

THE WEEK

P.J. O'Rourke, libertarian humorist, dead at 74

Grayson Quay
February 15, 2022

Right-libertarian author, journalist, and humorist P.J. O'Rourke has died at the age of 74, *The U.S. Sun* reported Tuesday.

His publisher said the cause of death was complications of lung cancer.

According to the *Sun*, O'Rourke was a native of Toledo, Ohio, and received his undergraduate degree from Miami University in 1969 and his master's in English at Johns Hopkins University a year later. In 1973, he was hired by the humor magazine *National Lampoon*, where he eventually became editor-in-chief.

While at the *Lampoon*, O'Rourke penned a famous piece of gonzo journalism entitled "How to Drive Fast on Drugs While Getting Your Wing-Wang Squeezed and Not Spill Your Drink."

He later worked as a foreign correspondent for *Rolling Stone*, an election reporter for *Real Time with Bill Maher*, a columnist for *The Daily Beast*, and a panelist on the NPR game show *Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!*.

His writing appeared in *The American Spectator*, *Playboy*, *The Atlantic*, *The Weekly Standard*, and elsewhere. He published 20 books, including *Parliament of Whores* and *Give War a Chance*.

O'Rourke was an outspoken conservative libertarian and a fellow at the Cato Institute.

"The free market is ugly and stupid, like going to the mall; the unfree market is just as ugly and just as stupid, except there is nothing in the mall and if you don't go there they shoot you," he wrote.

In 2016, he endorsed Hillary Clinton for president, saying "she's wrong about absolutely everything, but she's wrong within normal parameters," *Politico* reported at the time.

The Guardian called him "the rightwinger it's okay for lefties to like" and noted that O'Rourke's wit "won him friends on both sides of the political divide."

Per the *Sun*, he is survived by his wife Tina; daughters Elizabeth and Olivia; and son Clifford.