

# Jamal Simmons

## Biography

Jamal Simmons has been at the nexus of politics and media for three decades. He is currently a CNN political commentator, co-host of the *Trailblaze* podcast on Politicon and author of *Kill the Spider* on Substack. Before that, Jamal was deputy assistant to the President and communications director to Vice President Kamala Harris at the White House.

In 1992, as a 21-year-old college “stop-out,” Jamal joined Bill Clinton’s traveling campaign staff, setting up events around the world for the Clinton White House. He was also an assistant to U.S. Trade Representative and Commerce Secretary Mickey Kantor. In these roles, he represented the U.S. government in 15 countries including Bosnia, Ukraine, Namibia, Haiti and China. He served as a top communications aide for two presidential primary campaigns and a U.S. senate race and was chief of staff to a member of the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee. During the 2000 Florida recount, Jamal was a Gore/Lieberman spokesman in W. Palm Beach. Prior to focusing on his media career, Jamal advised corporate, nonprofit and political leaders at the Raben Group, co-chaired the Internet Innovation Alliance and co-founded CRVIII (CRATE), a digital media start-up.

Jamal came to prominence as a CNN Obama surrogate during the epic 2008 presidential primaries against Hillary Clinton. He became a political contributor for CBS News and NPR and hosted digital interviews for Hill TV with political leaders and celebrities, including then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and comedians Chelsea Handler, Rosie O’Donnell and George Lopez. In 2013, Jamal hosted “The Root 100” series on *Aspire TV*, where he interviewed celebrities such as Issa Rae, Billy Porter and Condola Rashad.

Jamal has written opinion pieces for *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, *Politico* and *The New York Times*. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Jackson House Board of Advisors at the Henry Ford Museum and the Rosa Parks Scholarship Foundation Board (honorary). He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Morehouse College and a Master in Public Policy (MPP) from Harvard University’s Kennedy School. He currently lives in the New York City area with his wife and their children.

