

Luenell Bares It All with Carlos Watson: From Bank Robber to Late Night, Comedy's Boldest Voice Holds Nothing Back

In her most revealing sit-down yet, Luenell opens up about outrunning the law, surviving addiction, and the late-night crown she's still chasing.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, July 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- She's the scene-stealer from the Oscar-nominated *Borat*, the voice of Milly in DreamWorks' *Dogman*, and the star of a Netflix special executive produced by Dave Chappelle. But in her new sit-down on [The Carlos Watson Podcast](#),

Luenell does something even her biggest fans rarely see: she stops performing and starts confessing. Over a candid, career-spanning conversation, the Oakland-raised comic takes two-time Emmy-winning host Carlos Watson from her breakout to her lowest points — and all the way back.

“

Quote: You watch rich people like you watch a bug in a jar — like, what's this bug gonna do next?”

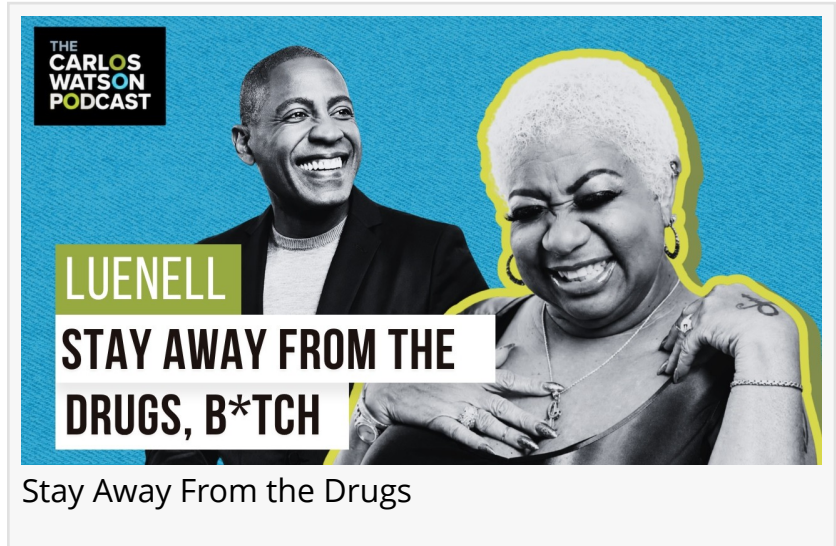
Luenell

From the Lam to the Limelight

Then there's the twist no publicist would script. Long before the sold-out tours and the Las Vegas residency, Luenell recounts, a young woman took money from the bank where she worked and spent the better part of a decade "on the lam" — performing stand-up in Oakland clubs even as her name surfaced in the local papers —

before the law finally caught up with her. She's equally unguarded about surviving the addiction that gripped 1980s Oakland. It's the kind of only-in-real-life origin story that makes her climb from survivor to bona fide comedy institution all the more astonishing — and her hard-won advice all the more earned.

"You shouldn't do comedy unless you feel like you're gonna die if you don't do it. It's your ministry. It's your calling." — Luenell



A Storyteller, Not a Joke Teller

What emerges is a portrait of an artist who has never once flinched. Luenell reframes comedy not as a career but a calling, and draws a sharp line between the performers chasing a check and the ones chasing the truth. She's just as pointed about authenticity in an age of filters and imitation — and about why audiences, in her telling, can smell the difference.

"I'm not a joke teller. I'm a storyteller." — Luenell

"You watch rich people like you watch a bug in a jar — like, what's this bug gonna do next?" — Luenell, on celebrity culture

The Late-Night Crown She's Still Chasing

And she is far from finished. Luenell is candid about the goals still on her list — a late-night show of her own and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame — and blunt about the gatekeepers who once told her she was "too wild" for network television. Watson, for one, thinks they had it backwards: in an attention economy that rewards the unfiltered, he argues, Luenell's voice is exactly what late night has been missing. It's a through-line that runs from her breakout in *Borat* through *Coming 2 America* and *A Star Is Born* to her Chappelle-produced Netflix hour, *Town Business* — a body of work built entirely on refusing to be anyone but herself.

The full episode, "Stay Away From the Drugs," is streaming now on The Carlos Watson Podcast.

About Luenell

Luenell has been making audiences laugh for over 30 years with her unapologetic humor, magnetic personality, and booming voice. Born in Tollette, Arkansas, and raised in Oakland, California, she is one of the most sought-after female comedians in the business, currently touring the country and headlining a residency at Jimmy Kimmel's Comedy Club in Las Vegas. She voices Milly in Universal/DreamWorks' *Dogman*, appears on HBO's Emmy-winning *Hacks* and the Paramount+ sitcom *Crutch* opposite Tracy Morgan, and stars in Amazon Prime's *Phat Tuesdays*. Her Netflix special *Town Business* — executive produced by Dave Chappelle and directed by Stan Lathan — joins a resume that includes her breakout in the Oscar-nominated *Borat*, plus *Coming 2 America*, *Dolemite Is My Name*, *A Star Is Born*, and *Taken 2*. For more, visit [HeyLuenell.com](https://www.heyluenell.com).

About The Carlos Watson Podcast

The Carlos Watson Podcast is the flagship interview show from [ROSE Media](https://www.rosemedia.com), hosted by two-time Emmy winner Carlos Watson, who draws out the icons, outcasts, and original thinkers behind the culture's biggest conversations — smart, soulful, sometimes spicy, always human.

About ROSE Media

ROSE Media is building the HBO of video podcasts — a premium home for smart, soulful, funny, and wise voices, named for Dr. Rose Camile Thomas Watson. Across full episodes and clips on

YouTube, Apple, Spotify, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, ROSE's shows have drawn more than 75 million views on- and off-platform.

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