



Biotech Daily

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Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

Vale Peter Olszewski - The Legendary JJ McRoach

[PIOTR 'PETER' OLSZEWSKI \(12.5.1948 – 9.4.2024\)](#)

I've known Peter - or Piotr or JJ - all my adult life.

As a teenager, I'd read his marijuana column in the Nation Review in which he noted missing bags of police drugs trial evidence and gave the street prices of various types of hashish and grass; but we first became friends in 1977 when he ran for the Senate as the Australian Marijuana Party candidate and changed his name by deed poll for the event to JJ (Jay Jerilderie) McRoach – his pen name for the Nation Review.

I was his campaign director.

He worked with promoter Michael Roberts, who brought the great 'Gonzo' journalist Hunter S Thompson to Australia, and I must have met him at the Melbourne Town Hall.

I always called Peter my "(tor)mentor", because like any good editor, he was a hard task-master. He'd look at me quizzically when I asked a dumb question, to which he thought I should already know the answer.

We were both pigeon-holed as "rock" journalists and told by some, who thought they were our betters, that we could never become "real" journalists.

But we persevered and did our own forms of journalism cadetships. Peter wrote for the Living Daylights, Nation Review, Go Set and published a series of marijuana magazines titled 'Weed', 'Greed', 'Feed', 'Need' and 'Seed'.

Eventually he won a reporting job at Melbourne's (then racy, now mainstream) tabloid, The Truth, and that's where his multiple names caught up with him.

Peter was born Piotr in Poland. He came to Australia as a one-year-old and grew up in Maryborough in country Victoria where foreign names didn't go down too well and became 'Peter'.

In his run for the Senate, he changed his name to JJ McRoach. The Truth's editor, Owen Thompson, called him into his office and said that 'Peter Olszewski' didn't match any official records, so he had to change his name from JJ McRoach, back to Peter Olszewski.

Peter moved to Sydney and became part of the Packer Consolidated Press empire, employed as the editor of Australian Playboy and later Penthouse and People magazine.

He covered war in Somalia, pop stars and court cases and everything in between; and at the turn of the Century moved to Myanmar where he worked for the Myanmar Times and later in Siem Reap, Cambodia, working for the Phnom Penh Post and Khmer Times.

In between, he taught journalism at Queensland's University of the Sunshine Coast.

Peter wrote books including 'A Dozen Dopey Yarns', 'A Salute to the Humble Yabby' and 'Land of a Thousand Eyes', as well as five annual reviews of the medical marijuana industry for Biotech Daily - the first in December 2019.

And he was a passionate Carlton Football Club supporter. Go Blues !

David Langsam
Editor