



Rants and Randomness with Luvvie Ajayi

Be An Advocate (with Kim Foxx) - Episode 38

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My peoples! Welcome to Rants and Randomness. I'm Luvvie, and this is my show where I'm talking about things I'm loving, things I'm side eyeing and having great conversation with awesome people. I'm here at the [Chicago Recording Company](#) bringing you all the radio voice as always.

On this episode, I am talking about my feel good, which is the Renegade dancer, [Jalaiah Harmon](#). Ranting about how you don't have to be everywhere on social media, spotlighting my love for [Martinelli's Apple Juice](#) – I'm so random, I know. And my guest is [Kim Foxx](#), Cook County State's Attorney, who is up for reelection.

It's going to be a good show, y'all, so let's jump into it!

Rants and Randomness Sponsor

[00:01:55]

This episode is sponsored by [Twenties](#), a new series from executive producer [Lena Waithe](#). It premieres on Wednesday, Mar 4th at 10/9 central on BET. Your twenties are a time of discovery, experimentation, finding your way and learning from mistakes—but that's what makes your Twenties a work of art. Hailed by *Deadline* as a show that “redefines the Black Queer narrative”, it's about three friends navigating life, love and work in Hollywood.

Meet Hattie, screenwriter and free spirit starting from the bottom—she loves words and women. Then, there's Nia, who trades in acting for teaching yoga—she's the peacemaking higher consciousness of the crew. Marie is an ambitious agent climbing the corporate ladder. She's the voice of reason. This show is full of real-life situations that are both relatable and unbelievable. You will definitely laugh and see a bit of your twenties—maybe even your right now—in this bold original comedy. It premieres with 2 episodes back to back—so you get twice the Twenties Wednesday, March 4 at 10/9 central on BET. Search and post on social with hashtag #TwentiesOnBET.

Feel Good

[00:01:55]

So, today, my feel good – I'm feeling good about [the original Renegade dancer getting the credit she deserves](#).

Now, I'm officially going to declare Auntie status here and acknowledge that I have no idea what the children are really doing on this app called TikTok. I barely even know what it is, but it's a big deal. And for several weeks, [everyone from teens to cats to 45-year-old white moms](#), they've been doing the Renegade dance to the song "Lottery" by K Camp. We'll [link some examples in the show notes](#) so you can see what this is all about if you're officially old like me. Young/Old – shout out to you.

So, it turns out, this dance was created by a 14 year old girl named [Jalaiah Harmon](#). She wasn't getting credit for it until the NBA invited several white TikTok influencers who had popularized the dance to be a part of the All-Star Game.

Yo. The fact that Jalaiah was not part of the group – the internet was NOT having it. There ended up being a [New York Times piece written about it](#) and in all the uproar, her name started making its way around, so she started getting credit. She ended up performing the Renegade dance live at [the NBA All-Star game](#). She's [been on Ellen](#), she's just blowing up. She's this 14 year old girl who's clearly deeply talented and was much overdue to receive the credit for this really cool dance. I can't even do it. I ain't even going to attempt to do it in all my young/old status. I'm not.

So, it's really good to see Jalaiah blowing up, it's really good to see this Black girl getting credit for her work, as she was previously erased from it and getting what she's due. So that made me feel good because this little girl was able to get her narrative back and be able to get the credit, and now hopefully some capitalization and money out of this work that she's done.

Rant

[00:03:41]

So my rant this week – speaking of TikTok. It is okay not to be on every single social platform.

First of all, trying to keep up with everything can be exhausting and it's just not necessary. If you want to be everywhere doing all the things, live your life, but I just want to make sure it's said that it's not critical.

I'm out here as somebody who's been on social media, early adopter of a whole lot of platforms. I've been on Facebook since 2004. I've been on Instagram since 2012. I've been on Twitter since 2008. These are the platforms that I helm. I'm out here as somebody who's kind of visible, and I realize that I only have time for a certain amount of things – you know, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. And then of course, my own social network [LuvvNation](#) (shout out to [LuvvNation](#) – if you're all listening to this, I love you all so much. If you want to join [LuvvNation](#), go to [luvvnation.com](#), that's L-U-V-V Nation.com. It's the best place on the internet, but that's beside the point.)

My whole thing is, if you're feeling guilty about not being on a particular platform, ask yourself, "Are the people I want to reach on there? Is my audience there?" If the answer is no, then I hope you release whatever FOMO that you're feeling that's attached to it.

I remember, I logged on to Snapchat maybe 2 times and I went “Ok, yeah. I don’t think this is for me.” If my business needed to reach teens, if like teens were my core audience, then it might make sense for me to be on there. Same for TikTok. It skews young, and those of us who are just finding out about TikTok and joining, we’re kind of the old-heads.

I know I spend more than enough time on social media as it is, and the pressure to be on another is too much. I might log on to hold down my name, but that’s about it. So you can find my auntie ass on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). That’s enough. Anything else? I might need to face my front, ok. Maybe I’ll log on to reserve the name, but I might not really try to be too active on it. And again, I also know that I want to be clear on where I’m spending my time – how it’s feeding me, how it’s feeding my work.

And of course, I reserve the right to change my mind. Y’all might see me on TikTok like tomorrow. (I’m probably lying. I’m probably not going to be on TikTok.) There’s just so much in this world to see and do, so let’s be deliberate on how we spend our time on social. You don’t have to feel like you have to keep up with everything and everywhere. You don’t have to be on TikTok, Snapchat, and everything else if you don’t understand it or if you’re not using it for business, and you definitely don’t have to feel guilty about making that choice.

Randomness Spotlight

[00:06:18]

This week’s spotlight – I’m super random, y’all. I love apple juice, and my favorite apple juice in the world might be [Martinelli’s](#). It comes in like this weird, little cylindrical bottle, but it’s so fresh. I feel like it’s clean. It’s what I drink whenever I’m recording this podcast in the studio at the Chicago Recording Company, it’s what I offer guests whenever they do come to the studio – like, I’m about to offer some to Kim. I just like it because I’m trying to drink less soda, and water is boring. And things like LaCroix, also boring. So my middle ground is juice, and apple juice is really good, and this apple juice is my favorite. This is not being sponsored, I just love the apple juice. And if you haven’t looked it up, it’s called Martinelli’s. Check it out. If you like it, let me know. IF you have your favorite apple juice, you also let me know that so I can compare notes, because I’m always looking for more things to love.

Rants and Randomness Sponsor

[00:07:24]

This episode of Rants is brought to you by [Twenties](#). It’s a new series from executive producer Lena Waithe – Lena’s everywhere y’all and creating all these new things. It’s dope. It premieres on Wednesday, Mar 4th at 10/9 central on BET. Your twenties are a time of discovery, experimentation, finding your way and learning from mistakes—but that’s what makes your *Twenties* a work of art. Hailed by *Deadline* as a show that “redefines the Black Queer narrative”, it’s about three friends navigating life, love and work in Hollywood.

It premieres with 2 episodes back to back—so you get twice the goodies on Wednesday, March 4 at 10/9 central on BET. There's some really cool new up and comers in it, so there might be some stars made from this show. So check it out then and then you can post on social. Use the hashtag #TwentiesOnBET to discuss.

Interview with Kim Foxx

[00:8:22]

LUVVIE I am super honored to have today's guest in the studio with me. There's only been one other person that's been in the studio with me this whole time I've had this podcast.

KIM Really?

LUVVIE And that was Rich Dennis. So, today, I am talking with Cook County state's attorney and my homie, [Kimberly Foxx](#). Kim, thank you for joining me.

KIM Man, thanks for having me. I'm super excited to be here.

LUVVIE I was like, "Kim, you got to come on my podcast. You got to come on my podcast. I'm going to start by telling people how epic you are, give them a little bit of your bio. Your bio is extensive, but we shortened it. But she's epic.

So, Kimberly M. Foxx is the first African-American woman to lead the Cook County state's attorney's office. It's the second largest prosecutor's office in the country. Kim took office on December 1st, 2016, with a vision for transform the Cook County State's office into a fair, more forward thinking agency focused on rebuilding the public trust, promoting transparency, and being proactive in making all communities safe.

Kim is currently up for re-election, and I wanted to have here today to not only talk about what she's done as a leader in the city of Chicago, but to shine a spotlight and talk about what all of us can do to elevate and amplify great leaders, especially Black women leaders, in our cities and communities across the country. So, Kim, shout out to you.

KIM Thank you.

LUVVIE It was so important for me to have you on because I wanted to have... you know, I've never had any politicians. You might be the first politician-

KIM Oh, now I'm under pressure.

LUVVIE ... on Rants. You're making history over here.

KIM All right. It's Black History Month. All right.

LUVVIE It's Black History Month. Why would we not. By the time y'all are listening to this, it won't be Black History Month.

KIM It won't be. Yeah.

LUVVIE But it's Black History year because we know we're ending-

KIM That's right. Last year was also...

LUVVIE Listen, we're going to keep Black History Month going through eternity, actually.

KIM That's right.

LUVVIE I like to start by asking people - what did you want to be when you were growing up?

KIM I said that I wanted to be a lawyer when I was six.

LUVVIE Really?

KIM When I was six. My mom and my father were not married, and so they had child support issues. I had to go to court with my mother one year. She wanted my brother and I to come with her so my father could look in our faces while she was like, "Where's our money at?"

And my mother was very anxious. She was very nervous there. When you're a child and you feel your mother's tension, I was like, "What is happening?" And now I'm nervous. She, in order to calm me down, said, "Well, let me explain who other people in the room are." She pointed to the people sitting at the table, and there was these people with suits on, and they were talking in big words and looked very intense.

And I said, "Well, what are they?" And she said, "Those are lawyers." And I said, "Well, what do lawyers do?" She said, "They're here to help me. They're here to help us." I just was blown away that these people in these suits and were talking like that were there for us. And so, I said to my mom, "Well, I want to be a lawyer." And she said, "So it shall be. So it shall be."

But then the judge walked in, and then everybody had to stand up. And I said, "Well, who is that?" And my mother said, "Well, that's the judge." And I said, "Well, wait, wait. I want to be a judge. Everybody got to stand up when they walk in." She said, "Well, you have to be a lawyer first." And I said, "Okay."

And from then on, my mother would introduce me as, "This is Kim, she's going to be a lawyer." It was never a chance... There was a moment where I was like, "You know what? I think I want to be a meteorologist." And she was like, "You're going to be a

lawyer." I didn't get a chance to have whimsical dreams after that. Like it was, "You said you were going to do this." And my mother was like, "So it shall be."

LUVVIE Wow. You might actually be the first person who's ever come on and knew what they were going to be at six and actually became that. So, when you were growing up, how did that thing, that, "I'm introducing her as an attorney," how did it affect you as you were going through school? How did it make you act in school, or change what you did in terms of classes? All of that.

KIM It was interesting because when I was six, we lived in the projects. We lived in Cabrini Green. My mother moved us from Cabrini to a more affluent neighborhood called Lincoln Park when I was in third grade. And the expectations were different. We talk about disparities in education systems. The school I went to in Lincoln Park, a magnet school, had all the resources.

LUVVIE Which one?

KIM LaSalle Language Academy.

LUVVIE You went to LaSalle?

KIM I went to LaSalle.

LUVVIE I actually grew up in Lincoln Park also.

KIM Did you?

LUVVIE I did. I went to Little Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln.

KIM Yes. I went to LaSalle, and at LaSalle, you had to pick a language. They had four languages; Spanish, French, German, or Italian. It didn't matter that I had come in third grade, you needed to know just as much as the kids who had been there before. And so, I wanted to take French because it seemed cool. My mother was like, "We can't eavesdrop on people on the bus with French. Ain't nobody speaking French on the bus. You're going to need to speak Spanish-

LUVVIE Spanish.

KIM And tell me what that lady said about me." But going into that school after coming from Sojourner Truth in Cabrini, the expectations were very different. I think teachers were looking at me very... I was the kid with free lunch. I was the quota kids.

And so, I always knew I was smart. I always knew, again, I was going to be a lawyer. I didn't know any lawyers at that point. I don't even think Claire Huxtable was on TV yet.

So, I didn't even have a frame of reference. But I just knew I was smart, and that for me... and knowing people's expectations that they thought I should not be as smart. Because my mother was a teenage mother, and so she was always a little extra jazzy when she came to drop me because she was like 28. When I look at it now, I'm like, "We were wild."

LUVVIE Imagine us at 28, we were not that responsible at all.

KIM No. And having an eight year old. My mother had me when she was 18, had my brother when she was 17. And so, there was a lot of judgment always when she came into that place. And my mother was always like, "You're just as smart. You're smarter. They don't have to navigate the same stuff you got to navigate. They don't have to worry about..."

And so, I always was extra cocky with mine. I wanted to always outperform because I felt like you don't have to worry about the same stuff I have to worry about. So, if I get a higher score in IOWA test, what's your excuse? And so, that was always my motivation was, I think, the world expecting that I wasn't supposed to have much.

LUVVIE Chicago is a high school city. As in, we often rep our high schools tougher than we rep our colleges. That's just what it is. So, what are you repping?

KIM Nobody reps harder than Whitney Young. I'm just-

LUVVIE Come on! Whitney Young Dolphins! Should have been a dolphin, I'm just saying, but continue.

KIM Yeah. No, not a dolphin. I'm a Lincoln Park lion. I went to Lincoln Park.

LUVVIE You went to Lincoln Park?

KIM I did.

LUVVIE That was one of three high schools that I applied to.

KIM See? Same. So, I was Lane Tech. I actually went to Lane Tech for our freshman year. And then the Tech in Lane Tech means technical, like woodshop, electric shop.

LUVVIE It was the same for me.

KIM I have the longest fingers in the world, so operating a saw, I was going to have nubs. I was like, "I didn't sign up for this. I'm a writer. I give speeches. I love to talk." And they were like, "You got to do woodshop, electric shop, auto shop." But Lane was number one that year over Whitney Young.

LUVVIE What?

KIM And so, people were going... This was-

LUVVIE We take offense to this.

KIM This was many moons ago.

LUVVIE You're like, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

KIM This was a different era.

LUVVIE I feel attacked.

KIM So, I left Lane, and went to Lincoln Park my sophomore year, and that's where I graduated.

LUVVIE For you, how was high school? Were you the A student all through high school?

KIM No. So, when I left Lane, I had a 1.7.

LUVVIE What? Why?

KIM I was wreck... Because I failed woodshop, and drafting, and electric shop. I just was like, "I didn't sign up for this. I am trying to be a lawyer, you're trying to make me work with my hands, so this isn't..." I got really defeated because I was used to being at the top of my class. I was used to being a star student. So, I just gave up on myself. When I got to Lincoln Park, again, it's amazing how we track students. So, they put me in Gen Pop, as I call it, at Lincoln Park.

LUVVIE Which is the regular not IB, not honors, not gifted, none of that.

KIM No. It's really sad because I think there were a really lot of smart kids who were there but they didn't have the access to these other classes. And I had a teacher who, history, Miss Weissenberg was like, "I don't think you belong here." And I was like, "I don't." It was a fight behind me. I'm like, "Let me out Miss Weissenberg." And she moved me into math / science honors.

KIM I was a smart student. Worked really hard. But when you are that far behind on your GPA-

LUVVIE Yeah, it's hard to catch up.

KIM It's hard to catch up. So, I was all school all the time because I just could not look my mother in the eye with that GPA. I was very studious with a rebellious streak that I tried to keep from folks.

LUVVIE Were you in any clubs, played sports? Because you tall, Kim.

KIM I'm tall. I'm a disappointment.

LUVVIE Damn, you didn't play basketball, nothing?

KIM I didn't play volleyball, basketball. I ran cross country.

LUVVIE Damn, Kim.

KIM I didn't even do that good. I joined for a boy.

LUVVIE You joined for a boy?

KIM I joined for a boy. And the first meet where you had to run two miles, I'm not going to lie, at mile three quarters, I was like, "Well, I'm anemic." And passed out. I kept people's times on the cross country team. I took up running later in life. I ran the Chicago Marathon in 2010. I do half marathons now. But in high school, I just was a long disappointment.

LUVVIE You were a long... Dang, it's okay. It's fine. So, you graduate from high school. Where'd you end up going for college?

KIM I ended up going to SIU in Carbondale.

LUVVIE Carbondale?

KIM Yeah.

LUVVIE With what major?

KIM I majored in political science.

LUVVIE So, you were still on this lawyer track?

KIM I was still on lawyer track. I didn't want to go to Carbondale, I'm going to be honest. I love my Saluki brothers and sisters. I wanted to go to Berkeley, UC Berkeley. Applied got in, and they were like, "This is how much it costs." And I was like, "Here it is mom." And she was like, "Who pays for that?"

LUVVIE "Do you have Berkeley money?"

KIM Yeah. "How does that work?" Because no one guided us through it. My mother didn't go to college. My father had come back into our lives. My father was like, "I'm not paying for that."

And so, I was like, "Well, I'm not going." Because we had had a period of homelessness, my family, my junior year of high school for like six months. I was working, going to school, moving from shelter to shelter, and here I had brought my GPA up after all of that that happened. I got into Berkeley having started with a 1.7. And they were like, "You need to go to Harold Washington College." So, I was like, "Bump it, I'm not going anywhere. I'm not going to college."

And as my friends were starting to prepare, and pack, and do their thing ... My mother was a smoker, and my mother knew how much I hated smoking, so she would walk around the house naked smoking.

LUVVIE To get you want to-

KIM So that I was like, "Can you..." "This is my house. You choose not to go to college, this is what you're going to live with." So, I was like, "I should. What's open? Where can I go?" SIU are rolling enrollment. And so, I got on the Amtrak, went down there by myself, and was like, "Can I get in? Is it too late?" And that's how I got in and studied political science.

LUVVIE My goodness. I'm floored because when you talk about ending up homeless your junior year of high school, how did you show up to school? How was moving from shelter to shelter?

KIM It was awful. It was awful. My brother and I are 13 months apart, and the worst part of it was finding a shelter that would take boys and girls. Because you are sometimes living in... your arrangements were such that they didn't want boys and girls mixed. And so, my brother stayed with a friend. So, the only time I would see my brother was at school.

And you are fronting. You don't want... I think it's one of the reasons I'm so passionate about the work that I do is because it's so hidden. I looked clean enough. People just assumed that I was going home, and it really was... We didn't have cell phones back then. So, it was, you'd find a pay phone and hope that you could find your mom. Are we at the same place?

So, it was really difficult for me. But again, the challenge of... like it was at LaSalle, these people got to... they know where they're going, they got an address. I know I'm still just as smart as them. And so, it was very motivating for me, but very, very hard because our family was fractured from that moment on. And my brother and I, I think our connection

was... Because he felt guilt that he wasn't with us. I felt resentment that he had a stable place every day.

And my mother, to her dying day, I think was one of her biggest regrets was that, as a mother, she couldn't provide for us. I have a letter on my desk in my office that she wrote to my grandmother describing her depression while being in a shelter with me. It motivates me to know and to make sure that we see everybody.

Because you don't know what people are going... No one knew. No one knew that about me. And it is why I think public service was always where I needed to be.

LUVVIE So, how was college, because I know for college, you were in a dorm. Was it different because of the fact that you actually did have a place to go? What about college... Because college's already a big adjustment, even if you are coming from the most stable, most white-bred home. How was it for you?

KIM Oh, I kicked it. I was safe. I was safe, and it was a community of people your same age. I felt safe for the first time in a really long time. Carbondale is five hours away from Chicago. It's actually on a beautiful campus. You could see the stars at night. And I was taken by that. I was taken by the quiet of it, and taken by being around Black people who we didn't have to report home to anything. We didn't have to report to adults. And so, I had a really good time as a Saluki.

LUVVIE How was that GPA looking?

KIM Raggedy that first year. This is my pattern, I have a hard first year.

LUVVIE Real life.

KIM You got to balance. Nobody's going to nag you to turn that paper in. You don't turn it in, you're getting that grade. But then, I turned it around and was a really good student.

LUVVIE I'm still on this lawyer track. What did you do to affirm that? Did you have internships? What actually made you feel like you were on the right track? Listen, college will kill some dreams real quick like it did mine. I was supposed to be a doctor. Clearly, that didn't happen. It's fine.

KIM I didn't have any... Still no one was telling me how you did it. They'll tell you, "You should study political science." And it's like, "Okay." And then I remember being in a world political geo figure something, and I'm like, "What is this got to do with being a lawyer?" By now, I have seen... Law and Order has finally come on. I'm like, "This ain't got nothing to do with what I'm studying." But I was told, "You needed to get a political science degree and an English minor."

I loved writing. To this day, I love writing. It's why I'm also a big fan of yours in your ability to tell who you are, comment on the world. And you're sharing your gift with others, how to write. I follow your instant stories, and I'm like, "I'm going to get Scrivener too."

LUVVIE I'm going to get Scrivener [inaudible 00:15:57]. You should.

KIM Yeah. Because I loved it, and I journaled a lot. I've journaled ever since I was a kid.

LUVVIE Really?

KIM I journal-

LUVVIE Do you still have your journals?

KIM There's a couple of journals that I was crazy that I threw away from college because you go back and you read them, and you was like, "I was that person."

LUVVIE "I was terrible." Yeah, I get you.

KIM And I was like, "Let me throw that." But my childhood journals, that was my escape. That was my... I created these worlds where I wasn't the victim so much. Like what would me being a hero in my own stories look like? I was sexually abused as a child, and it was, what does someone coming in to save me look like? What does that feel like?

And so, in college, I wrote a lot. I wrote a lot of fiction, a lot of stories. I had a professor say to me, "If you don't go to law school, I really think you should focus on this." And I told my mother that, and she was like, "Right, right, right. You're a lawyer."

LUVVIE That's cute.

KIM That's cute, but-

LUVVIE But no.

KIM Yeah. And so, I never had anybody telling me what else to look, I didn't intern. I really was one of those kids that was like, "Now what? Take the LSAT? Okay." Took the LSAT. SIU was like, "Listen, you want to just move around the corner? We got a law school, we'll make it cheap." I wanted to go to Emory in Atlanta. And again, who pays for that?

LUVVIE And you didn't even have the... no one presented you with resources like scholarships.

KIM No, absolutely not. No one teaches... And it's a frustration of mine. Poor kids of color, like the map. Like even for the LSAT, they tell you take the LSAT. I didn't know that there

were LSAT prep courses. I didn't know there were SAT prep course. Like even at Lincoln Park when I'm in math/science honors, the guidance counselors weren't looking at me for my full potential. Like, "Yeah, you're a great student. Yeah, you have all... you can do great. You got into Berkeley?" with shock and awe. But never anyone guiding. Never anyone's saying, "You need to do an internship, you need to do this."

And I also needed to eat. We were still poor, and I was one of those kids who when I got my Pell money or when I got loan money, I was sending money home to my mom to pay her rent. There was a cadre of kids like us who were like that, that we were still, in essence, breadwinners and students. And so, there wasn't even enough space for me to fully flesh out future because I was still trying to put my family on and go to school at the same time.

LUVVIE Wow. So, you took the LSAT without prep courses. Clearly, you didn't fail it.

KIM I didn't. I did enough to get into the school and went to SIU, and loved it. Loved criminal law. Absolutely loved criminal law. I wanted to be a sports and entertainment lawyer. And again, you have to know people and what that looks like. But the alternative was criminal law. I really enjoy criminal law, but never thought that I would be a prosecutor. I applied. It's funny, I found a letter that one of my professors wrote as a recommendation. I applied to state's attorney's office. And people had said to me, "You got to know somebody to get in there. You have to intern there to get in there." I didn't get in.

LUVVIE What year was this?

KIM This was 1997.

LUVVIE Wow. Okay.

KIM And so, I was going to go where they hired me. And so, I've worked for Cigna Property and Casualty, an insurance company that did workers' comp because they flew me and my then boyfriend, now husband, back and forth.

LUVVIE Hi, Kelley.

KIM Yeah, it's Kelley. Kelley and I've been rolling since my last year of law school.

LUVVIE Wow.

KIM Yeah. It's something to be with somebody when you have nothing.

LUVVIE Nothing.

KIM When you're sharing a twin-sized bed, and when the landlord comes, you like, "Shh!" together.

LUVVIE Started from the bottom, now we here.

KIM Now we here. And I had this job offer where they flew us to Chicago to interview, and I was like, "Okay, this'll do." Because I didn't want to be broke. It was really about, "I'm a lawyer now. I got some debt I got to pay, and I don't want to be broke." I did that for nine months. Workers' compensation insurance defense.

LUVVIE So, how did you become a prosecutor?

KIM I hated workers' compensation insurance defense.

LUVVIE Understood.

KIM And the transition is just like this. I knew this girl from law school, she worked at the Guardian's office. I was like, "Y'all hiring?" That was the only criteria is, "Are you hiring?" And she said, "Yeah, come through."

LUVVIE Come through. The plug is always come through.

KIM Always. Come through. Sitting out in the lobby waiting for your interview and she's giving you the crib notes of the things to say. Big ups to Margaret for doing that for me. But I got the job. The Guardian's office represents kids in the foster care system. And so my job was, I was literally a lawyer for babies just born who had crack in their system to 18 year olds who had grew up in foster care and everything in between.

And Luvvie, for me, I saw myself in those kids. I was never in foster care. My mother did everything she could to hold it together for us. But we were... there were kids who were homeless just like me, girls who were sexually abused just like me, girls who witnessed their parent's relationship... My mother was a victim of domestic violence, not by my dad, but by a boyfriend. And all of these things, it was a reckoning. I wasn't in therapy. I'd never dealt with any of the issues that I had faced. But here I was, a lawyer for these kids who were versions of me, who had never seen a lawyer before. So, it was like full circle. And my job was to advocate for them, so I felt like that six year old again.

LUVVIE Who was sitting at the courtroom.

KIM Yeah, I'm now got the suit on, and now I'm your lawyer, and I'm here to help you, except I realized that I was just as fragile and just as broken as they were. I realized that that was what all of it was supposed to be about. I did it for three years and wanted to have my own kids. And that's a hard job to have because you don't trust nobody. Everybody fingerprints getting run, everybody...

And the other part was the prosecutors decided who went into foster care, not the Department of Children & Family Services. State's attorney filed petitions, whether to take someone's children. It was the state's attorney who decided where the kids went home. And I saw too many people who did not have experiences like me in these kids make decisions about whether they were in foster care and not based on their notions of family.

They believed that poverty was abuse. And I was like, "I can't stand in the middle." I almost got held in contempt one day because this judge didn't want to return this boy home who clearly loved his mother because she said, "Well, his new family can provide more for him."

LUVVIE Come on.

KIM But that's our system. And foster care system in Illinois, majority are Black and Brown kids. And we were breaking up homes. We were terminating parents' rights, creating legal orphans off of this notion of what family should look like being determined by people who had no connection. And so, I said I wanted to go to the state's attorney's office because I wanted to have the power to say no. The power of no was far greater than the power of just responding to what systems will do to you.

Because these systems are built on long legacies of white supremacy, long legacies of who has value, who doesn't? And if you are just responding to them, you're not going to break it up. The power was in the prosecutor's office, so that's where I wanted to be. So, I left and went to the state's attorney's office.

LUVVIE How did you get into that door?

KIM The hookup?

LUVVIE Come on, the come-through. Yes.

KIM I was a strong lawyer. I was really good. And a supervisor there said, "Have you ever thought about coming here?" At first, I was reluctant. At first, I was like, "I see what y'all do. I don't want to be a part of that." And then it was, "Actually, yes, I do. I want to be able to do that." And so, I got the hookup, I did it for four years doing child abuse and neglect. So, now it's seven years of child abuse and neglect cases. That weighed on me. And Kelley, my husband was like, "Please stop asking to bring these babies home."

LUVVIE You know what? I'll just take them.

KIM That was me. And then I had my own kids, and then I went to do delinquency where kids are now charged with crimes. And that broke my heart even more because the same

kids that we were trying to protect on one side of the building, we were throwing in cages on the other side. I did that for seven years, rose the ranks to become a supervisor. I was one of the youngest supervisors in the office. I'd only been a state's attorney seven years, became a supervisor after three. And that's just not heard of.

And got really frustrated by the system and said, "I don't like being a part of..." Because even as much as you can say no, the systemic thing will just churn over you. I tell people, "The system works like its designed where we say it's a broken system." I was like that IKEA screw that you meant to put in a dresser that you try to put it in the lamp. I was the broken piece.

And so, I left, worked on criminal justice policy for the county board president, the plug, Juliana Stratton, who is now the Lieutenant governor of Illinois, worked for the county board president. We were at a party, and I said, "I would really love to work on policy there." She said, "Let's have lunch." Introduced me to the president of the county, and I got that job.

LUVVIE So then, when you ran for state's attorney in 2015, first of all, man, I know Kelley was like, "What?" What was the decision to actually run for the second largest prosecutor's office in the country?

KIM We never had someone like me run. Not just Black, not just a woman, a girl from the projects, a girl with all that lived experience who knows that the system actually impacts people like me more than it impacts my affluent neighbors right now. And I have more in common with the people who came through our justice system than the lawyers I worked with in the office. And I thought, "What would it be like to be able to have leadership that is reflective of the people, like truly reflective of the people and stop responding to broken systems?"

And so, I told my husband, "If not me, who?" It was the wake of Laquan McDonald was happening, Freddie Gray in Baltimore, a national conversation about police accountability and prosecutors. I did not feel that I could let that cycle go by without at least giving it a try, and running an authentic campaign that wasn't about, "Let's lock everybody up, us versus them." I targeted my campaign to the end users of the justice system, where it was like, "Hey, Black and Brown people, should we allow people who don't know our communities to make decisions about who goes to jail for how long? Prosecuting juveniles as adults. Who doesn't have that experience."

And so, that was my motivator. I didn't think I was going to win, but I knew by running, the conversation would have to be inclusive of those communities.

LUVVIE And then you won.

KIM Right.

LUVVIE And then you won and became the second most powerful prosecutor in the country, basically.

KIM Yeah.

LUVVIE What has that been like for the last four years? Because you've been in this office for at least three and a half years now.

KIM Yeah. It's been an honor and a privilege, and daunting, and sometimes debilitating, if I'm being honest.

LUVVIE Let's be honest.

KIM Let's be honest. Doing this work as a Black woman, 79% of elected prosecutors are white men. 79%. 16% are white women. So, if you do your math, that's like only 5% left. Less than 1% are women of color. There are about 18 Black women who do this work across the whole country-

LUVVIE Total.

KIM ... out of 2,400. We're in the same group chat. We'd be like, "Hey, y'all." There's not many of us. So, when you hear about Marilyn Mosby and Aramis Ayala, the only Black state attorney ever in the history of Florida, Kim Gardner of St. Louis, we all are very intimately connected. And doing this work, people don't disagree with us on policy and just are like, "I don't like that decision." You get, "I don't like that decision, you Black B---. How dare you?" The slurs.

LUVVIE They threaten your life.

KIM Yeah. It's debilitating. It is absolutely debilitating sometimes because you're like, "I just want to do my job." Again, I'm used to the underdog. I'm used to... but the level of racism and misogyny that comes when you are a first, that comes when you are in a world that really does not welcome you, where your presence, your mere presence is disruption. I don't say anything. Your being at the table, how dare you be the most powerful prosecutor in the state?

We have 102 prosecutors in the state of Illinois. I'm the biggest. You could swallow up half of those offices and they still wouldn't be the size of mine. So, when you come to the table and say, "I want to work on bond reform." And they're like, "Bond reform? What's wrong with the bond system?" You're like, "What's wrong with the bond system? Do you know how many people are there because they can't afford their bond? Well, that's not on us."

And then when you say, "Well, okay, I'm going to lead on this." A lot of my work the last three years has been, "I'm just going to do it, and y'all just going to come along or get rolled over." And that's been gratifying, actually, is what is possible when you just decide that you're not going to wait for somebody to tell you it's okay.

LUVVIE What you're going to do without waiting for permission.

KIM That's right.

LUVVIE And your office has actually made some sweeping changes, and that's why I'm passionate about being like, "I am 110% behind Kim." Because living in Chicago and knowing what's happening on the ground, and seeing how you're fighting every single day and making powerful enemies in the process in just trying to find justice. What are you most proud of that your office has done so far?

KIM I think the biggest impact we're going to have is on the cannabis legalization. So, Illinois became the 11th state to legalize marijuana effective January 1st. And for me, it was important. My mother smoked marijuana almost every day. My mother was a late diagnosed bipolar disorder, and she didn't have medication. She just was wild. There was no... That's just Janell being Janell. Like, "Oh, went off on the lady at Jewel. Okay. And went home and smoked a joint."

So for her, it was like self-medication. She almost got arrested once, and I had her purse. She was telling me like, "Move my bag. Don't let them take my bag." And I realized it's because she had weed in it. So, it was always bothersome to me that we were putting people in jail for this thing that my mother did, who my mother was a great mother. I knew the racial disparities were there.

And then all of a sudden, the nation changes in how we look at cannabis. I saw John Boehner on the news talking about how he was on a cannabis board making money. And I was like, "You know what? Never again." Again, I'm going to use the power of the office, announced we weren't going to prosecute. But before anybody sold the first joint, gummy, brownie product, we were going to start to make it right for the thousands of people who had convictions. And so, we were the first office in Illinois to actively vacate convictions of people who had marijuana, convictions for amounts that would now be legal. Statewide.

And we wrote the bill, we wrote that portion of the bill. So, it wasn't just Cook County. I was the only prosecutor in the whole state who sat at the table. But now, the entire state has their residents eligible for their convictions to be vacated or expunged; 770,000 records.

LUVVIE So, 770,000 people who have some type of record because of marijuana possession or use are now going to have their records expunged?

KIM Expunged. Be expunged, which means, for them, the ability to apply for a job, or housing, or FAFSA, student loans and their children, and their neighborhood. When people can work, when people can participate in the economy legally, when people aren't in the shadows because they've been locked out by a conviction... A felony conviction can lock you out of society for years and years to come. And it has an impact on your kids.

If your kids don't see you go to work, if your kids don't watch you participate in these institutions, then they believe they're locked out too. And so, the fact that so many people will be able to have this removed without cost, we're not charging people for it, we're actively moving on their behalf, makes me the most proud.

LUVVIE That's major. That's life changing. That's life changing. And as you do this life changing work, you're getting these threats for it.

KIM Yeah.

LUVVIE How do you still move in the world that requires that of you?

KIM Slow, looking both ways. I have to be reminded... My mother passed away in 2012, so she never saw me do this work. I have to be reminded of who I'm doing it for because if it's just me, selfishly, there are easier things I can do. There are places I could be that are of comfort to me. But when I ran and told everybody I was from the projects and what building I was from, ever since then, there's not a place I don't go where someone shouts out their building number to me. And for those communities like mine who never felt seen, who - every attack to me is an affront to them. It's an affront to my mom. It's an affront to these folks who were just as brilliant, as talented, as capable, who were locked out.

And so now I get in the room, and the people who say, "We don't want you here," it's not just me you don't want here, you don't want them. And so, I owe it to all of us to not allow the intimidation to take hold. It is tough, right? I try to find community. I find people who have similar situations, people who will pray with you, who have also gone through things. But it is the reminder that is bigger than me. It is so much bigger than me. And there are people who have passed the baton for whatever role you play in it. And my job is to keep my hand out and take it, and go to therapy.

LUVVIE Amen, Jesus Christ. Oh, Jesus Christ!

KIM And go to therapy.

LUVVIE Listen, it's funny. So, you are up for reelection, and I was like, "Kim, you got to come on because I need people to understand..." Because we think about the Cook County

state's attorney, we think about prosecutor's offices. That's not the sexy race everyone's thinking about. Everyone thinking about president, governor. But this office that you're in has tremendous power.

KIM Absolutely.

LUVVIE And it's able to determine who's criminalized, who's not. And oftentimes, those people are Black and Brown.

KIM That's right.

LUVVIE In this election, you are up against somebody... Your opponent is somebody who's self-funded.

KIM Yeah.

LUVVIE A self-funded white man who can spend millions of dollars on ads alone. So, you're faced with this information network against you. You're faced with the FOP, which is the Fraternal Order of the Police against you, which anybody who makes an enemy of them is probably somebody good. On GP, like on principle. And then you are also now faced with a tarnishing that's happening because people are tying your name to the case that the Chicago Police Department cannot let go.

KIM Man!

LUVVIE With Jussie. And I'm going to say... And Jussie was actually on this podcast. How are you combating this? How does this make you feel as somebody who's on the other end of it?

KIM There are days that I'm incredibly frustrated. This is a county that was called the false confession capital of the United States.

LUVVIE Why is that?

KIM Because we have more people on death row who confessed to crimes they didn't commit because of Jon Burge, a corrupt police commander who was literally torturing Black men on the South side, putting electrodes on their testicles to get them to confess to crimes that they didn't commit. We have spent almost a billion dollars in the last 10 years on police misconduct cases in the city of Chicago alone.

When I think of some of the atrocities that this justice system has perpetuated, and people try to equate Jussie Smollett with the other things that I've seen, it frustrates me. The spectacle of all the cameras and such at 26 and California, our courthouse, when I have victims of sexual abuse and assault, who have to walk past that scrum, where I have families who have lost loved ones, who wished that the police would call

them and tell them what happened. We have a low homicide clearance rate, but people want to talk about how much money they spent to prove that Jussie wasn't a victim of a crime while we haven't solved 50% of the murders that are happening here. So, I take a personal affront of the outrage. If you disagree with the decision, okay. It's been a year.

LUVVIE 12 damn months. 12 months. God damn, Chicago!

KIM It's been a year.

LUVVIE 12 months. Jesus Christ. Let it go.

KIM And we still have young Black women missing from our neighborhoods that don't get the... they beg and plead to get attention for these things. But this is where our focus is. And so, that's that part of me that comes from a neighborhood that felt like people didn't care about you. That when you see the prioritization of celebrity, you see the prioritization of money.

And my opponent has put an \$8 million in this race already. 8 million. He's the son of a billionaire. His father is a founder of the Carlyle Group. You ask him, "Why do you want to run this race?" And he says, "I enjoyed my time in the office." Hmm? Okay, I enjoyed my time at Applebee's in college, I don't want to be the CEO of Applebee's.

LUVVIE That don't mean I want to run Applebee's. Right.

KIM What are we doing? And so, it's very, sometimes, frustrating, but I have so much faith in the people of Cook County because when they elected me four years ago, I ran on a platform very different than anybody else had run on a platform. Unapologetically Black, unapologetically from the projects, unapologetically with an agenda that was about poor Black and Brown people not getting caught up, and won 57% of the vote.

And so, even in all of this noise, I have faith that people will cut through. I really do. Because I've seen elections like this race in other parts of the country, there are more progressive prosecutors who are being elected. You have Elizabeth Warren, and Bernie Sanders, and Kamala Harris endorsing this campaign because now this is a national conversation.

So, as frustrated as I am, I know what the tactics are. If you're willing to put \$8 million to take me out, then I feel like I'm on the right path.

LUVVIE You are a threat to them. You are a threat to justice. And I am like, what more can I... I will do whatever I can to make sure that you continue to be the Cook County State's Attorney because we need you in this office. We need your work. And as another visible Black woman, I ain't doing the work that you're doing. Your work is literally, every single

day, freeing people's lives. My job is to make sure that people know who you are, and that people really see you. I admire your work so much.

You and I just had a conversation two weeks ago where I was like, "Listen, I see you taking the bullets. And just know that hopefully, one day, you won't have to take these heavy bullets, and maybe some of us can take some for you in the meantime."

KIM No, I'm grateful for you. You see me, you let me share your concierge service that day. I was cussing people out at the airport.

LUVVIE At the airport.

KIM You was like, "Hey, why don't you come here..."

LUVVIE Come into the lounge with me, girl.

KIM Get some jelly beans." I appreciate that. I said this to you, and I feel like I should say it publicly too - you're giving voice to unpopular things, and saying the things that need to be said gives the freedom for other people to do that. And so, that example is also what sustains me too. When you see... Like the others that you've had on this podcast, I know you had Brittany Packnett Cunningham-

LUVVIE I love her.

KIM ... on here, who sends me text messages every couple of weeks, like, "We got you." Ayanna Pressley just sent me a text this morning. The network of Black women who say "We see you," and who are these leaders that are out there pushing gives me wings. So, as frustrating, as sometimes debilitating, it is really Black women who are like, "Get up, get up." And are dusting me and adjusting the crown for me, that gives me the strength to keep going.

LUVVIE Yes. I was going to ask you... I usually end every episode with, what are you doing for self-care?

KIM I go to therapy a couple of times a week.

LUVVIE Two times a week.

KIM Yeah.

LUVVIE Amen.

KIM I go with my husband on Mondays. People have date nights, we have Monday lunch. That's because it's amazing to... Again, we shared a twin-sized bed 20 something years

ago, and to now be at the spotlight and what does it mean for him to be a part of this and watch this. And so, I do that. And then I go on my own. And then, I've taken up running again.

LUVVIE Really?

KIM Yeah. I got one of those Peloton bikes. People judge me, call me bougie, whatever.

LUVVIE You can be bougie. It's fine. You've earned bougie. We've earned bougie.

KIM I was homeless.

LUVVIE Come on.

KIM I need all the bikes.

LUVVIE Thank you.

KIM All of the jelly beans. I work out every morning at least five to six times a week, an hour for myself, because I know the world is going to beat me up the moment I walk outside the door. And so, it's like, "What do you give yourself to... What is the gift you give yourself?" And that for me is sweating. It is, to me, like music that makes me feel good so that I'm armed and ready to get outside.

LUVVIE Boom. Look, we are sending you love. Y'all, if you are listening to this podcast, if you are in Illinois, if you are in Chicago, I need you to vote. Starting March 2nd is when-

KIM Correct.

LUVVIE ... you can actually start voting. But March 17th is actual primary. So, you can vote from March 2nd to March 17th. But then too, if you do not live in Illinois, you won't even know where Chicago is. I need you to amplify Kim's name and her voice. Share this podcast with other people, and go to kimfoxx.com. You need money.

KIM I need money.

LUVVIE Y'all give Kim money, please.

KIM Kim Foxx with two Xs. Let them know.

LUVVIE Kim Foxx, two Xs.

KIM Like Jamie, like Redd.

LUVVIE Exactly. Like Jamie Foxx, like Redd Foxx, Kim Foxx. We need you to give Kim money. It does not matter wherever you are, please donate because she is facing somebody who all they have is money. That is only thing that they have to offer is money. So, we want to even that a little bit. And then how else can people support you?

KIM You know what? If people live in Chicago and they want to volunteer on the campaign, you want to take people to the polls, you want to knock on doors, make phone calls, you can also go to kimfoxx.com. There's a way for you to volunteer because we need volunteers. This was a grassroots movement before. It really is grassroots right now. We need people to get people to the polls. Don't just tell people, don't just... I love the 'Let's make a plan.' Your plan might be, "I'm showing up at three o'clock to take you." Going to senior homes and helping make sure that people know what they're doing is also really an important. Get out the vote work is really important.

LUVVIE Please vote. We need the vote. I think right now people aren't excited about anything. Just think about it as risk reduction. We do not need somebody else who's just rich to be in office. We need people who are passionate, who see us, who understand that justice is necessary. And that's Kim.

So, you got my vote. I'm about to be plastering it everywhere and telling everybody, "Listen, have you voted? Have you voted for Kim? Please do that." Thank you. Thank you, thank you. Thank you for coming on my podcast.

KIM Thank you for having me. I almost said... You put out there a couple weeks ago, "Who should I have?" And I was like, "It would be tacky if I said me." I was going to try to recruit people to ask.

LUVVIE Listen, I'm shameless. I would be like, "Can you put me on your podcast?" Listen, had you texted me, I'd been like, "Kim, ma'am, I've been trying to get you on this podcast."

KIM You'll see how people will be coming at you. I would... Look-

LUVVIE Look, booked and busy. Listen, I was like, "I like to have the people who I like to have." So, I'm like, "I don't care who texts me." I'd be like, "I need the people who I want." And I was like, Kim... I was out here stalking Kim's text messages like, "Kim, when can you come."

KIM No, I'm grateful.

LUVVIE So, thank you for coming.

KIM Thank you.

LUVVIE And thank you for your work.

KIM Of course.

LUVVIE Come on, Cook County State's Attorney for four more years. Amen? Amen. All right, y'all. Bye.

Yo. Shout out to Kim Foxx for joining me. She's incredible. I am such a fan of her, and I have so much respect for her, and I'm honored that she joined me on the show. That conversation that we had? Whew! It just made me realize that Black women are superheroes. Black women are just everything. The things that we go through, the things that we do in spite of the world trying to stop us. In spite of the world telling us that we don't belong. It's magical. It's magical.

So, y'all follow Kim on social media. She is at kim_foxx on Instagram. Go to her website - kimfoxx.com. Please give her money. Support, amplify. It doesn't matter if you don't live in Chicago or in Cook County. Her name should be out here. She's the second most powerful prosecutor in the country, and she's so cool, y'all. And we need more of her in office. That is how we get change. More people like Kim.

The Rants tribe is growing. Apple featured us for Black History Month as Black History Makers. We were spotlighted all over the platform on Apple Podcasts, and we're getting more and more folks following us on Instagram and Twitter every day. And that's thanks to you, so thank you for sharing the podcast, and taking the time to rate and review where you listen to it.

I'm trying to spotlight a listener every episode as a thank you for taking the time to write a 5-star review about the show, so if you want to get a shoutout, take a couple of minutes and leave us a review wherever you listen to the podcast.

Shout out to QNgale, she said:

I absolutely love this Podcast. Luvvie is the cool older cousin we all want (and need). I love the content, it gets me through boring and challenging days at work. Also, if you haven't read her book, do yourself a favor and get it. Luvvie is amazing, and I hope to meet her one day.

Thank you, QNgale! I hope to meet you one day too! You know, hopefully you can come to one of the events that I'm having or be a part of LuvvNation too, because I'll be having secret meetups.

So yeah – follow the podcast all over social media, y'all, We are [@rantsrandomness](#) on Twitter, we're [@rantsandrandomness](#) on Instagram and on Facebook we're there too. So subscribe, continue to share, and thanks for listening to this podcast. It really means a lot. For me, follow me on social media everywhere. I am @luvvie. See you on the next episode.