

Mother of slain US soldier arrested at Bush campaign event

By Peter Daniels
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Secret Service agents and local police handcuffed and arrested the mother of a US soldier killed in Iraq after she interrupted Laura Bush's speech at a Republican Party campaign event in Hamilton, New Jersey.

Sue Niederer's son, Seth Dvorin, an Army first lieutenant, was 24 when he was killed last February while attempting to defuse a bomb in Iraq. At the September 16 event, she wore a shirt bearing a photo of her son and the words "President Bush, You Killed My Son." Niederer told the press that, even though this was an event sponsored by the Bush campaign, some people standing near her expressed support and sympathy when they saw the shirt.

The September 16 confrontation between the mother of the slain soldier and the wife of the President was barely covered in the national press. The *New York Times* devoted exactly one paragraph to the story on September 17, buried deep inside the paper. Local New Jersey papers provided more details.

When Laura Bush made reference to the Iraq war, the New Jersey mother shouted out, "Why don't your children serve?" "At that point it became chaotic and I was pushed and shoved," she told the *Asbury Park Press*. "They engulfed me. It wasn't plain, ordinary folks, but people in suits with earphones."

Secret Service agents took Niederer outside the hall while Bush operatives used the rehearsed chant of "Four more years" to drown out the mother and try to divert attention away from both her protest and the manhandling by the Secret Service.

Niederer said that at least one person spoke in her defense, saying, "She has a right to speak. She's a mother." When she began answering questions from reporters outside the hall, she was handcuffed, placed in police van, and charged with trespassing. Authorities later claimed she had refused a request to leave the

premises.

She said, however, that, before bringing her to the police station and arresting her, the cops drove her around for 40 minutes in an apparent attempt to isolate her from the Bush event and the media.

Niederer's action is only one indication of the enormous hatred of the war and the lies of the Bush Administration, including within the ranks of the military and of the families of soldiers and reserve troops in Iraq.

The 55-year-old housewife has participated actively in protests against the war since her son's death. Only two weeks after he was killed, she attended a protest outside a Princeton University conference attended by Secretary of State Colin Powell, where she shouted "You killed my son." She joined a group called Military Families Speak Out and recently participated in the August 29 demonstration in New York City that attracted more than a half-million people.

After burying her son last February, Sue Niederer told a local newspaper: "I'm not going to just be quiet. If I speak up, maybe someone else's son won't die for nothing the way my son did. If I don't speak up, then he will really have died completely in vain."

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