

= Stephen Colbert (character) =

Dr. Stephen T. Colbert is the fictionalized persona of political satirist Stephen Colbert , as portrayed on the Comedy Central series The Colbert Report . Described as a " well @-@ intentioned , poorly informed high @-@ status idiot " and a " self @-@ important right @-@ wing commentator , " the character incorporates aspects of the real Colbert 's life and interests but is primarily a parody of cable news pundits , particularly Fox News commentator Bill O 'Reilly .

Colbert first appeared as a correspondent on Comedy Central 's news parody series The Daily Show in 1997 and remained a regular contributor until 2005 , when he left to host The Colbert Report , a spin @-@ off show satirizing personality @-@ driven political pundit programs . He has also been featured in a number of other public performances , most notably at the 2006 White House Correspondents ' Association Dinner , and as the author of the books I Am America (And So Can You !) , I Am a Pole (And So Can You !) , and America Again : Re @-@ Becoming the Greatness We Never Weren 't .

Colbert 's performance attracted widespread critical attention and acclaim , with a reviewer writing for Time magazine calling it " one of the greatest sustained performances in pop culture , TV or otherwise . "

On April 23 , 2014 , the character appeared on The Daily Show to announce that he had clearly " won television " and would be ending The Colbert Report because he had met his goal . This came after the real Colbert announced he would not be using the character when he replaced David Letterman as the host of Late Show on CBS in 2015 . The final episode of The Colbert Report aired on December 18 , 2014 .

The character has made a few media appearances following the conclusion of The Colbert Report . He made a cameo appearance in the House of Cards season three episode " Chapter 27 " , which was released on February 27 , 2015 . He returned for the August 6 , 2015 episode of The Daily Show to honor Jon Stewart during his final episode as host of the series . He appeared on the July 18 , 2016 episode The Late Show with Stephen Colbert to do a special segment of " The Wørd " , during the show 's coverage of the 2016 Republican National Convention .

= = Development and inspirations = =

= = = The Dana Carvey Show = = =

Colbert 's earliest mainstream exposure came in the prime time sketch comedy program The Dana Carvey Show . While only lasting seven episodes in early 1996 , it provided Colbert with roles that would help forge his future onscreen persona . This was largely due to its format of delivering sketch performances directly to the camera . Although they did not air , several sketches inspired by The Onion also had Colbert playing a deadpan anchor delivering the news . In an interview with The New York Times regarding The Dana Carvey Show , Colbert noted , " If you have an opportunity to give it right to the audience , there 's a special connection that you make by looking at the camera . "

Upon the show 's cancellation , Colbert was cast for The Daily Show by co @-@ creator Madeleine Smithberg . This was thanks to his performance as a nauseated waiter on The Dana Carvey Show .

= = = The Daily Show = = =

Colbert appeared as a correspondent on The Daily Show between 1997 and 2005 . During this time , the comedian developed the character that would later form the basis for his Colbert Report persona , one that its creator calls a " fool who has spent a lot of his life playing not the fool . " Colbert frequently cites Stone Phillips ? whom he describes as having " the greatest neck in journalism " ? as a source of inspiration for the character , as well as Geraldo Rivera , " because he 's got this great sense of mission ... He just thinks he 's gonna change the world with this report . "

As a correspondent , Colbert was regularly pitted against knowledgeable interview subjects , fellow correspondent Steve Carell , or host Jon Stewart in scripted exchanges which typically revealed the character 's lack of knowledge of whatever subject he was discussing . Other Daily Show correspondents have since adopted a similar style ; former correspondent Rob Corddry recalls that when he and Ed Helms first joined the show 's cast in 2002 , they " just imitated Stephen Colbert for a year or two " .

= = = The Colbert Report = = =

In 2005 , Colbert left The Daily Show to host a spin @-@ off series entitled The Colbert Report , a parody of personality @-@ driven political pundit programs such as Fox News 's The O 'Reilly Factor that center largely on the personal views of their hosts . Because of this enlarged role , the personality and beliefs of the Stephen Colbert character have become more clearly defined over the course of the show , complete with a fictitious backstory that has been revealed piecemeal in short monologues accompanying a part of the program .

The character Colbert portrays in Report originated as an amplification of his self @-@ important Daily Show correspondent . As they developed the character and the show Colbert and his staff began to look at some more specific models . Bill O 'Reilly , whom the character affectionately nicknames " Papa Bear " , is the most commonly cited point of reference . In a 2006 episode of The Colbert Report , Colbert remarked that , " if it wasn 't for [O 'Reilly] , this show wouldn 't exist " . In adapting the character for the Report , Colbert has also mentioned Aaron Brown , Anderson Cooper , Sean Hannity , Lou Dobbs and Joe Scarborough as having an influence over his performance . References to the character 's abuse of prescription drugs are believed to be an allusion to Rush Limbaugh 's addiction to painkillers .

The nightly in @-@ character guest interviews were initially of concern to Colbert , who worried his character 's belligerent nature would be off @-@ putting to guests . However , since the show 's debut , he says he has found he is able to " slide the intensity " of his behavior depending on his interviewee 's ability to respond to his aggressive approach . Colbert now often cites the interview segment as his favorite part of the show , because it allows him to improvise . Colbert advises his guests to disabuse the character of his ignorance . " Don 't let me get away with anything . Don 't try to play my game . Be real . Be passionate . Hold your ideas . Give me resistance . Give me traction I can work against . "

= = = Books = = =

Colbert is the central character in the 2007 book I Am America (And So Can You !) . Co @-@ written with Paul Dinello and the writers of The Colbert Report , I Am America delves into what the character considers to be the most pressing issues facing America . The book takes influence from the literary endeavors of the character 's pundit models , such as O 'Reilly 's The O 'Reilly Factor (2000) and Hannity 's Deliver Us From Evil (2004) , which Colbert says he " forced " himself to read as a reference . I Am America is considered a pure extension of the Report ; the written medium allowed the writers to employ different styles , such as long @-@ format arguments , that they could not have used on television . " You can actually spend 20 pages talking about religion whereas in the show , two pages is about as long as we hold any one idea " , Colbert explains . In doing this , the writers " discovered things that [the character] cared about that ... they didn 't know he cared about before " .

A character similar to Colbert 's Daily Show persona featured in the 2003 book Wigfield : The Can Do Town That Just May Not by Colbert , Paul Dinello and Amy Sedaris . Russell Hokes , a self @-@ aggrandizing journalist , was voiced by Colbert in both stage performances of the text and the audiobook . Colbert likens Hokes to his self @-@ important correspondent character , but " more extreme , more self @-@ involved " .

= = Non @-@ fictional elements = =

Certain elements of the character are drawn from the real Colbert 's personal life . Both the real Colbert and the character were raised in Charleston , South Carolina ; both are the youngest of 11 children ; both played Dungeons & Dragons as teenagers ; and both are practicing Roman Catholics . Colbert 's own interest in and knowledge of religion , science fiction , and J. R. R. Tolkien 's The Lord of the Rings story will often show through in the Report . His character has a chocolate portrait of Viggo Mortensen (who portrayed Aragorn in Peter Jackson 's The Lord of the Rings films) in a place of honor on his shelf ; Mortensen briefly reprised the role of Aragorn in the Report 's September 13 , 2007 episode . He also owns a Sting sword presented to him by Peter Jackson .

Occasionally , Colbert will mention his real @-@ life siblings on the show . In one episode , he placed his brother Ed , a lawyer who advises the International Olympic Committee , " on notice " for refusing to grant the show the rights to air footage of a dispute between two American speed skaters . Ed later appeared at the start of the February 22 , 2010 edition advising Stephen on how to cover the Vancouver Winter Olympics since his character does not have the television rights to the games . Footage from the Richmond Olympic Oval was used after Stephen was named a special advisor to USA Speedskating . Generally , journalists covering the Olympics do not have access to the venues unless their employer has the rights to Olympic TV coverage , and cannot show moving video coverage of any official Olympic event unless they have permission from the rights holder . When his sister Elizabeth Colbert Busch declared her intention to run for congress , he mentioned the event . Later , when she was nominated to run against Mark Sanford and the MSNBC show Morning Joe declared their support for Sanford and mentioned Colbert , he defended his sister 's campaign .

In an appearance at Harvard University in 2006 , Colbert revealed that his character 's fear of bears was in part inspired by a recurring nightmare he has had , in which a bear is standing between him and his goal . The character 's phobia , which was initially referenced in the show 's first " ThreatDown " skit , was originally slated to be a fear of alligators . By the time the Report went to air , the alligator story was several weeks old , and the writers chose to use a more recent news item involving a bear in its place .

After Colbert received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from Knox College , the show began listing his name in the ending credits as " Dr. Stephen T. Colbert , D.F.A. " even though using both the honorific prefix and post @-@ nominal letters is incorrect . During the show , the character will sometimes refer to the degree and the qualifications he mistakenly believes it bestows upon him .

In May 2007 , Colbert was voted the " second most influential person in the world " by a Time magazine online poll . The first spot was taken by Rain , a young Korean pop star with a large following in Asia and the United States . Colbert then declared Rain his " arch @-@ nemesis " and began mentioning him frequently on the Report . Colbert filmed a satirical music video poking fun at Rain 's popular single " How to Avoid the Sun " and referencing several stereotypical South Korean dishes and products . The one @-@ sided feud eventually culminated in Colbert challenging Rain to a competition on air . After telling Colbert " not to quit his day job , " Rain appeared in a short segment on the show and competed (and won) a DDR dance @-@ off with Colbert . Both have been defeated by Shigeru Miyamoto in recent polls , though they still continue to be strong contenders .

On June 21 , 2007 , Colbert broke his left wrist on the set of the Report while performing his warm @-@ up for the show . This quickly became a regular source of comedy on the show as the self @-@ absorbed character requested his audience send flowers , launched a campaign against Hollywood 's supposed glorification of " wrist violence " , and began a " wrist awareness " campaign with " WristStrong " silicone bracelets . Although his wrist has healed , he continues to wear and promote his " WristStrong " bracelets . On August 23 , 2007 , the cast was removed on air and was put up for auction to the general public , complete with celebrity signatures , on eBay , where it achieved a winning bid of \$ 17 @,@ 200 . All of the proceeds from both the cast and the bracelets were donated to the Yellow Ribbon Fund .

Colbert occasionally makes comments that he would also make were he not in character . In an interview with The Buffalo News , Colbert said " The weird thing about my character , even on the show , is sometimes I say what I mean . It doesn 't matter to me that the audience doesn 't know

when that is . "

On June 19 , 2013 , Colbert returned from an unplanned break of several days following the passing of his 92 @-@ year @-@ old mother , Lorna Colbert . The emotional Colbert started the show with a tribute to his mother , in which he presented a brief biography of her life in photos , accompanied by his eulogy of her .

= = Titles and styling = =

The titles and styling of Her Excellency The Rev. Sir Doctor Stephen Tyrone Mos Def Colbert , D.F.A. , Heavyweight Champion of the World ? ? featuring Flo Rida La Premiere Dame De France are mostly for comedic reasons . Colbert became ordained minister on June 2 , 2011 , granting himself the title of Reverend . Colbert was mock @-@ knighted by Queen Noor of Jordan on April 7 , 2009 , bestowing him with the title of Sir . He was granted an honorary doctorate of fine arts by Knox College in 2006 , giving him the title of Doctor and use of the suffix D.F.A. (Doctor of Fine Arts) . This title is featured regularly during his segments Cheating Death with Dr. Stephen T. Colbert , DFA . Yasiin Bey gave Colbert the use of his stage name Mos Def on October 5 , 2011 . Colbert was set to interview Mike Tyson on July 23 , 2013 . Tyson did not appear which led Colbert to declare himself Heavy Weight Champion of the World and grant himself use of the title . The large asterisk in the title is to denote that he did not defeat Tyson in a boxing match . The suffix featuring Flo Rida was added during the segment I tried to sign up for Obamacare on October 23 , 2013 , where his name on the ACA form said featuring Flo Rida . Her Excellency was added to the title as Colbert was seated next to Michelle Obama at the White House state dinner in February 2014 , in which the President of France François Hollande was not accompanied by a partner . Because it is customary that the first lady of a visiting nation is seated next to the First Lady of the United States , Colbert proclaimed himself First Lady of France on February 12 , 2014 .

= = Fictional biography = =

Colbert 's fictional history is not always rigidly adhered to by the show 's writers . The comedian himself says that , " My character 's history may not always be perfectly consistent ... There 's my bio and there 's my character 's bio , and then there 's my character 's history , which is slightly different than my character 's bio . " His early life , prior to becoming host of The Colbert Report , is expanded upon in I Am America (And So Can You !) .

Like the actor who portrays him , Stephen T. Colbert is the youngest of 11 children , born into a devout Roman Catholic family ? the character 's family was so devout , in fact , they sent their teenage son to an " exorcism day camp located in Canton , Ohio " when they discovered he liked Dungeons & Dragons . In his in @-@ character appearance on The O 'Reilly Factor , Colbert stated that he is of Irish descent and only adopted the French pronunciation of his surname to " get the cultural elites " on his side . Colbert has made conflicting statements regarding his middle name , which he has at different times stated to be Tyrone (Colbert 's actual middle name) , Tiberius (like that of Captain James T. Kirk) , Lee @-@ Harvey , and Qxyzyzy . The character has said he was regularly beaten up in high school , and by the time he left for college he was determined never to be a victim again . As such , on the first day of his freshman year he walked into class and punched the first person he saw (unfortunately , this happened to be his ethics professor) . He attended Dartmouth College (instead of his first pick , Hogwarts , claiming that his white owl led them to reject him) , and was a member of the ??? fraternity , although his acceptance into the college appears to have been largely influenced by a claimed familial relationship with a wealthy donor , and graduated in the top 47 percent of his class with a major in history . He has also referred to Bob Jones University as an alma mater .

Prior to embarking on a career in journalism , Colbert worked as a carnival roustabout and a construction worker . During the 1980s , he was the lead singer and guitarist of an ABC @-@ like new wave band called " Stephen and the Colberts . " The comedian portrays his character 's younger self in the band 's music video , wearing worn jeans , cowboy boots and a spiky hair style .

Their only revealed song to date is entitled " Charlene (I 'm Right Behind You) " , one of numerous references to an ex @-@ girlfriend (and cousin) whom he continues to stalk despite numerous restraining orders . This song has been made available for download for free in the video game Rock Band . On the May 14 , 2008 episode , Colbert claimed to have been the " totalitarian ruler of Malawi from 1982 to 1984 " . He mentions that his wife 's first name is Lorraine .

Colbert later moved into reporting , working in TV news for several stations in Virginia and North Carolina . Occasionally he will show footage of himself as a " young man " (portrayed by Colbert , wearing a false moustache) working as an anchor at a local news station (WPTS) in Patterson Springs , North Carolina , still displaying his trademark outrage over minor municipal issues in the manner of 20 / 20 correspondent John Stossel . In 1997 , Colbert was promoted to anchor of the Channel 7 News on WPTS Patterson Springs after outing the previous anchor , Wayne Colt , for his cocaine addiction . His ensuing investigative reports into Colt 's downfall earned him a local Emmy , and eventually a correspondent position at The Daily Show . This corresponds with the year the comedian joined the cast of the show .

Colbert often makes digs at the expense of Daily Show host Jon Stewart . He has implied a strained relationship with Stewart , in contrast with the real Colbert 's admiration for the comedian , and suggests that his departure from The Daily Show occurred under dubious circumstances . The character has described Stewart as a sexual predator and has been known to become tearful when his name is brought up . On the other hand , Colbert has also implied that he only got his own show by blackmailing Stewart with incriminating photographs .

Colbert is described in America (The Book) : A Citizen 's Guide to Democracy Inaction , to which he was a contributor while serving as a ' Daily Show ' correspondent , as holding the positions of the Arthur Schlesinger Professor of American Studies at Harvard University , and of Chief Defender of International War Crimes at the World Court in the Hague . The book also states that he is the seven @-@ time recipient of the Werner Heisenberg Prize for Excellence in Theoretical Mathematics . Paradoxically , Colbert is described as being barely capable of feeding himself as well as being " personally unpleasant " .

Colbert was mock @-@ knighted by Queen Noor of Jordan with a prop sword from The Lord of the Rings films , on his April 7 , 2009 show in exchange for leading the " Colbert Nation " in signing the Global Zero declaration .

= = = Retirement from television = = =

On April 10 , 2014 it was announced that the real @-@ life Colbert will be replacing David Letterman as the host of CBS 's The Late Show in 2015 . It was also announced that The Colbert Report will be ending and Colbert will not be using the character on CBS show . Following the announcement , the character made a special surprise appearance on the April 23 , 2014 episode of The Daily Show to report that it has become clear to him that he has " won television " and changed the world , the goal he originally set out to do , and thus no longer feels the need to continue . He expressed interest in taking over The Late Show after Letterman retires but could not because " they already gave it to some fat guy " .

During the final episode , Colbert accidentally kills " lifelong friend and colleague " Grimmy in the final segment of " Cheating Death " , after which he becomes immortal and uses his powers to fuel a star @-@ studded celebrity singalong of " We 'll Meet Again " , before boarding a sleigh driven by Santa Claus , Abraham Lincoln , and " the man with all the answers " . At the end of the show , Colbert tosses back to Stewart at The Daily Show , implying that the show 's existence was just an extended correspondent report for the program .

On the July 18 , 2016 of The Late Show with Stephen Colbert , Colbert is revealed to have been living with a now @-@ retired Stewart in a remote cabin in a forest . In the skit , the real Colbert visited Stewart , asking him to explain how Donald Trump became the 2016 Republican nominee for president . Perplexed , Stewart turned to Colbert the character , who briefly returned to television to deliver an edition of " The Word " explaining Trump 's appeal , before turning the show back to " that other guy , " the real Colbert .

= = Presidential campaigns = =

= = = Colbert ' 08 = = =

Colbert dropped hints of a potential presidential run throughout 2007 , with speculation intensifying following the release of his book , I Am America (And So Can You !) , which was rumored (invariably by Colbert himself) to be a sign that he was indeed testing the waters for a future bid for the White House . Colbert staunchly refused to confirm or deny his candidacy , stating he had not yet made up his mind and must first talk the possibility over with his family .

Colbert confirmed his presidential ambitions on his October 16 , 2007 show , stating his intention to run both on the Republican and Democratic platforms , but only as a favorite son in his native South Carolina . In an interview with Larry King he revealed that , as his running mate , he would consider Mike Huckabee (who himself jokingly offered Colbert the vice presidential position) . He also speculated on the possibility of a Colbert @-@ Putin or Colbert @-@ Colbert ticket . Colbert abandoned plans to run as a Republican due to the \$ 35 @,@ 000 fee required to file for the South Carolina primary . On November 1 , 2007 , it was announced that he would not appear on the Democratic primary ballot either , after being deemed ineligible by the South Carolina Democratic Party executive committee . Several days later he announced that he was withdrawing from the race , saying that he did not wish to put the country through an agonizing Supreme Court battle .

The show went on hiatus immediately after this as a result of the Writers Guild of America Strike . When it returned to air on January 7 , 2008 without a writing staff , the character justified his absence by stating that he had taken some time off to have " a good cry " about his failed presidential attempt . He said that he had returned to air in celebration of Huckabee 's success in the Iowa Caucus , something for which he considers himself personally responsible as Huckabee has appeared on the Report on numerous occasions to invite Colbert to be his running mate .

Despite having withdrawn from the presidential race , Colbert continued to be referred to as an active candidate in the Marvel Universe . Colbert ' 08 paraphernalia appeared in the artwork of various Marvel comics , and Colbert himself teamed up with Spider @-@ Man in the October 2008 comic Amazing Spider @-@ Man # 573 . On November 5 , 2008 , Marvel announced that its fictional newspaper The Daily Bugle was reporting Colbert 's victory over both John McCain and Barack Obama . Several hours later Marvel released a second Daily Bugle article correcting its initial reports , stating that while Colbert had won the popular vote Obama had secured more electoral votes , thus winning the presidency . " Oops , our bad " , said Marvel editor @-@ in @-@ chief Joe Quesada of the confusion . " We completely forgot the Marvel Universe reflects what happens in the real world . "

= = = 2012 exploration for " President of the United States of South Carolina " = = =

During the September 28 , 2011 episode of The Colbert Report , Colbert consulted his lawyer and they set up his own 501 (c) (4) organization , similar to American Crossroads . As a super PAC the organization can raise unlimited sums of money from corporations , unions and other groups , as well as wealthy individuals . With Colbert as president of the Colbert Super PAC , the PAC ran several political ads prior to the Ames Straw Poll . The first ad , titled " Episode IV : A New Hope " , told Iowans to write @-@ in " Rick Parry " instead of Rick Perry , and the second ad , " Behind the Green Corn " , supported " Parry " as well .

During the January 12 , 2012 episode of The Colbert Report , Colbert announced his plans to form an exploratory committee to lay the groundwork for his possible candidacy for " President of the United States of South Carolina " . In the process , he transferred control of the Super PAC to Jon Stewart , renaming it The Definitely Not Coordinating With Stephen Colbert Super PAC , since , according to Colbert 's lawyer , Trevor Potter , it would definitely be illegal for Colbert and Stewart to coordinate their efforts in super PAC activities . A CBS news report called Colbert 's run " essentially

a joke " , saying , " The real significance of Colbert 's announcement may be the spotlight it puts on super PACs , into which donors can pour unlimited money in order to support or attack candidates , and thus influence election outcomes . Super PACs were made possible by the 2010 " Citizens United " Supreme Court decision that effectively classified money as speech " .

Colbert 's timing was too late for his name to be added the South Carolina primary ballot , and South Carolina law would not allow for write @-@ in candidates . Polling showed that 21 % of the potential Republican primary electorate reported they would be " more likely " to vote for former candidate Herman Cain , who remained on the ballot , if that vote served as encouragement for Colbert . Herman Cain received 6 @,@ 338 votes in the South Carolina Republican Primary , which was more than all the other withdrawn candidates received combined . On the next episode of The Colbert Report broadcast on January 23 , 2012 , Colbert boasted about passing the 1 % threshold and for Cain receiving many more votes in South Carolina than in Iowa and New Hampshire . Colbert then announced that he would no longer be exploring a run for President of the United States of South Carolina .

= = Characteristics = =

Described as a " caustic right @-@ wing bully , " an " arch @-@ conservative blowhard , " and by his creator and namesake as a " well @-@ intentioned , poorly informed , high status idiot , " Colbert is egomaniacal , xenophobic and fiercely anti @-@ intellectual . He claims to be politically independent , like his idol Bill " Papa Bear " O 'Reilly ; although in fact the character fawns over the Bush administration and the Republican Party , and frequently asks his guests , " George Bush : Great president , or the greatest president ? " Following the election of Barack Obama in 2008 , Colbert continued his right @-@ wing views , but stated he would " support our new President as long as [he] remains popular . " Colbert emphasizes that his character is genuinely well @-@ meaning and wants to do the right thing , but does not have the tools to achieve it " because he has no curiosity , he doesn 't like to read and he won 't listen to anybody except the voices in his head . "

Colbert is deeply self @-@ centered and takes everything personally , a trait which is reflected in his discussion of the news and current events . According to the comedian , " There 's nothing too large that doesn 't involve him . Every news story is really about him ... Everything he cares about is a news story because he cares about it . " This is expressed in his frequent attacks on and feuds with well @-@ known figures such as The Decemberists , Sean Penn , Conan O 'Brien , Rain , Barry Manilow , Tony Bennett , and Don Rickles (the latter three of whom beat out Colbert for Best Individual in a Variety or Music Program at the Emmys) . The comedian equates these feuds with Bill O 'Reilly 's culture wars .

Central to Colbert 's personality is his rigid belief that " what I say is right , and [nothing] anyone else says could possibly be true , " regardless of any evidence to the contrary . He discussed this in the Report 's first Wørd segment , using the term " truthiness " as he explained what he perceives to be the difference between " those who think with their head and those who know with their heart . " He has further gone on to ascribe " truthiness " to other institutions including Wikipedia , which he believes upholds his view that reality can be determined by consensus opinion , and often encourages viewers to use Wikipedia to " change reality . " Colbert believes that if a majority of people want something to be true , that thing therefore must become the truth . For instance , after months of scoffing at global warming , Colbert suddenly reversed his position , conceding its existence only due to the box office success of An Inconvenient Truth , a sign that " the free market has spoken . "

Colbert describes himself as racially color @-@ blind and unable to visually identify a person 's race , explaining , " Now , I don 't see race ... People tell me I 'm white , and I believe them , because I own a lot of Jimmy Buffett albums . " His race @-@ blindness is a recurring joke , and this statement is often repeated on the show with different punch lines . For this same reason he believed that he was black when he had an emotional breakdown after watching Obama 's inauguration video . He later qualified these statements in his book , stating , " When I say I don 't see race , I mean I don 't

see Black people . But I can spot a Mexican at a hundred paces . " Despite all these claims , Colbert often boasts that he has a large number of token minority friends (including Jon Stewart as " [his] Jewish friend " and Oprah Winfrey as " [his] black friend ") , although in the photos shown these friends appear decidedly uninterested in him . He has stated a similar inability to distinguish between the sexes , claiming to only " see an American . " This comes in contradiction of his at times sexist behavior , for instance , calling only on men during an open discussion with his audience on women 's issues .

The comedian has said that he likes playing weak characters , and particularly revealing weaknesses in high status figures . During the course of the show , he will frequently peel back the Colbert character 's apparent bravado to expose a very weak inner core . In one instance , Colbert demands one of his staff members subject him to simulated waterboarding , only to break down into pleas for mercy upon hearing a water bottle cap popped . In another episode , he criticizes The Today Show cohost Matt Lauer for saying that it 's unacceptable for men to cry , only to sob hysterically upon learning that Katie Couric has left the show . These status shifts occur commonly , and constitute a central component of the show 's comedy .

Colbert frequently uses his show as a platform for promoting his own fictional merchandise , including colognes , science fiction novels , medication , and his own sperm .

= = 2009 visit to Baghdad , Iraq = =

Colbert arrived in Baghdad , Iraq on June 5 , 2009 , to film a week of shows called " Operation Iraqi Stephen : Going Commando " . The episodes were filmed June 7 ? 9 , 2009 , which was sponsored by the USO (United Service Organizations) . Al @-@ Faw Palace 's rotunda was used for the filming of Operation Iraqi Stephen . Corbert had a suit tailored for him in the Army Combat Uniform pattern and went through an abbreviated version of the Army 's basic training regimen . The suit was specially tailored by Brooks Brothers . As a tribute to Bob Hope , Colbert brought a golf club on stage , a Hope trademark .

The first episode included an interview with Multinational Force - Iraq commander General Ray Odierno , which was interrupted by U.S. President Barack Obama . Obama stated that if Colbert really wanted to be a soldier , along with his attendance to Basic Combat Training , he needed to have his hair shaved off . Obama then ordered General Odierno to " shave that man 's head " . General Odierno then began to shave Colbert 's head ; the job was finished during the commercial break by one of Colbert 's staff members . One Army major said that " shaving of the hair is an amazing show of support " that was " very touching . " The episode also featured a message to the troops from U.S. Senator John McCain with a friendly reminder to " always remember to clean your muskets " , a lesson he claimed to have learned at Valley Forge , as a reference to old age jokes that he faced during the 2008 Presidential Election . Several other prominent politicians , including former presidents Bill Clinton , George H. W. Bush , and George W. Bush , along with Vice President Joe Biden and then Alaska governor Sarah Palin recorded messages for the troops that were aired in the following episodes .

= = Other appearances = =

White House Correspondents ' Association Dinner April 29 , 2006

58th Primetime Emmy Awards , presenter , August 27 , 2006

Night of Too Many Stars : An Overbooked Benefit for Autism , October 15 , 2006

Friendly Neighborhood Spider @-@ Man # 15 , December 20 , 2006

The O 'Reilly Factor , in @-@ character interview , January 18 , 2007

59th Primetime Emmy Awards , presenter , September 16 , 2007

Meet the Press , in @-@ character interview as presidential candidate , October 21 , 2007

60th Primetime Emmy Awards , presenter , September 21 , 2008

The Amazing Spider @-@ Man # 573 , October 15 , 2008

Late Night with Conan O 'Brien , February 4 , 2008 and February 17 , 2009

United States House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement , September 24 , 2010 . However , Colbert did break character when he responded to questions by Congresswoman Judy Chu about the plight of immigrant workers .

Rally to Restore Sanity and / or Fear , Co @-@ organizer October 30 , 2010

This Week with George Stephanopoulos , January 15 , 2012

A White House state dinner in honor of French president , Francois Hollande , February 11 , 2014 . Colbert was seated at the head table , in a seat which would have gone to Hollande 's guest had he brought one . The following night , Colbert referenced on his show his seating assignment at the head table , calling himself the " First Lady of France " .

In 2014 the character was used in an ad campaign for Wonderful Pistachios , which launched with a Super Bowl commercial that aired during Super Bowl XLVIII

The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon , February 17 , 2014 , the first episode . Fallon had several celebrities come on stage and give him \$ 100 bills paying off bets that they lost because he got to host The Tonight Show . Colbert was the last celebrity and he came with \$ 100 in a bucket of pennies , pouring them down Fallon 's clothes .

2014 RSA Conference

2014 Comic @-@ con : appeared both as a panel moderator as well as in costume portraying a character called " Prince Hawkcat " which is supposed to be " Half Hawk . Half Cat . Whole Prince " . The attendance in costume was not revealed until two months after the event .

October 2014 Apple Inc. press event : Colbert participated in the event via phone where he asked to be given the title " Supreme Allied Commander of Super Secrecy "

Colbert appeared in the November 6 , 2014 episode of @ midnight to announce the " Hashtag Wars " for the episode .

= = = After the conclusion of The Colbert Report = = =

Colbert made an appearance in the House of Cards season three episode " Chapter 27 " . The segment was taped before The Colbert Report set was transformed into the set for The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore . It was first released on February 27 , 2015 , two months after the final episode of The Colbert Report aired .

On August 6 , 2015 , Colbert (both in and out of character) returned for Jon Stewart 's last night on The Daily Show , along with many other correspondents to serve under his tenure , to pay tribute to the departing host .

On July 18 , 2016 , Colbert reprised the character on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert . The character appeared with Jon Stewart and Colbert (as himself , in his capacity as host) , before the character hosted the Colbert Report segment , " The Wørd . "