

Cosby's Lawyers Call His Accuser a 'Pathological Liar'

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Bill Cosby. *Photo: Bastiaan Slabbers/NurPhoto via Getty Images*



Closing statements in Bill Cosby's felony sexual assault trial officially wrapped up this evening at the Montgomery County Courthouse near Philadelphia. After more than two weeks and 25 witnesses, the judge is expected to hand off the case to the jury to begin deliberations Wednesday.

Highlights from the long and final day of this retrial included a blistering attack against all of Cosby's accusers by lead defense attorney Tom Mesereau. He asked the jury to reject the case, which he called "flimsy, silly, ridiculous" because Andrea Constand, the woman at the center of the retrial who has accused Cosby of drugging and raping her in his suburban Philadelphia home in 2004, is "a pathological liar."

No one was safe from the defense's scorn today. One by one, Cosby's legal team ripped each accuser's testimony apart in a summation that lasted about two hours. "Bill Cosby got conned big time," Mesereau said, pandering to the jury by focusing attention on the comedian's old age and impaired vision.

Defense attorney Kathleen Bliss also chided the prosecution for calling five accusers to the stand during the retrial — accusers who had a major impact on the case. "How unfair is that?" she asked. "digging up stuff from three decades ago?"

The defense implored the jury to not allow the #MeToo movement to influence their decision in this case. They reiterated several times that while Cosby may have made bad judgments, he's not a criminal.

Lara Yeretsian, a defense attorney with Yeretsian Law in Southern California who has worked on several high-profile cases, including those involving Michael Jackson and Scott Peterson, said that #MeToo is unavoidable in this case no matter how hard the defense downplayed it in closing. "Before the #MeToo movement," she said, "I would have said [Cosby's] status as a celebrity was a great advantage. Now, I'm not as confident celebrity is as advantageous as it used to be."

Today, prosecutor Kristen Feden reminded jurors that it's Cosby, and not Constand or any of the accusers, who are on trial. She also emphasized how each woman told "strikingly similar" stories that paint a portrait of the 80-year-old as a dangerous sexual predator who used his

fame and money to escape prosecution for decades. This case has become symbolic in many ways because it appears to be the last opportunity for Cosby to be charged criminally within the state of Pennsylvania's statute of limitations. No one has come forward since Constand filed charges just under the statute's deadline.

A big challenge for the prosecution, said Yeretsian, is convincing the jury "to convict Dr. Huxtable. That is not an easy task."

Feden said today that Cosby is not the man the jury may remember from television at all. "He preyed on Andrea Constand the same way he preyed on all those five women," she said, revisiting their graphic testimonies about how Cosby drugged and raped them over the past three decades.

The prosecution team also criticized the defense for their ongoing character assassinations, notably attacking accusers on the stand throughout the retrial. Feden said Bliss was "utterly shameful" to put accusers through such grueling testimony. "She's the exact reason why women, victims of sexual assault and men don't report these crimes," she said.

If the jury comes back with a guilty verdict, Yeretsian said that Cosby's age, a focal point for the defense today, would not preclude him from serving jail time. "I would expect [the defense] to appeal," she said, "particularly in light of some of the judge's evidentiary decisions."

She added that this case is being closely watched because it involves several controversial elements: fame, money and shocking accusations about a man who was beloved by millions.

"If Cosby is not convicted, the case becomes another example of the power of celebrity and the difficulties surrounding prosecuting celebrities," Yeretsian said. "If convicted, many will view it as a win for #MeToo. But the Cosby case didn't start the movement and regardless of the outcome, it won't be the end of the movement."