



# Who the Hell Are We Fighting?: The Story of Sam Adams and the Vietnam Intelligence Wars

*Michael Hiam*

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It was an enigma of the Vietnam War: American troops kept killing the Viet Cong – and were being killed in the process – and yet the Viet Cong's ranks continued to grow. When one man – CIA analyst Sam Adams – uncovered documents suggesting a Viet Cong army more than twice as numerous as previously reckoned, another war erupted, this time within the ranks of America's intelligence community. This clandestine conflict, which burst into public view during the acrimonious lawsuit *Westmoreland v. CBS*, involved the highest levels of the U.S. government. The central issue in the trial, as in the war itself, was the calamitous failure of our intelligence agencies to ascertain the strength of the Viet Cong and get that information to our troops in a timely fashion. The legacy of this failure – whether due to institutional inertia, misguided politics, or individual hubris – haunts our nation. And Sam Adams' tireless crusade for “honest intelligence” resonates strongly today.

To detractors like Richard Helms, Adams was an obsessive zealot; to others, he was a patriot of rare integrity and moral courage. Adams was the driving force behind the CBS ninety-minute documentary *The Uncounted Enemy*, produced by George Crile and hosted by Mike Wallace. Westmoreland brought a lawsuit seeking \$120 million in damages against Adams and Wallace in what headlines around the country trumpeted as the libel trial of the century. Westmoreland dropped his suit before the case could be sent to the jury.

*Who the Hell Are We Fighting?* is the first serious narrative history of Adams' controversial discovery of the Vietnam "numbers gap." Hiam's book is a timeless, cautionary tale that combines the best elements of biography, military history, and current affairs.



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