



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 20, 2017

Otto Warmbier Died of Oxygen Deprivation, Not Botulism as Claimed by His Torturers

The pain and grief suffered by the parents of Otto Warmbier, the American college student sentenced to 15 years of hard labor for allegedly stealing a propaganda poster while in North Korea last year, [was evident in their statement](#) issued Monday afternoon:



It is our sad duty to report that our son, Otto Warmbier, has completed his journey home. Surrounded by his loving family, Otto died today in 2:20pm.

It would be easy at a moment like this to focus on all that we lost — future time that won't be spent with a warm, engaging, brilliant young man whose curiosity and enthusiasm for life knew no bounds. But we choose to focus on the time we were given to be with this remarkable person. You can tell from the outpouring of emotion from the communities that he touched — Wyoming, Ohio and the University of Virginia to name just two — that the love for Otto went well beyond his immediate family.

The statement put the lie to the claim by his captors that Otto died as a result of botulism early in his captivity. Instead, he died as a result of torture:

We would like to thank the wonderful professionals at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center who did everything they could for Otto. Unfortunately, the awful torturous mistreatment our son received at the hands of the North Koreans ensured that no other outcome was possible beyond the sad one we experienced today.

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President Donald Trump's condolences to Otto's family reflected the same assessment:

Otto's fate deepens my Administration's determination to prevent such tragedies from befalling innocent people at the hands of regimes that do not respect the rule of law or basic human decency. The United States once again condemns the brutality of the North Korean regime as we mourn its latest victim.

Former Ambassador to the UN John Bolton called Otto's treatment at the hands of North Korea "barbaric but typical," adding, "This is a regime that's capable of almost anything."

After running a series of tests on the comatose young man, officials at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center said that his "extensive loss of brain tissue" suggested that his brain lost its blood supply for an extended period of time early in his captivity. Wikipedia's summary of those tests reveals the extent of the brain damage Warmbier suffered at the hands of his captors:

Neurologist Daniel Kanter, director of the neurocritical care program at University of Cincinnati Medical Center, said on June 15 that Warmbier was in "a state of unresponsive wakefulness" — a condition commonly known as persistent vegetative state. He was able to breathe on his own, and blink his eyes, but otherwise did not respond to his environment.



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Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) revealed he had suffered extensive loss of brain tissue throughout his brain. Kanter stated that Warmbier's brain injury was typical of a cardiac arrest that caused the brain to be denied oxygen.

Doctors also said that they did not find any evidence of physical abuse or torture; scans of Warmbier's neck and head were normal outside of the brain injury. Doctors said they did not know what caused the cardiac arrest, but that it could have been triggered by a respiratory arrest, while a neurointensive care specialist at the hospital stated that there was no evidence indicating botulism.

Part of the regimen of brutality in North Korea's "torture camps" includes immersing prisoners in water tanks up to their noses. In FoxNews.com's story covering the matter, one female prisoner "indicated that she was fully immersed in cold water for hours. Only when she stood on her tiptoes would her nose be barely above the water level." Added FoxNews, "It's possible that drowning could have led to the kind of oxygen deprivation that Warmbier's doctors are reportedly seeing."

This is standard procedure for the dictatorship, according to Joshua Stanton. An attorney with 18 years of both military and civilian experience in the "art" of North Korean torture techniques who frequently testifies before congressional committees about North Korea's atrocities, Stanton wrote:

By North Korean standards [Warmbier's treatment] was entirely ordinary. For North Koreans, brutality is an everyday fear, whether they're market traders being extorted and beaten by corrupt MSS officers, women refugees who are beaten after being repatriated by China, women in Kangan Province who are raped by soldiers with impunity, or the child prisoners in places like Camp 16, where death rates may be as high as 20 percent each year.

To suggest that Warmbier's death was caused by botulism is a canard fostered by the sub-humans running North Korea. In a tearful network interview, Otto's father Fred Warmbier said, "We don't believe anything that they say. There's no excuse for the way the North Koreans treated our son." His father added that Otto was "brutalized and terrorized by the pariah regime."

Image of Otto Warmbier: [Screenshot of YouTube video by stimmekoreas](#)

An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.



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