

# BILL O'REILLY

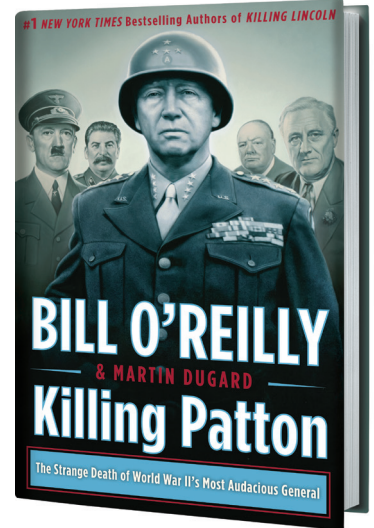
## & MARTIN DUGARD

## Killing Patton

### The Strange Death of World War II's Most Audacious General

#### A HENRY HOLT READING GROUP GUIDE

1. Have you seen the famous movie *Patton* starring George C. Scott? If so, compare how the film portrays George S. Patton to how Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard do. What are the similarities and what are the differences?
2. A lot of *Killing Patton* is told through the viewpoints of fighting men. Did you find this method effective? Did it effectively convey the sensation of being on a battlefield?
3. Patton is notorious for slapping a shell-shocked soldier—two soldiers, in fact. Did you know Patton did it twice? After reading the book, do you have more insight into why Patton slapped the soldiers? Did your opinion about the slapping incident change?
4. The authors write that Patton's slapping incident was hushed up for four months, and that Supreme Commander Dwight Eisenhower defied congressional calls for Patton's dismissal. Why was Patton considered so valuable to the war effort? Do you agree?
5. The authors write that in the German army, shell-shocked soldiers would have been summarily executed. Discuss how this illustrates the difference between democracy and fascism.
6. Although Adolf Hitler is remembered as the great mass murderer of World War II, the authors write that Joseph Stalin ordered between fifty million and sixty million deaths, far more than Hitler. Why do you think there is not more awareness of Stalin's crimes? Do you think the fact that the Soviet Union was allied with the United States has anything to do with it?
7. The Germans' last offensive, the Battle of the Bulge, was initially successful because American forces disregarded signs of the German military buildup. What do you think caused this overconfidence?
8. British field marshal Bernard Montgomery was allowed extraordinary latitude by Dwight Eisenhower, apparently in a political decision to salve war-weary British morale. Yet the authors write that Montgomery was not as effective as Patton on the battlefield. Do you think this is a fair evaluation? What do you think of Ike's decision?
9. *Killing Patton* details that many of Dwight Eisenhower's actions were done more for political reasons than for military ones. In his position, he was forced to balance the conflicting desires of the Allies. How would you evaluate his performance? Do you think the fact that Ike had no experience in war affected his decision making?
10. Both the United States and Nazi Germany had heads of state who, during the war, were dying men. Were you aware of Hitler's many physical ailments? Do you think his illnesses and the drugs administered to him affected his decisions during the war?



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11. The authors tell the remarkable story of how Stalin, to please his young daughter, invented a communist version of Christmas. Were you familiar with the Russian holiday of Children's New Year? Did your opinion of Stalin, a bloodthirsty dictator, change at all?
12. *Killing Patton* gives detailed descriptions of the Nazi death camps and how they operated. Were you familiar with these details? Do these accounts help you understand the horrors of the Holocaust?
13. Generals Dwight Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, and George Patton visited a Nazi death camp. Even such experienced soldiers could not comprehend the horror of the place. Did the descriptions given in the book help you come to grips with the reality of the camps?
14. The authors describe the fate of Anne Frank and tell how Otto Frank, her father, was liberated from Auschwitz. Have you read *The Diary of Anne Frank*? Did you know what happened after the events told in the diary end? Did you know her diary survived the war and was discovered by Otto Frank?
15. Like the Americans, the Nazis were working to develop an atomic bomb. Can you imagine what might have happened had Hitler possessed the bomb? How do you think history might have changed?
16. Both the Germans and the Russians committed brutalities against their captive populations. The authors quote a Russian soldier who said the Russian army's campaign of rape in Germany was revenge for Nazi behavior in Russia. Do you accept this statement? Do such incidents make a case for stronger rules of war?
17. President Harry S. Truman believed that possession of the atomic bomb gave the United States an advantage in postwar diplomacy. However, the Soviet Union developed its own bomb within four years. Do you think the Cold War would have developed differently if the United States had shared atomic secrets with all of its allies?
18. George S. Patton believed that the Soviet Union would be America's principal adversary after World War II and advocated continuing the war, this time against the Russians. How much of Patton's attitude do you think came from his knowledge of world politics and how much from the fact that he loved war and wanted to continue fighting?
19. President Truman opposed the establishment of an American spy agency and disbanded the wartime Office of Strategic Services. However, in a few years, the Central Intelligence Agency was created. What do you think caused Truman to change his mind?
20. The authors write that Stalin ordered Patton to be killed, and that William Donovan plotted against Patton because of his opposition to an alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union. Why do you think each considered Patton to be such an important target? interpreted his behavior to mean that he was safe from drinking, drug use, and sexually promiscuous behavior. What signs did they miss? Discuss the difficulties of correctly understanding what is going on with an adolescent.