

# PROFESSIONAL TROUBLEMAKER



with LUVVIE AJAYI JONES

## Professional Troublemaker with Luvvie Ajayi Jones

Love Saved Me (with Yvette Noel-Schure) - Episode 17

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Welcome to the Professional Troublemaker Podcast! This is the place where we help you cultivate the courage, authenticity and audacity you need to use your voice, take up space and live a life that is so bold, even your wildest dreams say #goals. I'm your host, Luvvie Ajayi Jones, New York Times bestselling author, sought after speaker and side-eye sorceress bringing you thought-provoking conversations with amazing people taken action, done scary things and rocked the boat to an audacious life. Like the late, great John Lewis said, these are the kind of people who are "Never, ever afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."

For our final Archive April episode, I'm re-sharing my interview with Yvette Noel-Schure, publicist to the stars. She is the person behind Beyoncé. She's been publicist to Prince, Mariah Carey, Adele, Wyclef Jean. Her resume is insane, but also, more importantly, she's just an amazing person. Her heart, her spirit, the way her smile lights up a room.

Because she is one of the loveliest people on the planet, you may not think of her as a professional troublemaker, but she has created a reputation and career as a trusted partner, as the real g who moves in silence behind a lot of your favorite musicians. That takes the confidence to stand in who you are, even when your knees feel like they are shaking and to step up and do what you need to do when it needs to be done. Like professional troublemakers do. I can't wait for you to hear this conversation.

### Conversation with Yvette Noel-Schure

LUVVIE Thank you so much for joining me.

YVETTE I am so excited. I feel like I just won the lotto or something.

LUVVIE Look, that's how I feel that you're here. I want people to know how epic you are. So, Rants fam, I need to let you know about Yvette Noel-Schure. If you already didn't know, this is the real g who moves in silence, okay? Yvette Noel-Schure is a seasoned, respected industry veteran and one of the top creative executive in the music PR business. Her passion for artists she works with in her business acumen will without question lead to her continued success. That's what [Music World Entertainment president CEO Mathew Knowles](#) said.

YVETTE Aww.

LUVVIE She's a mother of three and has been married for over 36 years. She and husband, David Schure, run their company [Schure Media](#) together. An award-winning industry veteran, Yvette's

garnered awards ranging from the [Caribbean Luminary Award](#), the [ACE Awards](#), and her name is with greatness in media and relationship-building. Her first client as a publicist was Mariah Carey, and now she represents Beyoncé. Her roster in the past has been Prince, Jessica Simpson, John Legend, Adele. Yvette, you are basically the unicorn of PR. Welcome to Rants & Randomness.

YVETTE Thank you. It's so weird to hear it all said like that. Oh my god.

LUVVIE Our bios speak our dopeness back to us, and it makes us blush. That's what happens.

YVETTE Oh my goodness. So, so good.

LUVVIE You are amazing. I had to have you on this show, because I'm like, you are one of those women who has moved behind the scenes for so long, and your story's so fascinating. So, I couldn't wait to bring you on to share it with my podcast listeners. I always start by asking people, what did you want to do or be when you were growing up?

YVETTE It had absolutely nothing to do with the music business. I wanted to be a teacher, and I wanted to be a writer, and it was one or two, two or one. It was never changing. That's all I wanted to be. And I think at a certain age, I sort of gravitated more to wanting to be a writer, because I became a newspaper girl. I was delivering the newspaper all around my little village of Birch Grove in Grenada.

At some point, I don't know where I got this red pen, but I got a red pen and started sitting down under the tree, whether it was a coconut tree, whether it was a mango tree ... Whatever it was, I needed a place that had good shade. I would sit there and edit the paper with my red pen, any sort of mistake I thought in my young age that did not belong there. That comma is wrong. There should be a question mark after that. Where is the full stop? Well, you say period here, but we say full stop in Grenada.

LUVVIE We say full stop in Nigeria, so I feel you.

YVETTE Okay. So, you know. Yes. So, I was like, "Where's the full stop? That was missing." Then I would then pick up my papers and then take it to the homes where I was delivering the papers. Then inevitably, my grandfather's phone would ring, and they would not really complain, but say maybe, "Let Yvette know that we don't want the red marks on the paper." But I knew that I loved words, and so I thought there's got to be some sort of career.

Then I started thinking, what does that mean that there is a piece written in the paper that I'm reading? Then there was this one little line that says by somebody. Oh. That's the person who wrote that. That's what I want to do. I want to write the original thing, as opposed to editing it. So, I didn't know how to sort of say that. I didn't know how to tell my grandparents that. And at some point, I understand that meant a journalist.

I remember one day saying to papa that I wanted to be a journalist, and my grandparents were uneducated but brilliant. They didn't have formal schooling, but they were brilliant. They ran their own businesses and stuff. So, he didn't know words either, but he never said no to me. He

said, "Okay, baby. You want to be a journalist? You'll be a journalist." Then I could see him trying to figure out what does that entail. But first he gave approval. Then he did the research. So, yeah, that was kind of my dream.

LUVVIE So, how old were you? How old were you?

YVETTE Anywhere between 8 and 10. I kind of had that paper route until I was probably 12, and then I left Grenada when I was 14.

LUVVIE And you came to the US?

YVETTE I came to the US. I came to JFK, stayed in Brooklyn, Pan Am with my brother. I was 14, and he was 17, and it was ... I mean, talk about fish out of water. First of all, we didn't want to leave our grandparents. I don't have hindsight about Grenada like, "Oh, wow Grenada was ... Wow, I didn't know I was living in such a beautiful place." Oh, no, no, no, no, no. I knew I was living in paradise. I knew I was living in paradise.

I also knew that I was really rich in love. I knew that my grandparents loved us. And I was beginning to understand that my mom had mental illness. So, I was like, wow. I'm going to a strange place with a strange temperature, because we were going in the winter, without mama and papa. I don't mommy as much as I wanted to know mommy, because she left, like most immigrant women leave. She didn't leave to get a better life; she left to get her life, because she was mentally ill, and my grandfather really needed to get her the help she needed.

But as far as a great life, I think he provided a great life for her. I think we're probably a few of those families that didn't write on their passports "We need a better life." I think we sort of knew we had a good life, but mommy was mentally ill. I didn't know what that picture would look like. I only saw her sick one time when I was 10. So, now it's four years later, and I didn't know what to expect. I knew what I had was good, so I just preferred to stay with mama and papa. But the universe called for me to come.

LUVVIE What was the trigger? What was the trigger to make you-

YVETTE What did you say?

LUVVIE What was the trigger to make you move from ... What made you say "Okay, this is when we're leaving"?

YVETTE Once mommy came to get help, she went in and out of being sick. So, there were days when she was very productive, and she had a job. Then she got it together long enough to file papers for my dad to come. Once daddy got here, typical Caribbean man with 25 jobs, he's like, "I really don't want to live without my children," because we were entrusted to her parents for so long. I think he finally said, "No, I want all my kids under this roof. We're going to do it our way in America." He made a deal with mommy that he was going to send for us. First, he was going to send for my sister Yvonne, and she came by herself. Then the rest of us were going to come in twos. But the one thing was, he wanted to make sure that we had a proper Grenada upbringing

before we got into America and got corrupted, in his words. So, you had to be at least 14 before you got on that plane.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE So, we came in twos. I was 14. My brother was 17. Then later on, my younger brother and my youngest sister came. Yeah. It was daddy's decision for us to come, so we just had to come.

LUVVIE I came when I was nine, and the culture shock was jarring. How was it to walk into the place where your accent was strange and where you were strange?

YVETTE Oh, Luvvie, it was terrible for me. It was terrible for me. I cried a pool's worth of tears every day. My father though didn't want to hear it, see it, hear it, smell it. Get away. Stop. You're not crying your life away. Get it together. He's like, "You are a Noel. Get it together." But it was hard for me. I sounded different. I looked different. And I'm not talking about my face. I went to school with Black kids in Brooklyn. We all looked Black, but I didn't have the clothes they did.

It was winter, and I was still putting on socks with open-toe shoes, because mommy was either sick or working, and daddy didn't remember that he needed to get boots. So, it took a couple of days before I actually got into ... Well, actually a couple of weeks before I got into a real coat. Because when he came to the airport, he brought us like a little spring thing. My brother had this little spring coat. I had this little spring coat. I was like, "It's like 23 degrees, daddy." Yeah. It was bad.

I've got to tell you though, Black American kids didn't bother me as much as other Caribbean kids did.

LUVVIE Really?

YVETTE Yeah. In '75 when we came, the people that was getting the most attention as Caribbean people, as Caribbean immigrants, were Jamaicans and Trinidadians. So, nobody knew what Grenada was. I wasn't liked by them either. I sounded different. That small island girl. You know, that sort of thing. It was terrible.

But when the Americans teased me, it was about "Get back on your boat," because I was really, really smart, and I would always raise my hand. It wasn't cool to be smart. You needed not to be smart. I was always told I had to be smart.

LUVVIE How did you adapt? How did you make friends? How did you laugh? Because you're somebody whose smile is bright.

YVETTE I think I started ... Oh my god, Luvvie, you're about to make me cry. Whew. I think I started laughing when I turned 17. But I think between 14 and 17, I was teased so much, and my mom was always sick. I was running from Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn to visit my mom at the G Building, which really was the crazy house at Kings County. Nobody really knew where I was going. So, I didn't have time to make friends. I couldn't join certain organizations, because I needed to be with my mom.

Years later, I told a story at a reunion that I didn't make a lot of friends, because I had something to do that I couldn't tell anybody. You couldn't tell anybody you were going to the G Building every day. The G Building was like a jail. There were tons of gates before I could get to my mother, because she was so sick. Most of the times I got there, and she didn't even know that I was there.

So, it took me a while, but the 17-year mark, I met my boyfriend! I met my husband. He's my husband now.

LUVVIE        Aww!

YVETTE        I was like, "Oh my god." I was like, "I think I'm about to have what my grandparents have."

LUVVIE        Aww!

YVETTE        Not my parents. I knew very early that my parents didn't have a real storybook love, but I knew my grandmother and my grandfather did. So, I was like, "Oh my god. Is this the guy that's going to get me what momma and papa have?"

LUVVIE        Oh my gosh!

YVETTE        Because I definitely don't want what daddy and mommy have, because their love was just ... Daddy was incapable of loving mommy the way she loved him. So, it was that sort of one-sided thing. But I was very aware. I was a girl that snuck and read harlequin romances. I was like, "Oh my god." I was looking for this love, and I was like, "Oh my god. Is this the guy?" Yeah, I think I got really light, very light with my attitude. I stopped crying as much. I mean, I'm still a crier, but ... Love. That love came into my life so early and sort of changed everything. It changed everything.

LUVVIE        I love that.

YVETTE        And it was such a consistent love, because obviously he's still here.

LUVVIE        I love that. That is so cute! So, his love basically brought your smile back.

YVETTE        His love changed everything. He introduced me to Manhattan. Because Caribbean people, we just owned Brooklyn back in the day. Brooklyn is all hip again, but back then I was like, "What is over the bridge? What is over the bridge?" Then I met a boyfriend that lived in Manhattan! I was like, "Yeah!" Yeah, it was great. It was great.

LUVVIE        So, how did that change your trajectory? Did you still think about "I want to be a journalist" as you-

YVETTE        Oh, absolutely. And not only did I get a boyfriend, I got my number one supporter. I said to David, "David Allen Schure, I think I'm falling in love with you, but you are never going to be the one that gets in my way." And he said, "Well, look at you." I said, "I want to be a journalist. I'm

going to go to college. I'm not going to get pregnant. You are not ..." On our first date, I said, "You can't even kiss me. Don't even touch my hand, because I've got a crazy father in Brooklyn."

He just listened to everything I said, everything I said. When I said I wanted to be a journalist ... I have to go back and tell you that I met David on a Wednesday. We had a date on a Friday, and by Sunday I ran away from home. That's a whole other story. I was moved into David's apartment in the East Village that Sunday after we met.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE My parents would have killed me. On my mother's dying bed, I asked her, "Why did you not stop me and David?" And she said, "I knew he would make you happy for the rest of your life."

LUVVIE Oh my gosh.

YVETTE "I knew you were having what I would never have, and that's why I didn't stop you." My mother said that to me. Yeah.

LUVVIE Oh my goodness.

YVETTE Yeah.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE Insane.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE But, when I told David that I wanted to be a journalist, he just kind of smiled at me, and I was like, "Aww, he's in love with me. That's cute." Then the next day, there was a package, and I opened the package. He had gone to Brooks Brothers. He had gotten me a traditional raincoat, like a trench. Dan Rather was a big man on CBS Evening News, and I used to sit and watch that and be like, "Dan Rather is such a journalist." I would look at his coat, because he would be sometimes not in the studio, but he'd be the man on the street doing the interviews, and I said, "Journalists have to wear a trench coat." And he went, and he got me the coat. Then he went to the Sony Music store, and he got me a little tape recorder, and he got me a reporter's notebook.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE And he said, "You're going to need all of that." Then he went online and got the application for my colleges. I mean, it was insane.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE It was insane. Yeah, yeah.

LUVVIE My jaw's on the ground.

YVETTE            He was a good kid. He was a good ... I mean, he wasn't a kid. He actually could have gone to jail. I mean, hello, I was 17, he was 24. Hello!

LUVVIE            Scandal!

YVETTE            But I did turn 18 four days after we met.

LUVVIE            Oh, wow. Okay. Okay.

YVETTE            We met on November 14th, and I turned 18 on November 18th. So, he was only a bad guy for four days.

LUVVIE            For four days.

YVETTE            Yes.

LUVVIE            So, he shows up, and affirms this dream that you've had, buys you the trench coat, the notebook, and then college applications. So, what college did you end up going to?

YVETTE            I ended up going ... Okay. So, I was supposed to go to NYU. That's where I really wanted to go. Then also, my second choice was UCLA. This is going to sound so crazy to you. I was so smart. I did not do well on the SATs. I did not blame it on me not studying, because I know I studied. I lacked sleep. I studied. I knew the work. But I was also trying to be cute, Luvvie, and I wore the tightest jeans you can ever find, couldn't breathe. I swear to you, I'm sitting in that testing room, so uncomfortable, ran out of time on my test.

                         It was terrible. I walked out of that test, and I said, "I am not going to go to NYU. My dream is just now dead. If you're not going to get into NYU, probably the most you're going to do is probably get wait-listed for UCLA, but probably not, because they're tough too." And I was really sad. Then David said to me, "You should think about the CUNY system, the City University of New York," and I was like, "Oh. If I went to a college in New York, I'd still get to be with David."

LUVVIE            He was like, "Yes."

YVETTE            So, I said, "Eeny, meeny, miny, moe, City College. I want to go to school in Harlem." So, I went to CCNY and became the editor of the newspaper. First I was the entertainment editor, then I became the editor. City College put me on a pedestal. They were just like, "Yes, whatever you want to do, we're just going to seed it here." They were great. They were awesome. Just about three months ago, they gave me such an honor I could not believe it. Then I graduated from City College. Then I was working and never went to my graduation. Then last spring, I was invited to speak at City College.

LUVVIE            Wow.

YVETTE            Before I addressed the students, the president of the college came in to say hello to me.

LUVVIE            Wow.

YVETTE I was like, "Why is the president of the college coming in to say hello to me?" He said, "Oh, we've been following your work, and you're amazing. The students talk about you, and the Caribbean students especially talk about you." I said, "Oh, that's nice. That's nice." Then I look at his hand, and he had a cap, a graduation cap in his hand, and he said, "That's for you." I said, "Oh my god. I never got a graduation picture. Yay, I'm going to get a picture!" I bent down, and I was teasing that my hair is so big, would this cap fit my wig? As I was making the joke, I looked up, and he had my degree in his hand. Oh.

LUVVIE Aww. Did you cry?

YVETTE 32 years after my graduation, I finally got my physical degree from City College.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE So, City College was Harvard to me. It nourished, nurtured, and protected me. It was a great place for me. I got married during my time at City College. I had my firstborn, Michael, during my time at City College. It was everything for me, everything.

LUVVIE Oh, that's incredible. When you went to City College, you were still a journalist. How do journalists become publicists?

YVETTE Well, I left college, did a number of internships, all sort of media related, did one with Gannett Westchester Newspapers. At the time, they were starting a national newspaper that was in color called USA Today.

LUVVIE Oh, wow.

YVETTE I worked for them in their Westchester, their White Plains office. Then I also did a broadcast internship at CBS News on their New Jersey desk. Then I got a call from a friend that I went to City College with. She was working for a company that had a number of magazines, and she was working their romance magazines. She said there's an opening at their music fan magazine. I said, "Oh, Right On." Then she said, "No. It's called Black Beat." I said, "I don't want to work for Black Beat. I want to work for number one. I want to work for Right On." She said, "Well, this publisher does not have Right On. He has Black Beat, and he's looking for an editor, and I think you'd be great."

So, I went in for the interview, and there was this publisher. His name was John Plunkett. I had gotten all of my writing samples. I put it in this nice portfolio, and I presented it to him. He looked at me, and he said, "You're hired." I said, "Sir, you didn't look at my portfolio." He said, "You're Black. You're young. You seem smart. I need a Black girl to run this magazine."

LUVVIE Well, you were ready.

YVETTE You have to be ready for those opportunities. You have to just be ready. And I spent a long time there. While I was there, obviously I met lots of publicists, because I was covering music, everybody from Michael Jackson and to New Edition. One of the people I met was Larry Jenkins. He was running the media department at Capital Records. When he changed jobs and went to



Columbia Records, Mariah Carey's album was coming out, Music Box, and I called for a copy of the records so I could review it.

I don't know how I said it, what I said, but something in how I said it, he said, "Yvette, you want a job as a publicist?" I said, "Larry, let's get serious. I don't want to be a publicist. Publicists are crazy. They get all emotional, and they forget you're on the list. They're terrible. No. No. I just want Mariah Carey's album so I could review it." He insisted that I should come up and talk to him.

So, once he sent the music down, I sat, I reviewed it, and then I went up to [Columbia Records](#), and I got hired on the spot. He said, "I should have thought of a music journalist for this position." I spent 17 years there with Mariah Carey as my first, my first client.

LUVVIE Your first.

YVETTE I walked in, and there was an envelope on my chair, like a folder, and it said Mariah Carey. So, I picked it up, and I brought it down the hallway to Larry Jenkins' office. I said, "Larry, I guess the former person in this office must have left this." He said, "No, Yvette, I put it there for you."

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE "You need to study everything about Mariah. She is your first client." I was like, "No, no, no, no, no. She's married to Tommy Mottola. She's married to the boss. What? You're setting me up for failure." He's like, "Girl, sit down and get to work." And I spent 17 years there.

LUVVIE Okay.

YVETTE It was a lot of work, a lot of hard work, and a lot of breakdowns. There were so many times I was like, "Ahhh!" We used to call it the Columbia Records breakdown, when you just get in the office and you're just overwhelmed, and you just scream, scream, scream behind closed doors.

LUVVIE You were thrown into the deep end in the biggest way possible.

YVETTE Nobody asked me if I could swim though, Luvvie.

LUVVIE Correct.

YVETTE Nobody asked me if I could swim.

LUVVIE Correct. So, how did you swim? How did you learn how to swim?

YVETTE I remembered two people, momma and papa, who never went to school but ran their business. I remember them having to start all over after they raised their children, because their oldest daughter was mentally ill, and they raised us. I just remember all of that. I remember my grandfather being a true feminist and treating me the way he treated my brothers and told me, "You have to learn to drive. Anything you need to do, you can do it." And I was like, "I am never

going to make those two people ashamed. I am never going to embarrass them. I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this."

There were so many tears. I thought, Yvette, you've got to get over this crying thing. People are going to judge you badly. So, I stopped crying in the meetings and I only cried in my office. But I cried!

LUVVIE Yeah. Yeah. That's real.

YVETTE I closed the door. I asked them to put a curtain up in my office at Columbia Records, and I told my staff, "When I come in and I close the door, it means I just need a moment." They ordered me a tea chest. I would wake up. I would come in in the morning, and I would have a cup of tea. I would sit there, and I would get all my emotions out. Then I would roll up my sleeve and say, "Let's do this. Let's do this. There are people who trust us with their dream. They trust us with their dream."

When Beyoncé, Kelly, LaTavia, and LeToya were dreaming about becoming singers and being [Destiny's Child](#), Yvette Noel-Schure was nowhere in that dream. Nowhere. So, the fact that I get the opportunity to be part of a piece of the puzzle, you can't mess that up. Those kids were young. They were young. They start trusting you from the beginning. You can't curse around them. You can't become a drinking fool and act crazy. You can't do drugs around them. They were babies. They were 14 and 15. You have to do the right thing.

LUVVIE That's when you started representing them, when they were 14.

YVETTE Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE The girls were 14 and 15 when I met them. I think Kelly had already had a birthday, because she is February, and I met them in the spring. So, Kelly already was 15, and I think B would have been 15 in September, LaTavia in November. I can't remember LeToya's. But they were all going to be 15 that year. Yeah. It was incredible.

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This podcast is named after my second New York Times bestselling book, [Professional Troublemaker: The Fear-Fighter Manual](#), which is available now wherever you get your books!

Think of it! A million people who are out there, standing on the edge of something great and need that little push of encouragement. That push to be the domino. To say the hard thing. To have the hard conversation. A million people kicking their fear to the curb and step into the life they've been dreaming of. A million people asking for a raise. A million people starting a fierce job they're not sure they're ready for. A million people doing something so big that their wildest dreams say goals. My goodness.

And that is what writing this book has done for me, what it's already done for those who are reading it and gifting it to others. This book has empowered people to say yes to things they were previously saying no to. It's empowered people to have tough conversations they weren't going to have before. People have asked for raises and promotions and gotten them after reading this book and finding the courage to speak up. The domino effect of what has been happening when a few people have decided not to live in the realm of fear has been amazing - think of what could happen if a million people stopped letting fear be the first factor in their decision making?

An audacious mission like that can't happen without you, so let's get this book in the hands of people who need it. Buy a copy of Professional Troublemaker for yourself, or as a gift for your friend who needs a push. I know it will change your life like it's changed mine and I know it will change the lives of all these people who touch it, because domino effects are real. Order Professional Troublemaker (hardcover or audiobook) now at [PROFESSIONALTROUBLEMAKERBOOK.com](http://PROFESSIONALTROUBLEMAKERBOOK.com) or wherever you buy books.

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LUVVIE      And that's when you started being their publicist, and now how many years after the ... It's been how many years at this point?

YVETTE      Well, it's about 23 years. It's about 23 years. Yeah. I tried to figure it out based on my daughters' ages. So, yeah, my daughters are next week ... Well, the week after, my daughters are going to be 26 and 23. And when I started working with Destiny's Child, my big girl was three, and my baby was ... Well, I'm sorry. Four. And my baby was one. So, it's about Milan's age, the youngest.

LUVVIE      I love the fact that you use your motherhood as a timestamp.

YVETTE      Well, because my motherhood was so important. I'm so proud of all the girls being mothers now. LeToya just became a mom, and they're all moms now, the original ones. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for when Michelle tells us. One day. The original ones, the original four, are all mothers.

I always use my motherhood in speaking about Destiny's Child, because I used to tell them, after we did a full day of interviews, a photo shoot, that kind of stuff, if anyone suggested, not necessarily the girls, but if management or the record label or a producer or somebody suggested anything other than work like "Let's go get something to eat," I would always say to the girls, "I have to go home to my babies."

I remember as they grew up, they would mouth back to me, "Yvette would always say, 'Got to go home to my babies.'" When each one of them became a mother, we'd say, "Ooh, girl. We understand now. You've got to go home to your babies."

There were so many moments of magic for me like going on a photo shoot and my daughter Micah coming when she was about 15 to meet me and watching her speak to Beyoncé, having a full on conversation with Beyoncé, and me coming into the room bawling. Immediately, B knew

what was going on, and she would say, "Yeah, your momma is just remembering when she met me I was your age." So, it's that kind of stuff. They know what motherhood means to me. In a way, I think, even though I was professional and it was publicist and client, I think in a way they all know that I had to put on my mother hat to do the job with them, because they were so young. And the fact that Tina Knowles-Lawson and Mathew Knowles trusted me every waking day to be around these girls? Man, you had to do the right thing, not just deliver covers. You've got to be respectful.

LUVVIE Exactly. You're basically the mother hen in that way. One thing that is clear about your career is also you've worked with greats, and you continue to work with greats, and you've worked with them over decades. So, once they get Yvette on their team, they don't let Yvette go.

YVETTE Well, I also don't want them to go, so I think I hold on tight.

LUVVIE Exactly. But everybody holding on tight to you. Actually that longevity, that consistency, speaks to something greater. What do you think is the secret to being the person who people are like, "Once I have her on my team, I do not want to let her go"?

YVETTE Loyalty. Loyalty. I'm just a really loyal person, and I also respect people's privacy. So, I'm very clear that my job is to tell you everything you need to know about their career. And I know that all of that personal stuff belongs to them. I would tell those artists, "You do not owe anybody anything except a really great performance when they buy a ticket. When they buy your music, you need to deliver a great album, because you know what? Those people, your fans, did not pick that money off the ground. Everybody works for their money. Their money is going into your bank account. So, what you owe them is a great performance, great curated content. That's what. But you don't owe them where you live, who you sleep with. You don't owe them any of that." And I take that to heart. Ooh, I'm a fierce protector. I'm a fierce protector.

LUVVIE Yes. That's so necessary. I mean, you represented Prince for a long time, and he was a deeply private person.

YVETTE I did. I had two stints with him, yeah. It's funny, because people say that he always moved on except for his bands. The bands lasted long, and then he would have another band. But for the most part, his music people kind of stayed in his life a lot, but other people ... Because after the whole Warner Brothers stint, he kind of went and did one album here, one album there with different labels. So, the fact that he came back to me for a second stint was something really special and something I really took to heart. Because I worked with him first in 2004 for a couple of years when he did the album with Columbia Records, [Musicology](#). Then when he called me back in 2014, and I stayed with him until he died.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE So, that was really special. Luvvie, the entire time I worked for Prince, both in the beginning and in the end, I pretended I was not a fan.

LUVVIE Did you really?

YVETTE Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah. The minute he walked out the door, I was like, "Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god. I work for ..." When I was around him, I was like, "Yes, sir. Yes, sir." Except

he caught me one time, and that's how I actually started working for him. [Prince and Beyoncé](#) were rehearsing for the iconic performance that we now know from the Grammys, and I was privileged to be in that room, the young woman that I love and the idol that I'm just like, "Oh my god," the purple man. I went to those rehearsals, said nothing to him, never looked his way, never looked his way.

Probably about a month later I got a call from his lawyer who said, "Prince signed a deal with Columbia. He wants to meet you. He's thinking about having you on the team." I said, "Why me? No. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no, no." He said, "You need to come and meet Prince. He's in New York, and he wants to meet you." So, I walk in, and I say, "Hello, sir. Nice to meet you." He said, "Really nice to meet you." I was like, "Okay. That's the end of it. He met me now. Now he could decide if my spirit goes with his. I'm leaving." So, literally as I'm getting ready to leave, and he said, "Wait, hold on."

Londell McMillan, who was his lawyer, said, "Yvette, come here. P wants to talk to you again." And he did call him P. P wants to talk to you again. I said, "Okay," and I came back into the room. He said, "I know you." I said, "No, no, no. I've been to a number of your shows. But at the time, I had no money, so I was like in the top row, so there's no way you could have seen me." He said, "Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no, no. No, no. You were at every rehearsal for the Grammy performance with Beyoncé. You were smiling the entire time, and I will never forget your smile." Londell goes, "Bingo! She's in." Yeah.

LUVVIE Yes!

YVETTE Yes. He had seen me grinning the whole time. He took that in the entire time they were focused on that epic performance, and he remembered that. Isn't that crazy?

LUVVIE You know what? I'm not surprised. That's one thing-

YVETTE Well, I'm always grinning, so ...

LUVVIE But you have literally ... I'm pulled in by people's smiles too, because I just love ... Because it really does light up your face. Your smile is-

YVETTE But you have an epic one. You have an epic one, Luvvie.

LUVVIE Coming from you. You have the epic smile. You smile with your whole body.

YVETTE I do.

LUVVIE It's with your whole body.

YVETTE I do.

LUVVIE It is amazing. It is one of those things. So, I can see Prince being like, "Yo, who's that smiling person in the room with six people?"

YVETTE Right.

LUVVIE Wow. He remembered your smile.

YVETTE Yeah. That's how I got to work with Prince.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE He remembered my smile. Luvvie, the hardest thing I had to do for work ... Obviously burying my parents, difficult. The hardest thing I've ever had to do for work was to sit on the floor of the airport in Trinidad on the 21st of April 2016 and write that statement that told the world Prince had died. I did not learn that in journalism school. I did not know where you put the full stop. It was the most bizarre thing. I had just spoken to the team two days before I left. We were going to do the cover of Keyboard Magazine when I got back. I was going home for a friend's wedding, another publicist that I ... She was marrying a half Grenadian guy, and I was like, "Yes! You've got to get married in Grenada. I need a vacation!" And I was going home but stopped in Trinidad. I was just in Trinidad, and I was going to spend the day with her before I took the flight home.

I landed, and both my phones, I turned them on, and I was like, "Why are all these calls ... What is all this? I missed all these calls and all these email. What's going on?" But I was scared to pick up the phone, because I was going through immigration, the transit, and you know how the rules are. But then I said, "Let me at least call my husband," because he called so many times. I hope nothing is wrong with my mom, because my mom was still alive. She died three weeks after Prince.

LUVVIE Oh, gosh.

YVETTE Yeah. When I called him, he said, "You've got to call Phaedra," who was Prince's business manager. "Prince has died."

LUVVIE What?

YVETTE And I was like, "What are you talking about? No. When I come back, we're doing the cover. What are you talking ... No. No. No. Prince. No." And I just lost it right there in immigration. My daughter was traveling, and she grabbed the phone from me. Then I called his business manager, and I said, "What is this hoax?" She said, "It's not a hoax, Yvette."

LUVVIE What?

YVETTE "You need to write the statement." And I was trying to write the statement, but all the texts were still coming in from CNN and ABC News and everybody, and I was like, "I can't get through writing." My daughter grabbed my phone and said, "Mommy, put it back on airplane mode." I put it back on airplane mode, and I wrote the statement on my phone. It's still on my phone. Then I said I couldn't send it to everybody, because it's just too much, so I called Nekesa Moody at the Associated Press, because she was one of the journalists that I had sent to his home just weeks before. Because he had finally ... I'd finally gotten Prince, so I wanted him ... He was finally saying yes to some interviews. I was like, "Yes, yes, yes." I gave her the statement.

The Luvvie, I looked up three, four minutes after, and on all of the television screens at the airport in Trinidad, I saw the statement, and I saw my name. I was like, "Wow, it's real." The power of digital. It's right there. Me, sitting in this Caribbean airport. It's real. Yeah.

LUVVIE Oh my gosh.

YVETTE Yeah, that was a sad time. Just so you can keep a calendar, Prince had died, I was going home, and days later Beyoncé would release Lemonade.

LUVVIE Oh, wow.

YVETTE So, there was this madness with the death, and I knew something epic was coming. Something epic was coming that I couldn't talk about either. Yeah. Yeah.

LUVVIE So, you dealt with Prince dying, [Lemonade](#) coming out, and then your mother dying two weeks after that.

YVETTE And my mother three weeks later, and then Beyoncé's Formation tour starting. Yeah. Yeah.

LUVVIE So, basically you were also-

YVETTE Because we started the tour. I was on the tour when my mother took a turn for the worse, and then I came home. My beautiful, wonderful mother waited for me, and we had a moment. She died into the wee hours of the morning after Mother's Day, so that Monday morning. So, she gave us Mother's Day, which was beautiful and so sort of apropos for our relationship over the years that she, in the end, just wanted to be a mother one more time and to have us celebrate her one more time.

LUVVIE And you're saying that, as she was dying ... You said something earlier that she said to you. Oh, yes, about David.

YVETTE Well, weeks before, weeks before, when her health was going down, I asked her about David. I asked her about David when she could still talk, because she went into that silence thing for like a week or so. But when she could still talk, I was like, "Mommy." I always said, "Why didn't my mother stop me?" I look at these photos of me looking like a 12-year-old at my wedding day. I was like, "Mommy, you didn't stop me." That's when she told me that "I knew that David would be with you forever and that he would make you happy and that you would have from David what I never had from your dad."

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE "And I wasn't going to stop that. I wasn't going to block your blessings at all, even though I knew you were too young." Yeah.

LUVVIE So, once again, when you were thrown in the deep end without you telling anybody you can swim, this one moth of crazy rollercoaster of emotions, of tragedy, of joy, and then tragedy again, how did you swim once again?

YVETTE I think this time love saved me. Love saved me. Love on so many ways, and I haven't spoken about that with anybody, and you're probably the only one I would speak to about this in a public way. When my mother died, I didn't know that your body could shut down and you could still be alive. My body just shut down. I balled myself up into the corner of my sofa, and I don't think I got up for 48 hours. I don't remember going to bathroom. I know I didn't eat. I couldn't even cry. It just wouldn't come out. It was just stuck in my throat.

When I came through, I said to my husband, "Oh my goodness. Okay. It's real. Okay. So, we have to make arrangements. We have to do this. People have to come in from Grenada. We have to get ..." Love. My husband had done everything. He had contacted the funeral home. He had ordered her coffin. He had done everything, everything. He had made arrangements for my sister to come in from Grenada. He had done everything. I said, "What is there for me to do?" He said, "I'm not a writer. You are. So, you're going to have to write what it is you want to say. Then I'm not the fashion person. You are. So, you're going to have to buy her dress." That was all I had to do.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE Then after the funeral, and I thought I was so brave ... I'm always thrown into deep water, and I always swim. So, I'm just going right back to work. Went back to work. And a week later, I was in Chicago, your Chicago, backstage, going through photos that was shot from that stage and had a full-on emotional breakdown, bawling. I want my mommy. I want my mommy. I want my mommy. And our photographer at the time, her name is Daniela, hugged me, and she wouldn't go back out to shoot the rest of the show. She just held me tight, tight.

By the time the show was over, someone must have told B. And a couple of days later, I was in the most beautiful place where I could hear my heart beat and where I could finally give into my grief. It was the most beautiful gift anybody could give me. It was love. She was like, "You need to go, and you need to just grieve. And then come back. We'll be here." Love. Love.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE When people care about you, they do really special things for you. Grief. Grief is a thief. It comes in the night. It comes in the morning. It's disrespectful. It just comes when you don't need it. And we have to give into it, and it takes people that really care for us to say, "Stop. Stop trying to swim." Sometimes you've got to fall under the water. Sometimes you've got to let that water go in your nostrils, and then you've got to jump up and be like, "Okay. Okay." Yeah.

LUVVIE Wow. That's beautiful. People don't even see, because you keep this smile on your face. I couldn't have imagined-

YVETTE Well, I choose happiness. I choose happiness above it all.

LUVVIE You choose happy.

YVETTE I know how to put my life into different compartments. I mean, don't forget, I've got the gene of mental illness. I've got that gene. You can't walk away from it. But every day, I wake up. I've got to put things into compartments so I can protect my sanity. If I took on all of those things that



threatened to destroy me, I would give into it, and I would not have broken the curse of my mom's legacy of illness.

That's part of the legacy that I am going to break, because ... And I'm going to talk about it, because I want people that look like us to not judge people who are mentally ill, because our people don't understand mental illness. We don't get that. Like, no, no, no, no, no. We're supposed to be tough. You know, there was a time last year where someone put something out on the internet that basically I'm going to mess it up, but basically that Black women should not fall apart. We shouldn't cry. We should just be tough. Are you kidding me?

LUVVIE Right. I hate that.

YVETTE No. What? No. We can't do that? We can't? That's why, I think, people are not protecting us, because they think we can do it ourselves.

LUVVIE Superwoman.

YVETTE No.

LUVVIE It's the superwoman syndrome.

YVETTE Yeah. We can't be superwoman all the time. We just can't do that.

LUVVIE So, what do you think ... Do you do therapy? How do you really keep your ... Yeah. Do you do therapy? Do you believe in therapy?

YVETTE I totally believe in therapy. I don't have a therapist now, but I did at one point. The first time I felt complete loss was when my younger sister got married, and I was really having separation anxiety, so I saw a therapist. I totally believe in therapy. I don't think drugs were the only thing that helped my mom. In fact, I think they probably put her back a couple of years. But I think when she sat with a therapist and she was able to talk, it was great. I completely believe in therapy, and I believe in the therapy of vacation.

LUVVIE Amen!

YVETTE Woo-hoo! Girl, get on that plane to Grenada, and I am healed. Yeah. I go home often, because it heals me.

LUVVIE And you just got ... You're now an ambassador of Grenada.

YVETTE I am officially a tourism ambassador. Actually, I'm going to go even further and work my way up to being a real ambassador of culture. So, that paperwork has been in for a long time, and I've been messy in not filling it in. So, I'm going to try to do that soon. But, yeah!

LUVVIE I need to come.

YVETTE I get to talk about my island. I get to encourage people to go.

LUVVIE I need to come.

YVETTE I love it. I love it.

LUVVIE I want to go. I definitely want to go.

YVETTE You must. You must. You must. Well, Luvvie, I started the three-year countdown to a very, very big birthday, and it'll be a carnival blowout in Grenada. And, hello, I looked the list yesterday. You are number five on the list, honey.

LUVVIE Yeah!

YVETTE That's after my family. So, yeah.

LUVVIE Look, give me the date now. I'll put it in my calendar. I'm literally going to block it out.

YVETTE November 19th, 2021 is the party, honey.

LUVVIE Yo, it's on my ... It's done. I am there. I am there.

YVETTE Grenada, here we come!

LUVVIE Yo, I am there.

YVETTE Yes. Yes.

LUVVIE So, what are you most proud of that you've done?

YVETTE My children. My children. I was 21 when I got married, 22 when I had Michael. I think I was 30 when I had Micah and I think 33 when I had Milan. There were so many different stages. My two first ones are nine years apart. I was taking Michael to school with me, hiding him underneath my coat while I did class. He always called his sisters the rich girls, because he said, "Mommy and daddy had no money when they had me." He said, "We ate ramen. We ate ramen. Nowadays, they're deciding what they want. There's like five different milks in the refrigerator now." He said, "We had milk when I was growing up. My sisters got milk. They've got coconut milk. They've got almond milk, cashew milk, hemp milk." Yeah.

But I'm proud of my children, because they're good people. They're good people. They don't judge people. They've accepted every kind of person that's come into my life. I remember I have a friend, and he's been in my life forever. He is just the most beautiful man. And I put my son sit down when my son was eight to tell him, "I just wanted you to know that my friend is gay." No. I said, "I just wanted you to know that my friend is ..." I couldn't say it. I was like, "I just don't want you to ..." He said, "Oh. You mean he's gay? Oh. So, is that supposed to be a thing? Is that a big deal? Are we supposed to talk about it?" He was eight. He was eight.

LUVVIE Wow.

YVETTE I was like, "I've got a good one here." Yeah. Yeah. My kids are wonderful. My kids are not without trouble, not without their own anxiety about the world. My daughter Micah is very political, and she can't understand why we're in this mess we're in. She's the most vocal about it.

LUVVIE I can't understand either.

YVETTE Yeah. She's like, "That's it. My whole childhood was a lie? This is not what's supposed to happen." But they're good people. They're good people. My kids could walk into any room and speak to anyone, and they hold their heads up high, and I just love that. I just took my daughter to [Michelle Obama's](#) last tour date for the book on this first round in New York at Barkley's, and I just stood up, and I watched my daughter have a full-on conversation with the former first lady and for my ever first lady. Full-on conversation, like full conversation. I was like, "Wow, man. Wow." Yeah. Very proud of it.

LUVVIE That's incredible.

YVETTE Very proud that I am leaving in this world ... If God is hearing me, he will make sure that I leave before my children.

LUVVIE Amen. Amen.

YVETTE So, I'm really proud that I'll be able to say that I will contribute three really good souls to the world.

LUVVIE That's amazing. So, final question, how are you taking care of yourself as you're world dominating, mothering like a champ, and ambassadoring?

YVETTE Well, everything that goes into my body, into my temple, is going to be important to me. I curate my food the way people curate their artwork on their walls. It's really important, really, really important. I eat mostly green. I do eat fish every once in a while. And because my daughters have beat me up with this, I really have gone crazy on drinking my water and back in the gym. I think you've got to be a little selfish for an hour in the day. An hour in the day has got to be about you, what you put in your body. Work up a sweat, get your heart going. But for the rest of the day, what keeps me going is that I just give love, man. I give free hugs. I smile. I choose to be happy. I love people. And I just really believe that, if I live in love, it's going to be okay. It's so sort of corny, but I don't mind being corny, man. It has worked for me for all those years. That's how I live.

LUVVIE Corny's not bad. Corny's not bad.

YVETTE Corny's not bad.

LUVVIE It's not. It keeps you happy. It keeps you joyous.

YVETTE Luvvie, I want to say something to you.

LUVVIE Yes?

YVETTE           It's not a question you asked me, but it's something that I want to say to you.

LUVVIE           Yes.

YVETTE           The moment I met you, I loved you. I had heard about you, and I was dying to meet you. Then I went to that event with Steve Pamon and you were both being honored. And I was so drawn to you! You started speaking, and I was just like, "Oh my god. This woman is even more than what I thought." I was like, "Oh my god. Please let her come to the party. Please let her come to the party." There is this really amazing photograph of when I met you. I think I hugged you so hard. I just want to thank you for that, because you were so amazing. We talked. I think we started building a friendship from that second, from that second.

LUVVIE           Yeah.

YVETTE           And even though I don't see you all the time, and I'm always in your DM telling you something, I think of you so often. I am in the fan group watching you dominate, supporting you, loving you, high-fiving you.

LUVVIE           Oh my goodness.

YVETTE           You are everything. You are everything.

LUVVIE           Listen, you're going to make me cry, because that ... Listen, to get that from you is mind-blowing. This summer, you had me come to the first North America stop of the On the Run Tour, and it was my first ever Beyoncé concert. Do you know that?

YVETTE           Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god.

LUVVIE           It was the first time I'd ever seen her in concert ever, ever, ever. My mind was blown. And you don't understand how much I appreciated that you thought of me and included me in that day.

YVETTE           Of course.

LUVVIE           It meant so much to me. So, thank you for seeing me.

YVETTE           Well, Steve Pamon is a huge fan of yours too.

LUVVIE           I love Steve. It's Chicago. We've to the Chicago connection.

YVETTE           The Chicago thing, man. Yeah.

LUVVIE           The Chicago's connection's real. For me, for people like me who are still working in our career in terms of trying to find our pinnacle, you are basically a beacon of light, and you show us that we can be exactly who we are. We can be the people we are and walk in these rooms and do the best work that we can and walk away and be respected for it. Like Jay-Z said, your presence is charity.

YVETTE Thank you for that.

LUVVIE Your presence is charity for me.

YVETTE Oh my god. Thank you.

LUVVIE I look in how you move. I look at your integrity, because you also show that you can be in this business for a long time and have strong, deep integrity. So, thank you for that. I love you.

YVETTE Aww, thank you. I love you.

LUVVIE You are my mentor. You're one of my mentors.

YVETTE You're so special.

LUVVIE Just so you know.

YVETTE I'm taking it. I'm taking it.

LUVVIE You are one of my mentors. You're one of my friends. I am so, so happy and rooting for you in everything. I'm so excited for everything that you do.

YVETTE And we're shoe lovers. We're shoe lovers.

LUVVIE Oh my god.

YVETTE Let's get real petty. We're shoe lovers.

LUVVIE Yo. Oh my god. The shoe game is serious, okay?

YVETTE Yes, shoe game! Okay. So, this is such a concession. Every time you post a photo on Instagram, I zoom into the shoes, zoom in. Come on, come on. Expand this photo. Let's see the shoes.

LUVVIE Because you know I have a shoe Instagram. I have a whole Instagram account dedicated to my shoes now, because people have admitted to me-

YVETTE Oh, honey, I'm on that.

LUVVIE Oh, girl.

YVETTE I go to that. I need to follow that. I don't know that I follow it. I need to follow that shoe Instagram.

LUVVIE Yeah, it's [mustluvvshoes](#).

YVETTE Oh, honey, I'm there now.

LUVVIE My shoe addiction.

YVETTE I love it.

LUVVIE I basically feel like I'm working so I can make sure my mom stays retired so I can buy shoes.

YVETTE That's right. That's right. Exactly. Exactly. I love it.

LUVVIE What shoe size are you, Yvette?

YVETTE I'm a eight and a half.

LUVVIE Okay. Okay. Good to know. I'm going to keep that in mind. Okay.

YVETTE Oh, you're funny. You're funny.

LUVVIE I'm going to keep that in mind. Thank you so much for spending time with me on this show like this. This means so much.

YVETTE Oh, I am so honored. I love you. I love your book. I love what you do. I love what you stand for. I love that you rep being an immigrant as hard as I do.

LUVVIE Yes.

YVETTE And I love that your culture is so important to you. I love your hair. I love everything about you. You're amazing, and I'm going to steal Oprah's line: girl, your future is so bright it's blinding me.

LUVVIE Oh my god. Honestly, my day's made. I don't even need nothing else for the day. I can just go to sleep now, because I'm good. I don't need nothing else. Love you, friend.

YVETTE I love you. Have a wonderful day.

LUVVIE You too.

YVETTE Thanks, darling. Thank you.

LUVVIE Bye.

YVETTE Bye-bye.

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She's just wonderful. I love that her smile got her the job working with Prince, and as we are coming out of this season of grief and loss and the world changing so much from this global pandemic, I think there is something to learn from her story of dealing with her grief after her mom died. We can't try to be Superwoman as the world continues to open up. We can't just jump back in and start swimming so

we don't sink – we have to be willing to float, like my late therapist taught me. We have to know when to fight and know when to honor our boundaries and rest.

Be sure to reach out to Yvette and show her some love on social. She's [yvettenoelschure](#) on all social. That's Y-V-E-T-T-E-N-O-E-L-S-C-H-U-R-E. Tag me too so we know how much you loved it. And I'm looking forward to celebrating that birthday!

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Until next time, have the courage to speak your truth and show up as yourself. Create good trouble.