

[REDACTED]  
Lancaster, OH 43130

September 17, 1993

Mr. Brian Lamb  
C-SPAN  
400 N Capitol NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

A few months ago, you interviewed Deborah Shapley, the author of Promise and Power, on your Booknotes program. The book sounded like a scholarly study of a complex man, Robert McNamara.

Unfortunately the book is loaded with factual errors. Inclosed is a copy of a letter I sent to the publisher listing some of them. In view of your interview with Reed Irvine on 9/17/93, I thought you might be interested.

Perhaps with future Booknote programs about books on current history, you could have someone do some fact checking before the program. I know with your schedule, you could not be expected to read books that thoroughly.

Sincerely  
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]  
Lancaster , OH 43130

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The Editors  
Little, Brown and Company  
1271 Avenue Of The Americas  
New York, NY 10020

Gentlemen:

I recently finished Promise and Power by Deborah Shapley. I thought of giving up at page 376 where Ms Shapley referred to "Colonel" James Stockdale (he was in the Navy, they dont have Colonels) or on page 441 where I learned that Martin Luther King Jr. was shot in Chicago, but I persevered to the end. I dont know when I have read a book with so many factual errors. Among these are:

Page 23. According to Alfred Sloan's book My Years With General Motors, the near failure of G.M. in 1920 was due to William C. Durant's (not Will, He was the historian) speculation in G.M. stock, not faulty accounting procedures. Sloan, a G.M. vice president at the time in fact split G.M. into five seperate divisions when he become president.

Page 29. Army and AirCorps captains wore bars on their shoulders, not stripes on their sleeves.

Page 29. The U.S. lost 188 planes at Pearl Harbor. The Air Corps had over two thousand planes of all types in December 1941, not fifty that Gen. Arnold knew by name.

Page 32. Jimmy Doolittle is not a "fabled World War I ace" His first overseas assignment did not come until World War II. His reputation was made through his advancements in the science and technology of aviation. Doolittle does have a doctorate in engeneering (MIT 1925) so he was well qualified to question the opinions of the Whiz Kids.

Page 33. The flight testing of the B-29 was conducted at Wichita Kansas where they were built, not at Selina KS.

Page 36. The entire second paragraph is nonsense. During the war there were far more B-24s produced than B-17s (18,300 vs 12,726). Ironically, the Ford Willow Run plant was built to produce B-24s. In addition to there use in Europe, the B-24 was the only heavy bomber used



in the Pacific (other than the later use of the B-29) due to their greater range (3200 mi vs 1850)mi for the B-17) The Decision to use the B-29 only against Japan was made in December 1943. There was never a plan to use the B-17 instead of the B-29. Neither the B-17 or the B-24 had nearly the range to bomb Japan from the Mariana Islands as did the B-29.

Page 68. I think that Chrysler would be surprised to learn that the Big Three auto makers are Ford, General Motors and Chevrolet.

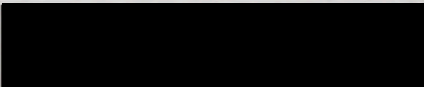
I could go on, but you get the idea.

Admittedly none of these are matters of earth shaking importance but they indicate sloppy research and cast doubts on the rest of the book. If an author can get such easily checked "facts" wrong, what does this say about "facts" that the reader is in no position to check? Are they equally suspect?

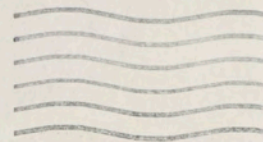
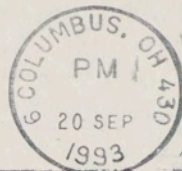
This is not a defense of Robert McNamara. I think his management of the war in Vietnam was a disaster for all concerned but any history should be as factually and historically accurate as possible because future generations of readers will rely on the facts contained.

I understand now that McNamara is going to write his own history of events. It will be interesting to compare Shapley's book with his. Unfortunately, if they disagree, we still won't know what to believe.

Sincerely



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