

Mark Halperin

Mark Evan Halperin (born January 11, 1965)^[1] is an American journalist, television cable host, and commentator for the conservative Newsmax TV. Halperin previously had worked as the political director for ABC News, where he also served as the editor of the Washington, D.C., newsletter *The Note*. In 2010, Halperin joined MSNBC, becoming the senior political analyst and a contributor. Along with John Heilemann, Halperin served as co-managing editor of Bloomberg Politics.^[2] Halperin and Heilemann co-wrote *Game Change* and *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, were co-hosts of MSNBC and Bloomberg's *With All Due Respect*, and produced and co-starred with Mark McKinnon in Showtime's *The Circus: Inside the Greatest Political Show on Earth*, which followed the presidential candidates behind the scenes of their campaigns in the 2016 United States Presidential Election.

In response to more than a dozen allegations of workplace sexual harassment and sexual assault at his prior position at ABC News, Halperin was fired by both Showtime Networks and NBC News towards the end of October 2017.^[3]

Since 2020, Halperin has appeared on Newsmax TV as a contributor and is the host of their weekly Sunday show, *Mark Halperin's Focus Group*.^[4]

Early life and education

Halperin was born to a Jewish family,^[5] the son of Morton Halperin, a foreign policy expert and staff member of the National Security Council during the presidential administration of Richard Nixon; and Ina Weinstein Halperin Young.^{[6][7]} He was born in New York City but raised in Bethesda, Maryland.^{[8][9]}

In 1982, before he began his senior year at Walt Whitman High School, he lived with a family in Japan as part of the Youth for Understanding program.^[5] He received his B.A. from Harvard University in 1987.^[10]

Career

In 1988, Halperin began his career as a desk assistant for ABC News and a researcher for *World News Tonight*. He then worked as a general assignment reporter in Washington.

Mark Halperin



Halperin at the 2012 Tribeca Film Festival premiere of *Knife Fight*

Born	Mark Evan Halperin January 11, 1965 New York City, U.S.
Education	<u>Harvard University</u> (BA)
Occupation(s)	<u>Anchor</u> <u>Author</u> <u>Columnist</u>
Years active	1988–present
Notable work	<i>Game Change</i> (2010) <i>Double Down: Game Change 2012</i> (2013)
Partner	Karen Avrich
Parent	<u>Morton Halperin</u> (father)

In 1992, he worked full-time as an off-air producer covering the presidential campaign of Bill Clinton. In 1994, Halperin became a producer with ABC's special events unit in New York and later an editorial producer.

In 1997, he was named the political director for ABC News. In that capacity, Halperin appeared frequently as a correspondent and political analyst for ABC News television and radio programs. He founded and edited *The Note*, which appeared daily on ABCNews.com.^[11]

In October 2006, Halperin and John F. Harris, published a book together, *The Way to Win: Clinton, Bush, Rove, and How to Take the White House in 2008*.^[12]

Since 2006, Halperin has served as a board member of the New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College in Goffstown, New Hampshire. He has been on their public advisory board since it was created in 2008.^[13]

In March 2007, Halperin became a political analyst for ABC News and was replaced as political director by David Chalian. In May 2007, Halperin was hired as a political analyst and editor at large for *Time* magazine. In June 2010, he was hired as a senior political analyst at MSNBC. In 2011, *Time* released an iPad app called "Mark Halperin 2012" that contains material from Halperin's "The Page" as well as video, photos, breaking news, and Halperin's take on the news.^[14]

Halperin and co-author John Heilemann wrote the 2010 *Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime*. Subsequently, the book was made into the HBO movie *Game Change*, which premiered on March 10, 2012. Halperin had a cameo role in the movie as a reporter. Halperin and Heilemann followed in 2012 with a book about that election titled *Double Down: Game Change 2012*.

Criticism

On June 30, 2011, Halperin was suspended from his duties at MSNBC for "slurring" President Barack Obama on the program *Morning Joe*, after commenting said of Obama "I thought he was kind of a dick" " for his performance at the previous day's press conference.^{[15][16]} His suspension was lifted a month later.^[17]

In December 2011, Halperin was listed as number 1 in *Salon*'s 2011 Hack List, his reporting described as "shallow and predictable" as well as "both fixated solely on the horse race and also uniquely bad at analyzing the horse race."^[18]

Alex Shephard, writing in *The New Republic*, criticized his coverage for being "totally fixated" on the horse race and for shallow analysis, and "that he's wanted to carry Donald Trump's bags for years."^[19]



Mark Halperin with co-host Mark McKinnon at the 2015 Iowa Growth & Opportunity Party, Varied Industries Building, Iowa State Fairgrounds, Des Moines, Iowa, during shooting of *The Circus*



Secretary of State John Kerry chats with MSNBC analyst Halperin before appearing on *Morning Joe* in New York.

Conversely, Benjamin Wallace-Wells of *The New Yorker* wrote that Halperin's *The Circus* is "both an argument for horse-race journalism and a way to see its inner workings, and so to track Heilemann and Halperin in their long traipse across the American interior is to see the media discovering its own vulnerabilities, just as Trump was exploiting them."^[20]

The Washington Post's Dana Milbank called Halperin's analysis in the 2016 United States presidential campaign "soulless" and "amoral", citing several instances where Halperin praised Republican nominee Donald Trump. Milbank noted that Halperin had declared on *Morning Joe* in March 2016 that Trump was "one of the two most talented presidential candidates any of us have covered." Earlier, in January 2020, also on "Morning Joe," Halperin said Trump's attacks on the Clintons were "politically brilliant." In June 2016, on his Bloomberg TV show, *With All Due Respect*, Milbank noted Halperin asserted that "it's not racial" for Trump to attempt to disqualify an Indiana-born federal judge as a "Mexican" because of his ancestry. His reason: "Mexico isn't a race."^[21]

In November 2016, NBC's Brian Williams said Halperin had "gone out of his way" to give Trump favorable coverage. "When Donald Trump complains he is not getting favorable coverage in the MSM"—making reference to the mainstream media—"he has not been listening to you this cycle", Williams said to Halperin on Williams' show. "I think you've gone out of your way to find the path, argue for the path, forge the path for him in an argumentative way with your cohost to the nomination."^[22]

Sexual harassment allegations

On October 26, 2017, CNN reported that five women had accused Halperin of sexual harassment. One woman told the network she was assaulted after visiting Halperin in the early 2000s. "I went up to have a soda and talk and—he just kissed me and grabbed my boobs", the woman said. "I just froze. I didn't know what to do."

Yet another woman told CNN that Halperin once pressed his penis to her shoulder during the 2004 campaign cycle. "I was obviously completely shocked", she said. "Given I was so young and new, I wasn't sure if that was the sort of thing that was expected of you if you wanted something from a male figure in news."

And another former ABC News woman employee, told CNN that she had been on the road with Halperin when he propositioned her. "I excused myself to go to the bathroom and he was standing there when I opened the door, propositioning [me] to go into the other bathroom to do something", she said. "It freaked me out. I came out of the ladies' room and he was just standing there. Like almost blocking the door."

CNN also reported that three other women described Halperin, "without consent, pressing an erection against their bodies while he was clothed." One woman recalled an incident during which "Halperin had pressed his genitals against her while she was seated in his office."^{[23][24]}

Halperin apologized for pursuing "relationships with women that I worked with, including some junior to me", but he also denied allegations that he had ever pressed his genitals against one woman and grabbed another woman's breast. He further announced that he would temporarily leave his daily work to "properly deal with this situation."^{[25][26]}

Later that day, *NBC News* released a statement saying that in light of the allegations, Halperin would not return as a senior political analyst "until the questions around his past conduct are fully understood."^[27] *HBO* announced it would no longer go forward with a planned *miniseries* about the

presidential election that was based in part on Halperin's then-upcoming book on the 2016 election. The premium cable channel said in a statement, "HBO has no tolerance for sexual harassment within the company or its productions."^[28] Penguin Press also canceled the latest installment of the *Game Change* series Halperin was co-authoring with John Heilemann, which HBO had already canceled plans to adapt.^[29]

A day after their first story, CNN ran a second story revealing that the number of women accusing Halperin of misconduct had grown to "at least a dozen".^[30] In a lengthy statement published in response to the CNN report, Halperin denied several of the new allegations, including ones that he masturbated in front of anyone or physically assaulted anyone. He apologized to the women he "mistreated" while acknowledging that he recognized he had a problem near the end of his tenure at ABC, received weekly counseling sessions, and ended the behavior;^[31] however, a later report from *The Daily Beast* included an allegation of harassment from 2011.^[32]

On October 30, 2017, both NBC and MSNBC terminated Halperin's contract with the networks.^[33]^[3] On January 3, 2018, Showtime replaced Halperin on *The Circus* with CBS News anchor Alex Wagner.^[34]^[35]^[36]

Comeback attempts

According to a May 3, 2019 report in *The Daily Beast*, Halperin worked on repairing his reputation during the first quarter of 2019 with a goal of returning as a pundit on television and radio. According to the article, Halperin enlisted the help of Michael Smerconish, Mika Brzezinski, and Joe Scarborough on an under-the-radar yet calculated professional rehabilitation campaign. Since the beginning of 2019, Halperin resumed posting on Twitter and launched a new political blog titled "Mark Halperin's Wide World of News" in mid-April. Around the same time, Halperin appeared on Sirius XM with Smerconish, where he said he has been working with the Fortune Society, a New York City-based nonprofit organization that provides essential support to the formerly incarcerated.^[37]

On August 18, 2019, publisher Regan Arts announced that Halperin had signed a new book deal. The book, entitled *How to Beat Trump: America's Top Political Strategists on What It Will Take*, was published in early-November 2019. Contributors to the book include David Axelrod, Donna Brazile, and James Carville. Both CNN and NBC declined to promote the book.^[38]

After news broke about the upcoming book, there was widespread criticism and outrage, with Gretchen Carlson calling the deal "a slap in the face to all women." Rebecca Katz, a political strategist said on Twitter, "you can beat Trump without supporting the career rehabilitation of Mark Halperin." CNN political commentator Karen Finney called Halperin "a predator" and denounced publisher Regan Arts. Eleanor McManus, whom as a 21-year-old job seeker at ABC Halperin attempted to force himself upon, commented: "He leveraged his position as a prominent journalist to prey on women... Giving him a book once again puts him in a position of authority and that is a slap in the face to all the women that he has victimized."

According to a September 9, 2019 report in *The Daily Beast*, Halperin allegedly exchanged vague threats on a call with MSNBC president Phil Griffin after Griffin refused to approve a possible collaboration with the *Morning Joe* team earlier in 2019.^[39]

In 2020, Halperin began appearing on Newsmax TV as a contributor and as the host of its weekly Sunday show, *Mark Halperin's Focus Group*.^[4]

Personal life

Halperin resides in New York City with his girlfriend, Karen Avrich, co-author of *Sasha and Emma*.^{[2][40][41]}

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Morton Halperin

Morton H. Halperin (born June 13, 1938) is a longtime expert on U.S. foreign policy, arms control, civil liberties, and the workings of bureaucracies.

He was a senior advisor to the Open Society Foundations, which was founded by George Soros.

He served in the Johnson, Nixon, Clinton, and Obama administrations. He has taught at Harvard University and as a visitor at other universities including Columbia, George Washington University, and Yale.

He has served in a number of roles with think tanks, including the Center for American Progress, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Twentieth Century Fund.

Early career

Halperin was born to a Jewish family on June 13, 1938, in Brooklyn, New York.^[1] He graduated from Lafayette High School in Brooklyn and received his BA in political science from Columbia University in 1958. Thereafter, he attended Yale University, where he received an MA in international relations in 1959 and a PhD in the discipline in 1961.

Halperin has three sons — David Halperin, Mark Halperin,^[2] former senior political analyst for NBC News and MSNBC, and Gary Halperin. He is the brother of Daniel Halperin, the Stanley S. Surrey Professor of Law, Emeritus at Harvard Law School.

In 2005, he married Diane Orentlicher, a professor of international law at the American University Washington College of Law. Orentlicher formerly served as a deputy in the Office of War Crimes in the U.S. Department of State.^[3]

Halperin began his career in academia as a research associate at the Harvard Center for International Affairs (1960–66). He was an instructor in government at Harvard (1961-1963) and an assistant professor of government (1964-1966).

Johnson and Nixon administrations

From 1966 to 1967, Halperin served as a special assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

Morton Halperin	
Director of Policy Planning	
In office	September 16, 1998 – January 20, 2001
President	<u>Bill Clinton</u>
Preceded by	<u>Gregory B. Craig</u>
Succeeded by	<u>Richard N. Haass</u>
Personal details	
Born	June 13, 1938 <div><u>Brooklyn, New York, U.S.</u></div>
Spouse(s)	<u>Ina Weinstein</u> (divorced) <div><u>Carol Pitchersky</u><div><u>Diane Orentlicher</u></div></div>
Children	<i>with Weinstein:</i> <div><u>David Halperin</u><div><u>Gary Halperin</u><div><u>Mark Halperin</u></div></div></div>
Education	<u>Columbia University</u> (BA) <div><u>Yale University</u> (PhD)</div>
Occupation	Foreign policy analyst



At 29-years-old, from 1967 to 1969, he became the youngest ever^[4] Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Policy, Planning, and Arms Control).^[5]

He joined the National Security Council in 1969 as the director of policy planning.^[6] Halperin and Henry Kissinger, Nixon's new National Security Advisor, had been colleagues at Harvard.

Halperin's appointment was immediately criticized by General Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; FBI director J. Edgar Hoover; and Senator Barry Goldwater.

Wire tapping and Nixon's Enemies List

On May 9, 1969,^[7] the New York Times reported that the United States had been bombing Cambodia. Kissinger called Hoover to find out who might have leaked this information to the press. Hoover suggested Halperin, and Kissinger agreed that was likely. That day, the FBI began tapping Halperin's phones at Kissinger's direction. The Nixon administration bugged Halperin's home phone, without a warrant, for 21 months^[8] starting in 1969.^[9]

Halperin also ended up on Nixon's Enemies List of 20 people with whom the White House was unhappy with because they disagreed in some way with the administration. Halperin was number 8 on the list. Nixon aide Charles Colson, who compiled the list, wrote next to Halperin's name, "a scandal would be helpful here."

Defense Secretary Robert McNamara asked Halperin to oversee the production of the Pentagon Papers. Les Gelb, a member of Halperin's staff, oversaw the staff that actually wrote the study. Halperin was a friend of Daniel Ellsberg. When Ellsberg was investigated in connection with the Pentagon Papers, suspicion fell on Halperin, who some Nixon aides believed had kept classified documents when he left government service. The tapping of Halperin's phone^[10] without a warrant was discovered when it came out in Ellsberg's trial.^[11]

Despite the continued use of the wiretap well after Halperin left government, Kissinger told reporters on May 13, 1973, that, "I never received any information that cast any doubt on [Halperin's] loyalty and discretion."^[12]

Halperin sued in federal court. Halperin won a symbolic \$1 judgment in 1977 for the offense, but the judgment was overturned by an appeals court.^[13] In 1991, Kissinger apologized to Halperin in a letter and the suit was dropped at Halperin's request in 1992.^[14]

Positions between government service

After leaving the Nixon administration, Halperin joined the Brookings Institution (<https://www.brookings.edu/>) as a senior fellow from 1969 to 1973 and then became the research director for the Project on Information, National Security and Constitutional Procedures at the Twentieth Century Fund from 1974 to 1975. He was the director for the Project on National Security and Civil Liberties from 1975 to 1977.

From 1977 to 1992, he served as the director of the Center for National Security Studies (<http://www.cnss.org/>) (jointly sponsored by the Fund for Peace and the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation. And from 1992 to 1994, he was a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

From 1984 to 1992, Halperin served as director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) office in Washington.

While at the ACLU, Halperin, along with Jerry Berman, also at the ACLU, worked with President Reagan's CIA Director William Casey to agree on language in the Intelligence Identities Protection Act of 1982, which has successfully protected journalists publishing the names of covert agents. He also worked on a number of civil rights bills, including an immigration reform bill in 1986, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and the American Disabilities Act of 1990.^[15] He defended the right of *The Progressive* magazine to publish a description of the design principle of a thermonuclear weapon (H-Bomb).

Clinton administration

At the start of the Clinton administration, Halperin was appointed as a consultant to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (1993).

In 1994 President Clinton nominated Halperin for the position of assistant secretary of defense for democracy and peacekeeping, and was opposed by the Senate Armed Services Committee which supplied a detailed list of Halperin's activities and stated views which it regarded as incompatible with his appointment.^[16] Clinton then named him to be a Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Democracy at the National Security Council (1994–1996).

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright appointed him to the position of Director of Policy Planning at the State Department (1998–2001) in Clinton's second term. Halperin focused on several issues of interest to Secretary Albright, including democracy promotion (the Community of Democracies and inauguration of the four priority democracies); nuclear issues; a review of the way that the United States responds to humanitarian disasters overseas; and northeast Asian security. He also was integrally involved in managing the crises in Kosovo and East Timor.^[17]

Post-Clinton administration

Following his service in the Clinton Administration, Halperin joined the Council on Foreign Relations (2001-2002) as senior fellow and director, Center for Democracy and Free Markets.

Halperin created the Open Society Foundations' office in Washington, D.C., and oversaw all policy advocacy on U.S. and international issues, including promotion of human rights and support for open societies abroad. He was the director of the Washington office for the Open Society Institute (now the Open Society Foundations) from 2002 to 2005 and the director of U.S. advocacy from 2005 to 2008. He was the executive director of the Open Society Policy Center (<https://opensocietypolicycenter.org/>) from 2002 to 2008.

He also was a senior vice president at the Center for American Progress from 2003 to 2005 and a senior fellow at CAP from 2003 to 2009.

He was a senior advisor to the Open Society Foundations. He retired in 2002.^[18]

Obama administration

President Obama nominated (<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/12/06/president-obama-announces-more-key-administration-posts>) Halperin to serve on the board of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (<https://www.mcc.gov/about/profile/morton-h-halperin>) in 2012 and again in 2015, and he was twice confirmed by the U.S. Senate. He served as director until March 9, 2018.^[19]

Publications

Halperin is a prolific author and co-author of 25 books, including *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (<https://www.brookings.edu/book/bureaucratic-politics-and-foreign-policy/>). The first edition of *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* is one of the most successful Brookings titles of all time. He also authored *Strategy and Arms Control* (with Thomas C. Schelling); *Limited War in the Nuclear Age*; and *Contemporary Military Strategy*.

Selected articles

- Review of *SPOOKS: The Haunting of America—The Private Use of Secret Agents* (<https://archive.today/20211014155146/https://www.nytimes.com/1978/11/26/archives/spooks-the-haunting-of-america.html>), by Jim Hougan. *New York Times* (Nov. 26, 1978), p. SM 212.
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Awards

Halperin has won numerous awards, including:

- Meritorious Civilian Service Award, Department of Defense, January 1969
- Hugh M. Hefner First Amendment Award, Playboy Foundation, July 1981
- Wilbur Lucius Cross Medal, Yale Graduate School Alumni Association, June 1983
- Fellow, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, June 1985, June 1990
- John Jay Award, Columbia College, 1986
- Public Service Award, Federation of American Scientists, December 1998
- National Freedom of Information Act Hall of Fame, March 2006

In 1985 he won a MacArthur Foundation fellowship.

He was a partial writer of *The Lawless State*, which documents the surveillance techniques and crimes of the U.S. government during the Cold War.

Boards

Halperin is the chairman of the Community of Democracies,^[20] Civil Society Pillar International Steering Committee (<http://www.community-democracies.org/organization/affiliated-bodies/international-steering-committee/>) and he is chairman of the board of JStreet.^[21] He also serves on the boards of ONE (<https://www.one.org/us/person/morton-h-halperin/>) and ONE Action.

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Further reading

- Hougan, Jim. *Spooks: The Haunting of America—The Private Use of Secret Agents*. New York: William Morrow (1978). ISBN 978-0688033552.

External links

- *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace* (<http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/democracy-advantage-how-democracies-promote-prosperity-and-peace>) by Halperin, Siegle & Weinstein (2004) Ch.1
 - Interview (<http://www.salon.com/opinion/greenwald/radio/2008/08/13/halperin/index.html>) with Glenn Greenwald for Salon, 13 August 2008
 - Statement on the nomination of Dr. Morton Halperin (http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/congress/1994_cr/s940715-halperin.htm), Congressional Record, United States Senate, 15 July 1994
 - Morton Halperin (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm3408049/>) at IMDb
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