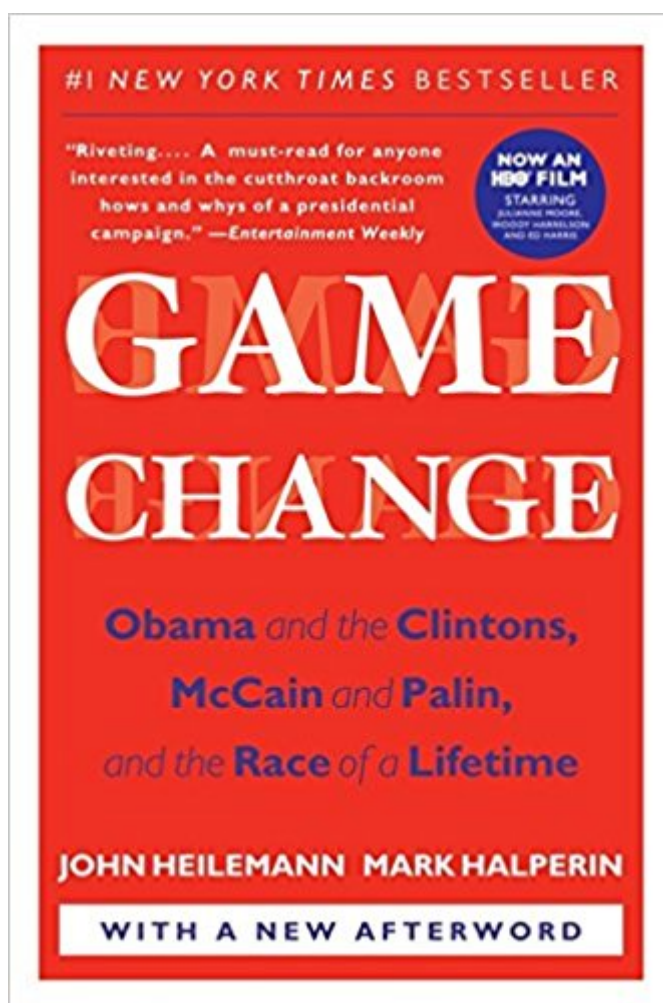


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Game Change: Obama And The Clintons, McCain And Palin, And The Race Of A Lifetime



Synopsis

It's one of the best books on politics of any kind I've read. For entertainment value, I put it up there with Catch 22. "The Financial Times" It transports you to a parallel universe in which everything in the National Enquirer is true. More interesting is what we learn about the candidates themselves: their frailties, egos and almost super-human stamina. "The Financial Times" I can't put down this book! "Stephen Colbert" Game Change is the New York Times bestselling story of the 2008 presidential election, by John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, two of the best political reporters in the country. In the spirit of Richard Ben Cramer's What It Takes and Theodore H. White's The Making of the President 1960, this classic campaign trail book tells the defining story of a new era in American politics, going deeper behind the scenes of the Obama/Biden and McCain/Palin campaigns than any other account of the historic 2008 election.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Game Change" is about the 2008 election. The most obvious question is "What could be new in this book - the campaign was already covered in incredible detail for nearly two years by bloggers, national media, local media - anyone with a camera and/or a link to the Internet. The answer is that most of the material concerns previously unreported personal details rather than much in the way of national policy or any sort of analysis of the electorate. The result is that whether you like it or not, "Game Change" has put the nation back into a supercharged 'gossip mode,' combining high-level

scandals in the Clinton, Edwards, and McCain campaigns, with allegations of presidential unfitness in the Clinton, Edwards, and McCain-Palin campaigns, along with a bit of racism thrown in for good measure. This volatile mixture has since been ignited by "60 Minutes," "Good Morning America," and other TV interviews. Initial reaction from those named in the book has largely been denial, except for Senator Reid regarding his comments on Senator Obama's relatively benign blackness not being an impediment for the presidency. Denials, unfortunately, will probably go unrebutted - the book makes extensive use of unattributed quotes and deep-background interviews that don't permit fact-checking. Sarah Palin clearly provides the juiciest material, mostly from McCain's campaign manager Steve Schmidt. It's a strange position - he led McCain to Palin, then lambasts her unfitness and poor preparation, and finally ends up admitting that without her it would have been worse.

"Game Change" was not even on sale and it was already roiling the political waters with its shocking revelations. There is a rich tradition of books about presidential campaigns that break news not revealed during the campaign and "Game Change" has PLENTY of revelations. The one getting a great deal of play was Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's inappropriate racially tinged comments about candidate Obama, which managed to be kept under wraps, while then-Senator Biden's made their way out. 2008 was the year of "Candidates Gone Wild," saying ridiculous and inappropriate things like Obama's comment on people clinging to their guns, religion, and bitterness. But there's so much here that never got out. Like Elizabeth Edwards, who has carefully cultured a public persona as the victimized suffering wife, belittling her husband John as a "hick" and in private launching into obscenity laced tirades at him and about him. Heilemann and Halperin examine both sides of the race and there are plenty of great gossip stories on both sides, as well as other shocking revelations, such as how rushed the selection of Governor Sarah Palin as Vice-President was. We already knew that virtually no one in the Republican leadership was consulted over the choice and only now do we learn how rushed the decision was and how little thought or consideration was truly given to the choice. Moreover, the choice was primarily tactical in nature, designed to knock the Obama campaign off balance and off guard. Only after Palin was selected did the McCain campaign realize that they had made a huge tactical error they could not undo. The ensuing problems within the McCain-Palin campaign are chronicled here, but considering how much press there was at the time there's little here that breaks new ground.

Amid the hoopla surrounding this book in the days prior to its release, I couldn't wait to get a copy.

Reading this book, I continually asked myself it was really worth all the hype or just a ratification of things I already knew. The last 10 years, the United States has been embroiled in such a divisive political atmosphere it comes as no surprise that most of the best-selling books are about politics and politicians ... intelligent books written about or by politicians have proven to be cash-cows that do nothing more than "energize the base" or fuel/ignite the opposition. "Game Change" gives me mixed feelings. We should have known this was coming ... the implosion of political candidates is as entertaining as the losers that humiliate themselves on the American Idol auditions year-after-year. Years ago, a news periodical like Newsweek or Time would run juicy after-election articles documenting a defeated candidate's horridly-run campaign that always included incidents of the candidate "losing grip" at one point or another. "Game Change" seemed to be nothing more than a compilation of such articles, but expertly welded together to create a generously smooth flow for the reader. In other words, other than the juicy details of the vitriol and carnage, the book didn't really reveal anything new about anyone or anything. After all, the 24/7 news cycle already gives us more information than we need to know about all the subject matter in this book:- we already knew Obama was a "smooth operator"; intelligent and gifted at reading other people's speeches ... his outright cocky demeanor and his obvious, deep and admirable devotion to his wife and children.

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