

## **Lanaya Lewis Bio:**

Lanaya Lewis is an accomplished journalist and publicist whose career is defined by her dedication to storytelling and serving her community.

Her journey started off rocky at 13 when she was arrested and charged with three felonies for a fight she started. It was the wakeup call she needed. Lanaya's probation officer introduced her to YR Media (formerly Youth Radio) in Oakland, California, where she gained invaluable early experience in journalism and media production. During her time there, she contributed to the mayor's newsletter, wrote scripts and acted in educational YouTube videos about teenage domestic violence, and published her first article in HuffPost. These experiences solidified her desire to become an on-air reporter and laid the foundation for her career in media.

After graduating from Oakland High School, Lanaya went on to graduate with her bachelor's from Norfolk State University, and master's from Regent University.

Lanaya's career as an on-air reporter took off between 2017 and 2021, as she covered major breaking news stories in Mississippi and North Carolina. She reported on pivotal moments, including the overturned convictions of Curtis Flowers and Ronnie Long, the inhumane treatment of inmates at Mississippi's Parchman Prison, and the historic redesign of the Mississippi state flag. Her impactful reporting earned recognition in prominent outlets such as The Washington Post, Essence, CBSN, A&E's Exposing Parchman, and has been featured as an expert on ID Channel's American Detective.

Despite her success, Lanaya faced a deeply personal tragedy in 2021 when she lost her son Kameron at 20 weeks pregnant due to premature rupture of membranes (PPROM). This traumatic experience led her to step away from the broadcast industry, feeling that she could no longer face the emotional weight of reporting on others' traumas. Lanaya returned to her home state of California, determined to rebuild her life and find a new path.

While navigating her journey through grief, Lanaya endured a new challenging pregnancy with her rainbow baby Kayden - once again battling hyperemesis gravidarum and learning she had incompetent cervix. During her pregnancy, she learned about public relations and began freelancing - which would eventually lead her to California State University, Sacramento as the Public Information Officer.

Lanaya's contributions extend beyond her professional achievements. She is one of six co-founders of the nation's first Black Honors College, located at Sacramento State and co-founder of National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) Sacramento. Her

devotion to community helped her be named one of Comstock's Magazine 2024 Young Professional of the Year and a 2024 Exceptional Woman of the Year Honoree.

When she's not working, Lanaya enjoys creating new experiences with her rainbow baby Kayden, and helping organizations learn how to tell their own unique stories with her business Noremak Media Consulting. Her resilience, dedication, and ability to turn personal challenges into purpose have made her a force in both journalism and public relations, embodying the power of perseverance and the importance of telling stories that matter.