

Dear Senators, Congress and Members of The Armed Services Committee,

August 6, 2011 was the most DEVASTING day in our lives. Every parent's WORST nightmare, your child has been killed, along with 30 of his comrades in a foreign country. Imagine...30 Families, who on 08/05/2011 were strangers, 24 hours later...bonded forever. My stepson, Michael Strange was on board the Chinook, call sign "EXTORTION 17", and in our home, the loud laughter isn't as loud and holidays, family get-togethers, celebrations and just any "ordinary" day, there is that silent void that NEVER goes away. I have had to watch my husband cry every single day because his heart aches and he misses his Son so much. Do you know what it's like, to watch the one person you love with ALL your heart, hurt sooo bad and know there's NOT A DAMN THING you can do?! I do, and it's a HORRIBLE feeling!

We have waited 30 months to be able to sit here today in the hope that this Committee would help us find out what REALLY happened that fateful night. Personally, I feel as if salt has been added to the wound by NOT ALLOWING any parents to speak here today. My husband & I have spent many sleepless nights, shed many tears and spent thousands of hours reading, researching, making calls and doing a whole lot of good ol' fashioned foot work knocking on doors trying to get some answers. In response we have been lied to, treated disrespectfully and talked to as if we were morons, it's disgraceful! I can't believe this is what Gold Star Parents have to tolerate!

There have been sooo many inconsistencies in the reports and stories for this to be "a lucky shot", so PLEASE DO NOT insult us with an OUTRAGEOUS AND OFFENSIVE excuse as that!!

Let's begin with Colt's statement in his "Summary" of what happened. He states that the "CH-47D Air Mission Commander and his task force commander **DETERMINED this mission to be BE A "HIGH-RISK MISSION" due to the experience level of one non-pilot crew chief** and because of this HIGH-RISK, the mission had to be approved by **The Higher Headquarters Commander for Special Operations Task Force** and the **Supporting Aviation Brigadier Commander**".

W H O ARE THESE INCOMPETENT INDIVIDUALS?

W H Y W O U L D T H E Y O K A L L 3 1 M E N O N 1 C H - 4 7 , I F B E F O R E L E A V I N G T H E F O B , I T W A S D E T E R M I N E D T O A L R E A D Y B E A " H I G H R I S K M I S S I O N " ?

Then.... They Gave N O ESCORTS FOR "EXTORTION 17" ON an already "HIGH RISK MISSION" into a Hot Landing Zone (HLZ)?

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Were Not Followed b/c they Should have had an escort (AC-130 Gunship OR an AH-64 Apache) upon leaving the FOB! **OUR MEN HAD NONE!**

Gen. Colt. states, "THE **RANGER-led assault force** was **SUPPORTED by 2 CH-47D CHINOOK Helos and 2 AH-64 APACHE attack helicopters, along with an AC-130 Gunship, and a RELATIVELY ROBUST TEAM OF INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE (ISR) AIRCRAFT**".

THEN to add insult to injury the next line is as follows "**THE 2 CH-47Ds WOULD AIRLIFT the Assault Force, totaling 47 personnel, into a LZ approx.. 1200 meters from the suspected location,** of the TANGI VALLEY TALIBAN LEADER, **QARI TAHIR A.K.A- "OBJECTIVE LEFTY GROVE"**".

So there were **47 Rangers and 31 Americans aboard Extortion 17, that equals 78 of our Special Operators to CAPTURE 1 Taliban Leader??!!** **W H Y??**

THEN...when the RANGERS arrived at their target compound, "Overhead Manned and Unmanned Aircraft" observed several personnel departing the target area. The AH-64 Apache attack helicopters **detected and Positively and Identified suspected TALIBAN FIGHTERS ARMED with AK-47 rifles and "RPG" LAUNCHERS, WALKING single file** APPROX. 400 meters **NORTHWEST** of the target compound." Throughout the execution of the mission the Overhead ISR aircraft continued to track the movement of suspected TALIBAN FIGHTERS". "THIS GROUP formed around two personnel who WERE OBSERVED MOVING **NORTHWEST** from the immediate vicinity of the target area, BEFORE the Ranger-led assault force had arrived". Did they know the Rangers were coming?...SURE SOUNDS LIKE THAT TO ME!!

"There were Taliban in the trees, on motorcycles, in the building, approx. 2 kilometers from the original compound". THEY KNEW ALL this, BUT STILL ALLOWED OUR "BOYS" to go IN A "HLZ", ALL 31 AMERICANS, ON ONE HELO???

**** WE WERE TOLD THE RANGERS NEEDED HELP BECAUSE THEY WERE UNDER ATTACK.....****

****THEN...WE COME TO FIND OUT...ARE YOU READY FOR THIS?...THE RANGERS WERE NEVER IN DANGER! ****

*******OUR BOYS DID NOT HAVE TO BE DEPLOYED THAT NIGHT AS A IRE...SO...WHY WERE THEY???*******

The 7 Afghan Commandos who originally on "EXTORTION 17" either got off and refused to get back on OR were switched out and 7 New Afghans GOT ON.* **WHO were they? WHY were they NEVER questioned?** WHO made these decisions? HOW come General Colt **NEVER** asks these questions? Are the 7 that aborted "EXTORTION 17" still being allowed to fly with our Special Operators? If so WHY?

*In the "Investigation Paperwork" "Ex. 89" Colt asks the Air Force Commander (AFC) "What is the assessment of the Tangi Valley?" AFC answers "over 100 Taliban plan to travel from the ___ Province to the Tangi Valley to shoot down the Coalition Force Aircraft". They knew and did nothing to prevent this?!

WHY when our Men Requested Pre-Assault Fire 2-3 TIMES, to CLEAR THE HLZ... They were DENIED! WHO denied that request?

The Occupational Coordination Group (OCG) has the FINAL say in EVERY mission our Special Ops does, whether it is a go OR if they don't like it they can call the "mission" off!

HOW THE HELL CAN WE EVER WIN A WAR, WHEN THE ENEMY KNOWS ALL OUR MOVES BEFORE WE DO THEM?!

WHERE ARE THE "BLACK BOXES"? On Oct.12, 2011 General Colt, when my husband (Charles Strange) asks this question, Colt replies "A flash flood came and washed it away! We have looked into this and those Boxes DON'T go away, in fact they have BEACONS on them and can be found 20,000 ft UNDER WATER! SO we ask again...WHERE ARE THE "BLACK BOXES"? WHAT DON'T THEY WANT US TO HEAR ON THOSE RECORDINGS?

There were 3 "EYES IN THE SKY"...BUT NOT 1 ON "EXTORTION 17"... WHY?

Gen. Colt asks about them and is told "We NEVER did a mission like this Sir (referring to Colt), it made us feel VERY Vulnerable. Our hands were tied from UP ABOVE"!

How far up is "UP ABOVE?" WHO gave this command? 95 days prior ALL EYES were on SEAL Team 6 from the SITUATION ROOM!

MY STEPSON, CTR1 MICHAEL STRANGE, WAS CREMATED...HE DID NOT NEED TO BE!

WHY WERE WE TOLD "THEY ARE ALL BURNED BEYOND RECOGNITION", "NO IDENTIFIABLE REMAINS" AND "ONLY 38 C-SPINES AND SKULLS LEFT". LIES, LIES AND MORE LIES!!! WHY???

WE NEED HELP FINDING THE "TRUTH"

Why are the Parents and Loved Ones of "EXTORTION 17" BEING ALLOWED TO BE TREATED THIS WAY?

The Men of "EXTORTION 17" were Men of courage, integrity and honor, and not only did the Families lose their loved ones BUT this Country lost 30 Heroic Defenders of Freedom. PLEASE help the Families of Extortion 17 find some closure and that can only begin with the Truth. WE DESERVE THAT MUCH!

THE ONLY TIME YOU HAVE TO LIE... IS IF YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING...IS WRONG!!