

Pennsylvania: Bill Cosby Sentenced 3 to 10 Years in Prison for Sexual Assault in 2004

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Bill Cosby, 81, the comedian and actor who was accused of drugging and sexually assaulting more than 60 women, was tried, convicted, and sentenced in Pennsylvania. The judge sentenced him to a minimum of three to a maximum of ten years in prison and described him as a "sexually violent predator", a classification that requires monthly counseling for the rest of his life. When he is released from prison, his name will appear on a sex-offender registry sent to neighbors and local schools. Cosby's lawyers asked for house arrest, claiming the Cosby is legally blind, but he may be disqualified for the program because the judge deemed him a "sexually violent predator." -GEG

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (AP) – A judge declared Bill Cosby a "sexually violent predator" on Tuesday as he prepared to sentence the 81-year-old comedian for drugging and sexually assaulting a woman over a decade ago.

The classification means that Cosby must undergo monthly counseling for the rest of his life and report quarterly to authorities. His name will appear on a sex-offender registry sent to neighbors, schools and victims.

Montgomery County Judge Steven O'Neill made the decision as he weighed the punishment for Cosby for violating Temple University women's basketball administrator Andrea Constand at his suburban Philadelphia estate in 2004.

Cosby declined the opportunity to address the court before the judge retreated to his chambers around noon to weigh the sentence. O'Neill said he would announce his decision early in the afternoon.

The comic once known as America's Dad for his role as wise and understanding Dr. Cliff Huxtable on "The Cosby Show" in the 1980s faced anywhere from probation to 10 years in

prison after being convicted in April in the first celebrity trial of the #MeToo era.

Cosby's lawyers asked for house arrest, saying Cosby – who is legally blind – is too old and helpless to do time in prison. Prosecutors asked for five to 10 years behind bars, saying the comic could still be a threat to women.

Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin Steele rejected the notion that "age, infirmity, should somehow equate to mercy."

"He was good at hiding this for a long time. Good at suppressing this for a long time. So it's taken a long time to get there," Steele said.

Cosby's lawyers had fought the "sexually violent predator" designation, arguing that Pennsylvania's sex-offender law is unconstitutional and that he is no threat to the public at his age. But O'Neill said prosecutors had met their burden of proof by "clear and convincing" evidence.

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