

## Transcript of Jose Rodriguez on CNN "Starting Point" With Soledad O'Brien, May 2<sup>nd</sup>

**O'BRIEN:** Welcome back, everybody. We're getting some new insight this week into the enhanced interrogation techniques that were formally used by the CIA, which setup a nationwide controversy when they were made public back in 2009.

Jose Rodriguez is the former director of CIA's National Clandestine Service. He's the man who ordered the destruction of the tapes of some of those enhanced interrogation techniques and says he has no regrets.

Speaking out for the first time in his new book, which is called "**Hard Measures, How Aggressive CIA Actions After 9/11 Saved American Lives.**"

It's nice to have you joining us this morning. Thanks for being with us. This book is really a defense of torture, a defense of waterboarding, what you call enhanced interrogation techniques, but there are plenty of people that would say it doesn't work.

What it does do is get bad information out of people who will just say anything in order to have the torture stop. Why are they wrong and you're right?

**JOSE RODRIGUEZ, AUTHOR, "HARD MEASURES":** Well, first of all, it's not a defense of torture. It's an explanation of the enhanced interrogation techniques that were approved by the president and certificate fight as legal by the Justice Department and briefed to the Congress and the proof of how successful they were is in the information that we obtained. There is loads of information that came from that program that allowed us to destroy the al Qaeda organization that attacked us on 9/11. So it worked.

**O'BRIEN:** Waterboarding was --

**RODRIGUEZ:** Waterboarding was one of the ten.

**O'BRIEN:** So walk me through because I read that you waterboarded Khalid Shaikh Mohammed 183 times. Is that right?

**RODRIGUEZ:** That is not right. It is a myth. Somehow 183 pints of water became 183 times. Actually, he told the Red Cross that he was waterboarded during five sessions and that was it. It's a handful of times that he was waterboarded.

**O'BRIEN:** Walk me through how it works. When you're going to waterboard somebody, I know you tie hands behind the back and you lean them back.

**RODRIGUEZ:** First of all, I was not the actual person doing the waterboarding. I was the person in charge of it all. The person lays down inclined with his feet up making sure that no water gets in the lungs.

And then water is poured from a distance of about a foot and the water pouring very specific guidance in the legal opinion says you can do it for up to 40 seconds but in reality it was mostly ten seconds.

Water is poured. There is -- the airflow is restricted and there's a sensation of drowning.

**O'BRIEN:** How quickly do they give you information?

**RODRIGUEZ:** Well, it depends. You know, there were some detainees that actually in a few days they were cooperating. Be mindful that waterboarding was only done on three occasions to three persons who have American blood on their hands. But in most cases a few days, in case of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, a couple of weeks, two or three weeks.

**O'BRIEN:** How did you decide who would be the ones that would be waterboarded and who would not?

**RODRIGUEZ:** Usually, of course, the high value detainees, people like Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who was the architect of 9/11 and killed 3,000 people.

And the person responsible for blowing up the "USS Cole" and killing 17 sailors and the first detainee we ever had and was responsible for the planning for the millennium attacks and had actually dispatched a terrorist to blow up Los Angeles International Airport. He was the first one. So those were the only ones that were waterboarded.

**O'BRIEN:** John McCain said when he was tortured that he was giving out the line up for the Green Bay Packers. He would just make stuff up. He was literally providing bad information just to get them to stop.

And sometimes he would give a little information, but for the most part he was making stuff up. As a person who experienced a lot of that, that he sees no value in it and he is against it. Does his word have weight?

**RODRIGUEZ:** Let me tell you that the people who were involved in the debriefing because there's a myth here. The interrogation face of it only took a few days or a couple weeks.

But the more detailed work was the actual debriefing in which the experts that we have at the agency and world experts on al Qaeda were able to vet the detainee because they had so much information.

That they were able to ask him questions that we had answers for and vet these individuals. Later when we had more prisoners, we would be able to use one against the other but the intelligence is compelling.

[CNN Contributor Will] **CAIN:** It seems to me, Soledad, Mr. Rodriguez, that the wrong debate is whether or not it works. If we submit to the premise that it does work as a society then what do we embrace and what do we not embrace. I would assume there are many, many legitimately torturous things that work. Where do we draw the line?

**RODRIGUEZ:** If you look at the techniques themselves and if you actually paid attention and looked at the ten techniques that are used here, they are pretty wimpy if you look at them one at a time.

So you know, these are things that I have no moral qualms on my own or anyone else who work with me in doing mindful of the fact these are people who killed and who are going to kill more of our people.

**O'BRIEN:** The techniques are in this book, we are out of time, but we can talk on the commercial break and write about it online as well this morning. The book is absolutely riveting.

It's called "**Hard Measures, How Aggressive CIA Actions after 9/11 Saved American Lives.**" Thanks for talking. Appreciate it. We'll take a short break. We're back in just a moment.