

## Book review

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### The Zyprexa Papers

by Jim Gottstein

REVIEWED BY DON WEITZ



Activist and lawyer Jim Gottstein is a hero, and his book *The Zyprexa Papers* is a bombshell. In this exposé, Gottstein shows how and why he took on and exposed Big Pharma giant Eli Lilly, the manufacturer of Zyprexa (generic name olanzapine). Over 10 years ago, Lilly was convicted and fined hundreds of millions of dollars for misinforming the public and hiding the many risks of another of its best-selling drugs: the suicide-inducing “anti-depressant” drug Prozac. With the courageous help of Dr. David Egilman and *New York Times* reporter Alex Berenson, Gottstein decided to go public with the awful truth. Not only does Zyprexa, a huge money-maker for Lilly, cause diabetes and other life-threatening medical disorders; but Lilly was deliberately and criminally covering up these serious risks in secret documents.

The book reads like a gripping detective story. Gottstein gives blow-by-blow accounts of his many legal protests and courtroom strategies against Lilly, and documents several obstructionist tactics by lawyers for Lilly and the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API).

The *Zyprexa Papers* also documents Gottstein’s unyielding and courageous defence of psychiatric prisoner Bill Bigley. After some 80 or more “involuntary commitments” and years of forced drugging with numerous doses of Zyprexa, Bigley died at 59, despite Gottstein’s awesome and relentless fight, in and out of court, to save his life. Gottstein does not specifically say this, but I will: psychiatry, and its forced drugging, killed Bill Bigley and thousands of other victims. You won’t find this damning fact in any coroner’s report or medical journal.

Unfortunately, there are many thousands of Bill Bigleys. My long-time friend, the anti-psychiatry activist Mel Starkman, was also prescribed Zyprexa for many years. I’m damn sure his doctors never warned him about diabetes and other “side effects.” I sometimes wonder if Zyprexa, which suppresses the gag reflex, contributed to his choking death last year in a Toronto

nursing home that covered up the circumstances surrounding his death.

The *Zyprexa Papers* should serve as a worldwide alert, a wakeup call about the pandemic of health crises and deaths caused and covered up by Big Pharma giants like Lilly, as well as Glaxo and Pfizer (the manufacturers and promoters of the “anti-depressant” drugs Paxil and Zoloft, which, like Prozac, are known to cause suicides, among their many other dangerous effects).

We need many more class-action lawsuits and independent investigations against these and all the other pharmaceutical mega-corporations that produce and promote these. As well as “antipsychotic” drugs (neuroleptics) These drugs are unethically and fraudulently marketed as “safe and effective medications” and approved by the U.S. government’s complicit Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

*The Zyprexa Papers* shows us why we need more advocates and courageous whistle-blowers like Jim Gottstein, who will not only fight for the freedom and human rights of psychiatric prisoners, but fearlessly expose the lies and crimes of Big Pharma and psychiatry. Silence is not an option. ■

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*Don Weitz* was a psychiatric survivor and social justice activist. He died in Sept 2021, at the age of 90, after a lifetime of activism. Don co-founded the *Ontario Mental Patients Association* in the 1970’s and *Phoenix Rising: the Canadian antipsychiatry magazine* in 1980 (which ran until 1990). He co-edited (with Bonnie Burstow) *Shrink Resistant: The Struggle Against Psychiatry in Canada* (1988) and wrote *Resistance Matters: the Radical Vision of an Antipsychiatry Activist* in 2018 (free to download from the internet).



Don Weitz (1930-2021)