

**FRANK L. RIZZO –  
AMATEUR NIGHT  
AT CITY HALL:  
THE STORY OF  
FRANK L. RIZZO (DVD)  
*MVDvisual***

Francis Lazarro “Frank” Rizzo first came to prominence as a tough, headline-grabbing Philadelphia cop-on-the-beat in the 1960s. His increasingly mythic persona led to a four-year stint as a crusading, law-and-order police commissioner (1967 to 1971) and then eight years (1972 to 1980) as Philadelphia’s most polarizing mayor of modern times. While many working class white citizens saw Rizzo as their protector-in-chief in a threatening urban environment, minority citizens, liberal and wealthy whites, civil libertarians, and others saw Rizzo as an authoritarian bully who himself created a climate of fear and repression throughout the city. *Amateur Night at City Hall: The Story of Frank L. Rizzo*, shot throughout 1977 and released in early 1978, illustrates key events from Rizzo’s colorful and controversial career and

attempts to analyze both the causes and effects of his actions. Although the film was released before Rizzo’s controversial assault on the radical group MOVE, it chronicles attacks he ordered on the Black Panthers and on young people lounging in Rittenhouse Square, his failed polygraph test, and his routinely tough talk. The film’s primary theme is “politics as show business,” and it includes many amateur musical performances from South Philadelphia’s Triangle Tavern.

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