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Week 4 Forum

Determining the Truth

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Determining the Truth

by [Joe Escobar](#) – Sunday, April 17, 2016, 12:32 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Determining the Truth topic.
To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT – SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: Determining the Truth

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The truth or bias?

by [Titus Young](#) – Monday, April 18, 2016, 12:30 PM

"The truth"... a phrase we have all been hearing a lot these past few weeks, but how can you tell what is the truth. Let's face it, when we watch the PBS documentary, they present their evidence and support it rather well. Before we heard all the criticism from AIM we were probably just believing most everything that PBS was saying. When we saw the AIM videos we probably might have questioned the PBS series as a whole. Now we get an article about how the AIM videos aren't completely accurate either. With all these different sources all disagreeing, how can we find the truth? The reason that the truth is so hard to see is because of a small four letter word that has a lot of meaning: Bias. When an organization or person decide on a topic their individual biases start forming. Thier biases affect what they perceive when they look at a situation. So PBS and AIM are on opposite sides of a story and their biases are very different. This is how the "truth" we keep hearing about is so hard to find, and on top of this, we have to decide which bias we believe more.

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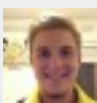
Re: The truth or bias?

by [Dustin Brown](#) – Wednesday, April 20, 2016, 5:57 PM

I absolutely agree with your post. When it comes to the truth it comes down to bias and that individuals perspective. For example in the PBS video episode 4 the clearing of the village of Ben Suc Vietnam is being discussed by U.S. military members, as well as some villagers that were present during the operation. The Americans claim that the VC were present and engaged them at the perimeter of the village, and the Vietnamese claim that there was no VC in their village, but the Americans didn't care and opened fire on innocent civilians. So the truth is somewhere in the middle, and is an almost impossible task to bring to light. As with every story ever told there are always going to be two sides to it and they both could be considered truth to the person telling it, their truth.

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Re: The truth or bias?

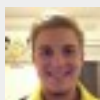
by [Justin MacDonald](#) – Sunday, April 24, 2016, 3:11 PM

Initially I thought the same thing. However, there is one thing that stands out to me that I didn't realize until now. The villagers interviewed were still living in Vietnam. Vietnam at the time was now under Communist rule, not long after the war. It wasn't like PBS just dropped into the jungle and surprised the people with a camera. PBS planned trip, and contacted the government. I don't think it was out of the realm of possibility a government as corrupt as Vietnam's would make sure the villagers "had their stories straight" before the interview. Also the lack of emotion was interesting from their part, although it could be argued it was natural considering their customs, since strong emotions are a little more impolite to show.

That being said, the ordeal at Ben Suc still sounds horrendous. And it wouldn't have been the first time during the war high civilian casualties were incurred, purposely or accidentally.

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Re: The truth or bias?

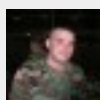
by [Justin MacDonald](#) – Sunday, April 24, 2016, 2:55 PM

Watching the news, I tend to gather my information from sources as far left and right of the spectrum as MSNBC and Fox News respectively. Bias will always be around, it is simply human nature. "The Truth" sometimes is something we have to decide for ourselves, best determined by doing more research and finding a bridge or meeting point between multiple sources of info. The middle ground between the PBS and AIM videos seems a good place to start. The problem with both is they both start off with a political agenda, which right off the back isn't good journalism. Further reading is required to get a better picture.

I tend to be more critical of media in general though, because I feel most of it tends to be to the left of the spectrum. That's not to say I'm necessarily conservative though, just look at this report: <http://freakonomics.com/podcast/how-biased-is-your-media/> .

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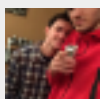
Videos dont match up

by [Dustin Brown](#) – Tuesday, April 19, 2016, 3:20 PM

I found it difficult to spot major discrepancies in this week's videos when compared to the last AIM and PBS videos two weeks ago. This AIM video mentions PBS episodes that we have not yet covered making it impossible to comment on those discrepancies, and most of what was pertinent to this week's PBS episode seemed to be open to interpretation, and could be received differently based on one's political and moral ideals. The arguments in the first half of AIM part 2 lacked substance, and consisted of their wrong, were right statements. Also AIM part 2 was more focused on the years 1969-1975 when the PBS episode was 1965-1967 so they hardly mentioned the same incidents.

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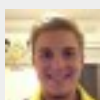
Re: Videos dont match up

by [Zachary Sielicky](#) – Saturday, April 23, 2016, 6:03 PM

The AIM video did discuss more years but I thought one of the biggest differences was the difference between the ways the POWs were treated, That was a very interesting part I thought.

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Re: Videos dont match up

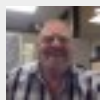
by [Justin MacDonald](#) – Sunday, April 24, 2016, 2:37 PM

I definitely grant you that the years of the events the AIM video mentioned certainly were either too far in the future, or things we haven't necessarily covered yet. The thing to keep in mind though is the main goal of the AIM video. Although it itself is biased source (conservative backed), the point it made was that the PBS video was definitely more biased than one might initially think. One of their stated goals was to provide an unbiased series of information and stories of the war. That's laughable considering the writers and producers were themselves biased, hailing from the left of the spectrum. A great example of this is was Dan Cragg pointing out, "...only a select few of the hundreds of thousands who served were highlighted, the 'bad' ones" (AIM pt 2). Most of the ones interviewed in the most recent episode of the PBS series were draftees and very disgruntled, obviously going to not have a great view on the war and America's involvement. Only 25% of America's military men were draftees, and in general when you get a draftee into a war, they didn't want to be there in the first place, so what would you expect them to say (<http://history-world.org>)? These guys fit the general construct of the war being terrible and America making a massive mistake, a fairly common liberal theme. This is an example of information given to us that is not false, but only gives a narrow view overall.

A funny side note, even some groups on the left didn't like the stated goals of the PBS series. They felt PBS trying to make an unbiased series was unfair: "Leftists attacked the show for its attempts to be objective when, they argued, it was impossible for anyone to feel that way" (War and American Popular Culture, Holsinger p. 421).

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Re:PBS portrayed the American Soldier as un-trained, killers.

by [Philip Highwood](#) – Wednesday, April 20, 2016, 5:41 PM

It is my perception that the American Solders were portrayed as un-trained, wandering lost in the jungle, and killers. The PBS Episode’s makes it sound as in the American Soldier was not equal to the North Vietcong fighter. “American Solders were unprepared for the complexity of Vietnam” (PBS,4 7:55). As an American Soldier I will state that the training given to Soldiers, Marines and Airmen is the best training that these young men could have received. PBS took time to talk about how un-wrapping hand grenades may been an involved, complicated task that American Soldiers needed help with once in Vietnam. Let’s take a piece from PVT Bill Enrhart. When talking about shooting an innocent women running in a rice field, stated that she was 50–55 and that “you shot first and asked questions later” (PBS,4 19:03). He also talked about leaches, foot rot, and that the heat sucked. He pretty much said what ever person in the world would think. That my friend’s is WAR.

If I am leaning on a side of truth I would have to side with AIM, possibly due to the facts that I have been a leader in combat and I know how professional Solders can be even when faced with grave decisions. Like setting fire to Villages that have only innocent civilians and not shooting innocent women and children.

So my question to you is this. Hhow did you perceive our American Soldiers as portrayed by PBS?

Philip Highwood

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Soldiers being looked down upon

by [Gabrielle Heehn](#) – Wednesday, April 20, 2016, 6:18 PM

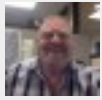
Something that really got my attention in the Part 2 of AIM series is the attention of the lack of support that our US soldiers had gotten in the PBS series. John McCain stated in the AIM that the treatments of American POWs and the treatment of Viet Cong POWs were talked about differently. He also went ahead and said that there were documents from the Viet Cong showing what the American POWs and South Vietnamese soldiers were going through and that they were used for propaganda, but no records shown of what the Viet Cong POWs had gone through once they were in the prisoner compound. I personally think that its not only important to learn about the politics of war, but also what the soldiers fighting had to go through to get a better understanding of the effects war has on an individual.

Also in the Herring book it lightly talked about how the Americans soldiers and Vietnamese civilians didn't really get along once the U.S. tried making part of their country more modernized at that they thought they were

destructive etc, but in the PBS series it was saying how the civilians were understanding and knew that there was nothing they could do about it. Just a little contradicting!

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Soldiers being looked down upon

by [Philip Highwood](#) – Saturday, April 23, 2016, 3:46 PM

Gabrielle,

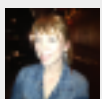
Hello, how are you? Great here. It is interesting, that PBS portrays our soldiers in such a manor, one might think they (the American Soldier), was not supported. So, I researched Mr. Martin Smith, who was the producer of the PBS documentary. I was thinking that he might be someone who might have dodged the draft; or possibly was friends with Jane Fonda! In his Bio. nothing is stated about him being in the armed forces; so there's that, and nothing to suspect him and Jane Fonda as being friends other then Martin was a film producer and Jane was an actress. However, for discussion Martin Smith might have been in support of our troops, just not in support of Americans fighting a war that quite frankly, America had no business fighting in. When discussing Jon McCain, I would have to trust what he said as being closer to the truth; although I have been involved in POW's in Iraq in 2004. Abu Ghraib was in our area and we went there to basically take charge of a situation where American Soldiers were in the wrong in every aspect. As the torture and mishandling of known Terrorists was way out of line.

I have a question for you? Do you feel that if Kennedy would not have been assassinated, would he have sent combat troops into Vietnam? Or simply left the advisors on the ground to help train the South?

Philip

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Re: Soldiers being looked down upon

by [Tamara Berge](#) – Sunday, April 24, 2016, 11:23 PM

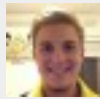
There isn't much information regarding the POW prisons in the Herring book, however in the Appy book there is a small section of accounts from the prisoners themselves. One account is from a U.S. pilot that was shot down in 1965 and wasn't released until 1973. I don't know John McCain's story fully but i am tempted to assume it is similar to this account. He discussed torturous interrogations and being used for propaganda purposes. This man's name is Porter Halyburton. He claims to have been in the Hanoi Parade in 1966, which is shown in the AIM video while McCain is speaking. (4:11) I imagine his experiences while being a prisoner are fairly similar to those of John McCain. Another story in the Appy book is by a woman, Truong My Hoa, that was imprisoned for eleven years in various prisons in South Vietnam from 1964–1975, for supporting the communist party and North Vietnam. Her depiction of the torture she experienced was rather different than the U.S. soldier's. "Over the years I underwent a lot of interrogation and torture. I was beaten with police bludgeon and an electric whip. My hands were put in an electric vise. My hands, legs, and fingertips were hammered with nails. We were spread-eagle on a long table and tied down. They poured soapy water into our noses and mouths. Sometimes they put a hose into our mouths and turned it on. They used to tie our hands to a beam and let us hang so that our feet did not touch the ground. Then they hit us back and forth as we swung between two men, each taking turns hitting us. They called this 'flying plane.' Many of my comrades died in prison and many were permanently disabled. Some women were blinded and some crippled. I fared better, but my body still suffers." (Appy p. 230)

In the AIM video John McCain states that while there were in fact atrocities committed by the U.S. and South Vietnam soldiers, they were" isolated incidences that took place in the field." He also says that no cases had been documented of abuse on prisoners inside the prison compounds. This seems hard to believe. Truong My Hoa spent a year locked up with five other women in a tiger cage, enduring inhumane conditions. The use of tiger cages in South Vietnam was discovered in 1970.

<http://www.historiansagainstawar.org/resources/torture/luce.html>

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Holy Writ

by [Justin MacDonald](#) – Wednesday, April 20, 2016, 10:35 PM

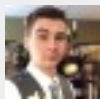
I can't say episode 4 of the series we are watching is giving too many wrong facts. It's merely how they are presented that really distorts the actuality of the situation. Nguyen Bich, the first commentator in the second half of the AIM video, states the PBS series portrayed the situation as "The northern saints vs the passive southern puppets" (AIM part 2). This is evident in how during the whole episode, several soldiers (some in the same battalion) give their snippet of how terrible the war is, and how they were regretting some actions in some battles during the chaos. One veteran, Charlie Subatier, even says "What the hell is Communism? We were killing them just because they were Communist" (PBS ep4). This is followed by various accounts of Vietnamese civilians giving spotty accounts (unemotionally I might add, compared to several teary soldiers) of how evil the Americans were, laughing and killing while the women and children watched crying. No major details of the battle were given, no other side presented. It begs you to suspend belief, and that these villagers, living under Communist rule, were telling the truth. I find it more likely PBS saved the clips of the most disgruntled soldiers, and the civilians recounting their interaction with Americans was debriefed before hand by their government. Bill Ehrhat, another soldier, goes on to say, "I had the feeling I was a Redcoat...[that] I wasn't a good guy."

Now, I have to put myself in the boots of a soldier. I have no doubt living through something like the Vietnam War would be nothing less of a struggle. I could never guess what I would do in a similar situation, or cope after having been in battle. War is terrible, but it sometimes a necessary evil. Our posts last week already went into what we were fighting for. It seems PBS so far likes to drive the point even further than the horrors of war, to say America was the perpetrator of most of these terrible things, and the soldiers all regret it. And it also seems reading the NYT article, that the producers knew this, and refused to engage in dialogue, knowing exactly what they were doing. They had preconceived notions going into the production of their series, and felt they were in the right. "At no point, however, do the producers of 'Vietnam: A Television History' give an inch. They confuse their series with Holy Writ" (NYT Article 1985). PBS pushes an agenda which strongly suggests everything America did there was on the wrong side of history.

My question though is, which side is right? If one looks objectively at PBS's series and AIM's rebuttal, they are left and right of the spectrum respectively. PBS is funded and run by liberal associates and journalists, while AIM is backed by conservative groups with money. Both groups are biased. I still seem to lean to the right. As Dan Cragg said, "...only a select few of the hundreds of thousands who served were highlighted...the 'bad' ones" (AIM Part 2). PBS just doesn't seem to play fair. Still an interesting documentary through it all though. Achieving a middle ground between the two videos seems reasonable.

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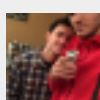
Re: Holy Writ

by [David Leavitt](#) – Saturday, April 23, 2016, 11:33 AM

I totally agree with you on that. I'm sure everything in the PBS video really happened, and that the interviews were real and such, but it was how they were presented that was the problem. It only showed one side; the side of the soldiers that obviously didn't study much out, that didn't even know what communism was. These were the guys that PBS interviewed, instead of the guys that knew what communism was, and went over to try to stop it. There's multiple sides to everything, and I feel like PBS only showed one.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Zachary Sielicky](#) – Wednesday, April 20, 2016, 11:01 PM

In my opinion I think the biggest contradiction is the view of each of the videos have on the POWs controlled on both sides. The PBS series showed graphic scenes of the mistreatment of the Vietnamese POWs by the American soldiers, this focus highlights the left of center bias that the PBS series exemplifies. The AIM video brings in Jon McCain, a well known senator and decorated Naval air fighter who was captured by the VC and tortured. This experience has had lasting effects on his political views and positions on military power and techniques. The AIM

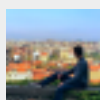
video uses his to demonstrate that the US was not the only side using brutal force against POWs and claims that the VC at times were even worse. To me I think this is especially important to examine in order to understand the views and bias's that each of these shows have in order to build your own position on the topic.

The New York Times article was very useful in understanding the two views even more. The article discusses how the PBS series was a "landmark in television journalism," and how they still feel that way because it was the first of its kind to incorporate such a distinct bias. This is both good and bad, fast forward to todays world all networks are littered with political bias' that have not only polarized the two ends of the spectrum but it has also grown to use ill journalism by giving a tainted view to just about every thing that gets broadcasted. So to say that it is a landmark is very accurate but in my opinion it isn't necessarily a good thing.

I personally still think that the PBS documentary does a better job at what is going on because their ideas were not in reaction or rebuttal to something else and it also talks about things that most other documentaries will try to avoid in order to make America look like the good guys still. Sometimes it is good to be shown that bad side of America in order to understand our place in the world and how we are viewed by other countries and why.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Who are the Real "Bigots?"
by [Trevor Kaye](#) – Thursday, April 21, 2016, 3:31 AM

A substantial contradiction between the second half of the Accuracy in Media program and the PBS series is the portrayal of American soldiers in the war. Episode four of *Vietnam: A Television History* focuses largely on the experiences of American soldiers. Through numerous first-hand accounts, the PBS series tells the unfortunate stories of young men caught in a brutal war.

Vietnam: A Television History exposes the horrors of the Vietnam War that soldiers faced, and sheds light on some of the atrocities that were committed. Many complex, emotional stories are shared, and they are all generalized in one simplistic statement from Dan Cragg on the AIM series. "I think the great unjustness of this film is that it portrays the American soldier in Vietnam as a drug addict, a racial bigot, and a man who murdered his officers and NCOs almost at will." The overarching issue with the AIM series is exhibited in the first two words of Cragg's statement: "I think." An organization advocating for accuracy in the reporting of modern and historical events should maintain an unbiased standpoint, using facts rather than emotionally-charged statements to sway their audience. Instead, as described by the New York Times article, "It is a polemic, interested mostly in its own point of view."

Vietnam: A Television History doesn't portray American soldiers as "drug addicts" or "racial bigots" as the AIM video states. It portrays them as genuine, sometimes regretful human beings who almost always feel some level of sympathy for those negatively impacted by the war. Bill Ehrhart, a veteran on the verge of tears, discusses his nightmares of "the woman in the rice field that [he] shot one day because she was running, for no other reason." The sheer emotion in his voice alone is enough to determine that he is far from a simple drug addict or racial bigot.

The audacity of the AIM series to even mention the word "bigot" is baffling, considering their blatant ignorance toward those with different political opinions. The narrator of the series states that, "Through all this PBS melodrama of heroes and villains, there's no hint that two ways of life: one based on freedom, the other on communism were struggling for the future of Indochina." The narrator juxtaposes the ideologies of "freedom" and "communism" to make it seem as if they are complete opposites, which simply is not the case. Freedom is not a political or economic system, and at this point the AIM organization is clearly trying to appeal to the blind patriotism and fear of communism that started the conflict in the first place.

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On a leash with hands tied
by [Dustin Brown](#) – Thursday, April 21, 2016, 5:49 PM

In the PBS video (America takes charge) they portray the American soldier as untrained, lacking regard for human life, and not equal to the enemy fighters. The PBS video makes it sound as if even with all the military might of the United States being used, and the Americans total disregard for human life and property the war was lost because the U.S was fighting a better trained force. In the Herring book (Chapter 5 page 179) it is explained that President Johnson was repeatedly asked by the joint chiefs of staff for a knockout blow on North Vietnam by bombing Hanoi, blocking the northern ports with mines, and sending a large

amount of troops in to seize enemy territory. President Johnson rejected the idea preferring a gradual escalation of force out of fear that U.S. aggression of that magnitude could force Russia or China to intervene. So the reality is the U.S. military commanders had their hands tied and were not allowed to take the fight to Hanoi which is why all the major battles took place in the south.

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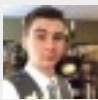
Distorting the truth

by [Titus Young](#) – Friday, April 22, 2016, 2:55 PM

It is easy to distort the truth. Whether we realize it or not we have all done it, albeit to different extremes. I think that most of us did this most as a child. We might just leave out certain parts of a story that will make our side of the story look better, or just exaggerate what others have done to us. Most of us have grown out of this but some people don't. PBS has done their fair share of distorting the truth, especially about Ho-Chi-Minh, and now also with the American soldiers that fought in Vietnam. They say that the soldiers were lost in the jungle, and they were but they also said that they were killers. Although they did kill a lot of Vietnamese needlessly, not all soldiers did that. PBS distorted the truth and made it seem as though they wandered aimlessly through the jungle killing any Vietnamese that crossed their path, which is obviously not the truth. This whole problem goes back to their bias, that is what causes someone to distort the truth, which in turn helps support their beliefs.

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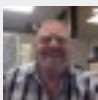
Re: Distorting the truth

by [David Leavitt](#) – Saturday, April 23, 2016, 12:14 PM

I agree that it's very easy to stretch the truth, to make it support your beliefs. We are all bias to one side or another, and have all stretched the truth, left out facts or exaggerated at some time. The problem is that PBS was supposed to make a documentary that "would supply information for the historical record." (AIM part 1) Now in a TV documentary, you can't show every clip ever shot, every interview, which makes it near impossible to make it without any bias, but if you're trying to supply information for the historical record, you need to do as best as you can to take as much bias out of it as you can. This is where I think PBS went wrong, because it looks like they purposefully had bias in their videos.

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Re: Distorting the truth

by [Philip Highwood](#) – Saturday, April 23, 2016, 2:19 PM

Titus,

Hello, good day to you fine sir. You bring up an interesting point, in the facts that PBS just might be bias; or the leadership of the Media group might be bias. PBS defiantly interviewed some week Soldiers. For instance PVT Bill Earhart, his story at first made him look like an American War Hero (as he volunteered and was not drafted); however, after listening to his recollection of his time in the Jungle it is my perception that he as an adult was crying about how crappy the conditions were. Was he trying to make us feel sorry for him and the rest of the Soldiers? So, my point here is if I was managing the interview process, and the final cut process, I would have portrayed the American Soldier as extremely well trained, and not lost in the Jungle. It's amazing to me that PBS would portray the American Soldier in such a fashion that one would think they were just coming the jungle with no purpose or end state. When in fact they were often wandering as a "movement to contact"; this is what Soldiers do, when the fight is not coming to them they go and find it. The PBS story is in fact the exact way the media group wanted the History of Vietnam remembered.

Philip.

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Re: Distorting the truth

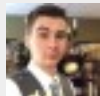
by [Tamara Berge](#) – Sunday, April 24, 2016, 9:17 PM

Hey Philip. It seemed to me that it is possible PBS chose the men in episode 4 with a potential bias, but I think it's also possible they were trying to represent large groups of soldiers that fought in the Vietnam War with those specific men. Private Earhart's account could have been put in to represent the young men that wanted to fight for their country and trusted that they were fighting for the right reasons. He stated that he was only seventeen when he enlisted in the marines and needed his parent's permission. Charlie Sabatier was the soldier that was drafted and ended up getting shot in the back, which I presume is why he is now in a wheel chair, for a war he didn't clearly understand and didn't have any stake in. I believe he represents a vast amount of soldiers from that time as well. Wouldn't it also show bias to only show interviews of soldiers that were confidently well trained and were always on point in a foreign jungle?

In episode 3 of the PBS series, Jack Valenti, discussed the reservations of Pres. Johnson in regards to deploying more troops to Vietnam, "We've got two questions that we've got to answer, can westerners fight a war in Asian jungles and number two, how can we fight a war under the direction of others who's governments topple like bowling pins?" (episode 3, 40:47) To me this just reinstates the unusual circumstances that surrounded the Vietnam War and the difficulties that the soldiers and all military personnel struggled with.

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Solders were misrepresented by PBS

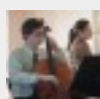
by [David Leavitt](#) – Friday, April 22, 2016, 6:43 PM

Even before watching the 2nd half of the AIM video, I thought the portrayal of the American solders was poor. They went on and on about how the Americans mistreated the Vietnamese by merciless killing in brutal ways, torturing, and destroying their way of life (which I am in now way saying didn't happen at all). But they never said anything about the Good the solders did, only about how hard, or even impossible they made the lives of the Vietnamese (PBS 37 mins). Not only this, but to contrast, they said that North Vietnamese were told they were reunifying the country (PBS: 15 mins), which makes the viewer side subconsciously with the Northern Vietnamese. Turns out I was not the only one that thought there was something wrong. The AIM video went into how the hundreds of thousands of Americans that serves in Vietnam with honor, and dignity, in a just way were not given credit. That all Americans were portrayed as Mercy less killers. (AIM 6 mins)

The NYT article said something really interesting: "The rebuttal is being presented by Accuracy in Medio, or AIM, the conservative group that monitors the press. Clearly there is controversy in that." What this article left out, is that PBS is a particular liberal media organization. So you have two groups, from both sides giving their opinion on what happened in Vietnam, and in the end, there is truth in both. The PBS video did a great job of showing some of the dilemmas that the American solders went through, not knowing who was friend or foe outside of their comrades. But it didn't show how the mass majority of them behaved. And I can see where some people wouldn't like how the AIM video did nothing but critique the PBS video, and didn't give them any credit for what they did right. I would have to say that I approve of the AIM video more, although it's tough to draw conclusions from the two.

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Prisoners of war

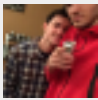
by [Titus Young](#) – Saturday, April 23, 2016, 9:42 AM

One thing that stood out to me that the AIM video pointed out was the treatment and use of prisoners. The American soldiers on the PBS series were depicted as Drug addicts, racists, and murderers. While I am sure some soldiers were maybe some of those things not all of them were. PBS also distorts the truth and tries to tell us that our American soldiers were not as good as the Vietnamese this is not true as the American soldiers were probably more superior soldiers to the Vietnamese soldiers. In any war, there will be prisoners of war, on both sides. While the American soldiers did mistreat the Vietnamese, when they were put in prison, the AIM video points out that there wasn't one documented case of mistreatment of the Vietnamese. While on the other side of

the spectrum the North Vietnamese periodical assaulted their prisoners of war mentally and physically. This helped them to manipulate the soldiers to be their "puppets" to control the US media that would influence the US government. This lead to the "Case–Church Amendment" that disabled our troops and eventually ended the war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Prisoners of war

by [Zachary Sielicky](#) – Sunday, April 24, 2016, 11:11 AM

The AIM video does highlight the mistreatment of the American POWs and uses Jon McCain as symbol of that mistreatment. Having Jon McCain in the video highlighting the PBS's fallacies about the American POWs in their documentary exhibits what they (PBS) is trying to convey to their audience t\and the political leaning they have. Jon McCain says "In relation to PBS, I think it's unfortunate that this series did not give the attention it deserved of the way the Vietnamese used American POWs as propaganda purposes," (McCain, 4:10). It is interesting to listen to the different perspectives of the American's who fought in Vietnam in the PBS documentary, they discuss like you said the drug abuse, racism and murders. It is hard to form a strong opinion on this topic when we are given two documentaries on the same topic that vary in views and opinions of America's role and actions in Vietnam.

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The final episode, the final offence.

by [Titus Young](#) – Saturday, April 23, 2016, 11:40 AM

After the Case–Church Amendment, the US troops were disarmed, their air support taken and even their weapons removed, then forced to leave Vietnam. This opened the door for communist North Vietnam to take over all of South Vietnam. Another mass exodus from Vietnam was spurred by communism taking over the country and their human rights. As the Vietnamese fled their country, out of Vietnam, through Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, all the way to Singapore. The AIM video points out that this was the greatest percentage of people to be affected by a communist takeover while the holocaust affected more people, the total percentage of the Vietnamese population effect was greater. On top of this, the PBS series seemed to ignore the real reason way this mass exodus happened: communism infringes upon basic human rights. The reason they overlook this is their bias of portraying the North Vietnamese as the good guys.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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A couple of view points

by [Brittany Aldinger](#) – Saturday, April 23, 2016, 5:59 PM

I personally enjoy the PBS documentary series. For myself, the interviews and footage from the combat zones show the malicious events that took place, in all their horror. It also gives light to the influence that the American government placed on the soldiers going to war. Bill Ehrhart voluntarily joined the United States military to fight for his country and be a hero after hearing the government tell the country that, “the communists were taking over Vietnam, and if we didn’t stop them there, we would eventually have to stop them in San Diego.” (Episode 4. 5min. 35sec.) That resonated with Mr. Ehrhart, and he chose to take action.

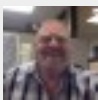
Two minutes and forty–two seconds into *Vietnam: The Real Story*, Heston states that the PBS films “paints a pretty dark picture of the American Military in Vietnam” I agree with him, but as Heston believes that the films are overly exposing the gruesome actions that the American Military took against the Vietnamese, I find that it is important that the American citizens are exposed to the madness and tragedy that ensued in Vietnam. Heston goes on to say that “the men who fought there are not very happy about that.” I disagree with his statement here, because in the PBS film, it is the men who fought there telling the gruesome and horrific stories of the goings on that took place in Vietnam for many years.

Also in The Real Story, Dan Cragg, of Army Magazine, states that the film “portrays the American soldiers as a

drug addict, a racial big-got,and a man who murdered his officers and NCEO’s almost at will” (6min. 4sec.) I have not once felt that the PBS films were depicting our soldiers as so. As far as I have watched, the PBS films have shown the fear and drive that the American soldier had to have in order to survive the war.

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Re: A couple of view points

by [Philip Highwood](#) – Sunday, April 24, 2016, 9:57 AM

Brittany,

Good morning, I like that you have a strong sense of whom to side with. It also appears that you admire Bill or Mr. Ehrhart, and that you look up to him for taking action. I could not agree more; I also volunteered to take action for the same reason; I wanted to keep "War" away from America, and I fight so that my children do not have to.

So, I have searched using "BING" and "YAHOO" looking to find out more information on the people who PBS interviewed. PBS states that Bill Ehrhart, is a "PVT" (Private). That is the rank that you have in your first 6 months in the military. The average Soldier, Marine, Air Man, will be promoted at the vary least, two times within the first 18 months of service. Providing the individual stays out of trouble. With that said I can't find anything that shows Bill Ehrhart,is in fact a PVT. I found a William Ehrhart served three years in Vietnam as a marine, however, he was a Sergeant. That is an NCO (none commissioned officer).

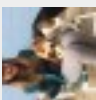
For discussion, we all know that proper tittles are extremely important, if infact William is Bill then PBS was officially misrepresenting Mr. Ehrhart, not by his first name, as Bill is Will and visa versa; but buy his military rank which is as important to the military person as is a doctor being called a doctor. I have two reasons why his title would be PVT.

- 1. Either PBS was misrepresenting Mr. Ehrhart; which means what else are they misrepresenting?
- 2. Mr. Ehrhart, was a below average marine? Was it Mr Ehrhart, who also stated that he shot and killed an older woman as she ran away through the rice fields?

Philip

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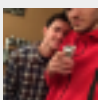
PBS approved

by [Brittany Aldinger](#) – Saturday, April 23, 2016, 6:32 PM

After reading the New York Times article and watching the rebuttal that AIM put out for the citizens to see, I still feel very strongly drawn to the PBS series. The real footage of combat can not lie to us, it cannot insert it’s own opinions and reinterpret the way the violence makes us feel. The interviews and stories that our veterans tell the cameras are at times shocking and at other times engorged with emotion and sorrow for the Vietnamese people. Lastly, the interviews that are incorporated from the Vietnamese stand point are exceedingly tragic and truthful. When it comes down to it, all we can do as society, is ask the media to give us the truth, and then make our own depictions from there.

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Re: PBS approved

by [Zachary Sielicky](#) – Sunday, April 24, 2016, 10:05 AM

I agree, I really like the PBS documentary and the actual footage they show. The way they insert their own opinions is by picking and choosing certain pieces of footage to show then have the narrator interpret it for the watcher. The footage doesn't lie to us, you are right but the way they talk about the events they can forge an opinion.

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Attempting to identify conflicting information

by [Tamara Berge](#) – Sunday, April 24, 2016, 6:07 PM

With this second AIM video, I have found it more difficult to quickly identify conflicting information. Some comments left me confused as their claims must clearly be pertaining to events or topics that come after the fourth episode in the PBS series, which is as far as I have watched. Dan Cragg, for example, left me feeling this way when he discussed his disapproval for the PBS episodes and the way they represented the conduct and behavior of American soldiers. “The great unjustness of this film is that it portrays the American soldier in Vietnam as a drug addict, a racial bigot, and a man who murdered his officers and NCO’s almost at will. The hundreds of thousands of Americans who went to Vietnam and served honorably and bravely have got to be incensed at this terrible, terrible misrepresentation of their bravery and sacrifice on the battlefield.” (Cragg, AIM 6:05)

Of the episodes I have seen, I have not come across his reasons of upset against PBS. However, I was able to find some basic information on page 309 of the Herring book. While I am unsure what Cragg felt was misrepresented, the book confirms there were numbers of soldiers that had involvement with drugs and many cases of assassination attempts on officers. “The U.S. command estimated in 1970 that as many as 65,000 American service personnel were using drugs and that 40,000 were hooked on heroin. In addition, the armed services were not immune to the racial tensions that tore America apart in the Vietnam era.” (Herring p. 309)

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