

Bill Cosby sentenced to 3 to 10 years in prison for sexual assault

By **Eric Levenson** and **Aaron Cooper**, CNN

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(CNN) — Bill Cosby, once known as "America's Dad," was sentenced Tuesday to three to 10 years in a state prison for drugging and sexually assaulting Andrea Constand at his home 14 years ago.

Cosby's bail was revoked and he was escorted from the courthouse in handcuffs.

"This was a serious crime," Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, Judge Steven O'Neill said. "Mr. Cosby, this has all circled back to you. The day has come, the time has come."

Cosby, convicted in April of aggravated indecent assault, declined to speak to the court prior to the sentence. His attorneys have said they intend to file an appeal.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY CORRECTIONAL

Bill Cosby's mugshot was taken on Tuesday, Sept. 25 as he was being processed into the Montgomery County Correctional Facility.

He also was ordered to pay a fine of \$25,000 plus the costs of prosecution as part of the sentence. In addition, O'Neill ruled that Cosby will be classified as a "[sexually violent predator](#)," a determination that requires lifetime registration, lifetime mandatory sex offender counseling with a treatment provider and notification to the community that a "sexually violent predator" lives in the area.

Cosby was booked into Montgomery County Correctional Facility and will be transferred to SCI Phoenix, a state prison in Collegeville, according to Corrie Emerson, public affairs manager for Montgomery County.

The lengthy path to this moment began in 2004 when Cosby, the groundbreaking actor, gave Constand pills to incapacitate her and then sexually assaulted her. She told police in 2005 about the incident but prosecutors declined to press charges, and they settled the case in civil court a year later.

A decade later, dozens of women came forward to say Cosby drugged and sexually assaulted them over his decades as a powerful media figure.

Constand's was the only one of those cases that occurred within the statute of limitations. A new team of prosecutors took up the case and, relying on Constand's and Cosby's statements in a civil deposition, arrested him in December 2015.



Related Article: The long, winding path to Bill Cosby's guilty verdict

A first criminal trial against Cosby ended in a hung jury. But in April, Cosby was [convicted of three counts](#) of aggravated indecent assault for drugging and assaulting Constand in the first high-profile celebrity criminal trial of the #MeToo era.

"No one is above the law, and no one should be treated differently or disproportionately," O'Neill said.

Cosby's spokesperson Andrew Wyatt unleashed on the media, judge and prosecutors after the sentence, calling the prosecution "the most racist and sexist trial in the history of the United States." He also said Cosby was doing well because "he knows that these are lies" and even compared it to the [sexual assault allegation against](#) Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.

"They persecuted Jesus and look what happened. (I'm) not saying Mr. Cosby's Jesus, but we know what this country has done to black men for centuries," Wyatt said.

Gloria Allred, the victims' rights attorney who represents several women who say they were assaulted by Cosby, praised the sentence as a long journey to justice.

"We're glad that judgment day has finally come for Mr. Cosby," she said. "Mr Cosby has shown no remorse and there has been no justice for many of the accusers who were barred from a court by the arbitrary time limits imposed by the statute of limitations."

Victims react to sentence

See Bill Cosby leave court in handcuffs 01:12

Ahead of the sentencing, Constand wrote a [five-page letter](#) to the court explaining how Cosby's assault -- and the ensuing legal battle -- had changed her life. As a Temple University employee, she looked up to Cosby, a Temple trustee, as a mentor and friend. He used that position of power and trust, as well as his public persona as Dr. Huxtable, to take advantage of her, she testified at trial.

"Bill Cosby took my beautiful, healthy young spirit and crushed it. He robbed me of my health and vitality, my open nature and my trust in myself and others," she wrote in the impact statement.

O'Neill cited Constand's statement in deciding on the sentence.

"I have given great weight to the victim impact testimony in this case, and it was powerful," he said.



Kathy McKee, a former actress who has accused Cosby of raping her, told CNN that listening to the news about Cosby's sentencing stirs up some "very difficult and deep emotions."

"I'm happy that the judge sentenced Bill Cosby accordingly and I'm grateful to Andrea for standing strong," she said.

Chelan Lasha, another of Cosby's alleged victims, also praised the sentence.

"I am very happy to know that Mr. Cosby will do time in prison. That he is touchable, like he touched us unwillingly," she said.

Related Article: Andrea Constand's full victim impact statement about Bill Cosby's assault

The prison sentence drew praise from victims and advocacy groups like the nonprofit Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, known as RAINN.

"We are grateful that the court understood the seriousness of Cosby's crime and sentenced him to prison," said Jodi Omeear, vice president of communications at RAINN. "Let's hope that the legacy of this case is that victims feel empowered to come forward, knowing that it can truly make a difference in bringing perpetrators to justice."

Prosecutors had asked the judge on Monday to sentence Cosby to five to 10 years in state prison for the assault, saying he had shown "no remorse" for his actions. However, Cosby's defense attorney, Joseph P. Green, asked for a sentence of house arrest, citing Cosby's advanced age and blindness.

Cosby's case tests #MeToo

Several of Cosby's alleged victims arrived to court for the sentencing, including supermodel [Janice Dickinson](#). She was one of five "prior bad acts" witnesses who testified at the criminal trial that Cosby had incapacitated and then assaulted them without their consent.

Cosby arrived Monday and Tuesday with his spokespeople, Wyatt and Ebonee Benson. His wife, Camille Cosby, was not present.

The state sentencing guidelines indicate 22 to 36 months in prison, plus or minus 12 months because of aggravating or mitigating circumstances. However, judges are [allowed to issue](#) sentences beyond those guidelines.



Related Article: Bill Cosby's last lesson: Separating the public person from the private one

Cosby did not testify at the trial and has spoken publicly only infrequently since his criminal trial began. But in April, when prosecutors claimed he had a private plane and asked the judge to [revoke his bail](#), Cosby stood up in court and yelled, "He doesn't have a plane, you a**hole," referring to himself in the third person.

In a sentencing memorandum, prosecutors said that "extraordinary display of disrespect" was evidence of "who this convicted criminal defendant actually is."

"He seemingly thinks that he hasn't done anything wrong," District Attorney Kevin Steele said in court. "The jury thinks otherwise."

Green, Cosby's attorney, asked for a sentence of house arrest and said Cosby was not a danger to anyone.

"Eighty-one-year-old blind men who are not self-sufficient are not a danger, unless perhaps to themselves," he said.

Green also on Monday downplayed the outburst about the plane, saying that "Mr. Cosby's frustration got the better of him."

"When Mr. Steele's witnesses at trial made outbursts, that was excused, everybody understands, but when the defendant makes one, it deserves three pages in a sentencing memorandum?"

Though the three charges each carry a maximum possible sentence of 10 years, O'Neill announced Monday that the charges had been merged into one because they all stem from the same event.

Cosby had remained out of prison for the past five months on \$1 million bail, and his lawyers said they plan to appeal his convictions.

Correction: A previous version of this article mistakenly said an appeal has been filed. Attorneys for Bill Cosby say they are planning to lodge an appeal, but it had not been filed as of Wednesday morning.

CNN's Jean Casarez, Laura Ly and Sarah Jorgensen contributed to this report.