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Alex Berenson

Alex Berenson (born January 6, 1973) is an American writer. He was a reporter for *The New York Times* and has authored several thriller novels and a book on corporate financial filings. His 2019 book *Tell Your Children: The Truth About Marijuana, Mental Illness and Violence* sparked controversy, earning denunciations from many in the scientific and medical communities.

During the coronavirus pandemic, Berenson appeared frequently in American right-wing media, spreading false claims about COVID-19 and its vaccines.^[2] He spent much of the pandemic arguing that its seriousness was overblown; once COVID-19 vaccines were rolled out, he made false claims about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines.^{[3][4][5][6][7]}

<div>Alex Berenson</div>	
Born	January 6, 1973 <div>New York, U.S.</div>
Education	Yale University (BA)
Genre	Nonfiction, spy fiction
Subject	Politics
Notable awards	Edgar Award (2007) ^[1]
Website	
Official website (http://alexberenson.com)	

Contents

Early life and education

Career

- Opposition to cannabis legalization
- COVID-19 pandemic

Books

- Novels
- Non-fiction

Awards

References

External links

Early life and education

Berenson was born in New York, and grew up in Englewood, New Jersey.^[8] He graduated from Yale University in 1994 with bachelor's degrees in history and economics.

Career

Berenson joined the Denver Post in June 1994 as a business reporter. In August 1996, he left the

Post to join *TheStreet*, a financial news website founded by *Jim Cramer*. In December 1999, Berenson joined *The New York Times* as a business investigative reporter.

In the fall of 2003 and the summer of 2004, Berenson covered the occupation of Iraq for the *Times*. More recently, he covered the pharmaceutical and health care industries, specializing in issues concerning dangerous drugs.^[9] Beginning in December 2008, Berenson reported on the *Bernard Madoff \$50 billion Ponzi scheme scandal*.

In 2010, Berenson left the *Times* to become a full-time novelist. He lives in the *Hudson Valley*,^[10] with his wife, a *forensic psychiatrist*.^{[11]:1}

He has written 12 spy novels, all featuring the same protagonist, CIA agent John Wells. His first novel, *The Faithful Spy*, was released in April 2006 and won an *Edgar Award* for best first novel by an American author.^[12] *The Faithful Spy* was ranked #1 on *The New York Times Bestseller List* for paperbacks.^[13]

In 2008, Berenson released his second thriller, *The Ghost War*. His third novel, *The Silent Man*, followed in 2009. His fourth, *The Midnight House*, was released in 2010 and debuted at #9 on *The New York Times* bestseller list.^[14] The fifth, *The Secret Soldier*, was released in 2011 and debuted at #6 on the bestseller list.^[15] The sixth, *The Shadow Patrol*, was released in 2012, and debuted at #8.^{[16][17]} In July 2012, *The Shadow Patrol* was named a finalist for the *Ian Fleming Steel Dagger Award*, given by Britain's Crime Writers' Association.^{[18][19]}

Opposition to cannabis legalization

He authored the controversial 2019 book *Tell Your Children: The Truth About Marijuana, Mental Illness and Violence* that has been denounced as alarmist and inaccurate by many in the scientific and medical communities because of his claims that *cannabis causes psychosis and violence*; many scientists state that he is drawing inappropriate conclusions from the research, primarily by *inferring causation from correlation*,^{[20]:1[21]:1[22]:1[23]:1[2]:1} as well as *cherry picking*^{[11]:1} data that fits his narrative, and falling victim to *selection bias* via his use of *anecdotes*^{[11]:1} to back up his assertions.^{[22]:1[23]:1[21]:1[24]:1[25]}

COVID-19 pandemic

Early in the 2020 *COVID-19 pandemic*, Berenson vocally argued that people and the media were overestimating the risk of the new virus, that it posed little risk to young Americans, and that it was being used as a cover for government overreach.^{[2][26]} Many public health experts have rejected his claims.^{[2][26]:1}

In May 2020, Fox News announced that Berenson would host a TV show called *COVID Contrarian* on its online streaming platform Fox Nation. However, by July 2020, amid surges in coronavirus cases across parts of the United States, Fox News appeared to have backtracked and removed the announcement of his show from its website.^[27]

In 2021, Berenson tweeted that COVID-19 vaccinations had led to 50 times more adverse effects than flu vaccine. PolitiFact rated the claim "mostly false".^[6] *The Atlantic* called him "The pandemic's wrongest man", owing to his false claims of the vaccine's ineffectiveness.^[4]

On August 28, 2021, Twitter permanently suspended Berenson for repeated violations of its policy on COVID-19 misinformation.^[28]

Books

Novels

John Wells series

No.	Title	Publisher	Date	Genre	ISBN
1	<i>The Faithful Spy</i>	Random House	April 25, 2006	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-345-47899-3
2	<i>The Ghost War</i>	Putnam	February 12, 2008	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-399-15453-9
3	<i>The Silent Man</i>	Putnam	February 10, 2009	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-399-15538-3
4	<i>The Midnight House</i>	Putnam	February 10, 2010	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-399-15620-5
5	<i>The Secret Soldier</i>	Putnam	February 8, 2011	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-399-15708-0
6	<i>The Shadow Patrol</i>	Putnam	February 21, 2012	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-399-15829-2
7	<i>The Night Ranger</i>	Putnam	February 12, 2013	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-399-15972-5
8	<i>The Counterfeit Agent</i>	Putnam	February 11, 2014	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-399-15973-2
9	<i>Twelve Days</i>	Putnam	February 10, 2015	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-399-15974-9
10	<i>The Wolves</i>	Putnam	February 9, 2016	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-399-17614-2
11	<i>The Prisoner</i>	Putnam	January 31, 2017	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-399-17615-9
12	<i>The Deceivers</i>	Putnam	February 6, 2018	Spy fiction	ISBN 978-0-698-40753-4

Non-fiction

- *The Number* (novel) Random House, 2003, ISBN 978-0375508806
- *Lost in Kandahar* (novel) Brilliance Audio, 2012, ISBN 978-1469230948
- *Tell Your Children: The Truth About Marijuana, Mental Illness and Violence*, 2019, Free Press, ISBN 978-1982103668
- *Unreported Truths about COVID-19 and Lockdowns: Part 1: Introduction and Death Counts and Estimates*, 2020
- *Unreported Truths about COVID-19 and Lockdowns: Part 2: Update and Examination of Lockdowns as a Strategy*, 2020
- *Unreported Truths about COVID-19 and Lockdowns: Part 3: Masks*, 2020

Awards

- 2007 Edgar Award for best first novel, for *The Faithful Spy*^[1]

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External links

- Author's website (<http://www.alexberenson.com/>)

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