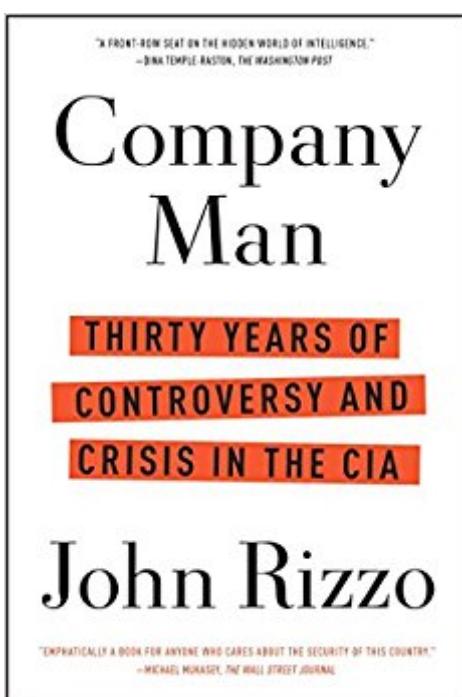


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# Company Man: Thirty Years Of Controversy And Crisis In The CIA



## Synopsis

The “revealing” (The New Yorker) insider history of the CIA from a lawyer with a “front-row seat on the hidden world of intelligence” (The Washington Post). Former CIA director George J. Tenet called Company Man a “must read.” Over the course of a thirty-four-year (1976-2009) career, John Rizzo served under eleven CIA directors and seven presidents, ultimately becoming a controversial public figure and a symbol and victim of the toxic winds swirling in post-9/11 Washington. 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. As the agency’s top lawyer in the years after the 9/11 attacks, Rizzo oversaw actions that remain the subject of intense debate, including the rules governing waterboarding and other “enhanced interrogation techniques.” Rizzo writes about virtually every significant CIA activity and controversy over a tumultuous, thirty-year period. His experiences illuminate our nation’s spy bureaucracy, offering a unique primer on how to survive, and flourish, in a high-powered job amid decades of shifting political winds. He also provides the most comprehensive account of critical events, like the “torture tape” fiasco surrounding the interrogation of Al Qaeda suspect Abu Zubayarah, and the birth, growth, and death of the enhanced interrogation program. Company Man is the most authoritative insider account of the CIA ever written—a groundbreaking, timely, and remarkably candid history of American intelligence. This is “emphatically a book for anyone who cares about the security of this country” (The Wall Street Journal).

## Book Information

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Scribner; Reprint edition (October 7, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1451673949

ISBN-13: 978-1451673944

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 109 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #72,059 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #38 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Military > Afghan & Iraq Wars > Iraq War #57 in Books > History > Military > Iraq War #62 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals &

## Customer Reviews

In 1975, the author, a lawyer working for the U.S. Customs Service, applied to 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—but 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 --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

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 unfailing 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 Service) "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 Secret America*) "[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. "Rizzo'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)"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)"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 News) "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) "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 cannot 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)

The vitriolic reviews have nothing to do with the substance of this book that reveals Rizzo to be a very smart, very thoughtful, very positive gentleman. His characterizations of colleagues and events of his career are pithy and acute, and whether or not you agree with USG policy, its clear he and his organization were doing their best in often difficult circumstances. How easy it is to criticize twelve years after the fact of 9/11 and the Iraq invasions but policymakers, and those who implement those policies, don't have that luxury. One wishes that from time to time Rizzo were less kindly toward some of his colleagues, and had a bit more of Gates' sharp tongue when it comes to calling out those who richly deserve it both on the Hill and in the building. Its particularly sad that his career ended as it did, but if there's one thing CIA officers, both in the field and at Hqs, know, its that life isn't fair and no good deed goes unpunished.

The problem with being a ground-level spy in the intelligence business is that you are only privy to the "need to know" secrets that you directly work with. To get the big picture view with access to any and all juicy details, you'd have to be President or.....in-house counsel for the CIA. John Rizzo knew EVERY skeleton in EVERY closet in his long career at CIA because it was his JOB to know! Anyone who has ever watched corporate lawyers in action know that the field is littered with legal beagles who specialize in advising their superiors on how to "drive 43 mph in a 45 mph zone." Playing safe is not something you get to do, however, when you are trying to balance law, critical foreign policy objectives and operational effectiveness wherein millions of lives may hang in the balance. Rizzo provides the reader with one of the most comprehensive historical perspectives on both the agency and numerous Presidential administrations from the vantage point of one of the most fascinating and pressure-packed professional careers imaginable. Great stuff.

This book rates five stars because it is a first hand account by an inside actor in the CIA. He has worked for several presidents describing how they viewed the Agency and how important the relationship is between the president and the Agency . The author makes no bones about the pressures he was under from press revelations, legalities and dealings with Congress. With the exception of a few critical comments about a few politicians and two journalists the author praises others and deflates press and other written accounts. I have recommended this book to friends and relations that are lawyers. The author has dealt with a large number of people in his assignments

and it may be hard to follow the narrative in some cases depending on the issue at hand. Nonetheless, the writing flows and the author's wins and losses are out there in plain view. Definitely worth reading.

I am a lawyer by profession, with an enduring interest in both intelligence and national security issues. This book is about as good as it gets - the "inside" story on the most important issues, controversies, and scandals involving the CIA over the last 25 years from a man who tells it like it was, without an agenda, worts and all.

The book is interesting mainly because of the insights provided into the workings of the CIA. Rizzo was a high level CIA lawyer, spending a few years as acting Chief Counsel. However, he is a Republican apologist, though far from being a Fox News type. For example, he opines that the Valerie Plame affair was trivial, whereas a fair commenter would perceive its similarity to Nixon's cover ups. He hardly mentions Cheney's role in the torture episode or his visit to the CIA to pressure them to make up stories about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. I was disturbed when he stated that he always votes for an incumbent president for the reason that a change in administration is upsetting to the CIA. I think that a more loyal American would vote for the person he considers best for the USA, not the CIA. He sheds a lot of light on the important players in the CIA and offers his opinion on its succession of leaders, which in this case is less politically influenced. He was nominated by Bush I to be the chief counsel of the CIA but rejected by the Senate. He writes as though the fact that he supported Republicans had nothing to do with his selection.

I am familiar with Rizzo and his history. His longevity and involvement in so many key issues makes him a Forrest Gump-like character--in the right place at the right time for a good deal of the Agency's history. Rizzo gives a good account of the events he describes, but does an awkward job at times in pulling his punches. Specifically, he'll offer what I believe is legitimate criticism of someone, but then quickly try to mend any potential offense by offering a defense of the inappropriate activity he criticizes and claiming that the instigator remains a great friend. Look--you can't have it both ways. Call a spade a spade. It's inevitable that not everyone is going to love you if you write a book like this. The author should have accepted that fact. Beyond that fault, which I found annoying, the book offers an outstanding overview of some key and controversial Agency activities and explains them in a perspective that is fresh and will be educational for interested

readers. That quality earns four stars, but trying to stay buddies with those whom the author criticizes cost him the fifth star in my review.

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