

LAUREN MORELLI

b. July 22, 1982

WRITER & PRODUCER

“There are so many more queer stories being told on television, but often we’re still presented with overwhelmingly white, overwhelmingly male.”

She is an award-winning writer and the co-producer of “Orange Is the New Black.”

Lauren Morelli is an American screenwriter, producer and director. Her work often depicts lesbian relationships and issues. She is best known for two Netflix series, “Orange Is the New Black” and “Tales of the City.”

Morelli grew up in McCandless, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh. At Marymount Manhattan College in New York City, she followed her passion for dance until a back injury forced her to reconsider her career path. She pursued writing but graduated with a BFA in Modern Dance.

After graduation, Morelli moved to Los Angeles. She wrote short stories and blog posts before securing a position as the lead writer for “Orange Is the New Black.” Premiering on Netflix in 2013, the series is an adaptation of Piper Kerman’s memoir, “Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women’s Prison” (2010). The show features lesbian relationships in a low-security women’s federal prison.

Ranked by The Guardian as one of the 100 best TV shows of the 21st century, “Orange” earned praise for humanizing prisoners and showcasing diversity in body types, racial backgrounds and sexualities. Nominated for 17 Emmys, six Golden Globes and six Writers Guild Awards, it remained the best-watched series on Netflix, three years after it ended.

Morelli worked on the series for five of its seven seasons. Writing for lesbian characters awakened her own latent sexuality. A year into the show, she came out as a lesbian and divorced her husband.

Following the success of “Orange Is the New Black,” Morelli continued to work on lesbian-themed material at Netflix, becoming the executive producer and writer of “Tales of the City” (2019). An adaption of Armistead Maupin’s 1978 books on LGBT romance in San Francisco, the series starred Oscar winners Ellen Page and Laura Linney.

Morelli’s work extends to playwriting. Her short play “Roach & Rat” was produced in 2013 by Lesser America, a theater company in New York City.

In 2017 Morelli married Samira Wiley. The couple has been together since shortly after Morelli came out. In 2019 Diva Magazine, Europe’s leading publication for lesbian and bisexual women, featured Morelli on its cover.



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