



Name: John Rizzo

Profession: Attorney

Oct. 6, 1947 - Aug. 6, 2021

Positions in the Bush regime and Obama Administration:

Acting General Counsel and Senior Deputy General of the Central Intelligence Agency through July 2009 when he was replaced by Stephen Preston.

(Mr. Rizzo, employed by the CIA since 1976, has previously served in other CIA leadership positions, including Deputy General Counsel for Operations and Deputy Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs.)

War crime charge(s):

- Complicity in the commission of a war crimes – torture, ill-treatment of detainees, the establishment of secret prisons, extraordinary rendition and kidnapping, and destruction of evidence of torture.
- On behalf of the CIA he requested the "torture memo" of Aug. 2002, to provide legal cover for the CIA's torture program. He authorized torture by the CIA even prior to the receipt of OLC memos. In 2007 testimony to Congress, Rizzo stated that the legal opinion in the torture memo "on the whole was a reasonable one." (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/12/AR2007091202353.html>)
- He also requested various other "legal" memos from the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel to permit extraordinary rendition and illegal detention.
- He illegally sanctioned the destruction of videotapes that recorded the interrogation and torture of CIA detainees held in CIA secret prisons.
- A Pakistani lawsuit charges Rizzo with "conspiracy to murder a large number of Pakistani citizens" through his participation, with John Brennan, in the selection of victims and claims of "legality" of the US drone program.

Other Association:

Rizzo was waist deep in the Iran/Contra affair in the 1980s providing support to the Contras.

Primary Association:

- Senior counsel at Steptoe and Johnson in Washington DC.
- Completed his memoir, *Company Man: Thirty Years of Controversy and Crisis in the CIA*, and begins touring with it Jan. 2014.

[Excellent biography page on Rizzo from The Center for Torture Accountability.](#)

More information:

- [6-20-07 CIA's Rizzo Mum at Confirmation Hearing](#)
- [11-8-10 Former CIA Acting General Counsel John Rizzo Speaks at Harvard Law School](#)
- [2-12-11 Inside The Killing Machine](#)
- [7-15-11 Campaign seeks arrest of ex-CIA legal chief who authorized drone attacks](#)
- [7-18-11 Pakistan anti-drone campaigners plan to prosecute British officials](#)
- [7-27-11 International outrage over drone attacks raises questions of legality](#)
- [11-27-11 Jemima Khan donates cameras to tribes to capture US drone damage](#)
- [1-14-12 Zohra Ahmed on Drones and John Rizzo in Pakistan](#)
- [5-11-12 "Vomiting and Screaming" in Destroyed Waterboarding Tapes](#)
- [1-2-14 The C.I.A.'s Lawyer: Waterboarding and Memory](#)
- [6-29-14 Complaint Against John Rizzo](#)
- [8-12-14 The Rear-Guard Defense of Torture](#)
- [1-12-15 Video: The CIA's Lawyer-Legally Speaking](#)
- [4-7-15 Pakistan court says former CIA station chief will face charges over drone strike](#)
- [8/12/21 John Rizzo, CIA lawyer who approved torture program, dies at 73](#)
- [10/15/22 John Rizzo Was Supposed To Be Constitution's Last Line of Defense Inside](#)

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From [Officials of Torture](#) , from website of Sandra Koponen.



No Reason Rizzo, 16x24, Oil on canvas, Sandra Koponen © 2015

CIA

John Rizzo, CIA, Senior Deputy Legal Counsel Mar. 1995 - Nov. 2001, Oct. 2002 - Aug. 2004
CIA, Acting General Counsel Nov. 2001 - Oct. 2002, Aug. 2004 - Sept. 2009

As the senior legal adviser to the CIA, Rizzo repeatedly asked for approval from the Office of Legal Counsel for the CIA's use of "enhanced interrogation techniques," many of which amounted to torture. He wrote in his memoir that he sought approval in order to obtain "legal cover." As part of the requests, Rizzo's office provided still-secret documents to the OLC regarding the specific application of the techniques, and their alleged effectiveness and safety.

Rizzo helped draft Bush's still-secret order authorizing the CIA to establish secret detention facilities overseas and to interrogate detainees. He visited Guantanamo Bay in September 2002, with Addington, Gonzales and Haynes, reportedly to observe interrogations and inquire about the interrogation of Mohammed al-Qahtani, who was later subjected to a brutal 50-plus day interrogation. Rizzo also visited two CIA black sites in 2005 to assure CIA personnel that their work was "still fully endorsed by the nation's highest legal and policy-making officials."

** <https://www.aclu.org/infographic/infographic-torture-architects>