W. Kamau Bell, director and executive producer. *We Need to Talk About Cosby*. Showtime, 2022.

The docu-series *We Need to Talk About Cosby*, released in January 2022, documents the rise and startling fall of comedian, actor, educator, and author Bill Cosby. After years on the comedy circuit, Cosby gained national adoration, becoming "America's Dad" alongside other beloved actors like Bob Saget or James Avery from *Full House* and *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. However, in 2014 allegations of sexual assault and misconduct were brought forward against Cosby from over 60 different women spanning over four decades. Thus, comedian, writer, actor, activist, and director W. Kamau Bell decided to discuss the once-beloved actor. Through this series, Bell points out how Cosby boosted the Black community in the U.S. while also being honest about the allegations brought forward. Most notably, Bell received an Emmy Award for his CNN docu-series, *United Shades of America with W. Kamau Bell*. Throughout the docu-series the question prevails of whether one can separate the artist from the allegations?

Whether it was *I Spy* (1965 - 1968), *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids* (1972 - 1985), or *The Cosby Show* (1984 - 1992), most people grew up watching Bill Cosby. Revolutionary within the business, he also gave representation to thousands. By revealing his accomplishment, Bell also includes the testimonies of Cosby's victims, exposing that when he was creating a path for future black comedians and actors, he was simultaneously assaulting dozens of women. Inviting over 30 scholars, entertainers, editors, and professionals to join in chronicling this history, the scholars also describe the red flags during his career. The docu-series is an indepth look not only at Cosby's career but how he was able to conceal his true nature from society. The tone within these four parts is severe and heartbreaking but becomes digestible for the audience with direction and guidance. *Part One* focuses primarily on Cosby's rise to fame, detailing his actions during the Civil Rights Movement and critical support of black entertainers. Nonetheless, it also divulges his first moments abusing power and notoriety. *Part Two* delves into how Cosby created his persona as

an educator, anti-drug advocate, and trusted man paired with traumatic and painful stories of the women who experienced his abuse firsthand.

As the series continues, the focus shifts to introducing the charming and relatable Cliff Huxtable. *The Cosby Show* revolutionized the Black American family. Bell parallels this episode to the #MeToo Movement, alluding numerous times that the continued abuse was feasible because Cosby used his reputation, unlike other abusers, who used intimidation and fear tactics. As a result, he was able to hide his egregious actions through a combination of trust, power, authority, and adoration. It would only be after comedian Hannibal Buress made several comments at a show that women began to come forward with allegations of assault and misconduct against Bill Cosby, who was 77 years old at the time. After he was found guilty, everyone, including Bell, believed it was finally over. However, in 2021, a legal technicality freed him.

This docu-series aims to show the true nature of a man once considered a hero and entertainer. Erstwhile depicted as "America's Dad," he is lined up with sexual predators such as R. Kelly, Matt Lauer, Harvey Weinstein, Louis C.K, and other CEOs, entertainers, and politicians in powerful positions. With the testimonies of survivors and a platform for discussion, this docuseries invites a diverse group of speakers such as Gloria Allred, an American Women's rights attorney, Jelani Cobb, a professor at Columbia University, and *Ebony* magazine editor Kierna Mayo. W. Kamau Bell explains the impact this docu-series has on the #MeToo movement, on rape culture, and the power of perceptions involving seemingly untouchable figures. For audiences grappling with complicated feelings surrounding a once loved and famed man, this series publicizes the narrative for in direct, unpreachy ways, allowing them to form their own opinions from the substantial facts.

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