

SUPREME COURT OF NEVADA

William Cosby, Jr. v. Angela Leslie

142 Nev. Adv. Op. 11 (2026) · No. 89650 · Decided February 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The Nevada Supreme Court answered a certified question under NRAP 5 concerning whether forcing a victim to masturbate the perpetrator with the victim’s hand, without intrusion into a genital or anal opening, constitutes sexual assault under NRS 200.366. The court held that the statutory definition of sexual penetration requires intrusion into a genital or anal opening and therefore answered the certified question in the negative.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Nevada
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Stiglich, J.; Herndon, J.; Parraguirre, J.; Bell, J.; Cadish, J.; Lee, J.
JURISDICTION	Supreme Court of Nevada
DECIDED	February 12, 2026
DOCKET	89650
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The United States District Court for the District of Nevada certified a question of Nevada law under NRAP 5 concerning whether forced masturbation without genital or anal intrusion constitutes sexual assault under NRS 200.366.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	De novo review of the pure question of law presented by the certified question.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion; precedential
PARTIES	William Cosby, Jr. v. Angela Leslie

TOPICS

- statutory interpretation
- appellate procedure
- torts

PRACTICE AREAS

- appellate procedure
- statutory interpretation
- torts
- sexual assault

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether, under NRS 200.364(9) and NRS 200.366, a person commits sexual assault by forcing another person to masturbate the perpetrator with the victim's hand when there is no intrusion into a genital or anal opening.

HOLDINGS

1. The intrusion clause of NRS 200.364(9) requires intrusion of a body part or object into a genital or anal opening. Forcing a victim to masturbate the perpetrator with the victim's hand, without intrusion into a genital or anal opening, is not sexual penetration.
2. The Supreme Court of Nevada exercised its discretion to answer the certified question because it involved an unsettled, determinative question of Nevada law on which no controlling published Nevada authority existed.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“we hold that forced masturbation without such intrusion does not constitute sexual assault under NRS 200.366.” (5)

“Thus, it is clear that sexual penetration under NRS 200.364(9)'s intrusion clause requires the act of thrusting or forcing a body part or an object into the genital or anal opening of the body.” (4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Angela Leslie alleged that, in the late 1980s or early 1990s, William Cosby, Jr. drugged her in a Las Vegas hotel room, covered her hand in lotion, and forced her to masturbate him by holding and moving her hand on his penis. Leslie was one of ten plaintiffs who sued Cosby for battery, assault, negligent and intentional infliction of emotional distress, and false imprisonment. The legal characterization of the alleged conduct determined whether Nevada's elimination of limitations periods for civil causes of action arising from sexual assault applied.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Angela Leslie and nine other plaintiffs sued William Cosby, Jr. in federal court, asserting civil claims arising from alleged sexual assaults. Leslie alleged that Cosby drugged her and forced her to masturbate him by holding and moving her hand on his penis. Cosby moved to dismiss, arguing that the alleged conduct did not constitute sexual assault under Nevada law and that Leslie's claims were therefore time-barred. The federal district court certified the statutory-interpretation question to the Supreme Court of Nevada, which answered it in the negative.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Mack v. Williams, 138 Nev. 854, 856, 522 P.3d 434, 440 (2022)

- Echeverria v. State, 137 Nev. 486, 488, 495 P.3d 471, 474 (2021)
- Hobbs v. State, 127 Nev. 234, 237, 251 P.3d 177, 179 (2011)
- Kassebaum v. State, Dep't of Corr., 139 Nev. 311, 314, 535 P.3d 651, 655 (2023)
- Lofthouse v. State, 136 Nev. 378, 380, 467 P.3d 609, 611 (2020)

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