



# COCOA BROWN

## Comedian, Actress, and Entrepreneur

By Towanna Hogue

Cocoa Brown is one of the funniest female comedians around. She is her real authentic self and is unapologetic about it. She is balancing a successful career while being a great and loving mom to her 9-year-old son. Her laughter is contagious, and her story is empowering.

### WHO IS COCOA BROWN?

Cocoa Brown is the alter ego of Farah Brown. Cocoa Brown was created and manifested through divine placement. Cocoa Brown has evolved, grown, stumbled, fell, and has come into her own. I think, in the beginning, Cocoa Brown was someone who was trying to be what everyone thought she should be, and now, Cocoa Brown is unapologetically who she is. She is a grown woman embracing every

part of herself and learning to love herself completely, even through all her flaws and mistakes. I forgive myself and have survived the worst that life tried to give me. I am now enjoying the very best that life has to give me.

### WHEN DID YOU START COMEDY?

I started in 1996. I had just graduated college and then moved to DC for my first job. I ended up going to a BBQ with a friend, and I was just being me. By the end of the night, the gentleman throwing the BBQ co-owned a comedy club called The Comedy Spot. He said, “You are just naturally funny. Have you ever thought about being a comedian?” I said, “No.” He said, “No? You should try it. You should come to open mic and just try it.” I have

never been fearful of the stage. I just never thought it was something that I could do to put food on the table – be my livelihood.

I ended up going to open mic and had no idea what I was doing but was funny. I got a lesson the first day on stage that probably takes many years for comics to learn. At that very moment, I realized that what is ‘real’ is funny, and audiences can tell when you’re faking it. They can tell when you’re not invested in what you’re saying. I went up there trying to tell jokes, and the audience was just staring at me like: ‘What is she doing?’ I panicked and was like, “Look, I don’t need none of this for real for real, because I work for the circus,” and the audience busted out laughing. I said, “Nah, for real, for real. I work for Ringling Brothers, but I’m not out there training monkeys or nothing.” I’m panicking, and the audience is laughing because I’m literally in a panic mode trying to explain to them: “Look, I’m not up here because I need this.” It hit me that this is just funny, out the gate.

When I came off stage, I had the incredible blessing of meeting my mentor, who became my Godfather in the business, Darcel ‘The Fat Doctor’ Blagmon. He was an icon in DC. They called him the DC Godfather of Comedy. He had mentored everyone from Martin Lawrence, Tommy Davison, Donnell Rawlings, and Dave Chappelle. He was that dude, and I had no idea because, like I said, I was only a viewer of comedy. I was not a student of comedy at all. My friends and I went to comedy shows, and we stayed up at night watching Def Jam in college, but I never thought, in a million years, I would be in that position. He approached me and said, “You got it!” I said, “Got what?” He said, “You got something I’ve been trying to teach my students for years.” I said,

“What’s that?” He said, “That what’s real is what’s funny.” I said, “Huh?” He said, “I would love to work with you. You just have a natural talent, and I think we can teach you how this works.”

He ended up taking me under his wing and became more than just a mentor to me. He passed away last year, God bless his soul, but even up to the very end, he was in a hospital bed still trying to help me with jokes, encouraging me, and believing in me. The Fat Doctor taught me the integrity of the business and that anybody can get on stage and make people laugh at them. The key is making them laugh with you and to be true to yourself. Even when you stumble and make mistakes, hold yourself accountable, keep moving forward, and let no one keep you where you used to be.

He just instilled so much in me, so when I think about comedy and the craft of it, for me, it’s deeper than a set-up and a punch line. It is a business, it is a family, it is a natural gift that you possess, and you got to fine-tune it. So that’s what he taught me. I hold that dearly, every time I get on stage, whether it’s my first show or my thousandth show, I’m going to give them everything I have, and I’m going to be authentic and true to myself. I’m not getting up there to try to make a mockery of this business: I respect the craft.

#### WHO ARE YOUR FAVORITE COMICS?

Richard Pryor. Richard is the originator of ‘laugh at my pain’ and putting his tragedy on stage and making it comedy. You can’t even call yourself a true comedian if you haven’t studied this man and how he did that. I love that he took real societal issues and made you think, and he really didn’t give a damn if he made you laugh. He wanted you to feel uncomfortable.

Speaking of uncomfortable, Paul Mooney, God rest his soul. Paul Mooney was unapologetic. Dick Gregory was unapologetic. Adele Givens, Sommore, who is a master comedy writer. Watching her is like watching a masterclass. Marsha Warfield, for opening doors for the black female sitcom actresses. I respect her greatly.

Newer comics like Tony Roberts and Rob Stapleton. These guys are just heavy hitters. There are so many that I admire and respect, but if I had to say top five, I would say: Richard Pryor, George Carlin, Sommore, Marsha Warfield, and Dave Chapelle.

#### WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR MATERIAL TO CREATE JOKES FROM?

Life. I’m a constant observer. I’m the person that, when I come into a room, people expect me to be the center of attention, make jokes at whatever. But I’m the one sitting in the corner observing everything. Some of my best jokes have come from me being in the car with my girlfriends. A lot of times, I stumble on jokes just from general conversation and observation. Now, being a mom of a 9-year-old, he gives me way too much material. I am thoroughly convinced he has been here before.

#### WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST ROLE AS AN ACTRESS, AND HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE?

My very first role as a paid actress was in a movie called ‘Blue Moon.’ It was filmed in DC by a Howard University student. I played a nightclub MC that had a drinking problem, and he wanted me to improv everything. Improv was something I could do with my eyes closed. This film was the only credit on my resume when I moved to LA, outside of ‘Comic View’ and ‘Showtime at the Apollo.’

My first major role was ‘Lakeview Terrace,’ with Samuel L. Jackson. That was one of those roles that I was like; I’m not only in the film with the man, but I’m in the scenes with him too. I will always give him his props. They didn’t want me to say anything. I had lines, and they were like, “No, no. Don’t say nothing”. Sam Jackson was like, “Well, hold up. I’ll look crazy as hell talking to her, and she don’t talk back.” So he saved the three little lines I had [laughs] in the movie.

#### OUTSIDE OF ACTING AND COMEDY, DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER MAJOR INTERESTS, PASSIONS, OR BUSINESSES?

Absolutely. I’ve really gotten into the CBD business. CBD has become like a passion of mine. I’ve taken courses and done a lot of research, and now I have two businesses that incorporate CBD.

The Cocoa Brown Collection are body products that include body creams, scrubs, and hand sanitizers that are CBD-infused. I also have an edibles business called Cocoa’s Craveables which are CBD-infused edible products. I also have acting workshops. I was getting asked by many comedians how I got into acting or how did I transition. So I began to teach comics

on how to transition from stage to screen. That then went on to parents reaching out to me about helping their kids get into the business. So then I started another class called Little Oscars, which helps prepare children for the business. Teaching them acting and educating the parents on how to protect their children.

#### ARE THERE ANY OTHER EXCITING NEW PROJECTS YOU ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON THAT YOU CAN SHARE WITH US?

Yes! I just shot my first 1-hour special, well, actually, it’s my third, but this is the biggest one I’ve ever shot. I’ve shot two other specials – one I funded myself, and one was through Bounce TV. But this one is through Comedy Dynamics and the Tribeca Film Festival, so that will be dropping soon.

I also have a book coming out. It has been a labor of love. I’ve always needed to get to a certain place in life because I didn’t want the last chapter to be like I’m still dealing with certain things. I wanted some kind of resolution or evolution. So my book ‘Famous Enough’ is coming out soon on all platforms.

I’ll be back on 9-1-1, which is awesome. It’ll be my fifth season with 9-1-1 on Fox. I’m also on the second season of Never Have I Ever on Netflix. I play Principal Grubbs. I’m also on a new show on Freeform called Single Drunk Female, with Ally Sheedy. I’ll be doing a reoccurring role in P-Valley on Starz and the new show BMF – Black Mafia Family that is executively produced by 50 Cent. I have a movie called Sebastian, directed by Mann Robinson, coming out soon. Also, Gamechangers, that’s coming out on the Hallmark Channel. I’m just trying to stay relevant.

To learn more about Cocoa Brown, please visit her website at [cocoabrown4life.com](http://cocoabrown4life.com)

