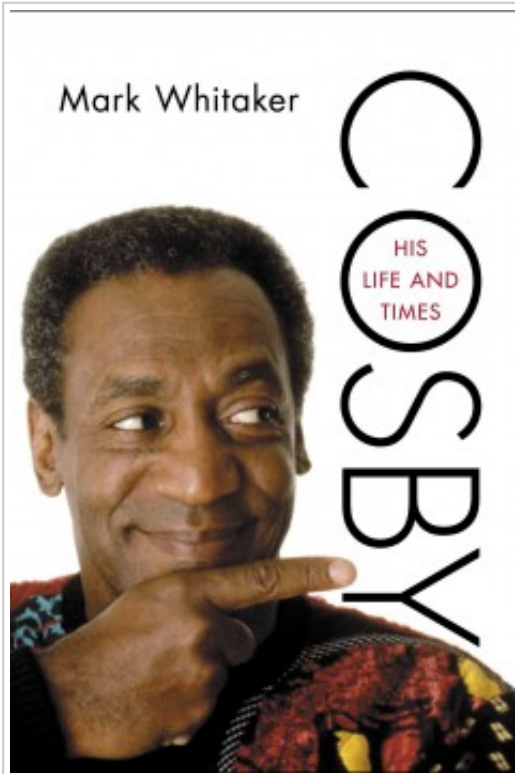


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## Cosby

by Mark Whitaker

**Price: \$29.99**(Hardcover)

Published: September 16, 2014

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

**From the Publisher:** The first major biography of an American icon, comedian Bill Cosby. Based on extensive research and in-depth interviews with Cosby and more than sixty of his closest friends and associates, it is a frank, fun and fascinating account of his life and historic legacy. Far from the gentle worlds of his routines or TV shows, Cosby grew up in a Philadelphia housing project, the son of an alcoholic, largely absent father and a loving but overworked mother. With novelistic detail, award winning journalist Mark Whitaker tells the story of how, after dropping out of high school, Cosby turned his life around by joining the Navy, talking his way into college, and seizing his first breaks as a stand-up comedian. Published on the 30th anniversary of The Cosby Show, the book reveals the behind-the-scenes story of that groundbreaking sitcom as well as Cosby's bestselling...

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## What We Say

Bill Cosby's impact on popular culture is extraordinary and this solid, fascinating biography tells his story well. Journalist Mark Whitaker is clearly admiring of Cosby, but manages to deliver a somewhat warts-and-all look despite extensive cooperation from the star and his many associates over the years. It does address extra-marital affairs in a straight-forward manner but makes no mention of rape allegations and an out of court settlement against one such accuser in 2006; in essence, this is an unofficially approved biography. It's very strong in fleshing out Cosby's childhood and years in the military but really hits its stride as Cosby rockets to success. In recent years, the trend in autobiographies of show business figures has been a focus on the years before they made it big (such as Steve Martin's excellent memoir). "Cosby" shows the years after you make it can also be fascinating. Cosby's struggles with censors and studios, the constant seesawing in how he was perceived both by white and black audiences and how his first attempts to capitalize on fame with a production company bankrupted him are all spelled out. The huge impact of "I Spy," his ground-breaking work on "Fat Albert" and "The Electric Company," the ahead of its time sitcom "The Bill Cosby Show," his innovative work as a spokesperson for various products and of course "The Cosby Show" and its seismic success are all covered in depth. And throughout it all, Whitaker threads his work as a stand-up, showing how Cosby shapes his material and why that has been the lifeblood of his career despite the hit films and record-breaking TV shows. The book provides some good cultural context but never quite scales the heights of greatness the way its subject did. Still, it gets the job done and reveals a career and talent that is truly singular. It will surely be snapped up by fans and send others back to his seminal comedy albums and lesser known projects. -- Michael Giltz

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## What Others Say

"A smart, revealing biography of an iconic American funnyman. . . . A fascinating look at a complicated genius." - **People**

"Whitaker's wonderfully thorough biography of America's most accomplished comedian provides context and depth as he analyzes Bill Cosby's work." - **New York Times Book Review**

Fluid, admiring, packed with detail and anecdotes." - **Wall Street Journal**

"Invaluable . . . Whitaker makes a convincing argument that issues of race and politics have preoccupied Cosby throughout his life." - **New Yorker**

"Whitaker's clear-eyed, fair-minded and deftly written book takes up all the momentous stops of Cosby's life's journey . . . by allowing us to see Cosby's tumultuous life in full, Whitaker's book makes it possible to imagine Bill Cosby being regarded as one of the first prophets of what optimists of all colors believe will someday be a "post-racial America." - **USA TODAY**

"Absorbing . . . makes a persuasive case for Cosby as a groundbreaking comic and a quiet but far-ranging pioneer of black advancement." - **Publishers Weekly**

"Readable, thoughtful life of the brilliant comedian and . . . an eye-opening..."