



Company Man: Thirty Years of Controversy and Crisis in the CIA

By John Rizzo



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From the “most influential career lawyer in CIA history” (*Los Angeles Times*) an unprecedented memoir filled with never-before-told stories from his thirty-year career at the center of the U.S. government’s intelligence program (1976-2009).

In 1975, fresh out of law school and working a numbing job at the Treasury Department, John Rizzo took “a total shot in the dark” and sent his résumé to the Central Intelligence Agency. He had no notion that more than thirty years later, after serving under eleven CIA directors and seven presidents, he would become a notorious public figure—a symbol and a victim of the toxic winds swirling in post-9/11 Washington. From serving as the point person answering for the Iran-contra scandal to approving the rules that govern waterboarding and other “enhanced interrogation techniques,” John Rizzo witnessed and participated in virtually all of the significant operations of the CIA’s modern history.

In *Company Man*, Rizzo charts the CIA’s evolution from shadowy entity to an organization exposed to new laws, rules, and a seemingly never-ending string of public controversies. Rizzo offers a direct window into the CIA in the years after the 9/11 attacks, when he served as the agency’s top lawyer, with oversight of actions that remain the subject of intense debate today. In *Company Man*, Rizzo is the first CIA official to ever describe what “black sites” look like from the inside and he provides the most comprehensive account ever written of the “torture tape” fiasco surrounding the interrogation of Al Qaeda suspect Abu Zubaydah and the birth, growth, and death of the enhanced interrogation program.

Spanning more than three decades, *Company Man* is the most authoritative insider account of the CIA ever written—a groundbreaking, timely, and remarkably candid history of American intelligence.

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Editorial Review

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In 1975, the author, a lawyer working for the U.S. Customs Service, applied—pretty much on a whim—to join the CIA. This fascinating memoir takes us through Rizzo’s three-decade-long career as a CIA lawyer, a career that has included being the liaison between Congress and the CIA during the Iran-Contra affair and becoming an international celebrity—not that he sought such notoriety—through his involvement with the so-called torture tapes, recordings of the alleged torture of an al-Qaeda operative, which were destroyed amid great controversy by the agency. Rizzo’s intimate knowledge of the company’s post-9/11 activities makes his book must reading for today’s political junkies, but he had been with the agency more than 25 years before the 2001 terror attacks, and his portrait of the CIA from the 1970s through the ’90s is fascinating on its own terms, portraying an intelligence organization that was dealing with internal strife and trying to decide how to adapt to stricter new regulations, even as the world was growing into a darker, more frightening place. As insider looks go, this one is about as close-up as you can get. --David Pitt

Review

“CIA Directors have come and gone over the past several decades. There were two constants at the agency: crises and John Rizzo in the Office of General Counsel helping to manage them. A larger than life character, with great style, nobody worked harder to protect the nation and the men and women of CIA than John Rizzo. *Company Man* offers fresh insights into the some of the most highly debated national security issues of our time, from the perspective of an honest and dedicated public servant. It is a must read for those trying to understand some very important moments in the history of the CIA.” (George J. Tenet, Former Director of Central Intelligence)

“A wonderful book by a man who was in the eye of the storm for thirty-four years. Told with humor and unflinching appreciation for the politics of espionage, *Company Man* is the best book out there on the modern CIA.” (Robert Baer, New York Times bestselling author of *See No Evil* and *The Perfect Kill*)

“John Rizzo has seen it all in his 30 years as a CIA lawyer, and he tells the truth in this absorbing, well-written memoir of his life as a *Company Man*. Think of Tom Hagen, the Corleone family lawyer in "The Godfather," and you begin to get the flavor of what Rizzo had seen and heard. He draws vivid portraits of the agency's great characters and their sometimes outrageous schemes. The best thing about the book is that you sense Rizzo never stopped being a lawyer or trying to give his clients good, straight-up advice. If you're interested in the inside life of the CIA, read this book!” (David Ignatius, Washington Post columnist and New York Times bestselling author of *Body of Lies*)

"John Rizzo, formerly the CIA's top attorney, has superbly captured the scope of his fascinating career in *Company Man*. Not only does he cover the major espionage and covert action of the decades he served, he also conveys an enduring and critical lesson for all liberal democracies--the centrality of the rule of law at the nexus of foreign policy and intelligence. John, who always provided clear and honest counsel to the CIA's Clandestine Service, has crafted an important book with the same sense of intellectual integrity and duty." (Ambassador Henry A. Crumpton, New York Times bestselling author of *The Art of Intelligence*, Chairman & CEO of Crumpton Group LLC and 24-year veteran of the CIA's Clandestine Ser)

“When the CIA was in trouble, big trouble, it called John... Rizzo knows where the bodies are buried because he helped stash them. *Company Man* reads like the CIA's conscience: what the CIA was *thinking* as

it shifted from collecting information to killing terrorists after 9/11. Why did the CIA violently interrogate suspects and then destroy the evidence? Rizzo knows, and he's talking." (Richard Engel, NBC News Chief Foreign Correspondent and author of *War Journal*)

"*Company Man* is simply the most revealing insider account to date of the top ranks of the CIA during its most historic--and controversial--era. There is news and humor in every chapter. Frankly, I often found myself wondering why the CIA's pre-publication censors signed off on some of it." (Dana Priest, two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for the *Washington Post* and co-author of *Top S*)

"[A] lively memoir of life and work inside the nation's intelligence headquarters." (*Publisher's Weekly*)

"Under seven presidents and 11 different CIA directors, Rizzo rose to become the CIA's most powerful career attorney... [he] accumulated more than 30 years of war stories, and he tells most of them...[Rizzo] clearly loved his job and, readers conclude, served the agency and his country well." (*Kirkus Reviews*)

"Must reading for today's political junkies.... As insider looks go, this one is about as close-up as you can get." (Booklist)

"[A] revealing and funny memoir.... Rizzo provides a clear, detailed account of his decision-making and his role in the C.I.A.'s interrogation program.... Rizzo's memoir is an important contribution." (Steve Coll *The New Yorker* "Daily Comment")

"Revealing... Whatever conclusion you draw, Rizzo's book makes an important contribution to history and the debate over interrogation.... *Company Man* is tailor-made for CIA buffs. Rizzo's career as an agency lawyer spanned the decades from Iran-Contra to drones, with Russian turncoat Aldrich Ames, the rise of al-Qaida.... His book manages to strike notes that are both earnest and candid. That alone sets *Company Man* apart in the genre." (Matt Apuzzo *Associated Press*)

"A gripping story." (*New York Times Book Review*)

"Both students and lay readers of American politics should find considerable value in this memoir." (*Library Journal*)

"Rizzo's memoir often reads like a good spy novel." (Andrea Mitchell, NBC's Today Show)

"A gripping, affecting and revelatory story." (*The Age (Australia)*)

"John Rizzo takes readers deep inside Langley.... Informative and mordantly witty, [Rizzo] ... reveals fascinating details ... and does not hesitate to peer into the future with an insider's prediction that ought to command our attention." (*Boston Globe*)

"Few books have this scope or insider perspective on the CIA. Rizzo seems to have been there for everything — from Iran-contra to Valerie Plame to the arrival of President Obama. And that makes *Company Man* a front-row seat on the hidden world of intelligence over the past 30 years.... Rizzo rose from humble beginnings to become a fixture in national intelligence.... An atlas to navigate the dark, murky morality that governs the business of intelligence." (Dina Temple-Raston *Washington Post*)

"Emphatically a book for anyone who cares about the security of this country and about how the political classes treat those charged with protecting it." (Michael Mukasey *Wall Street Journal*)

“Anyone who reads spy novels or political thrillers will find the real-life version of both in this book... A big, important story, covering many years of our country's secret history. It's told well; it's gripping and intense and feels like the truth. Rizzo has a knack for turning events into story, for bypassing hysteria and discovering history.” (*Bookotron*)

“Fascinating and insightful... A unique and refreshing perspective... a surprising page-turner.” (*Fredericksburg Freelance Star*)

“Rizzo saw and heard a lot. The astonishing roster of his bosses begins with William Colby, followed by George H. W. Bush, Stansfield Turner, William Casey, William Webster, Robert Gates, James Woolsey, John Deutch, George Tenet, Porter Goss, and Leon Panetta. Rizzo's portraits of these individuals in action—some of them legendary figures in the history of American espionage—make this memoir worth the price of admission. But *Company Man* also holds interest for the light it sheds on a variety of quasi-secret subjects, some of them highly controversial.” (Gabriel Schoenfeld *The Weekly Standard*)

“[A] remarkable career... Rizzo is a good story-teller... I liked this book very much one man whose story is wrapped up in the many twists and turns of the CIA's modern history of triumph, failure, and scandal, and whose personal story offers an important window into why those triumphs, failures, and scandals probably can't ever be separated.” (Benjamin Wittes, Lawfare Blog)

“An exceptionally valuable resource. What this book does well, among other things, is explain the inner workings of the processes of the most controversial CIA programs of the past decade.... Reading John Rizzo's book, and being more familiar with the scope of law within the area of national security law would help citizens and reporters to process the actions and accusations of our nation's elected and appointed leaders.... *Company Man* is an excellent read.” (Tobias T. Gibson, Law and Politics Book Review)

About the Author

John Rizzo had a thirty-four-year career as a lawyer at the CIA, culminating with seven years as the Agency's chief legal officer. In the post-9/11 era, he helped create and implement the full spectrum of aggressive counterterrorist operations against Al Qaeda, including the so-called “enhanced interrogation program” and lethal strikes against the Al Qaeda leadership. He has served as senior counsel at a Washington DC law firm and is a visiting scholar at the Hoover Institution. He is a graduate of Brown University and George Washington University Law School.

Users Review

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