

# Biography Yusef Salaam

In 1989, at just fifteen years young, Dr. Yusef Salaam was tried and convicted in the “Central Park jogger” case along with four other Black and Latino young men. The Exonerated Five spent between seven to 13 years behind bars for crimes they did not commit, until their sentences were overturned in 2002. Since then, they have received a multi-million dollar settlement from the city of New York for its injustice and have been profiled in award-winning films, including ***The Central Park Five*** documentary from Ken Burns, Sarah Burns and David McMahon and most recently the Emmy award-winning Netflix limited series ***When They See Us***, written and directed by Ava DuVernay.

Over the past two decades, Yusef has become a family man, father, poet, activist and inspirational speaker. He continues to utilize his platform to share his story with others and educate the public about the impact of mass incarceration and police brutality rooted in our justice system. He regularly advocates for criminal justice reform, prison reform and the abolition of juvenile solitary confinement and capital punishment.

Yusef was awarded an Honorary Doctorate (2014) and is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from President Barack Obama (2016). More recently has shared his story and stance on current issues on CNN, MSNBC, REVOLT TV, NPR Atlanta, FOX and more. He authored his memoir *Better, Not Bitter* and is the co-author of *Punching the Air*.