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**Responsibility
By Amy Branham
Gold Star Mom for Peace
BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator**

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One would think we would feel some sense of validation knowing that all we accused our government of doing: the lying, the torture, the deceit, is true. Piece by piece and time after time, those of us in the peace movement and, in particular, Gold Star Families who have worked in the peace movement have learned we were right. I don't know about the rest of the families today, but I can tell you, I do not feel in the least bit happy about it.

For those of you whose heads have been in a hole somewhere out in Never Never Land, let me explain to you what I am talking about. Former White House Press Secretary, Scott McClellan, wrote a book that has been talked about hour after hour this week called "What Happened". He talks about the lead up to the war and how the Bush administration fed all of us, including him, propoganda as they beat the drums to illegally invade Iraq. It is, seemingly, a tell-all book written by a man who now says he has a duty to the truth.

Sir, you have always had a duty to tell the truth, to speak truth to power. As a public servant, that should have always been your moral and ethical responsibility! To do anything less leaves you culpable in one of the greatest crimes against humanity of all time. If you knew what the administration was spewing were lies, you should have said something and done something. But you did not and because of it, all of us have suffered. You were not alone in this, I'll give you that. There were many others who spewed the lies, the rhetoric, the propoganda that cost so many lives and so many trillions of dollars. You helped to totally ruin a foreign country and kill their civilians.

I can feel little more than anger today, after I have listened to hours of interviews and talking points on the TV and radio.

A few years ago I never thought I'd find myself in the position I am in today, as I look back over time and what I have experienced because of this war and this disastrous administration. I have been called a traitor to my country, unpatriotic, and a disgrace to my son and his service to his country. I have been threatened physically and shouted at by misled people (who are generally otherwise probably pretty decent people) who thought I was crazy because I did not believe. My phones have been tapped and my emails read illegally. One morning during August of 2005, shortly after coming home from Crawford, Texas, my husband went outside to find a government car parked in front of our home, the windows blacked out. The car sped away as soon as they spotted my husband.

We have worried for our jobs and the safety of our family. Many of our friends thought we were just plain nuts, while we have had others, who worked for the government, tell us, we can't be friends anymore – it endangers us and our jobs. Even our own family thought we had lost our marbles.

Yet, I cannot lay full blame on Scott McClellan. The blame for all of this also lies with the media, who did not question properly even though it would have put their jobs on the line. The blame also lies with our elected officials who should have questioned more carefully and explained to the American people what they were doing.

We no longer have a system of checks and balances on the Presidency of this country, in Congress or in the media. When responsible, patriotic citizens stand up to hold our government and the media to accountability, we are generally ignored and pushed to the side like an unwanted pile of weeds.

The corruption goes down to the very deepest, darkest levels of our society now. When people like Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly and the likes of Fox News and the other Murdock-owned media outlets only report what the government wants them to report, there is something seriously wrong. When people are getting rich off the war there is something wrong.

We know the truth. There is inescapable evidence right in our faces as to what the truth is. Yet, absolutely nothing is being done to hold the Bush administration accountable for its actions. Those few honorable elected representatives who have tried eventually get buried and forgotten. It is not just the Republicans who are responsible for this, the Democrats hold equal responsibility for not taking responsibility, holding the administration accountable and doing what is right.

What we have all feared for so long has come to pass... The terrorists won, but not in the way we thought they would. It did not take more violence, only a government and military industrial complex that fed upon our worst nightmares and fears. Worse, We, The People, let them.


BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator, Amy Branham, is the mom of the late Sgt. Jeremy R. Smith. Her blog is: <http://amybranham.blogspot.com/>. Click [here](#) to contact Ms. Branham.

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