

Book review

Cosby book is not worth the money

By ALLAN GOULD

It is not hard to understand why Bill Cosby is one of the most popular and successful performers/humorists on the face of the earth today. His stand-up comedy routines are often quite inspired; his timing is exquisite; his TV show is well-crafted and better than most. But here we are with his third book of the past few years (Love and Marriage, Doubleday; 188 pages, \$22.95), and one has to wonder why the people who can get him free every week on television are willing to shell out so much money for so little value.

Fatherhood, Bill Cosby's first book, sold more than four-million copies in both hardcover and paperback; the second, Time Flies - panned rather nastily by this reviewer barely a year ago - sold nearly two-million copies in hardcover, in spite of my warnings.

It is clear, then, that the question is no longer "will Cosby have another best-seller?" That's like asking if Elizabeth Taylor/Zsa Zsa Gabor will have another husband, and the answer is inevitably in the affirmative. The question remains, why should anyone pay another 20-plus bucks for another book that is even less skillfully done than the previous two?

Please: Save your money. The idea has potential, heaven knows; perhaps even more potential than the first two. (Not every person is a father, or even of the male persuasion; and certainly not every person is attracted to the idea of reading a book about Growing Old(er). But what human being has not been in love, if not married? So, in that sense, Cosby has chosen a worthy topic - and a topic more than worthy of his often-keen wit.)

But he rarely, if ever, rises to the occasion. For one thing, this insultingly slim, wide-margined, big-print book begins with another obnoxious little essay by the author's close friend, psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint, who also consults on the Cosby TV show. Mercifully, his intro is not endless, as in Time Flies, but it's still irritating, when one wishes some humor, to get such platitudes as "Unfortunately, many smitten youngsters engage in early and irresponsible sexual activity, thereby facing many risks, foremost among them contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including life-threatening AIDS." Thanks for that, Dr. P.; if you hadn't told me, I never would have known.

FLASHES

In the first half of the book, entitled Love, the sharp Cosby vision now and then comes to the surface. "Suddenly, almost overnight," he writes, sounding just like he does on TV, "a grand transformation takes place in that student of carnage called a boy: It's 'Good Morning, glands.' Suddenly, you don't

want to knock a girl down, you want to bowl her over. Suddenly, you lose interest in scarring her knees and turn your attention to making an impact on her heart." Sweet, almost-Leacock-like, with some nice line construction, too. But oh, so obvious.

Better is when the youthful Cosby tells a girl, "I like you very much. Will you be my girlfriend?" And "Goddess" replies: "(Doing a poor job of suppressing a laugh) I'd rather have some cavities filled." Good stuff, and very funny.

In the Marriage portion of this too-brief-for-the-money non-book, there are also some inevitably winning lines. When his new wife tries a vegetarian dish on him, husband Cosby exclaims, "Would you please donate this to the Hare Krishna and bring me my real meal... No, what I have is a snack for the North Korean Army. The meat must have slipped off somewhere. Why don't we try to find it together?" Great.

Fun, as well, is a paragraph like this one: "In her endless effort to bring her husband out of the cave, the American wife will tell him, 'The problem with you is you are not in touch with your feelings.' She will tell him this right after he has tried to shoot his son to dramatize some parental point for which mere language lacked clarity. She will tell him this right after he has kicked in the television set as a fitting response to an overtime field goal against his home team. A man can spend an entire morning creatively running amuck; and when he is finished and the foam on his lips has dried, his wife will say, 'The problem with you is you are not in touch with your feelings.'"

TOO RARE

That's very good, but stuff like that comes far too rarely. Which brings us back to our original question, about why another two-to-five-million North Americans will soon be opening their wallets to pay good money for another piece of written fluff from that charming, delightful comedian and television star.

Too many trees are dying in order to make books like this one, and, as the earner of close to \$100 million (U.S.) last year, Bill Cosby sure as heck doesn't need the money.

"I married Dave because he doesn't leave the toilet seat up," says a female friend in this book; "It may be his best quality." That's quite a humorous line, alright, but you hear better ones every week on TV, freeing you to give the \$22.95 to charity. You'll feel better, and Bill Cosby won't mind.

Allan Gould, a humorist in his own right, wishes his books sold as well as Cosby's, but he swears that he's not that jealous. His latest book of political satire is The Great Wiped Out North (Stoddart Publishing).

It's the busy season

Home security is a must

It's summer, officially, and the peak holiday-travel season is here at last.

But while you are enjoying the pleasant anticipation of a vacation trip, take some time to ensure that your home will be safe while you are away, and that you don't take unnecessary health risks on your trip.

Don't advertise the fact that you are going to be absent - for example, by speaking about your plans in places where you could easily be overheard, such as a supermarket check-out line or a hair salon.

Another form of advertising to be avoided is the accumulation of flyers, newspapers and so on that could pile up at your door while you are on vacation unless you arrange for a reliable neighbor to clear them away. Phone the newspaper to have home delivery temporarily suspended.

If you don't already have one, make a list of the family possessions that are most attractive to burglars, such as jewelry, cameras, videotape recorder and sound equipment. The list should set out the value of the various items, and be placed in your safe-deposit box or other secure location.

Put the high-risk valuables in some part of the house where a burglar would be unlikely to look - an attic, or instance. Some police departments will lend an engraving tool with which you can place an identifying mark on your possessions. That helps you to reclaim them in the event that they should be found after a burglary.

LIVED-IN LOOK

Your house should look and sound occupied while you are away, so install two or more electric timers to switch lights and radio on and off at specific times.

Should the house be left in total darkness, or if the lights remain switched on throughout the day and night, it's pretty obvious that it's vacant.

Another useful form of deception is to have a car parked in your driveway (the neighbor's car will do, if you are on a motoring holiday), and to leave children's playthings scattered around the outside of the house.

Be especially careful not to leave anything behind that would assist a burglar in breaking into your home, such as a ladder leaning against the house. If you usually keep a spare key in some hiding spot near the front door, by all means remove it before going away.

Such precautions are justified by the frequency of residential burglaries in Canada, which are more than 12 per cent more prevalent than in the U.S. Here, in 1987, according to Statistics Canada, there was one break-in for every 41 homes. Police statistics suggest that as many as 90 per cent

of burglaries occur during daylight hours.

EXOTIC PLACES

Another pre-holiday precaution is to check with your family doctor, preferably about six weeks before departure, especially if you're heading for a Third World destination.

Apart from special individual necessities, basic requirements in a traveller's medical kit would probably include diarrhea medication (Lomotil and Pepto-Bismol are widely used) and skin preparations, both to repel insects and to prevent sunburn.

It's best, of course, not to have to use an anti-diarrhea in the first place, by being cautious about what you eat and drink. If the purity of the local water is questionable, then so are the ice cubes. Use bottled water for drinking and brushing your teeth.

Holidaymakers who are lucky enough to be taking a cruise should first seek a doctor's advice as to motion sickness. In fact, seasickness seems to have more to do with one's individual characteristics than the rough seas, and those who have sailed before probably know whether they are vulnerable.

Should seasickness strike you, see the ship's doctor; who may prescribe phenegan (antihistamine) and a few hours' rest. Alternatively, stay out on deck, breathing the bracing sea air and keeping your eye fixed on the distant horizon.

A less serious problem with cruises, but frequent nevertheless, is over-indulging in tempting food. Take aboard an antacid or other indigestion remedy; many Europeans use Bromozyme (made by Barth's) to aid digestion.

BUZZ OFF

Mosquitoes and other nasty insects are one of the biggest problems faced by holidaymakers, particularly at this season. It's said that mosquitoes can transmit some 80 different diseases to humans, and that four species of mosquito carry malaria.

For protection, use an insect-repellent that contains at least 30 per cent "deet," and for relief (in case the protection fails), bring along calamine lotion or some other anti-itch preparation to treat bites and stings.

If you are going really far off the beaten track on a vacation adventure, you may need to equip yourself with snake-bite treatment, water-purification tables, poison-ivy medication and the like.

Some lucky people tan. The rest of us get sunburnt - unless we use an effective, broad-spectrum

sunscreen to filter out the ultraviolet rays.

Perhaps the best defence against skin problems, whether from insects or the sun, is to expose as little skin as possible. If the risk is high, wear a hat, sunglasses, some covering for the arms and legs, and some lotion for nose, lips and other areas that may have to be exposed. Use sleeping nets at night, when insects are most active.

EXTRA INSURANCE

One other precaution before leaving home: Arrange for medical insurance.

True, you are covered by the provincial hospital insurance plan. But hospital charges in some foreign countries can be higher than the coverage provided by the provincial plan.

For a premium in the range of \$1 to \$1.50 a day, you can buy extended-medical coverage. However, you should read the policy carefully before buying, since there are significant differences between one company and another - especially for insurance on those aged 65 or older.

Check as to whether the insurance company has a toll-free number at which the foreign hospital can confirm that you have the necessary coverage. Otherwise the hospital may demand payment in advance, leaving you to collect from the insurer later - or, worse, it could turn you away.

On a cheerier note, you may find that you already have this type of safety net. Some employers' health plans provide for extended coverage abroad, and so do some types of savings accounts at financial institutions.

A little bit of HUMOR

Lisa: Why does the Statue of Liberty stand in New York harbor?

Lena: Because it can't sit down.

Steve: I saw a sign near a chopped down cherry tree in Wakefield, Virginia.

Sam: What did it say?
Steve: "George Washington was spanked here."

Fred: What did the apple tree say to the farmer?

Jed: Stop picking on me.

THE WORLD ALMANAC DATE BOOK

June 30, 1989

Today is the 181st day of 1989 and the 10th day of summer.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

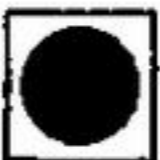
TODAY'S HISTORY: On this day in 1971, the 26th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, extending full voting rights to 18-year-olds, received the necessary ratification when it was approved by the Ohio legislature.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS: David Wayne (1916); Buddy Rich (1917); Lena Horne (1917); Susan Hayward (1918); Chet Atkins (1924); Mike Tyson (1966).

HYUNDAI OWNERS
For Service Call
873-1818

TODAY'S QUOTE: "It's not the voting that's democracy, it's the counting."
- Tom Stoppard.

TODAY'S MOON: Between last quarter (June 26) and new moon (July 2).



TODAY'S BARBS

BY PHIL PASTORET

And then there's the fellow with big bucks who tried to get a DWI canceled. He thought he was driving under the affluence.

GINO'S PIZZA Forget The Rest Call The Best!

\$3.00 OFF ANY PIZZA OVER \$9.00

FREE DELIVERY WITH MINIMUM ORDER
184 GUELPH STREET
873-4499

CRITERION CARPET & RUG CO. LTD. SAVINGS ALL YEAR LONG!

SALES - SERVICE INSTALLATIONS
CARPET - VINYL - TILE

128 Guelph St. Georgetown, Ont. L7G 4A5
(416) 877-1012
(416) 454-4760

HOLLYWOOD HOME PRODUCTS LTD.
"No one ever regretted buying quality"

Custom Design & Installation

- THERMAL REPLACEMENT WINDOWS
- STANLEY THERMAL ENTRANCE DOORS
- PATIO DOORS
- SOFFIT, FACIA AND EAVESTROUGH
- SIDING
- PATIO DECKS AND FENCING
- SOLARIUMS
- NEW ADDITIONS
- CUSTOM DESIGNED BAY AND BOW WINDOWS
- ALUMINUM AWNINGS AND SHUTTERS
- ELEGANT VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL SHADES

CALL TODAY FREE ESTIMATES 873-3459
All work guaranteed No Obligation to Purchase
QUALITY CREDIBILITY RELIABILITY