



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on December 2, 2024

MSNBC Claims Ignorance of Harris Campaign's Pre-interview Donations to Sharpton's Group

MSNBC claims it was “unaware” that Vice President Kamala Harris’ presidential campaign had donated \$500,000 to Al Sharpton’s activist organization just weeks before Sharpton interviewed Harris on the network.

MSNBC isn’t saying what it plans to do about this supposedly shocking revelation, but one employee claims it is raising eyebrows among his co-workers, who consider it a “bridge too far” even for notoriously lax MSNBC.

Kampaign Kontributions

On November 12, the [Washington Free Beacon](#) reported that the Harris campaign had contributed \$250,000 to Sharpton’s National Action Network on September 5, and again on October 1.

Then, according to the Free Beacon:

On Oct. 3, Sharpton [aired a video](#) of Harris wishing him happy birthday on his MSNBC weekend show, *PoliticsNation with Al Sharpton*. “Happy birthday, Rev,” Harris said, using Sharpton’s nickname. “You have been over all of your years such an extraordinary leader. You have been a voice of truth, a voice of conscience.”

Sharpton, 70, conducted a glowing [interview](#) with Harris on Oct. 20 in which he touted her “extraordinary historic campaign” while referring to [former President Donald] Trump as “hostile and erratic.” His questions lined up closely with messages that Harris sought to highlight on the campaign trail. Sharpton addressed concerns among black voters — especially black men — about Harris’s record as a prosecutor in California, where she was given the nickname “Kamala the Cop.” Sharpton brought up Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman elected to Congress, and one of Harris’s personal heroes, to put Harris’s candidacy in historical perspective. Sharpton asked Harris whether men who opposed her were “misogynistic.”

All the while, Sharpton never mentioned on-air the half-million dollars his group got from Harris, and he kept it from his bosses at MSNBC — or so they now claim.

“MSNBC was unaware of the donations made to the National Action Network,” a network spokesman told the [Free Beacon](#) last Tuesday. He declined further comment, citing MSNBC policy regarding “personnel matters.”



AP Images
Al Sharpton



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Weird AI

One anonymous MSNBC employee took his grievances to [Fox News](#), telling the channel the Sharpton situation has been “ricocheting around the halls” of 30 Rockefeller Plaza.

“No one’s surprised that anybody at MSNBC was rooting for Harris,” the employee said. “This feels like another level of nonsense. Like, you’re kidding me, right? This is weird.”

“Harris could have given Al Sharpton an interview, and it would have gone the same way,” he continued. “But what are you paying for?... There’s no way that this can’t seem weird.”

Whether Sharpton violated MSNBC policy is uncertain, although the unnamed employee claims they aren’t even allowed to accept “tickets to a ballgame,” to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. What is known is that MSNBC policy forbids on-air personalities from contributing to political candidates — or at least it did in 2010, when both Joe Scarborough and then-MSNBC host Keith Olbermann were suspended for violating it. Sharpton’s potential violation runs in the opposite direction: a political candidate donated to *his* nonprofit.

It is next to impossible to separate donations to the National Action Network from personal contributions to Sharpton. The organization “paid Sharpton around \$650,000 in 2021,” wrote the Free Beacon. “It also spent more than \$900,000 on private jets and limousine services seemingly used by Sharpton.” Thus, it is highly likely that some of the Harris campaign’s contributions directly benefited Sharpton.

“That kind of money should not be changing hands to people who are cosplaying being a journalist,” the MSNBC employee told Fox News. “That just feels a little bit like pay to play.... It feels like I couldn’t get away with it.”

“Grifty and Gross”

Of course, MSNBC forfeited its credibility when it hired Sharpton in the first place. The [race-baiting, anti-Semitic, hoax-peddling grifter](#) should have no place in any respectable news organization. But there he is, raking in [millions of dollars in salary](#).

It’s no surprise, then, that, according to the unnamed employee, Sharpton is given a “wide berth” and “not held to the same journalistic standard” as other MSNBC hosts — which, judging from the [commentary](#) of [Joy Reid](#), is not particularly high to begin with.

The employee said:

It’s got a real bulls— feel to it. People who like Al and respect him and understand what his value is... it ranges from disappointment to disgust. Not a whole ton of surprise, I will tell you that.

There are some organizational rules — I understand he has different rules, but they can’t be that, that you donate money and then you get an interview. That can’t be acceptable... I think a three-year-old would see a potential conflict in this.

One reason Sharpton may enjoy special privileges at MSNBC is his close relationship with its president, Rashida Jones. “She’s twice accepted the [National Action Network’s] ‘Chairman’s Award,’” penned the Free Beacon. “[A]nd she spoke at a National Action Network event with Sharpton the day before one of the Harris campaign donations.”



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Still, the MSNBC employee says his co-workers think Sharpton overstepped even his expansive bounds, and something needs to be done about it.

“This has a bit of a dirty feel to it.... These things happen and they don’t bounce around MSNBC all that much. Like people just don’t care,” he said. “This one feels, I’d say, there’s a deeper disappointment. There’s a sense of like, ‘Ugh, we don’t need this. This feels kind of grifty and gross.’”

The same could be said of Al Sharpton.



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