



Fans of the PBS favorite History Detectives will notice a new face when the 11th season of the series, History Detectives Special Investigations, premieres July 1. Kaiama Glover, an associate professor at Barnard College, joins veteran detectives Tukufu Zuberi and Wes Cowan to solve the biggest unsolved mysteries in American history.

In the interview below, Kaiama answers some questions about her research, what she loves about being a History Detective, and the mystery she dreams of solving.

What's the best thing about being a History Detective?

I love interviewing the people who are closest to the history—either in their passions and interests, or in their relationships to the individuals at the center of whatever mystery we're hoping to solve. I'm struck every time by the fact that history really does have a "heart."

What's the worst thing about it?

Airport security. It's arbitrary, it's inconsistent, it has little rhyme or reason. Now there's a mystery that needs solving!

What advice would you give someone interested in the field of historical research?

Don't expect to be able to answer every question you have going in, and instead look at the "dead ends" as opportunities. Interrogating the past requires open-mindedness, persistence and a real measure of creativity.

What do you do most in this job?

Read.

How do you approach a mystery?

I try to think about the context in which our mystery is embedded. I make sure to have a grasp of the broader historical moment and to get a sense of what the various players might have thought, feared, withheld, or otherwise had to contend with—especially from a racial or gendered perspective—living in that particular historical moment.

Where do you like to get started?

I start online. I read everything I can find out there and jump down every rabbit hole.

What area would you describe as your specialty?

The relationship between history and literature. I'm convinced that the ways in which stories are told not only reflect but also can determine social and historical realities.

Is there a puzzle or mystery you dream of solving?
I wouldn't mind digging into Amelia Earhart's disappearance...

If you could leave a time capsule now to be opened in 2114, what would you put in it?
Cryogenically frozen, genetically unmodified seeds of my favorite foods and flowers.

Where's the most interesting place you've traveled as a History Detective?
Austin, TX circa 1885.

What do you never leave home without?
That thing I've been meaning to read.