

cc: S. Trahern ✓

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BRIAN LAMB

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I watch your Booknotes show every week. It's a great show, and illustrates a lot of effort. But I write not to praise your show (only) but to call you to task for two recent reviews.

First, Dixy Ray Lee. She talked out the extreme risk aversion that has infected our society. I agree with her. As an illustration, she stated that the US spent "\$120 billion last year" to remove - unnecessarily - asbestos from schools. Perhaps \$120 million was spent; the cost she stated is absurdly high. I score that error - Brian for letting that "fact" go without challenge.

Dixy also stated ~~can~~ that sports are reported without error, wondering why scientific issues can't be accurately reported also. She asked you for confirmation about sport reporting accuracy. Well, I know that sports reporting has errors in it; the quantity being about the same in other areas. I've watched or listened to sporting events (which have live errors in them). Then I read reports and/or see TV coverage of it. Again, errors. Dixy's faith in sports reporting (which wasn't the real point, which was inaccuracy of science reporting) is based on nothing but ~~the~~ misplaced faith. I suppose that Dixy isn't a sports fan, and doesn't pay close attention to details. I am and I do. Anyway, you could have stated the truth - sports reports (often prepared in haste) are full of errors.

It's unfortunate that you interviewed Roger Githines (John Tower) before you talked with Bob Woodward (The Commanders). You could have asked why Tower's Naval gunnery prepared him to be Defense Secretary and what relevance did Sam Nunn's Coast Guard Service have to do with anything? You could have pointed out that Nunn's ^{uncle} ~~lostin~~ (Sam Vinson?) was the chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee (later House Armed Services). He worked for Uncle Carl & has worked to follow in his footsteps.

Tower's assertion that Nunn's opposition to his nomination is based only on presidential aspirations is just not credible. Tower is tragic in going to his death without understanding why he was denied the Defense seat. If Nunn was ~~never~~ ~~from~~ acting to run for president, he wouldn't

have voted with Bush 72% in 1989 (New Republic, 3/4/91, p26).

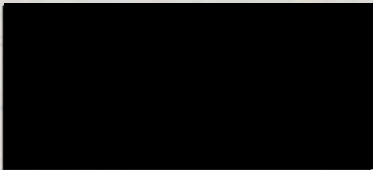
He also would not have voted to ~~den~~ continue sanctions against Saddam (i.e., no force). He knew he was on the short end of the vote & knew his constituents did not agree. When Al Gore voted to authorize force, he was accused of ~~not~~ voting his presidential ambitions.

After the Woodward interview, you could have asked why Tower's military past qualified him. Dick Cheney never was in the military & he's been a real good Defense Secretary (which has surprised me). Woodward talked about the work Cheney has put in & the results. But even before you interviewed Gittmer, you should have known Cheney's past - it was mentioned over & over, during the Gulf crisis and earlier. Same with Quayle.

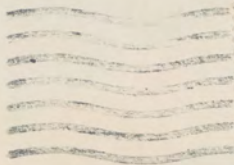
So you could easily ask "Why?"
When Tower was nominated, I didn't
find him to be a compelling choice.
I expected him to be confirmed (by
the usually spineless senate), but
his rejection wasn't a surprise (after
the media attention) nor was it
an unappreciated result.

Anyway, your show is always
interesting. Your authors' discussions
about their books, book publishing
in general and their own life stories
are generally fascinating. Keep up the
good work.

By the way, I finish this letter at
10:53 pm on the ~~last~~ tenth of July.



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