

All Her Little Secrets, A Novel by Wanda M. Morris,

in conversation with Lissa Jones on Black Market Reads

Transcript (lightly edited for clarity)

[00:00:00] **Lissa Jones:** From the *Library Journal*, “In her debut thriller, corporate attorney Morris deftly combines a creepy naziesque sect with a murderous plot and rounds out the intrigue with a striking commentary on racism, sexual assault, and misogyny.”

From Zakia Harris, New York times best-selling author of *The Other Black Girl*, “It is hard to know just how far you might go to protect yourself and your secret. But it's remarkably easy to get swept up into this razor-sharp workplace thriller. At times, deeply disturbing and all the while gripping, *All Her Little Secrets* is a refreshing who done it, that will keep you guessing. And second guessing from start to finish.”

[00:00:46] **Yo Derek:** For Black writers and all their readers and for audiences who are smart and free-thinking, *Black Market Reads* is a series of conversations highlighting the Black literary voices of today. *Black Market Reads* is produced by the Givens Foundation for African-American Literature in partnership with iDream.tv.

[00:01:14] **Lissa Jones:** Our guest today, Wanda M. Morris, is a corporate attorney who has worked in the legal departments for several Fortune 100 companies. An accomplished presenter and leader, Morris has previously served as the President of the Georgia Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel and is the founder of its Women's Initiative, an empowerment program for female in-house lawyers.

An alumna of the Yale Writer's Workshop and Robert McKee's Story Seminar, she is a member of Sisters in Crime, Mystery Writers of America and Crime Writers of Color.

I'm so excited to welcome Wanda M Morris to talk about her debut novel, *All Her Little Secrets*. Wanda M. Morris, welcome to *Black Market Reads*!

[00:02:06] **Wanda M. Morris:** Thank you for having me.

[00:02:09] **Lissa Jones:** Oh, I am so delighted you're here. I want to start at the beginning, why don't we introduce listeners to your book? Tell us a little bit about it and introduce us to the characters.

[00:02:19] **Wanda M. Morris:** Sure. So, *All Her Little Secrets* is the story of a Black female lawyer who gets caught in the cross-hairs of an executive conspiracy, so to speak. And once she finds out what happens she is in a race to protect a brother she tried to save years ago and stop a conspiracy far more sinister than she ever imagined.

[00:02:45] **Lissa Jones:** It is far more sinister than I could ever have imagined when I opened the book and thought about it. Tell us a little bit about the main character. What's she made of? What's she doing?

[00:02:57] **Wanda M. Morris:** Ellice Littlejohn is like so many women, so many of us. She is smart. She's talented, she's beautiful. And you know, she's hopelessly flawed as well. But she has two things going for her. One is her love and her passion for family, and the other is her strength. She will not be deterred. And I hope that comes through in the book. Because that was one of the things I wanted to accomplish with her character, to show Black female strength.

[00:03:38] **Lissa Jones:** Oh, you absolutely did that! And more! I'm thinking about the theme of family. Family that you're born into and family that you choose. Why was it important to draw that distinction?

[00:03:52] **Wanda M. Morris:** Interestingly enough, I once worked for an organization where management continually called everyone family. You're part of the family. You're one of the family. But, in actuality, they didn't treat us, meaning the company employees, like family. And I thought it was such an interesting dichotomy that executive management, management in general, slapped a label and said, "we're all one big family here". But didn't really treat employees, particularly women and people of color, with the kind of respect and the kind of compassion that you would treat someone in a family.

So, it was the genesis of writing the book, along with having some lived experiences in corporate America where women and people of color weren't really valued. So, I thought, hmm, interestingly enough, I know what family is like when we're all related by blood. And it's interesting that I go into an office and I'm considered family.

So, I wanted to explore both of those topics. Like you said, the family that you choose and the family that chooses you.

[00:05:15] **Lissa Jones:** Wow. I love it. Would you mind giving us a reading?

[00:05:19] **Wanda M. Morris:** Sure. So, the book is told in dual timelines. You see Ellice Littlejohn as a 14 year-old girl. And the other timeline is Ellice Littlejohn in present day.

So, I'll be reading a passage from Chillicothe which is the 14 year-old, Ellice Littlejohn.

Chillicothe, Georgia, August 1979.

The three of us -- me, my brother, Sam, and Vera, or Miss Vee as everyone in Chillicothe called her -- looked like a little trio of vagabonds as we stood in the Greyhound bus station, which in Chillicothe meant a lean-to bus port in the parking lot of the Piggly Wiggly. By God's grace, we'd survive summer's blazing days and humid nights, the fire ant stings and mosquito welts, and all the side-of-the-mouth whispers that floated around town. *What happened? What did those young 'uns do? Why is Ellice Littlejohn really leaving town?* Even

though I was headed to Virginia on a full-ride scholarship to boarding school, it didn't stop some people around town from talking in hushed tones and asking meddlesome questions.

I held tight to the old brown cardboard suitcase Vera had borrowed from her friend, Miss Toney. I didn't have much, but everything I owned was neatly packed inside it, including a sturdy winter coat, two pairs of new shoes and a few toiletries courtesy of Vera passing around the hat among her friends and the congregation at the Full Gospel Baptist church.

Sam hung at Vera's side, kicking the rubber toe of his canvas sneaker against the asphalt. Even though he did what he called "cool stuff" like smoking cigarettes and stealing candy from the grocery store, at that moment, he looked exactly like what he was, a small and frightened ten-year-old boy. I sat my suitcase down and placed my lunch bag on top of it. I grabbed his hand and pulled him off, out of Vera's earshot.

"No more smoking cigarettes while I'm gone, okay?" I said.

"I ain't touched no cigarettes since Miss Vee caught me. I'm not going through that again." Sam rolled his eyes.

I giggled. "And you can't be stealing from the grocery store, Okay? That was cute when you were little but you're too big for that stuff. You can get into really big trouble, especially if Miss Vee finds out." He frowned and looked away.

"I just don't understand why you got to leave. Why can't you go to school here?" Sam asked.

I plucked a piece of lint from Sam's little Afro. "I told you it's a different kind of school. You study there *and* live there. Don't worry. You'll be safe now. There's nobody around to hurt you anymore."

The Greyhound bus pulled to a stop in front of us with a long, loud hiss. "Here it is," Vera said. "Now you got enough money in your bag for a taxicab once you get in Virginia, I know that school got a telephone. So, don't pretend like they don't. You call me as soon as you get there. Call collect. You hear me?"

I smiled. "Yes. Ma'am".

Vera leaned her large frame in and hugged me and the waterfall between us started. Vera wasn't much on crying, but anyone standing in that parking lot would have thought the opposite. She finally, let me go and pulled a couple tissues from her skirt pocket. She wiped my face and handed the tissue to me.

I stared at Vera "I'm scared."

She wrapped an arm around my waist. "I know you are honey bunny. But it's all gonna work out just fine. Your mama was right about one thing. You ain't but 14, but you too big for this

place. This town ain't equipped to hold somebody as smart and strong as you. Now get on that bus and don't come back until the good Lord sends you back. Now go. “

The driver trotted down the stairs to the bus and smiled at us. He took my suitcase and tucked it underneath in the luggage compartment.

Vera gave me another hug. “Go on now.”

I climbed the stairs to the bus into the stifling scent of disinfectant and human sweat. *I'm a big girl. I can handle this.*

I walked past the pregnant lady with two little kids snuggled underneath each of her arms, an old man and woman sitting side by side talking, before I took a window seat, near the middle of the bus. I located my little ragtag family out in the parking lot. Sammy, Vera and Birdie stood beside the car waving up at me. I watched them, Vera smiling and Miss Birdie blowing kisses, as the bus pulled out of the lot and onto the street. And then, I cried for a solid hour, straight across the Georgia --South Carolina state line.

[00:10:24] **Lissa Jones:** A reading. From author, Wanda M. Morris, her book is titled *All Her Little Secrets*. That was incredible to hear you read that. Thank you. it was amazing. I thought the book came to life in my own imagination, but hearing you read it and doing the voices is just - it's priceless. Let's talk a little bit about you. Are you okay with that?

[00:10:48] **Wanda M. Morris:** Absolutely.

[00:10:49] **Lissa Jones:** Okay. Wanda M. Morris, this book was a journey. You talk about 13 years to write, please tell me all about it.

[00:10:57] **Wanda M. Morris:** Sure. So, it wasn't 13 years of non-stop writing. In fact, I started the book 13 years ago. I wrote a first draft and I kind of tinkered with it for a few years. And then incredibly, I talked myself out of it. I convinced myself that nobody wanted to read a book about a 40ish Black woman who dealt with really awful people. So, I put the book down, for six years or so. And I wanted to go back to it, but I was like, nobody's going to read that. Nobody's going to buy it.

I continued to write. I always journal. I wrote a couple little short stories and then about six or seven years ago, I had a health scare and I made it through, but, you know, you have one of those epiphanies and I thought, I am everything to everybody else, but what am I doing for me?

And so, I picked that manuscript back up because I'd always loved to write, ever since I was young. And I said, let me just see what's going on here. Because writing gives me joy, I actually love the act of writing. It's hard. It's solitary. It's unsure, but I like that. And when I picked it up this time, it was pretty bad, but that was okay. Because I figured - I can make bad better. So, I started writing again and continued on with it. I had this vision that I'll get

to the end. I'll revise it some, and then I'll immediately go out and get an agent. And I'm on my way.

And it just didn't work out that way. So, I worked on it. I queried it with a lot of agents. They all turned me down. And that was okay because those earlier drafts, just weren't ready. So, I was undeterred this time and I dug in. I took some additional writing classes. I joined writing communities and, really honed-in on the craft of writing.

And with that, I queried some more and got rejected some more. I think I've probably amassed, maybe something on the order of 70 or so rejections for this book. But every time I went back and revised it; I just knew there's something in the story. Just keep going. And so, I did. And, I finally met my agent, the woman who signed me up at a writer's conference called ThrillerFest in New York City back in 2019.

And it was so funny because, I sat down in front of her to pitch the book and I pretended like I was talking to a girlfriend and we were gossiping about something happening to this woman who worked with these really awful people. And when I finished, she was like, "oh, that sounds really good. Send me the book".

And I sent it to her. And the next day I was sitting in the parking lot, waiting on my son to come out of camp and I get an email and she says, "I am loving this book!" And so, the rest is what they say - is history. She signed me up.

[00:14:35] **Lissa Jones:** Oh, first of all, thank you for persevering. A lot like Ellice, I suspect.

[00:14:43] **Wanda M. Morris:** A little bit.

[00:14:44] **Lissa Jones:** We fight with our heads and I love that. And thank you to her for saying yes to your book, because it really is a page-turner.

You've spent your life making inclusion a verb, particularly for what I call women of culture. And in corporate America that's not an easy thing when you're trying to make your own way, when you're already dealing with your own demons and your own people, thinking of Wanda, you know, in different ways.

Talk to us about your work advocating for women of culture in corporate America. Why did you decide to do it? Why did you stick with? What expenses were, what price did you pay for doing it?

[00:15:23] **Wanda M. Morris:** Oh, that's a great question. I guess I have always been an advocate for women because I watched my mom do it. My mom was a very strong influence in my life and, she was very big on making sure that women were recognized and heard. And that's a tough thing to do in her era, you know, and we're talking the fifties and sixties. But as I grew up I watched her as an example. After getting out of law school, I started to practice employment law, labor and employment law.

So, I've always dealt for the bulk of my career in the area of discrimination and Civil Rights. Throughout all the organizations I've worked for, I've done this kind of work. To me, it's always been this labor of making sure that other people get equity and fairness. And when I was finally high enough in an organization to implement some things, I served as a Vice President, I've served as a Senior Director, and as I took on those roles, I tried to bring other women behind me.

During, my tenure, at one organization, I served as the President of the Association of Corporate Counsel, where I implemented the Women's Initiatives. We sponsored programs and workshops and speakers, resume building, all the things to help female lawyers climb the ladder and find success in their roles. As Vice-president I was in charge of diversity and ensuring that women and people of color, other able body people, got fairness and equity in the workplace. I think, you know, it's one of the things that I talk frequently about is that you have to be in a position where you can make these kinds of changes.

if you have a homogenous looking executive suite, you're going to get homogenous thinking. And you're not going to get people that are tuned to, or compassionate to the issues of other people. And so, if you're working in these roles, hopefully you are bringing in other folks that can make the same kinds of changes that you do. At least that was my hope. That's what I was attempting to do.

[00:18:16] **Lissa Jones:** Oh, thank you. It seems like being an attorney with a mission would be enough, a lot, like almost too much. Why write?

[00:18:26] **Wanda M. Morris:** I've always loved to write. And I used to write even as a young girl. But being a writer wasn't really viewed as a real job. Because there are so many people that write. And it is so hard to get published. So, I pursued a legal career because you do a lot of reading and writing as a lawyer. It's a very different type of writing, but, nonetheless, I never really stopped writing.

And as I mentioned at the top of the conversation, once I looked across the landscape of my life and said, you know, what am I doing that pleases me? I turned back to the thing that pleases me, and it's writing.

[00:19:15] **Lissa Jones:** Well, I am so very glad. Before we ask you for another reading you're part of Sisters in Crime. Okay, I mean, I'm interested in all of them, but particularly Sisters in Crime. Tell me all about it.

[00:19:26] **Wanda M. Morris:** Sure. It is an organization that promotes the publication, the uplifting of women crime writers. But we also have not just Sisters in Crime. We also have Mistresses in Crime as well. So yes, men can join the organization as well. The organization was started by Louise Penny, who was an excellent writer.

And, she started this organization back in the eighties when there were not a lot of female writers getting published. And she said, I'm going to take care of that. And so, she started

this organization. Very similar to Crime Writers of Color, where it's to promote and uplift writers of color who write crime. And that organization is much newer than Sisters in Crime. It's just a couple of years old, but we have 300 members. We have everybody from Walter Mosley and Sean Cosby to people who say, I think I might like to write a crime book one day and who are very new, very green.

But they're both wonderful organizations. And I tell you, honestly, I don't know that I could be here in this space right now if it weren't for support from people in organizations like that. They have been an invaluable resource for me.

[00:21:03] **Lissa Jones:** Oh, I'm so glad to know about both of them so I can talk about them and let people know.

I'm in conversation with author, Wanda M. Morris. Her work is titled *All Her Little Secrets*.

We met Ellice Littlejohn, when she was 14. Will you introduce us to Ellice in the present time and context?

[00:21:22] **Wanda M. Morris:** Sure. Thank you.

Chapter 1

Six forty-five in the morning was far too early for keeping secrets. But Michael and I are lawyers and that's what lawyers do. We keep secrets. Attorney-client privilege, confidential work product, ethical rules, all the ten-dollar terms we use to describe the ways we harbor information from prying eyes.

I hustled through the parking garage, a veritable wind tunnel on a cold blustery January morning, and inside the lobby of Houghton Transportation Company. Houghton management proudly announced its corporate prosperity and success to visitors with an entryway of gleaming chandelier, polished steel and veined marble floors. Inside the sleek glass and metal cage, we raced around for ten and twelve-hour days in our hamster wheels of closed-door meetings, videoconference calls, and potluck lunches in the breakroom.

It was so early, the security guard hadn't even shown up for his post at the front desk. *Good. No clumsy banter.* I press the call button for the 20th floor. I don't drink coffee, but I wished I brought a travel mug of tea or a bottle of water with me to wash away the brain fog. As the elevator rose, I close my eyes for a moment and leaned into the wall. Michael is the executive vice president and general counsel, and I work under him as assistant general counsel in the Legal Department. Michael was cryptic in his call the night before, maybe because someone else was nearby: *Let's meet in my office in the morning. 6 45.* I didn't press him. He did the same thing last week, a late night meeting that lasted over an hour. Only we didn't talk about work. We didn't even have sex.

The elevator pinged and the doors slid open onto the Executive Suite. Everything on this floor was plush, soft and expensive, unlike the utilitarian budget-friendly accommodations

two floors below in the Legal Department. I paced past the darkened offices of the CEO's sycophants, more commonly referred to as the Executive Committee, before I reached Michael's suite. Everything was dark here, too. If he dragged me up here at this un-godly hour and forgot about our meeting, I'd be royally pissed.

The company's reserve lighting system created a menacing tangle of shapes and shadows in the anteroom. A small pit-a-pat of fear slid through me as I flipped the light switch. His assistant's desk was neat and orderly, just the way she always left it.

I tapped lightly on his door. "Michael, it's me, Ellice."

No answer.

My skin prickled. I opened the door and flipped on the lights.

The bright crimson spray of blood was everywhere. Shock raced through me like a torpedo before landing in a hard knot at the pit of my stomach. My knees buckled as a tidal wave of nausea washed over me, like I would be sick and fade into black at any moment. But I didn't panic. I didn't utter a sound.

The star-shaped hole in Michael's right temple was ragged and grisly, like someone had tried to open his skull with a sledgehammer instead of a bullet. Blood had oozed in erratic streams along the side of his face, creating diminutive red rivers in the wrinkles along his jawline, before pooling at the end of his chin and trickling onto his starched white oxford shirt. The air hung thick with the acrid, copper scent of blood. And the hum of the fluorescent lights, the only sound in the room was like a thousand bumblebees.

An instant later, my mind clicked, as if someone else were inside my head directing me.

Run, just go.

I turned my eyes away from Michael's lifeless body and the gun beside him. I hated myself for what I was thinking. Amid all this carnage, my first thoughts were to run, to leave without calling for help.

No one knows I'm here.

I slowly inched away from his body, careful not to touch anything. The few shreds of conscience I had left warned me that to leave would be reprehensible.

I prayed to God for forgiveness, turned off the lights and quietly closed the office door behind me.

This would be the last secret between Michael and me.

[00:26:14] **Yo Derek:** Black writers and all their readers and for audiences who are smart and free-thinking. *Black Market Reads* is a series of conversations highlighting the Black literary voices of today. *Black Market Reads* is produced by the Givens Foundation for African-American Literature in partnership with iDream.tv.

[00:26:36] **Lissa Jones:** Welcome back. You're listening to *Black Market Reads*. Our guest today is Wanda M Morris author of *All Her Little Secrets*. Let's talk about some of the issues you confront in your writing. I think about Kimberle Crenshaw's Intersectionality, and in a way, the number of themes compounded frankly, by race and gender is almost overwhelming and it made me reflect on my own intersections in these ways, sexism, racism, microaggressions, abuse and how Black women are required to carry it. Please tell us about it.

[00:27:16] **Wanda M. Morris:** Sure. When I set out to write the book, I wanted to write a story about a strong Black woman. And I said, what are the signature issues that we grapple with as women, particularly women of color on a day-to-day basis. And, Lissa, quite frankly, I surprised myself as I started to list them and think, just like you said --abuse, racism, microaggressions, gaslighting, all the things that you deal with in in a day to day.

One of the scenes that particularly touches me is when Ellice goes back to Chillicothe, where she was raised and she looks around the town and she thinks to herself, I'm not an angry Black woman the way society tries to tell me I am. I'm a fighting Black woman because Black women are constantly in this quest to be heard, to be respected, to be protected, to be recognized. All the things that are so freely given to people in the majority. And when you're constantly having to ask for those things, having to demand those things.

I try to incorporate scenes or snatches of real life that would address these things. Sometimes it can be a tough read. I had an early reader comment that, gosh, there was just so much of that. It was almost too much. And I was like, try living that, you know, on a day-to-day basis, try living that every day.

So, it is a lot in there, but it's a lot to be a Black female in America.

[00:29:27] **Lissa Jones:** I think you said it correctly. I mean, I wouldn't shy away from anything. I don't think it was too much at all. I think it was really illustrative of what it means to navigate as a Black woman to constantly have to demand your respect every single day, even though you're not being disrespectful. You know, if you cross the parking lot, people are like, what are you mad at? You're like -- nothing it's sunny outside, you know? And you know, I'm frowning up. Cause my sunglasses, you know. White Supremacy. I don't know why in this country it's taken us so long to be able to just say it out loud, but White Supremacy plays prominently in your book and lots of ways.

I mean, what they call race. I don't really necessarily believe in the social construct, but bi-cultural relationships and power and privilege, based on where you are in a floor and who is around you and whether or not you have a tribe. Talk to us about those things. How did you come to those realities? Through experience?

[00:30:21] **Wanda M. Morris:** Indeed, some of the things, and I don't like to point to particular examples, but there are some examples in this book from my lived experience working in corporate America. I live in Atlanta. It is a city that, it's a bit of an enigma. You have Confederate soldiers' statues on one corner and just down the street is a six-story tall mural of John Lewis. You can still find streets and venues named Dixie and things of that nature, and Black Lives Matter is prominent here. And so, it's a city of dichotomies and including White Supremacy.

I think that the South has never shied away from what it is. Let's just be honest. And so while the rest of America was kind of skipping along during Obama's terms in office as president, I think we were still feeling the effects here in the South where you could very easily walk around and see Confederate flags and people wearing Confederate flag shirts and saying all sorts of disrespectful things about Obama.

Things hadn't changed. We just had a Black president. And so, I wanted to tap into the dichotomies of the city and what that meant if you are navigating it. In the book, not only is Ellice navigating this, her brother is also navigating it as well. He is caught in a legal judicial system that from the start never really gave him a fair shot and the repercussions of that. So, I tried to deal with it all in a way that I hope is eye-opening, but also makes people stop and think like, Hmm, I had never thought of it that way. Maybe start a conversation or do some deeper thinking or research on some of these issues.

[00:32:49] **Lissa Jones:** Well, I can certainly say that you have reached your goal with me. I coach a number of Black women, and I intend to put some of them into a coaching circle around your book and let us have conversations about how we heal. Because these are the conversations we have about every day, these intersections.

Another piece that I'd like to touch on before we talk about the extraordinary lengths we have to go to, to have a seat at the table is what happens when every human being has secrets. And your book is terrifying in a way, because it made me start thinking, what secrets do I hold? Whose secrets am I keeping? Am I helping them by keeping their secret? Did you intend that when you were writing?

[00:33:32] **Wanda M. Morris:** Very much so. First and foremost, I love a book with a good secret. But I think we all have those other sides of ourselves, and we may not be keeping secrets quite as dark as Ellice Littlejohn, but you know who amongst us, hasn't made a mistake or two, or have a regret for something that we've entered into. And we carry that with us. And I just think that, the darker the secrets, the more painful the secrets, the more they impact your life.

And for Ellice Littlejohn, she puts on this mask of educational pedigree and expensive clothes, and she surrounds herself with a luxurious condo. But she's still that 14 year-old girl back in Chillicothe who has some unresolved pain. And it's one of the reasons why I encourage people, particularly women of color seek to mental health guidance when you need it.

You know, you are carrying a tremendous burden. Just being Black and female and walking around every day. And that is hard. So, get whatever you need, whatever resources you need. Reach out to friends, reach out to therapists, get what you need. And I think that's the reason why you see Ellice Littlejohn in the book behave and do the things that she does and makes the decisions that she makes. Come on. She's involved in an affair with her married boss. She's smart enough to know that that is not a good decision, but she does it, nonetheless. What I tried to do was to insert things like that, to show when you don't have this kind of resolved or treated, trauma, then you don't make decisions that are necessarily in your best interest.

[00:35:47] **Lissa Jones:** I'm so glad we're talking today. Speaking of trauma, constantly having to prove our relevance, having a seat at the table and constantly having to prove that we deserve to be there, that resonates throughout your book. Talk to us about that, please.

[00:36:05] **Wanda M. Morris:** You know, I think I'm probably preaching to the choir when I preach to people of color about this topic, but so often you do all the things that you think are right. I got the education and I got the job. And then once I got the job, I did all the things they asked of me in the job. Now where's my promotion. And you don't get it, or, I rose to the executive suite. I have the educational pedigree that they told me to get, but still, they don't want me to sit at this table and make a decision the same way that they are making them.

Not only is it traumatic, but it is the kind of thing that wears on your confidence and your belief. And so, you start to second-guess yourself. You start to think, wait a minute, am I the crazy one? Or did I not do this? And it's just another part of that kind of oppression, it's another form of oppression.

And for me, what I had to do when I was in a situation like that is, I had to, really talk myself up and give myself the pep talk like, oh, wait a minute. I'm sitting at this table. I paid for my law degree, just like everybody else sitting around this table. Excuse you. But then that's hard to do. I shouldn't have to do that.

I shouldn't have to do that, or I shouldn't have to walk into a room and start to count all the other brown people or people that look like me to see, okay, do I have an ally here? Will this person support? I shouldn't have to do that. My white male counterparts, I feel pretty certain don't walk into a room and make that kind of assessment.

And so, when I was part of the Women's Initiative and founding of the Women's Initiative, it was one of the things that we wanted to address for not just Black women, but for all kinds of women, because that is a female issue too. It's one of those intersectional issues that we talked about earlier, where we still are not on parity with men when it comes to salaries and promotions and everything else. And so, I wanted to make sure that when I addressed it in the book, I was kind of offering different slices of that because you see Ellice and her journey. And then you see, Willow who is the vice president, and she has her own journey that she's trying to make as well. And so, this is kind of a woman's issue as well as a people of color issue.

[00:39:02] **Lissa Jones:** Intersectionality keeps showing up.

[00:39:05] **Wanda M. Morris:** Yep.

[00:39:06] **Lissa Jones:** Well, Wanda M Morris. I am so glad that I got a chance to talk to you. Your book was fantastic. Talking to you was even better. And as I ask of each of our guests at the end of our time together, what are you reading?

[00:39:22] **Wanda M. Morris:** Well, I have just started a very interesting book. *Her Name is Knight* and it's by Yasmin Angoe. And it is about a Black female assassin. So again, it's a thriller, but I think Yasmin's book is kind of breaking barriers because we don't see a lot of Black female assassins. So, I just started in on this, but it is a thrill ride just from the opening pages.

[00:39:54] **Lissa Jones:** Oh, Wanda. Thank you. I will be sure to pick it up so I can have my mind be on par with your mind, at least with what we're reading. I want to thank you for writing this book and thank you for speaking our truths and thank you for doing so unapologetically and for providing the hope that all of us need to keep going.

[00:40:14] **Wanda M. Morris:** Thank you and thank you for having me.

[00:40:16] **Lissa Jones:** It has been my pure privilege. Wanda, thank you so much.

Our guest today was Wanda M. Morris. Her book is titled *All Her Little Secrets*. If you are smart and wise, go get it right now. It says on the top of the book, "everybody has something to hide." I'll tell you; I'm still thinking about what my secrets are and what I'm hiding and who I'm hiding them for.

Thank you for listening to this edition of *Black Market Reads*. To go deeper and find out more about our authors remember to visit and subscribe at BlackMarketReads.com. Our production team includes executive producer Herman Milligan, co-producers Lissa Jones and Edie French, technical director Paul Auguston, audio engineer Soren Schoen, associate writer Maya Auguston, the voice "Yo" Derek Emery, and our artist of inspiration Ta-coumba T. Aiken. I'm your host, Lissa Jones. We'll see you again. Next time.

[00:41:22] **Yo Derek:** [Black Market Reads](https://BlackMarketReads.com) is produced by the Givens Foundation for African-American Literature in partnership with iDream.tv. *Black Market Reads* is made possible through the generous support of our individual donors, the Target Foundation, and the voters of Minnesota through the Minnesota State Arts Board with support from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.