

America's Father Figure, Comedian Bill Cosby, Free at Last



By Kelleigh Nelson

Birds sing after a storm. Why shouldn't people feel as free to delight in whatever sunlight remains to them? –Rose Kennedy

Education happens to be something that all people, all cultures, need to embrace. Math, science, the words of the world. To be able to speak and be able to have clarity and to be able to think. Those are the greatest of gifts. –Bill Cosby

One of the deep secrets in life is that all that is really worth doing is what we do for others. –Lewis Carroll

Through humor, you can soften some of the worst blows that life delivers. And once you find laughter, no matter how painful your situation might be, you can survive it. –Bill Cosby

The childless experts on child raising also bring tears of laughter to my eyes when they say, I love children because they're so honest. There is not an agent in the CIA or the KGB who knows how to conceal the theft of food, how to fake being asleep, or how to forge a parent's signature like a child. –Bill Cosby

The article I was working on was set aside when I read the news of Bill Cosby's release from prison. I was thrilled to know that a man I spent a few hours with in the late 60s and again in the mid-70s, was freed from prison to be with his

wife and family.

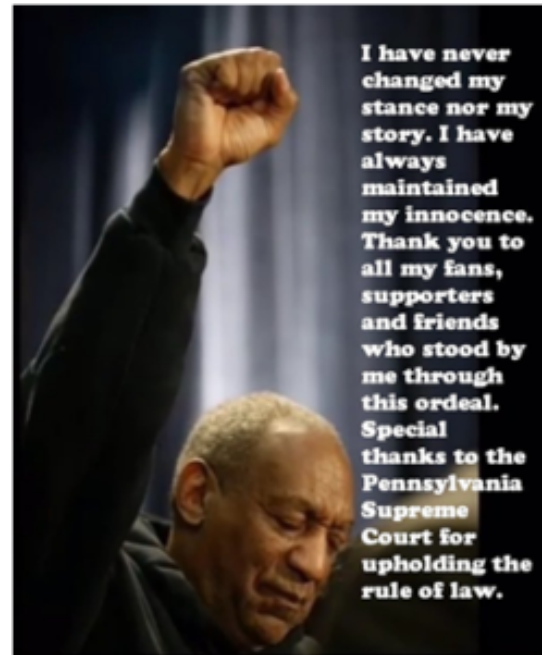
As I read through the many humorous Bill Cosby quotes for this article, I laughed and cried. Take time out and [read his quotes](#); they're fabulous everyday family truisms. Then tell me this was a man who drugged and assaulted women, because I will never believe it. He was never charged or convicted of rape and why would a man of his fame have to drug any woman?

And yes, I spent hours with Bill Cosby, not once, but twice and both times he was a perfect gentleman and a delight to be with. If you've ever known anyone who could make you laugh until you cried, that is Bill Cosby. I almost choked on a sip of coffee the second time we met because of his comments. The man is and was a genius in the comedic portrayal of life.

The second time I met Bill Cosby, he was back from entertaining an audience with clean comedy, unlike the vulgarity of other black comedians, Richard Pryor, Dick Gregory, and Redd Foxx. Cosby actually declined the coveted [Mark Twain Prize](#) twice, before finally accepting it in 2009, because of the profanity that dominated the first award show in 1998 for recipient Richard Pryor.

And the Cosbys have lived through the tragedies of losing their only son [Ennis, when he was shot in the head during a failed robbery attempt](#) while changing a tire on a California highway, and the loss of his daughter, [Ensa who at 44 died of renal failure](#). Yet, he stands true to his faith and his family.

Conviction Overturned



Bill Cosby's conviction was overturned by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Good. I'm certainly not the only one who believes Cosby was railroaded by the "MeToo" mob. I [said this in January of 2015](#), and I'll say it again. Bill was never perfect, none of us are, but women threw themselves at him as happens with all stars and sports figures, so why would he need to use Quaaludes to dope any women in order to molest them? It doesn't hold water. And by the way, I remember Quaaludes being the big drug in the late 60s and 70s, as though everyone had them. Bill is a man who loves his wife and family and they love him and that goes for the people who have worked with him and know him.

Attorney Jonathan Turley explained, "In their 79-page opinion, the judges found that a "non-prosecution agreement" reached with Cosby should have barred the prosecution. In the earlier agreement, the prosecutor, Bruce Castor Jr., agreed not to charge Cosby in return for his civil deposition. Cosby proceeded to purposely incriminate himself in what the Court said was a **bait-and-switch**. The later prosecutor then just ignored the non-prosecution agreement. The trial was also undermined by the decision of the trial court to allow women to testify as witnesses on uncharged alleged crimes against Cosby."

“The court called Cosby’s arrest “an affront to fundamental fairness, particularly when it results in a criminal prosecution that was forgone for more than a decade.”

Justice David Wecht, writing for a split court, said Cosby had relied on the former district attorney’s decision not to charge him when the comedian gave his potentially incriminating testimony in Constand’s civil case, done of course to get out from under the rubbish of false attacks, which was the promise of the original DA.

The justices said that overturning the conviction, and barring any further prosecution, “is the only remedy that comports with society’s reasonable expectations of its elected prosecutors and our criminal justice system.”

“Mr. Cosby should never have been prosecuted for these offenses,” said lawyer Jennifer Bonjean, who argued Cosby’s appeal. “District attorneys can’t change it up simply because of their political motivation.” She said Cosby remains in excellent health, despite being legally blind.

And these [alleged crimes were from decades ago, their stories don’t jive, Gloria Allred represented all of them](#) and the question remains, what took the women so long, and why now?

Prison

After conviction, Bill spent two and half years in prison. He told his wife and family not to visit him because he didn’t want them to see him in this incarcerated state and he didn’t want them going through it with him. His wife Camille spoke with him every day.

But does America know what Bill was doing in prison? He was lecturing and preaching, he was reaching out and telling young men how to save themselves from lives of desperation and loss. Cosby’s pitch was that the inmate’s lead by example for their kids and stay out of prison in the future. He urged the

inmates to re-bond with their kids immediately upon getting out. Cosby was clearly trading on his all-American dad image from “The Cosby Show” and it resonated with the prisoners. And he mixed all these life lessons with humor and they loved it. He told them, “To all men... it’s a time to be Great Fathers, Great American Citizens and Great Husbands. Man Up and Become Men of Valor.”



Bill worked most with a group of inmates set up for parole called “Man Up” talking life lessons, keeping out of trouble and not getting locked up again. He lectured them about finding work post-prison, and gave them tips on interviewing techniques...and yes, he lectured on substance abuse and how to stay clean.

He was asked to speak at least four times a week to crowds of 200 and inmates would ask to sit down and eat meals with him one on one. Bill is legally blind; people would count how many would come to hear him and let him know. No matter the situation, Cosby was doing what he had been doing all his life, reaching out to young men, especially young black men, and telling them that there is more to life than drugs, gangs and fathering out of wedlock children. He wanted them to be good fathers and productive citizens.

In May 2021, Cosby was denied parole after [refusing to participate in sex offender programs](#) behind bars. He has long said he would resist the treatment programs and refuse to acknowledge wrongdoing even if it meant serving the full 10-year sentence. A stand which could have cost him death in prison.

Support

[Phylicia Rashad](#) who starred with Bill as Claire Huxtable on *The Cosby Show* for eight years, tweeted, “FINALLY!!!! A terrible wrong is being righted – a miscarriage of justice is corrected!” She never believed Bill was guilty of the “MeToo” charges. Rashad said, “What you’re seeing is the destruction of a legacy. And I think it’s orchestrated. I don’t know why or who’s doing it, but it’s the legacy. And it’s a legacy that is so important to the culture.” [Link](#)

Rashad dismisses claims from two outspoken women. “Oh, please,” she said when their names came up. She also is quick to defend Camille Cosby. “This is a tough woman, a smart woman.” “She’s no pushover.” “There is no



question,” Rashad said, “that Camille Cosby has not been complicit or looked the other way as her husband terrorized women for the last 50 years.”

She added, “Someone is determined to keep Bill Cosby off TV,” alluding to people other than the women. “And it’s worked. All his contracts have been cancelled.”

Bill’s wife, [Camille Olivia Hanks Cosby](#), holds a PhD in Education and is a direct descendant of [Nancy Hanks Lincoln](#), President [Abraham Lincoln](#)’s mother. Like his wife, Bill earned his Doctor of Education from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 1976 after completing his Masters of Arts there in 1972.

This is the same man who, in 1971, was one of the lead stars on [The Electric Company](#), a comedy variety show that taught basic phonetic and grammar concepts using live-action sketches, cartoons, songs, and Spider-Man episodes. This is where, then unknown, Morgan Freeman, got his start. Bill and

his wife Camille have always been at the forefront of academic education for all of America's children.

Camille Cosby has [previously been outspoken about her belief](#) that the case against her husband was "unethical" and claimed his accusers were lying. She owns a production company, has done television and stage work, and has written books and articles. She was her husband's manager and kept explicit records as to Bill's engagements. She has never left his side.

When these charges first erupted, [ABC News](#) reported that [Camille Cosby](#) came out in defense of her husband and this is what she said, *A different man has been portrayed in the media over the last two months. It is the portrait of a man I do not know. It is also a portrait painted by individuals and organizations whom many in the media have given a pass. There appears to be no vetting of my husband's accusers before stories are published or aired. An accusation is published, and immediately goes viral.*

These two women who know Bill well are not the only ones who have stood by him. Others who have worked with Bill through the years are standing by the man they know.

Cosby Family Philanthropy

The Cosby family, through their foundation, has helped their own race far more than most. They gave multi-millions and helped millions of black young people to succeed and to become successful members of society. I haven't been able to find a decision by an institution to publicly renounce any of the tens of millions of dollars that he and his wife, Camille have given over the years. Nor have they decided to reject any new donations.

Cosby's legacy of giving is decades-old and extensive, topped by a \$20 million gift to Spelman College in 1988 and including, among many other donations, \$3 million to the

Morehouse School of Medicine; \$1 million in 2004 to the U.S. National Slavery Museum in Fredericksburg, Virginia; and \$2 million from Cosby's wife, Camille, to St. Frances Academy in Baltimore in 2005. According to IRS filings, in 2009, Camille and Bill Cosby gave more than \$800,000 in scholarship grants through the William and Camille Cosby Foundation. And that's only a tiny portion of their philanthropy.

I wonder if the Cosby's know of [Margaret Mitchell's decades of donations to Morehouse](#)? In 1942, Margaret Mitchell, author of *Gone with the Wind*, received a letter from Dr. Benjamin Mays, president of the all-black Morehouse College in Atlanta. He asked her to give one scholarship of \$80.00 for one student, and Margaret Mitchell wrote back and sent a check, and that was the beginning of a long relationship.

Mays was a mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King. He sensed that Margaret might be open to his ideas on education, and again wrote to her. And Dr. Mays was right. Her checks increased with the needs and a college student was the courier between the two. Mays and Mitchell never met, but her legacy of charity to Morehouse continues and will for the next 100 years. It was Margaret's [deep affection for Hattie McDaniel](#) who played Mammy in the movie, and her caring relationships with people from all walks of life that led to the millions in donations to Morehouse College.

HBO stopped showing the movie and in doing so, cut some of the funds to Morehouse for black medical students.

2004 Speeches

For decades, Cosby lectured the black community about family values. Leaders who promoted the "victim" mentality of black Americans were not happy.

Bill wanted his people to excel and he knew they'd never do it when fathers were not in the homes, when children dropped out of school, when they wore their pants too low, when they had

\$500 tennis shoes and carried guns and joined gangs. He spoke against it every chance he had, and especially at the NAACP. Cosby did not want his people to be victims, but to strive to be all they could be...as others in his race had done.

On May 17, 2004, Bill Cosby spoke at an [NAACP Legal Defense Fund](#) awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1954 Supreme Court decision in [Brown v. Board of Education](#).

In the speech, which was subsequently widely disseminated and analyzed, Cosby was highly critical of the black community in the United States. He criticized the use of [African-American Vernacular English](#), the prevalence of single-parent families, perceived emphasis on frivolous and conspicuous consumption at the expense of necessities, lack of responsibility, and other behaviors.

[Here is the transcript of that speech](#), and it was a mighty one excoriating the black community's care of their children. He has been both praised and condemned for his statements. Bill Cosby has not repudiated his controversial pronouncements or attempted to distance himself from them. Instead, he has chosen to expand upon his theme on subsequent occasions and to make himself a spokesperson for black self-empowerment through education and better parenting.

What do you believe the so-called black leaders thought of this kind of rhetoric? Of course, some had to support him, because he was a great star in his own right, but I highly doubt they were happy about his words. Here's a taste of what he said back then.

They're standing on the corner and they can't speak English. I can't even talk the way these people talk: Why you ain't, Where you is, What he drive, Where he stay, Where he work, Who you be... And I blamed the kid until I heard the mother talk. And then I heard the father talk.

Everybody knows it's important to speak English except these knuckleheads. You can't be a doctor with that kind of crap coming out of your mouth. In fact, you will never get any kind of job making a decent living.

People marched and were hit in the face with rocks to get an Education, and now we've got these knuckleheads walking around.

The lower economic people are not holding up their end in this deal. These people are not parenting. They are buying things for kids. \$500 sneakers for what?

And they won't spend \$200 for Hooked on Phonics.

I am talking about these people who cry when their son is standing there in an orange suit. Where were you when he was two? Where were you when he was 12? Where were you when he was 18 and how come you didn't know that he had a pistol? And where is the father? Or who is his father?

People putting their clothes on backward: Isn't that a sign of something gone wrong? People with their hats on backward, pants down around the crack, isn't that a sign of something?

Isn't it a sign of something when she has her dress all the way up and got all types of needles [piercing] going through her body? What part of Africa did this come from?? We are not Africans. Those people are not Africans; they don't know a thing about Africa.

I say this all of the time. It would be like white people saying they are European-American. That is totally stupid.

I was born here, and so were my parents and grandparents and, very likely my great grandparents. I don't have any connection to Africa, no more than white Americans have to Germany, Scotland, England, Ireland, or the Netherlands. The same applies to 99 percent of all the black Americans as regards to

Africa. So stop, already!!! With names like Shaniqua, Taliqua and Mohammed and all of that crap... And all of them are in jail.

Brown or black versus the Board of Education is no longer the white person's problem. We have got to take the neighborhood back. People used to be ashamed. Today a woman has eight children with eight different 'husbands' – or men or whatever you call them now.

We have millionaire football players who cannot read. We have million-dollar basketball players who can't write two paragraphs. We, as black folks have to do a better job.

Someone working at Wal-Mart with seven kids, you are hurting us. We have to start holding each other to a higher standard. We cannot blame the white people any longer.

Dr. William Henry 'Bill' Cosby, Jr., Ed. D.

Cosby again came under sharp criticism, and was unapologetic for his stance on the issue, when he made similar remarks during a [speech at a July 1st meeting](#) of Jesse Jackson's [Rainbow-Push Coalition](#) commemorating the anniversary of *Brown v. Board*, where he said, "... you've got to stop beating up your women because you can't find a job, because you didn't want to get an education and now you're [earning] minimum wage."

He had critical remarks for black Christians' seeming inability to create positive social change for the urban population to which he was referring, "I'm telling you Christians, what's wrong with you? Why can't you hit the streets? Why can't you clean it out yourselves?"

At the end of Cosby's speech where he encourages listeners to go to their families and improve their parenting so the black community can improve, he said, "Well, I've got something to tell you about Jesus. When you go to the church, look at the

stained-glass windows of Jesus. Look at them. Is Jesus smiling? Not in one picture. So, tell your friends. Let's try to do something. Let's try to make Jesus smile. Let's start parenting. Thank you, thank you."

Conclusion

I've never claimed Bill Cosby was perfect, and he may well have had dalliances or affairs, but the bait-and-switch by the Pennsylvania prosecutor required Cosby to claim actions that may have never happened.

Why take down a man all of American loved and idolized? Because he ruffled far too many feathers and he certainly was never politically correct. I learned that over a sandwich and coffee with him in the 1970s. Could he be extorted with charges that were false? Of course, many famous people have forked over funds to avoid trials and publicity, even when those charges were total fabrications.

Bill Cosby always operated outside the power brokers and marched to his own drummer. He avoided allegiances and payoffs to alliances who could ultimately own him. He was and still is a "public moralist." That makes him a target of the social and perverted justice warriors.

Bill Cosby's true legacy is one that needs to be echoed throughout America...I'll stand with him and his family.

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