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<http://www.thewire.com/politics/2014/04/nobody-knows-how-afghanistans-torturer-in-chief-ended-up-living-in-a-pink-house-in-california/361380/>

## Nobody Knows How Afghanistan's 'Torturer-in-Chief' Ended Up Living in a Pink House in California

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Haji Gulalai is seen to the left of Afghan President Hamid Karzai in a 2002 photo taken in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

It's a fact of life that U.S. immigration is a soul-destroying pursuit, so how did Haji Gulalai, Afghanistan's "torturer-in-chief," end up living in the leafy suburbs of Los Angeles? No one seems to know.

Gulalai (real name Kamal Achakzai) ran the National Directorate of Security, Afghanistan's notorious CIA-funded intelligence operation, from 2001, and in 2009 he disappeared. The acts of torture committed by the NDS were "systematic," and included sleep deprivation, electric shocks, and prolonged suspension from the ceiling. Gulalai was identified as the primary culprit, and even today the human rights abuses of NDS are allegedly continuing. His mere presence was enough "to cause prisoners to tremble," *The Washington Post* reported Monday.

According to officials who spoke with the *Post*, Gulalai's journey to West Coast retirement "remains murky." The CIA has denied helping him, but members of Southern California's Afghan community say that his U.S. connection is what saved him. Gulalai wasn't just an enemy of the U.S.; the Taliban attempted to kill him twice.

The *Post*, which reports that Gulalai lives with extended family and plays cards every weekend, makes it sound like he's snagged some prime real estate:

Now in his early 60s, Gulalai lives in a rented house in a Los Angeles suburb where the dry heat and backdrop of brown hills are reminiscent of Kandahar. His front yard is surrounded by a tall, white fence with a locked gate at the sidewalk. There are citrus trees in the back and a steady hum from a freeway a block away."

One person who probably doesn't mind Gulalai's resurfacing is famed torture apologist Donald Rumsfeld, who recently said that "enhanced interrogation" techniques like waterboarding weren't torture after all. "If I would have to do it all over again, I would," he told an audience at American University last month. The *Post* says reports that Gulalai has had a difficult time adjusting to American life, doesn't have a job, and hasn't learned much English.

But despite a history of human rights abuses, Gulalai has been remarkably lucky. As the U.S. continues its withdrawal from Afghanistan, thousands of Afghans who worked for the U.S. military are competing for a limited number of visas issued through a State Department program.