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# MailOnline

Tuesday, Sep 2nd 2014 11PM 68°F 2AM 66°F 5-Day Forecast

## 'I'm back, Obama': ISIS executioner Jihadi John taunts President as he beheads second US journalist, Steven Sotloff . . . and then threatens to kill a British hostage next

- Steven Sotloff, 31, from Miami, was captured in Syria in August 2013
- The video is titled 'A Second Message to America'
- In the video, Sotloff describes himself as 'paying the price' for the Obama administration's decision to attack ISIS in Iraq
- Executioner threatens to kill Briton held hostage by ISIS next
- Sotloff freelanced for Time and Foreign Policy magazines
- Family of Steven Sotloff said they 'know of this horrific tragedy and are grieving privately'
- Sotloff was the grandson of Holocaust survivors
- The White House today said: 'Our thoughts and prayers are with Mr Sotloff and Mr Sotloff's family'
- UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said the whole world was 'outraged' by the content of the video

By [James Nye for MailOnline](#) and [Michael Zennie for MailOnline](#) and [David Martosko, Us Political Editor for MailOnline](#)

Published: 12:16 EST, 2 September 2014 | Updated: 23:43 EST, 2 September 2014

ISIS has released a video that shows the beheading of U.S. journalist Steven Sotloff and says the murder is retaliation for the Obama administration's continued airstrikes in Iraq.

Sotloff is the second American journalist to be killed by ISIS, and his death comes two weeks after James Foley was executed in a similar video.

In the video entitled 'A Second Message to America,' Sotloff appears in an orange jumpsuit before he is beheaded by an Islamic State fighter.

The executioner appears to be the same man who killed Foley – known as 'Jihadi John' - and tells the camera: 'I'm back, Obama, and I'm back because of your arrogant foreign policy towards the Islamic State.'

He also threatens to kill a Briton held hostage by the group next. The identity of the hostage is widely available online, but MailOnline is not identifying him at the request of the British government.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said on Wednesday that the world was 'outraged' at what they had seen.

'We are all outraged at reports from Iraq about the brutal killing of civilians by ISIL, including yesterday's (Tuesdays) reported brutal beheading of another journalist,' he said.



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**Murder: American journalist Steven Sotloff pictured in an ISIS video before he was executed. He was killed two weeks after James Foley died in the same way**

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**Challenge to Obama: The ISIS executioner taunts the President before he kills US journalist Steven Sotloff. He is thought to be the same militant who killed James Foley and tells the President 'I'm back'**

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**Threat to kill Briton next: A British hostage, who the Mail Online is not identifying, was brought on screen as ISIS militants said they would kill him next**

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**Last week: Sotloff's mother Shirley appealed directly for the return of her son last week. On Tuesday, ISIS released a video that purported to show the beheading of her son online**

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British Prime Minister David Cameron condemned the video, calling it 'an absolutely disgusting and despicable act'.

He said he will chair a COBR meeting on the threat to a UK citizen tomorrow, and added: 'My thoughts and prayers are with Mr Sotloff's family and friends tonight as they deal with this appalling and tragic situation.'

'We have already been working hard to keep British people safe and we will continue to do all we can to protect our country and our people from these

barbaric terrorists.'

President Obama this afternoon boarded Air Force One and flew to Estonia ahead of a NATO summit without addressing the nation. The White House said the President's 'thoughts and prayers' were with the Sotloff family.

Sotloff, 31, from Miami, who freelanced for Time and Foreign Policy magazines, vanished in Syria in August 2013 and was not seen again until he appeared in a video released online last month that showed Foley's beheading. He was the grandson of Holocaust survivors.

In the new video that shows the killing of Sotloff, the executioner points his knife menacingly at the camera as he speaks.

Clad in the same black garb he wore during Foley's execution, the killer has a pistol strapped under his arm in a shoulder holster. The black flag of the Islamic State can be seen waving in the background.

## 'I'M BACK OBAMA': MASKED EXECUTIONERS CHILLING THREAT TO CAMERA

### Executioner:



**'I'm back Obama, and I'm back because of your arrogant foreign policy towards the Islamic state, because of your insistence on continuing your bombings and ... on Mosul Dam, despite our serious warnings. You Obama, have but to gain from your actions but another American citizen. So just as your missiles continue to strike out people, our knife will continue to strike the necks of your people.**

**'We take this opportunity to warn those governments that enter this evil alliance of America against the Islamic State to back off and leave our people alone'**

Sotloff calmly reads a statement moments before his murder. 'I'm sure you know exactly who I am by now and why I am appearing,' he says.

He adds to the camera: 'Obama, your foreign policy of intervention in Iraq was supposed to be for preservation of American lives and interests, so why is it that I am paying the price of your interference with my life?'

While he speaks, a militant calmly holds a knife at his side and stands next to Sotloff.

### Watch Video Here

[AUDIO: Jihadi John speaking in Sotloff and Foley beheading videos](#)





Mother appeals to ISIS leader to release her son





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**Alleged: The British jihadist, Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary, known as Jihadi John is suspected of killing US journalist James Foley and Steven Sotloff (pictured above on August 19)**

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[White House working to confirm Sotloff video authenticity](#)



The man believed to be 'Jihadi John' - the same militant who killed James Foley and suspected to be Briton Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary - then taunts Obama on camera.

He says: 'As your missiles continue to strike our people, our knife will continue to strike necks of your people.'

'I'm back Obama, and I'm back because of your arrogant foreign policy towards the Islamic state, because of your insistence on continuing your bombings and ... on Mosul Dam, despite our serious warnings. You Obama, have but to gain from your actions but another American citizen. So just as your missiles continue to strike out people, our knife will continue to strike the necks of your people.'

Two hours after the video was released, Mr. Sotloff's family issued a statement to say they believe he has been killed.

'The family knows of this horrific tragedy and is grieving privately. There will be no public comment from the family during this difficult time,' the statements said.

Foley's family released a statement after Sotloff's execution, calling it 'just horrific.'



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No statement: President Obama boarded Air Force One to Estonia this afternoon without addressing the nation on the latest killing

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## MOMENTS BEFORE HIS DEATH, STEVEN SOTLOFF'S FINAL WORDS:

**A Second Message to America:**



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Taunting Obama: Sotloff's masked executioner tells the camera that the killing is in retaliation for US airstrikes in Iraq

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**'I am Steven Joel Sotloff. I'm sure you know exactly who I am by now and why I am appearing before you. And now this is the time for my message:**

**'Obama, your foreign policy of intervention in Iraq was supposed to be the preservation of American lives and interests, so why is that I am paying the price of your interference with my life? Am I not an American citizen? We've spent billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars and we've lost thousands of our troops in our previous fighting against the Islamic State, so what are the people's interests in reigniting war?**

**'From what little I know about foreign policy, I remember a time when you could not win an election without promising to bring our troops back from Iraq and Afghanistan and to close down Guantanamo. Here you are now, Obama, nearing the end of your term, and having**

**achieved none of the above and deceptively marching us the American people in the blazing fire.'**

The president was in the White House when news broke, preparing for a mid-afternoon departure for Estonia and then Wales, where he will attend a NATO summit. But the White House didn't immediately comment on how and when Obama heard about Sotloff's reported death.

American lawmakers were quick to condemn the video as another atrocity against the US.

Rep. Ed Royce, who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said in a statement that he was 'disgusted by what appears to be another horrendous killing of an American journalist at the hands of ISIS.'

'Sadly, ISIS is bringing this barbarity across the region – beheading and crucifying those who don't share their dark ideology,' said Royce. 'The threat from this group seems to grow by the day.'

The Pentagon refused to confirm the video of Steven Sotloff's murder today and said they were working to authenticate it with intelligence officials.

Rear Admiral John Kirby said: 'We still can't confirm this next video and potential new murder... We are trying to find out the ground truth here.'

On Thursday, Sotloff's mother Shirley Sotloff went on television to make a direct appeal for her son's life. She addressed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-claimed caliph of ISIS.



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**'Disgusting and despicable': Prime Minister David Cameron, pictured, tonight, condemned the video and will hold a crisis meeting on the killing tomorrow**

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'My son is in your hands,' Ms Sotloff said. 'As a mother I ask Your Justice to be merciful and not punish my son for matters he has no control over. I ask you to use your authority to spare his life.'

The SITE Intelligence Group, a U.S. terrorism watchdog, first reported about the video's existence.

Unlike Foley's beheading, which was widely shared on Twitter accounts affiliated with the Islamic State group, the video purporting to show Sotloff's killing was not immediately posted online, though several jihadi websites told users to expect it Tuesday.

The fighter who beheads Sotloff in the video called it retribution for Obama's continued airstrikes against the group in Iraq.

Sotloff's mother had pleaded for his release last week in a video directed at the Islamic State group.

Addressing the leader of the Islamic State group by name, Shirley Sotloff said in a video her son was 'an innocent journalist' who shouldn't pay for U.S. government actions in the Middle East over which he has no control.

### 'IT WAS WHAT HE LOVED TO DO': SOTLOFF'S CAREER AT THE FRONTLINE



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Dedicated; Steven Sotloff pictured on assignment in Libya in 2013

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Sotloff grew up Miami, Florida, before attending the Kimball Union Academy boarding school in New Hampshire from which he graduated in 2002.

He then began attending the University of Central Florida, according to a society notice in The Miami Herald's archives.

UCF spokeswoman Zenaida Gonzalez Kotala said school records show Sotloff was a student majoring in journalism from fall 2002 until fall 2004. However, Sotloff did not complete his degree and graduate.

University of Central Florida President John C. Hitt said on learning of his death: 'Our UCF family mourns Steven's death, and we join millions of people around the world who are outraged at this despicable and unjustifiable act.'

While at Kimball Sotloff was an avid rugby player and on moving to UCF began working for the student newspaper there, the Central Florida Future.

He left this paper in 2005 and began to pursue his dreams of journalism full time.

'The guy lit up a room. He was always such a loyal, caring and good friend to us,' said Josh Polsky to the New York Times. Polsky shared a dormitory suite with Mr. Sotloff.

'If you needed to rely on anybody for anything he would drop everything on a dime for you or for anyone else.'

While it is not fully known how Sotloff arrived in the Middle East to report as a freelancer, his friends said he was undeterred by the volatile and dangerous situation there.

Sotloff wrote reports from Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Turkey and Syria.

'A million people could have told him what he was doing was foolish, it seemed like it to us outsiders looking in, but to him it was what he loved to do and you weren't going to stop him,' said his friend, Emerson Lotzia.

'Steve said it was scary over there. It was dangerous. It wasn't safe to be over there. He knew it. He kept going back.'



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**Respected: During his time in the Middle East, Sotloff, 31, was published in TIME, World Affairs, National Interest and the Christian Science Monitor**

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Lotzia, now a Florida sports reporter, tweeted his horror after his friend's execution: 'Devastated and crushed. Steve was an amazing friend. Lucky to have him in my life. Heart is heavy for his family. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.'

He wrote about the lawlessness in Libya after the fall of Colonel Gaddafi, and criticized the attack on the US consulate in Benghazi wrote the New York Times.

'With no security organizations to ensure order and an ineffective justice system unable to prosecute suspects, Libyans fear their country is slowly

crumbling around them.'

During his time in the Middle East, Sotloff was published in TIME, World Affairs, National Interest and the Christian Science Monitor.

An avid user of social media sent out his last tweet on August 3, talking about his hometown basketball team the Miami Heat.

According to his account, he was living in Benghazi, Libya at the time.

Sotloff's family had previously been advised not to go public with news of his disappearance.

But a family friend wrote about Sotloff last December, saying he went missing August 4 and to pray for his return.

'Steve Sotloff lived in Yemen for years, spoke good Arabic, deeply loved the Islamic world.. for this he is threatened with beheading,' friend Anne Marloe tweeted after the release of the first video.



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**A friend puts a consoling arm around Steven Sotloff's father Art on the day that he found out his son had been brutally executed by ISIS militants in Syria**

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White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest offered his sympathies to the Sotloff family. He said of the video: 'This is something that the administration has obviously been watching carefully since this threat against Mr. Sotloff's life was originally made a few weeks ago,' he added.

'I'm not in a position to confirm the authenticity of that video, or reports, obviously,' he cautioned, 'since I just walked out here.'

'But if there is a video that has been released, it is something that will be analyzed very carefully by the U.S. government and our intelligence officials to determine its authenticity.'

'Our thoughts and prayers, first and foremost, are with Mr. Sotloff and Mr. Sotloff's family and those who worked with him,' he said. 'The United States, as you know, has dedicated significant time and resources to try and rescue Mr. Sotloff.'

At the State Department a rattled spokeswoman Jen Psaki confused the executions of Foley and Sotloff.

'We certainly consider this act, this reported act, the act of the killing of James Foley, as a horrific terrorist act,' she said.

Foley was the first U.S. journalist beheaded in an ISIS video. His death first aroused Americans' anger two weeks ago.

'If the video is genuine,' Psaki said, 'we are sickened by this brutal act, taking the life of another innocent American citizens. Our hearts go out to the Sotloff family.'

Asked if the Obama administration will regard Sotloff's execution as an 'act of war,' she refused to engage in semantics.

'We certainly – I'm not going to put new labels on it,' Psaki said.

'I don't think it's a useful exercise to go back and forth about new terms,' she said later. 'What's important is what we're doing about it.'



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**Second death: This frame from a video released by Islamic State militants two weeks ago shows the killing of journalist James Foley by the militant group**

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## WAS THE SOTLOFF EXECUTION VIDEO POSTED ONLINE BY ACCIDENT?

The video of Steven Sotloff's brutal murder may have been accidentally published online too early by an ISIS Twitter user who jumped the gun.

When news first broke of a new ISIS beheading video, it was not widely available on Islamist websites. James Foley's execution footage, by contrast, flooded social media and the dark corners of the web all at once.

Vocative.com reports that only one ISIS Twitter account initially posted the video. Another ISIS-affiliated social media account called out the early release and told the user to remove it – but by then, the video was already widely available online.

Later, ISIS even issued an apology to its followers for the confusion.

'Clarification about the mistake was made by "Uyun al-Ummah" account, that has published the video before the official time,' an ISIS official wrote.

'The user saw a tweet with the video and thought it was published officially. We tried to remove the video after we understood that his was published by mistake, and we are sorry to the followers of the Islamic State.'

The back-and-forth – all of it in Arabic – shows just how sophisticated the social media strategy for ISIS has become.

It appears multiple people had copies of the video and that they were meant to wait until the proscribed time to publish it – in order to flood online channels and ensure it was widely distributed.

Videos like the one that surfaced Tuesday, she told reporters, have 'been one of the motivating factors in the effort to undergo the creation of an international coalition to address this threat.'

Psaki would not say how many other captives ISIS is holding from the U.S. and other Western nations.

'We don't get into specific numbers, for the safety and security of individuals,' she said.

'We've said "a few." That continues to be accurate.'

The chilling threat to execute a UK hostage is a direct challenge to Prime Minister David Cameron and will send shockwaves through the British government.

Only last week Mr Cameron warned that ISIS was now a 'greater threat to our security than we have seen before'.

After the beheading of journalist James Foley, Mr Cameron rushed back from his holiday in Cornwall to condemn 'the barbaric and brutal act'.

On Friday the Prime Minister warned that the killers were likely to be British.

The Prime Minister was addressing Tory MPs in a private meeting in Parliament this evening when he was informed of the latest video.

At the end of the meeting of the Conservative backbench 1922 committee, Mr Cameron was seen looking at his blackberry before emerging to address journalists.

It comes just 24 hours after Mr Cameron outlined a fresh crack down on extremists returning from the Middle East to wage war on Britain.

He announced that police will be given the power to seize the passports of terror suspects trying to join jihadists fighting in Iraq and Syria.





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**Remarks: White House press secretary Josh Earnest during his daily news briefing at the White House in Washington on Tuesday. Earnest also spoke about reports that a video on the internet that purports to show beheading of US reporter Steven Sotloff by ISIS**

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He also revealed the Government was considering new powers to force jihadis living in the UK to relocate, while airlines will be compelled to hand over passenger lists before flights take off.

New laws will also be considered to prevent terrorists returning to 'wreak havoc' on the streets of Britain by removing their citizenship if they are fighting for ISIS abroad.

The Prime Minister admitted the Government would 'continue to consider' what further action Britain could take against the ISIS fighters in the Middle East - including what 'military measures we might take'.

In the Commons, Mr Cameron was asked directly if he was 'open to the idea of direct military participation in airstrikes'.

He replied: 'I don't rule anything out. I don't think we should.' He added: 'We should consider everything.'

The Islamic State group which has taken over a third of Syria and Iraq has terrorized rivals and civilians alike with widely publicized brutality as it seeks to expand a proto-state it has carved out on both sides of the border.

In its rise to prominence over the past year, the extremist group has frequently published graphic photos and gruesome videos of everything from bombings and beheadings to mass killings.



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[demakers](#), Weston, United States, 3 hours ago

You know, everyone I talk to feels very much the same way. We have a clear and present danger to our way of life, yet for some reason, Obama and his circus clowns keep us from doing what needs to be done. When Americans come together, nothing can stop us. We know what we have to do, but I feel so hopeless due to the fact we have no leadership. It's like the guy just doesn't care. I care, I'm grieving for our fellow Americans, and their family members. I'm also praying for the gentleman from the UK. This is beyond outrageous now, I can't even express in words my frustration.

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[22](#)  
[169](#)

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[Soofa](#), San Francisco, United States, 3 hours ago

Something is truly wrong in the world. When savage 15th century beheadings are the norm. When the worlds strongest military might is threatened by a bunch of dessert rats. The worlds greatest super power worries about waterboarding and making sure terrorists in Guantanamo Bay receive their proper religious meals, and the Almighty USA isn't dropping a

football field worth of missiles on these monsters. I know, I know, innocent people will die. Even more will die if we don't get a handle on this. If the people in the middle east cannot clean up their back yard, if they can't clear out the cancer among them,, then (sadly) death is going to happen. Overwhelmingly, a large percentage of Muslims are anti-West and somewhat agree with what the terrorists are doing. Many might not publicly admit it, but behind their closed doors they are saying we are getting what we deserve. Enough toying with the Middle East...wipe is off the face of the earth.

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[amont003](#), portland, United States, 3 hours ago

Obama looks disturbingly happy.

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[18](#)  
[77](#)

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[The UiNeill](#), Arlington Texas USA, United States, 3 hours ago

why is Obama stalling on this question of retaliation for these horrible crimes? BECAUSE HE DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO RUN A COUNTRY! He never ran anything before you damn liberals elected him. He has no experience. So every time something comes up he has to stall until he completes a crash course on war, diplomacy,or domestic issues. You are seeing the result of the USA being run by committee. He will not make a decision himself because then he would have to take the responsibility for it if it went wrong. That is something a narcissist will never let happen.. That is why this country is being run by the king of excuses and his minions on the committee of coalition opiioin. UGH I dislike him so much

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[104](#)

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[Victor Meldrew](#), On another planet, United Kingdom, 3 hours ago

All these people in power need to wipe them all of the face of the earth every single one.

[Reply](#) [New Comment](#) [New](#)

[6](#)  
[78](#)

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[itsapat](#), Niagara Falls, United States, 3 hours ago

Show yourself..if you believed in what you are doing you wouldn't hide.

[Reply](#) [New Comment](#) [New](#)

[4](#)  
[101](#)

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[Bear1000](#), Harrisburg, United States, 3 hours ago

It's hard for me to believe that the Sotloff family is in the president's thoughts and prayers when he doesn't even bother to make a speech or even issue a statement. How's that 'hope and change' working out folks!

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[Ray](#), Liverpool, 4 hours ago

I have listened to both statements by so called Jihad John and I don't believe it is the same person

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[15](#)  
[12](#)

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[misterants](#), San Francisco, United States, 4 hours ago

Can we STOP calling this coward "Jihadi John" like he's some tv character deserving of a cutsie nickname??

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[305](#)

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[Oblio](#), Bay Area, Ca, US, 4 hours ago

Two words: scorched earth.

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