



# ISIS Exposed: Beheadings, Slavery, and the Hellish Reality of Radical Islam

*Erick Stakelbeck*

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## **ISIS Exposed: Beheadings, Slavery, and the Hellish Reality of Radical Islam** Erick Stakelbeck

The terror masters of ISIS are determined to get America's attention. They've humiliated the Iraqi Army we trained and seized territory in Iraq that we had secured at the cost of so many American lives. They've beheaded American journalists on camera in a direct challenge to the power and resolve of the United States. And now ISIS is calling for "city wolves" across the United States to act on their dedication to the Islamic State's blood-drenched ideology and murder innocent American citizens at random.

Who is ISIS? Where did it come from, and what is driving its successful campaign of murder and conquest? Our government and our media alike seemed to be blindsided by the Islamic State's blitzkrieg-like advance, which forced American troops back into Iraq. ISIS has conquered a territory roughly the size of the state of Indiana, rules over eight million terrorized souls, and has even revived the practice of legal slavery. And yet the true motivations, inner workings, and future plans of this terror state and its mysterious caliph seem almost as obscure as when ISIS first burst onto the world scene. In *ISIS Exposed*, veteran investigative reporter Erick Stakelbeck gets inside the story of the new caliphate and reveals just how clear and present a threat it is.

## **ISIS Exposed: Beheadings, Slavery, and the Hellish Reality of Radical Islam Details**

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# **From Reader Review ISIS Exposed: Beheadings, Slavery, and the Hellish Reality of Radical Islam for online ebook**

## **Jim Donovan says**

A good refresher book about the real ISIS and how it developed. Very informative although I could have done without the political grandstanding - "Bush's fault because we went in to Iraq"; "Obama's fault because we pulled out of Iraq". Unfortunately, the book is full of typos, spelling and punctuation errors and grammatical mishaps. It is also in a large typeface, apparently in order to stretch the material to book length (265 pages). But that also led to an easy, quick read.

Overall, the book is a good primer on ISIS, how it originated and evolved, its methods, recruiting strategies and its tangled web of alliances, blood feuds, brutality and manipulation that is the Middle East in 2015.

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## **Justin Tapp says**

(I reviewed this book with a host of others examining Islam, Al Qaeda, and the rise of ISIS in the Middle East and this review should be read in the context of the other books. A list of many of the books is at the bottom of this post.)

Unlike other books on ISIS, this one focuses more on ISIS' effect or potential danger for the West rather than its origins, development, and operations. Basically, this book is warning Americans of the threat of Radical Islam and President Obama's foreign policy. The endorsements on the cover by various Fox News personalities tells you the audience.

Stakelbeck begins with a look at "Little Mogadishu" in Michigan, where many Somalis live and the Muslim call to prayer wakes up residents. Palestinian-American Imam Jabril preaches at a mosque in Dearborn, encouraging listeners (sometimes tacitly) to join ISIS fighters in Syria. (I'm reminded of Mohamedou Slahi's book where such a character would risk a drone strike from the US if he lived overseas, but is protected by the First Amendment here). Supposedly, many Americans who went to Syria to join the fight had connections to him via social media. The anti-defamation league is apparently tracking US fighters abroad and Stakelbeck tells stories of foreigners on US soil, illegal border crossings, and sociopath recruits for the jihadi cause in the US. He discusses the Islamic Society of America's ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and its funding of mosque construction, among other things.

Stakelbeck examines the ISIS caliphate and how the organization has eclipsed Hamas and Al Qaeda in terms of recruiting and operations. He repeats what info was publicly known about al-Baghdadi when the book went to print. He interviews an Iraqi-American who had his accounts hacked and was threatened by ISIS and accounts of interviews with survivors. He makes the claim that 15% of Muslims worldwide hold radical views. How one determines a way to poll that and determine "radical" is beyond me. He turns rather snarky about Obama and his Iraq policy, particularly the troop withdrawal. He seems to ignore more nuanced politics about the situation as described by people like Robert Gates in his memoir-- the Iraqi government

pushed back on US troop immunity and the Obama administration didn't try as hard as it possibly could to convince them otherwise.

One aspect he examines is the diversity of Westerners joining ISIS' jihad in Syria. One group I found interesting were the British women going to establish brothels filled with kidnapped Yezidis and Christians within the would-be caliphate. (I have found some news websites with this story circa 2014, but the reports don't seem to be heavily substantiated.) Stackelbeck predicts attacks in Europe from current residents and jihadis returning from Syria, particularly in Holland where there were openly pro-ISIS marches chanting "Death of Israel" in 2014. Mohammad Chaudry in England was collecting welfare while preaching jihad openly on the streets. I picked up this book shortly before the world was shocked by large bombing in Amsterdam in 2016 by either ISIS or its sympathizers after a similar attack in France shortly beforehand and it felt like Stackelbeck had called it correctly. This aspect of ISIS has been largely untouched by the other books on my list, which focused almost solely on Iraq and Syria.

The author's criticisms of President Obama are more foreign policy complaints without recognizing the ideological and philosophical differences between West and East as well as the theological nuances of Salafists and ISIS' embrace of prophecies regarding Dabiq and the Mahdi. Stackelbeck works for a pro-Israel outfit and closes the book with questions about what the difference is between ISIS and Hamas in terms of their goals-- both want to see Israel wiped off the map. Why does the media treat one as horrific but the other with less scrutiny, asks the author? He asks why the Obama administration hasn't embraced Islamic reformers and why haven't other policymakers done enough to publicize dialogues between moderates. His solution to the problem is the same as that of Maajid Nawaz, Reza Aslan, and others who seem to anticipate a reformation period. Where exactly are those public dialogues?

The book largely re-reports news stories, some of which may be foreign to people like myself who mainly read mainstream publications like The Atlantic and the New York Times. The book lacks for a deep philosophical, historical, or psychological thinking about ISIS and the Middle East or foreign policy. It lacks any thinking about the rise of ISIS in the context of the recent histories of Syria and Iraq. But thinking about how and why people in the West are influenced to leave lands of liberty to pursue death in a caliphate is worthwhile, so the book gets 2.5 stars.

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Other Al Qaeda and ISIS-related books reviewed in 2016:

The Siege of Mecca - Yaroslav Trofimov (5 stars)

The Bin Ladens - Steve Coll (4 stars)

Growing Up Bin Laden - Najwa and Omar Bin Laden (4.5 stars)

Guantanamo Diary - Mohamedou Ould Slahi (4.5 stars)

The Black Banners - Ali Soufan (5 stars)

Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS - Joby Warrick (4.5 stars)

Jihad Academy: The Rise of the Islamic State - Nicholas Henin (4.5 stars)

ISIS: The State of Terror - Jessica Stern and JM Berger (4 stars)

ISIS Exposed - Erick Stakelbeck (2.5 stars)

The Rise of ISIS - Jay Sekulow and David French (1 star)

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**Nick S. says**

Have you ever wonder what is the complete truth to ISIS? The news gives us some of the information but not

all of it. Erick Stakelbeck's *ISIS Exposed: Beheadings, Slavery, and the Hellish Reality of Radical Islam*, a nonfiction book about ISIS, provides more information about ISIS. Stakelbeck tries to tackle history in making about Islamic terrorism. Speaks to known radicalized muslims that work as recruiters. Mentions how ISIS grew and possible ways to prevent the spread of radicalized Islam. Shows ISIS's interpretation of the *Quran* and the reasons why they do nightmarish acts of terror. ISIS must be stopped but how to stop violence with no action from the government. Sometimes the best defense is a strong offense.

This book caught my eye due to the fact it is about a problem happening right now. I wanted to learn the harsh truth behind this new global power. It also has several sources throughout the entire book. It even shows the perspective of an ISIS recruiter in England. This book did not live up to its potential for it blames Obama for ISIS. It did not expose ISIS.

This book is aimed for the attention of conservatives that want to just blame the problem of Islamic terror on the Obama administration. The author tries to convey the idea that Obama help build ISIS from the ground. The biased information almost wants you to put the book down. It spins the truth just to nag on the Obama administration. Only right wing conservatives will enjoy this book.

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## **Steve says**

“Beheadings, Slavery and the Hellish Reality of Radical Islam” are what you won’t normally see on the six o’clock news. In this his third book in four years, CBN News investigative reporter Erick Stakelbeck shines a naked spotlight on the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham’s modus operandi. Exposing ISIS ain’t pretty.

Author of “The Brotherhood” and “The Terrorist Next Door,” Stakelbeck explains in these 207 pages the ideology as well as the short term and ultimate long-term goal of ISIS or ISIL. As frightening as ISIS and ISIL’s plans for the world should be to freedom-loving citizens of this planet, as Stakelbeck points out, perhaps even more alarming is the West’s “weak, disjointed and muddled response” to global terror. Stakelbeck writes, “Western leaders . . . seem absolutely flummoxed as to how to confront the Islamist threat . . . their impotence and ignorance have already been disastrous.” Now that’s scary!

Reading “ISIS Exposed” is a little bit like taking a two college semester course in one weekend seminar. There’s just so much information packed into this short volume. It’s like trying to drink from a fire hose. Here Stakelbeck covers President Barack Obama’s view of “violent extremism” and his demonstrated weaknesses in dealing with those who seek to destroy the civilized world. Also here, you’ll find details on Operation Inherent Resolve. (Did you know that’s what our American military calls all those air strikes against Islamic State positions in Iraq and Syria?) Stakelbeck follows the money. (Where does ISIS get its operating funds? Read it [here](#).) How do Sharia law-loving terrorists treat women? Read it [here](#). Why is Minneapolis and Saint Paul “America’s number one terrorist breeding ground?” Read it [here](#).

For Stakelbeck readers who might be “expecting a strong, confident Europe to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States in the generational struggle against Islamism,” consider this: The author writes, “Uninterested in defense spending, dismissive of Christianity, rife with anti-Semitism, and beholden to their restive and growing Muslim populations, our European allies have passed the point of moral relativism and are well on their way to moral rot.” Are you scared yet? You should be!

Stakelbeck puts human faces on what otherwise could be just an academic exercise. We get to meet some home-grown terrorists like Shannon Conley, Donald Morgan and Mufid Elfgeeh. We also get a glimpse of

“the alleged brain behind ISIS’ cutting-edge social media and video operation,” Ahmad Abousamra, who was raised in a Boston suburb and is the son of a leading endocrinologist at Massachusetts General Hospital. “Great Britain’s most hated man,” Anjem Choudary meets one-on-one for an in-person interview with author Stakelbeck within these pages.

Do you know the three categories of personalities being recruited to join ISIS? Here Stakelbeck introduces us to the adventure-seeker, the “really nasty guys” and the idealist or humanitarian jihadist. Do you know the seven steps in the demographic or settlement jihad being employed by twenty-first century Islamists? Stakelbeck lists them all on page 169. Do you know some of the “trends to watch for in the near future as ISIS continues to march across the Middle East?” Stakelbeck has that covered. More importantly, do you know the steps Stakelbeck believes Americans must eventually take if global jihad by ISIS is to be defeated? They’re all listed here. This is a definite and well-researched wake-up call. My fear is, it may be too little too late.

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### **Inez says**

This book isn't worth reading.

Erick should come to Australia and work for A Current Affair - he would fit in very well.

Tabloid rubbish.

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### **Melissa says**

The book was interesting but by the end I was very annoyed. The author has strong opinions about the Obama administration and their actions. I wished he had kept his opinionated sentences to himself and just reported the facts.

Additionally, the last 50 pages felt like they were written to put me on edge and push me towards hatred. I didn't like that tactic.

Interesting book but a person needs to take it with a pound of salt...

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### **Deborah says**

Erick Stakelbeck's ISIS Exposed: Beheadings, Slavery, and the Hellish Reality of Radical Islam. This is an eye-opening wake up call to the U.S., full of bitter sarcastic humor showing the horrific realities of the unacknowledged terrorist war against non-Muslims. The U.S. is no ostrich and needs to get its head out of the sand. Weak of heart be warned, reality is more gruesome than fiction. Deserves an Audie, Deserves to be heard.

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## Jennifer says

Meh. Compared to the other books on ISIS I've read recently, this came across as really shallow. I probably should have guessed from the blurbs and the fact that the author is a commentator for CBN and Fox News. But this was all about how Obama's not doing enough to stop ISIS, or his policies are responsible for it, and when the narrative dips back farther in time, there's definitely not the same ire reserved for Bush. (Personally, I think foreign policy has been a mess for \*decades\*, but you probably don't want to start me on that, or I'll begin to sound like this guy.) Plus the emphasis is on fear of attacks in the U.S., though I think the threat's *much* greater for those who live in the Middle East. Anyway, there are other books which I found far more informative, which I'd be happy to recommend to anyone who's interested.

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## Jap Hengky says

Firstly, I'm not enjoying this read at all. There is absolutely nothing new and as noted, the coverage lacks considerable depth. There is little discussion on the organization; its “philosophy” or interpretation of Islam, much less on radical Islam; how the organization operates its “state”; the tactics that have allowed it to capture so much territory; or any other deeper analysis of aspects of the organization or its methodology. Rather, the book is a compilation of news clips brought together to provide a rather simple narrative. It's like reading a newspaper. The other one is strong anti-Obama administration that is present. Whether you support the Obama administration or not, the author's consistent telling drawbacks of what he sees as the administration's failure to continuously deal with ISIS and the threat it represents is so glaringly partisan that it detracts from the book and the author's message and credibility.

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## kurp says

Rozczarowuj?co p?ytke. W?a?ciwie jedyny moment, kiedy autor dokonuje próby jakiej? syntezy/analizy to opis strategii internetowej czy te? marketingowej IS. Reszta to w?a?ciwie newsy, które zainteresowany tematem czytelnik zna zapewne z mediów, oraz personalna i polityczna historia ugrupowania, niewykraczaj?ca poza klepanie dat i nazwisk.

O poziomie zrozumienia tematu najlepiej ?wiadczy finalna konkluzja, w której autor przytakuje, ?e Daesh nie da si? zniszczy? nalotami, bez udzia?u si? l?dowych, nie zaj?kn?wszy si? ani s?owem, ?e US Army ju? tam przecie? by?a i to w?a?nie odegra?o kluczow? rol? w \*powstaniu\* IS!

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## Kirk Mahoney says

Exhaustive accounting of the evil that is Islamic State

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## Andrew says

I stopped reading this after a few chapters. I was expecting a book about objective facts and theories about

ISIS. What Erick wrote was a subjective commentary, one far to the political right. I couldn't get past the bias--it annoyed me to the point I stopped reading.

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### **Shannon Kelso says**

I read this only because I wanted to understand more about what I'm hearing in the news. I did learn a lot. Parts were very hard to read because of the "Hellish Reality of Radical Islam" as Mr. Stakelbeck puts it. I found myself thinking "is this real?!" just as I do when I read books about World War II. The author is not very fond of the Obama administration which I found distracting at times(sarcasm was used fairly often). Many sources were given, including personal interviews. So, not to get into the politics of it...I do feel more grounded in the players and actions that have led to our current situation and I am more concerned about it than I was before. The book served the purpose I had when I selected it to read. I won't read it again, though I certainly will think of it.

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### **Richard Macquarrie says**

This was a good book that explained that ISIS is not the only threat, or even the main threat to Americans, Christians, Jews, as well as people who love freedom...but militant Islam is. It also does a great job of explaining how all these jihadi groups form. Many people see the war between Hamas aka (the Palestinians) and Israel as the leading cause of militant Islam and the spread of terrorism around the world. They see America's support for Israel as the main factor for their hatred toward us. Erick Stakelbeck explains however it is in fact the proxy war between Saudi Arabia (sunni's) and Iran (shia) that causes the friction. Iran supports Hamas and Hezbollah as its agents in the area. Saudi Arabia supports Al-Nusra as well as ISIS from time to time to prevent Iran's control over Syria. Iran is pushing for greater control over all of the middle east and it is getting to the point where Saudi Arabia is getting desperate. This was a very informative book but difficult to read. The author did a great job with the book but the violence was a bit extreme...sometimes I had to take a break and do something else. Great book however despite the terrible topic.

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### **Danny says**

A thoroughly-sourced recap of how ISIS got its beginnings, what it has done as of the publish date of 9 March 2015 (so not including Chattanooga, Paris, San Bernardino, Brussels, the Orlando nightclub, or dozens of others worldwide), and some [very "passionate"] ideas of how to address it. And by passionate, I mean I took them with a grain of salt:

I guess it's a little appropriate and humorous that a book on extremism takes its bias to an extreme, and if I had known just how partisan the author is I might not have read it. But then again, I suppose it's never bad to be exposed to all kinds of opinions. I've read issues of *Dabiq* so Stakelbeck deserves some of my time too.

Stakelbeck's super right-leaning thoughts ooze out of every line, especially the jokes. At least twice per chapter, he works in a "*thanks, Obama*" quip. He also seems to lump all Muslims into two categories: extremists, and future extremists. Only in the last couple pages do moderate Muslims get some credit for speaking out against jihadism, but if you didn't make it to the end of the book, you would get the impression that there is no safe way to practice Islam.



This book is a great illustration of the truth that if you look hard enough, you can always find evidence to support your view. That's relativism. It doesn't mean that Stakelbeck is wrong, just that if a person's only source is this book then their worldview and voting tendencies are going to align with a very specific ideology. That ideology will be difficult to modify if someone tries to present them with an opposing view someday.

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