

[\(Watch the video that shows a part of the protest inside at John Yoo's presentation at the Cornell Club.\)](#)

By Debra Sweet

From [Debra Sweet](#) | Original Article

Last night, on both coasts, World Can't Wait, Code Pink and other people of conscience demanded the prosecution of John Yoo, the principal legal architect of the justification of torture by the United States.

In Berkeley, where his 2010 class schedule called for the first class of the semester, UC officials made the location secret, they said, because of “concerns for students’ safety.” One might note that it would be more dangerous for a law student to be taught Constitutional law by someone who opposed international law on the subject of torture (not to mention U.S. law) than for those students to encounter advocates against torture.

But no matter. 20 people delivered the message that John Yoo should be prosecuted for war crimes; disbarred from practicing law; and fired from his teaching position at Boalt Hall School of Law. Not, as we have said many times, for what he thinks, writes, or speaks as a professor, but because he provided the legal justification for torture while working for the Bush regime, which led to the deaths of detainees.

Jackson West blogged on NBC News in the Bay Area “[John Yoo Charm Campaign ‘Secret’ Classes at Cal](#)” that “Torture memo” author John Yoo has nothing to hide, except John Yoo.

The protest took the question directly to Berkeley Law Dean Christopher Edley’s office on Tuesday. More upcoming at [FireJohnYoo.org](#).



Protesting John Yoo

Last night in NYC, Yoo promoted his new book at the Cornell Club. Outside, we talked to members of the Cornell Club entering the building who had no idea why Yoo would be speaking there; and to people attending the event. A dozen told us they were going in to question Yoo on torture, and of course there were Federalist Society members and others who vocally defended torture, racial profiling, nuclear weapons, and the swift, violent demise of people like us who questioned the “war on terror.”

Protesting John YooThe night went to those inside who questioned, challenged, and denounced Yoo for promoting torture. First was Richie, wearing an “Audacity of War Crimes” message on his shirt, who added to the introduction of Yoo. “John Yoo is a war criminal!” He was roughly dragged from the room, but seems to have gotten everyone’s’ attention.

After Yoo’s presentation, the first question was from Stephanie Rugoff, co-ordinator of [War Criminals Watch](#), a project of World Can’t Wait. “With so many lawyers in the room, I want to know why John Yoo isn’t being prosecuted for war crimes?”

3 women from Code Pink brought a banner “John Yoo is a War Criminal” and were escorted out for holding it up. Another woman challenged Yoo, and stalked out, saying she was disgusted to be in the company of those who promote torture.

Outside, a lively discussion followed, as people filing out stopped to ask why we felt so strongly

about Yoo and torture. We found many people who opposed it. One of the common questions, though was, "He just gave his legal opinion. Why is that a crime?"

We've encountered law students recently who have never heard of the [Nuremberg war crimes trials](#). But to the older lawyers, there's one word: Nuremberg. The U.S. prosecuted the Nazi lawyers in 1946 on the premise that the lawyers have the "penultimate" responsibility to ensure that laws of war are followed by a government.

The Bush regime was, and remains, forever marked by its flagrant disdain for international and U.S. law that didn't serve its agenda. Bush made his own law through hundreds of executive orders and signing statements, beginning with his [doctrine of pre-emptive, aggressive war](#) against countries which did not attack the U.S.

If you knew torture and the culture supporting it could be stopped, wouldn't you protest Yoo?

Rather than engaging in a wild goose chase to locate the venue, World Can't Wait has decided to bring the question directly to Berkeley Law Dean Christopher Edley. Join us 3:00p m on Tuesday at the [Dean's Office](#) to ask: "What will be taught behind closed doors that needs to be kept secret? Will this initiate a new policy for Boalt Hall to hide from public accountability?"