



Lela Rochon

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Lela Rochon (born **Lela Rochon Staples**; April 17, 1964) is an American actress, best known for her breakthrough role as Robin Stokes in the 1995 romantic drama film *Waiting to Exhale*.^[1] She later had starring roles in films *The Chamber* (1996), *Gang Related* (1997), *Knock Off* (1998), and *Why Do Fools Fall in Love* (1998).

Early life

Rochon was born in Los Angeles, California, the daughter of Zelma, a nurse practitioner, and Samuel Staples, a business owner and graphic artist, who are both of Haitian descent.^{[2][3]} She graduated Cerritos High School in Cerritos, California. She attended California State University, Dominguez Hills where she earned a BA in Broadcast Journalism, with minors in Sociology and Theatre.^[4]

Career

Early works

From 1986 to 1988, while attending college, Rochon was one of the "Spudettes" featured in over 30 national spots for the Spuds Mckenzie Budweiser/Bud Light TV commercials. She also appeared in the 1985 made-for-television film *A Bunny's Tale* starring Kirstie Alley and Delta Burke, based on Gloria Steinem's experiences as a Playboy Bunny. She appeared as the love interest of Gerald Levert in the video for "My Forever Love" by Levert,^[5] and in Luther Vandross's "It's Over Now" video. She also appeared in the music video for Lionel Richie's single "All Night Long (All Night)", in Al B. Sure's video for the song "Natalie",^[6] and in Tupac Shakur's video "I Get Around" as one of the female dancers. She had many guest starring roles in a number of sitcoms, include *The Cosby Show*, *Amen*, *227*, *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, and *Hangin' with Mr. Cooper*.

Lela Rochon



Rochon with husband Antoine Fuqua at the 2007 *Shooter* Film Premiere.

Born	Lela Rochon Staples <div>April 17, 1964</div> <div>Los Angeles, California, U.S.</div>
Education	Cerritos High School <div>California State University, Dominguez Hills</div>
Occupation	Actress
Years active	1984–present
Spouse(s)	<div><div>Adolfo Quiñones (m. 1982–87)</div><div>Antoine Fuqua (m. 1999)</div></div>
Children	2

Rochon made her film debut in 1985, when she starred opposite Fred Williamson in *Fox Trap*. In 1987, she played the role of Debby in the film *The Wild Pair*, starring Beau Bridges and Bubba Smith. In 1989, Rochon acted opposite Eddie Murphy in 1989's *Harlem Nights*, as the memorable "Sunshine" character. She again worked with Murphy in the successful 1992 romantic comedy, *Boomerang*. In 1995, she was regular cast member during the first season of The WB sitcom, *The Wayans Bros.*^[7]

Breakthrough

Rochon' biggest break came in 1995, when she landed one of the lead roles opposite Whitney Houston, Angela Bassett and Loretta Devine in the adaptation of the Terry McMillan novel and highly successful drama film *Waiting to Exhale*. She played the character Robin Stokes, for which she was nominated for an MTV Movie Award for Best Breakthrough Performance and NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture. Rochon was chosen by *People* magazine as one of the "50 most beautiful people in the world" in 1996.^[8]

In 1996, Rochon starred opposite Timothy Hutton in the Showtime cable network film *Mr. and Mrs. Loving*, receiving a Cable Ace Award nomination for Best Actress. Later that year, she played the female lead in the crime thriller film *The Chamber*. The following year, she starred alongside Jim Belushi and Tupac Shakur in the crime thriller *Gang Related*. In 1998, Rochon had the leading role alongside Halle Berry and Vivica A. Fox in the romantic drama *Why Do Fools Fall in Love*, and well starred in *Knock Off* with Jean-Claude Van Damme, and *The Big Hit*, as love interest to Mark Wahlberg's leading character. In 1999, she appeared in *Any Given Sunday* directed by Oliver Stone. In 2001, Rochon made her return to television with one of leading roles alongside Bonnie Bedelia, Nancy McKeon, Tracey Needham, and Lisa Vidal in the Lifetime crime drama series, *The Division*. She left the series after single season.^[9]

2000s-present

In 2004, Rochon co-starred opposite Katie Holmes in the romantic comedy film *First Daughter*.^[9] In 2009, she had cameo in crime drama *Brooklyn's Finest* directed by her husband, Antoine Fuqua.^[9] In 2013, she played one of leading roles in Regina King's directorial debut *Let The Church Say Amen*, the film adaptation of ReShonda Tate Billingsley's 2005 novel for BET.^[10] She later had roles in films *Supremacy* (2014) with Danny Glover and Derek Luke, and *Reversion* (2015), playing Aja Naomi King's character's mother.^{[11][12][13]}

Personal life

Rochon was married to actor Shabba-Doo from 1982 to 1987. In 1999, she married film director Antoine Fuqua. Together, they have two children, Asia and Brando.

Filmography

Film

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1984	<i><u>Breakin'</u></i>	Extra	Uncredited
1984	<i><u>Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo</u></i>	Dancer	
1985	<i><u>A Bunny's Tale</u></i>	Charlotte	Television film
1986	<i><u>Foxtrap</u></i>	Lindy	
1986	<i><u>Stewardess School</u></i>	School Instructor	
1987	<i><u>The Wild Pair</u></i>	Debby	
1987	<i><u>Into the Homeland</u></i>	Exquisite Woman	
1989	<i><u>Harlem Nights</u></i>	Sunshine	
1991	<i><u>Extralarge: Black and White</u></i>	Wendy	
1992	<i><u>Boomerang</u></i>	Christie	
1993	<i><u>The Meteor Man</u></i>	Vanessa	
1995	<i><u>Waiting to Exhale</u></i>	Robin Stokes	Nominated — <u>MTV Movie Award for Best Breakthrough Performance</u> Nominated — <u>NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture</u>
1996	<i><u>Mr. and Mrs. Loving</u></i>	Mildred Loving	Television film Nominated — <u>CableACE Award for Outstanding Actress in a Movie or Miniseries</u>
1996	<i><u>The Chamber</u></i>	Nora Stark	
1997	<i><u>Gang Related</u></i>	Cynthia Webb	
1997	<i><u>Legal Deceit</u></i>	Sydney Banks	
1998	<i><u>Ruby Bridges</u></i>	Lucielle 'Lucy' Bridges	Television film
1998	<i><u>The Big Hit</u></i>	Chantel	
1998	<i><u>Knock Off</u></i>	Karen Lee	
1998	<i><u>Why Do Fools Fall in Love</u></i>	Emira Eagle	
1999	<i><u>Any Given Sunday</u></i>	Vanessa Struthers	
1999	<i><u>The Charlotte Austin Story</u></i>	Charlotte Austin	Also executive producer
2000	<i><u>Labor Pains</u></i>	Lulu Brown	

Year	Title	Role	Notes
2004	<i><u>First Daughter</u></i>	Liz Pappas	
2006	<i><u>Running Out of Time in Hollywood</u></i>		
2009	<i><u>Balancing the Books</u></i>	Sharlene	Also executive producer
2009	<i><u>Brooklyn's Finest</u></i>	Investigator	Cameo
2010	<i><u>Blood Done Sign My Name</u></i>	Roseanna Allen	
2013	<i><u>Let the Church Say Amen</u></i>	Loretta Jackson	Television film
2014	<i><u>Supremacy</u></i>	Odessa	
2015	<i><u>Reversion</u></i>	Maya	

Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1987	<i><u>The Facts of Life</u></i>	Diana	Episode: "The Greek Connection"
1987	<i><u>The Cosby Show</u></i>	Veronica	Episode: "The Shower"
1988	<i><u>Amen</u></i>	Young Bride	Episode: "Wedding Bell Blues"
1990	<i><u>21 Jump Street</u></i>	Denise Price	Episode: "Change of Heart"
1990	<i><u>227</u></i>	Leslie	Episode: "Gone Fishing"
1990	<i><u>1st & Ten</u></i>	Joy Brock	Episode: "Don't Powerburst My Bubble"
1991	<i><u>Generations</u></i>	Brandy Alexander	Recurring role
1991	<i><u>The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air</u></i>	Cindy	Episode: "Will Gets a Job"
1992	<i><u>Homefront</u></i>	Mary Louise	Episode: "At Your Age"
1992	<i><u>Roc</u></i>	Carol	Episode: "Roc Throws Joey Out"
1992	<i><u>Tales from the Crypt</u></i>	Mercedes	Episode: "Werewolf Concerto"
1993	<i><u>Out All Night</u></i>	Victoria	Episode: "Mall in the Family"
1993	<i><u>The Sinbad Show</u></i>	Denise	Episode: "Pilot"
1994	<i><u>Hangin' with Mr. Cooper</u></i>	Denise	Episode: "The Courtship of Mark Cooper"
1995	<i><u>The Wayans Bros.</u></i>	Lisa	Series regular, 13 episodes
1997	<i><u>The Outer Limits</u></i>	Beth Carter	Episode: "The Awakening"
2001	<i><u>The Division</u></i>	Inspector Angela Reide	Series regular, 22 episodes
2011	<i><u>Reed Between the Lines</u></i>	Sherri	Episode: "Let's Talk About Affairs"

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External links

- [Lela Rochon \(https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005375/\)](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005375/) at IMDb
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