collection is a two-drawer set containing 80,000 pages of text, including all depositions, all courtroom testimony, and all joint exhibits from the libel suit. It is a treasure trove for scholars.

¹⁵The books by Oberdorfer, Braestrup, Davidson all speak to this paradox. My television program entitled *Television's Vietnam: The Impact of Media*, in focusing on specific stories during the Tet offensive, demonstrates this thesis in detail.

¹⁶The corporate histories by Boyer and Joyce support these assertions.

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program is available for c.\$100 from the Vanderbilt Television Archive, 110 21st Ave, S., Suite 704, Nashville, TN 37203 615-322-2927.)

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Westmoreland v. CBS. Ed. Walter Schneir. New York: Clearwater Publishing Company, 1987. This source consists of two drawers of microfiche in a set which amounts to over 80,000 pages of text. Historians will take special interest in the Depositions (alphabetical by surname) and the Trial Transcripts (indexed by surname). The Joint Exhibits section contains top secret cables which form a paper trail for reconstructing the numbers controversy in the American intelligence community during 1966-7. I have referred to Depositions by the letter "D" and the page number in text; I have referred to the Trial Testimony by the letter "T" with the page number in text; Joint Exhibits have been referred to as "JX."