

The Suspicious Death of the First Great Natural Medicine Author + Editor on National Television in 1971

Long before Medical Expose', there was an incredible visionary and champion of Natural Medicine. Jerome Rodale. He made the "Prevention" magazine and taught the world about why SINthetics, Processed Sugar, Trans-Fats, Smoking and other bad habits are so bad.

In front of a live audience in 1971 he told the people he would live a long healthy life. He pulled his head down and died on camera. This footage has not been released to the public but it has been viewed by many in the NBC catacombs. Many a doctor, lawyer and executive have been shown this tape and it has been used to threaten and teach people to obey. Here is a more complete story. Please learn that we need to fight for our rights of freedom of speech.

The Dick Cavett Show "Jerome Rodale Death"

On the 5th of June 1971, during a taping of The Dick Cavett Show, guest longevity and health guru Jerome Rodale suffered a fatal heart attack and was pronounced dead shortly after.

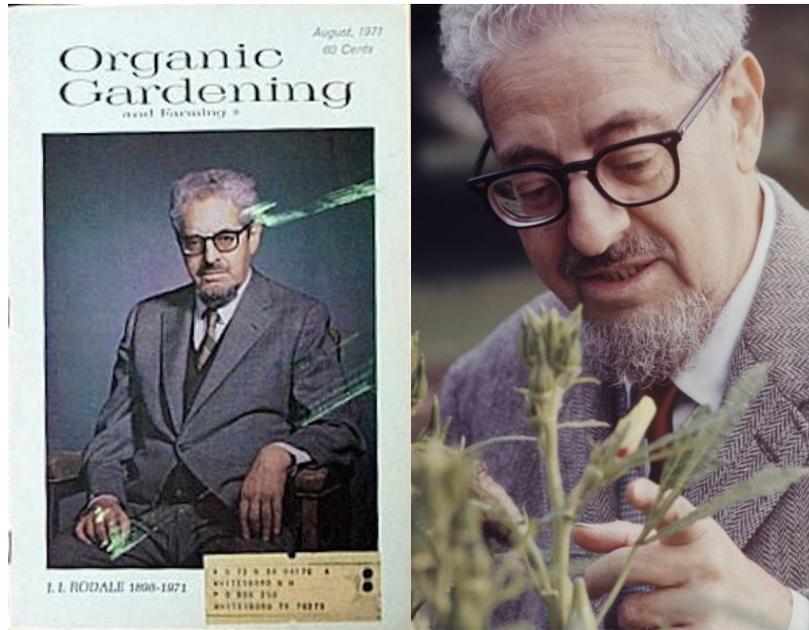
After finishing his interview, Rodale was sat in a chair next to the then-current interviewee (New York Post columnist Pete Hamill), when his head suddenly slumped backward, as he let out what was said to be a 'snoring-like' sound. Allegedly, at this point, Dick Cavett turned to Rodale and asked "Are we boring you, Mr Rodale?", although Cavett has emphatically denied being able to recall ever having said such a thing, also stating that he somehow knew there and then that Rodale was in fact dead, and not joking around.

Somewhat ironically, during his interview, Rodale was quoted as saying "I'm in such good health that I fell down a long flight of stairs yesterday and I laughed all the way", "I've decided to live to be a hundred" and "I never felt better in my life!".

The episode was never broadcast, for obvious reasons (instead a re-run took its place), although Cavett has described the event many times both in documentaries,[1] interviews[2] and in his online blog,[3] just to name a few. Cavett and his staff warily viewed the recording of the incident several weeks later, only then noticing for the first time the irony in

On June 7, 1971, Jerome Irving Rodale appeared on "The Dick Cavett Show." The elder statesman of a growing organic food trend, he gushed about the health benefits of his diet, boasting that he "never felt better" and that he "decided to live to a hundred." But after a commercial break, as Cavett interviewed his second guest, what sounded like a loud snore rose from Rodale's end of the couch. The audience twittered, thinking that he was pulling a prank. But Cavett [knew](#). When he looked over at Rodale's bloodless pallor and gaping mouth his suspicion was confirmed—America's most famous natural-health figure was dead of a heart attack at 72.

For over two decades, Rodale also dispensed nutritional and lifestyle advice in his monthly magazines, *Organic Farming and Gardening* (est. 1945) and *Prevention* (est. 1950). In their pages, Rodale summarily rejected postwar medical advances. "Isn't there a better way of conquering polio than jabbing all the children in the country with a needle?" he wondered in a September 1955 *Prevention* article. And he made wacky, unfounded claims about what causes and cures various diseases. "Rimless glasses" and saltwater cause cancer, Rodale contended, whereas the earth's "electricity ... aids the body to combat cancer." Foreshadowing the counterculture's pastoral idealism, he wrote in an October 1955 *Prevention* editorial, "We must go back to nature, if we wish to live long. ... We do not have to stop the advances of technology [but] we must not industrialize and technologize our own bodies."



Rodale

IN MEMORIAM

The August 1971 cover of *Organic Gardening and Farming*.

In his autobiography, Rodale boasted, “Twenty years before [Rachel Carson] and her *Silent Spring* appeared, I began lashing out continuously against the dangers to plants, animals, and people of these poisonous insecticides.” Even then, in 1965—three years after Carson's book came out—Rodale's audience was limited but devoted. It wasn't until the late 1960s that American culture (or, more accurately, *counterculture*) caught up with his ideas and his magazines stopped running at a deficit. By 1971, Rodale’s circulation had skyrocketed, with slightly renamed *Organic Gardening and Farming* selling 720,000 copies and *Prevention* 1,000,000 in one year. The *New York Times Magazine* took notice, featuring Rodale in a June 6, 1971, cover story anointing him “*The Guru of the Organic Food Cult*”—and landing him, exactly one day later, on Dick Cavett's couch.

By the time of his death, J.I. Rodale had become *the* organics authority in America. His significance to today's food revolution cannot be underestimated—and not simply because [Rodale Inc.](#) is still churning out the above titles, plus *Men's Health*, *Runner's World*, and others. He was at the forefront of a critique of industrial agriculture that contained a wariness (if not downright paranoia) about government, science, and business's role in food production. Had Rodale had his way, his alternative proposals would have earned him a place of influence and respect in mainstream American society. But since the USDA and others roundly rejected Rodale's organic designs, he cast them and the modern foods system as villains in a Manichean morality play, with self-serving bureaucrats and businessmen plotting against earnest organic advocates. That narrative lives on today. When celebrities like Jenny McCarthy spread misinformation about the dangers of vaccines, or locavores like Michael Pollan preach relentlessly about the evils of large-scale food production, they're following in Rodale's reactionary footsteps.

Although the 1960s counterculture brought Rodale his national notoriety, he was more a nineteenth century health-food evangelist, in the mold of John Harvey Kellogg, than a hippie back-to-the-lander. In his autobiography, he describes himself as a “weak and sickly young man” who sought relief with vegetarianism, nudist camps, and other fixes. His maladies persisted until he moved his family and business to rural Emmaus, Pennsylvania, in the 1930s. There, he researched the farming methods of British agronomist Sir Albert Howard, whose compost-fertilized natural farming inspired Rodale to buy a farm and “raise as much of our family's food by the organic method as possible.” The results were miraculous. Rodale enthused, “After about a year on the farm, eating food raised organically, we could see a definite improvement in the general health of the family.” Rodale's 1945 treatise on the miracle of compost-fertilized farming, *Pay Dirt*, made him, in his own words, “Mr. Organic.” That self-appointed title might have been meaningless had postwar America not been worried already about the toxic future ushered in by the atomic bomb. One of the profound changes prompted by the industrial-atomic age was a cultural condition that political scientist Robert Crawford describes as “somatic vulnerability.” Rodale explained this nervous social state in his autobiography: “The atom bomb has its atomic fallout. An ordinary heating system sends death dealing smoke into the atmosphere, as does the automobile. Foods are sold preserved with poisonous additives and food processors and government biochemists

nod their heads in approval.”

In the early-mid 1950s, as public sentiment turned against nuclear weapons testing, a raft of studies linked the chemicals in ready-made foods to cancer. Calling pesticides “elixirs of death,” Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* accelerated distrust of agricultural industrialism. By the late 1960s, this cultural brew catapulted Jerome Irving Rodale onto the national stage as America’s organic seer.

In the early days, being “Mr. Organic” was rough. The publication of *Pay Dirt*, he wrote, “caused a stepping up of the campaign of abuse against us by magazines, newspapers, government and scholastic authorities.” The mainstream media lauded pesticides as modern miracles that made the “green revolution” of the 1940s-1960s possible; detractors were dismissed. In 1963, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture director wrote, “In any large scale pest control program we are immediately confronted with the objection of a vociferous, misinformed group of nature-balancing, organic-gardening, bird-loving, unreasonable citizenry that has not been convinced to the important place of agricultural chemicals in our economy.”

Rodale suspected and feared that anti-Semitism was stunting his career advancement, so he changed his name from Cohen to the more gentile-sounding Rodale.

Rodale was used to having enemies. In his twenties, he suspected that anti-Semitism was stunting his career advancement, so he changed his name from Cohen to the more gentile-sounding Rodale. (In this instance, his suspicions may have been well-founded, but his response to later challenges to his organic crusade indicates a lifelong sense of embattlement.) In his publications and his personal research notes, he upbraided his foes. On food manufacturers, he exclaimed, “If a man is in a business making something that goes into people’s stomachs and a little chemical has to be used should he get out of the business? Or does he justify ... that a little cannot do much harm TO MAKE A DOLLAR!” He also attacked doctors and their advocacy arm, the American Medical Association, saying they perpetuated the “greatest hoax in world history: the hoax that we must have disease ... No wonder these jerks loused up the health situation. They confound problems and make problems where none exist.”

Rodale's suspicion of doctors and drugs led him to embrace scientifically dubious alternatives, such as a dietary cure for polio. He claimed that the anti-polio course recommended in Dr. Benjamin Sandler's pamphlet, "The Road to Polio Prevention"—featuring unprocessed vegetables and "protective foods like meat, fish, and poultry"—would halt polio because "really healthy children do not get polio." After Dr. Sandler's diet was broadcast in his local North Carolina newspapers, "polio cases dropped almost magically," Rodale claimed.

Because the establishment wasn't trustworthy, Rodale recommended an individualistic approach to health. "We must question every generally accepted health tenet or dogma," he believed. "You must observe the effects on your own bodily processes of your basic daily actions. Make your own interpretation." To this end, he served readers a smorgasbord of dire warnings and dietary endorsements. In *My Own Technique for Eating for Health* (1969), Rodale enumerated foods and vitamins needed for optimum well-being. Sunflower seeds, he claimed, "contain a living element, a germ which represents life." Wheat, salt, and milk, on the other hand, caused everything from the halitosis to hardened arteries. For evidence, Rodale cited his own experiences or he cherry-picked data from various sources (some legitimate scientific studies, some specious). Often, reader testimony sufficed.

Occasionally Rodale's notions were outright laughable—such as the theory that "plain club soda or seltzer water may be bad for your eyes," or that "millions of heart attacks have been caused by susceptible people drinking artificially softened water." Yet some of his still medically debatable advice has re-surfaced in today's health food trends. Dr. William Davis, a gluten-free popularizer and author of *New York Times* bestseller (and Rodale publication) *Wheat Belly* (2011), would feel validated by Rodale's November 1959 editorial exclamation, "I say don't eat bread." Sounding like Rodale incarnate, Dr. Davis warns on his blog, "The food you eat is making you sick and the agencies that are providing you with guidelines on what to eat are giving dangerous advice with devastating health consequences. You can change that today."