



1. Series synopsis

A riveting, psychological drama from David E. Kelley (HBO's *The Undoing* and *Big Little Lies*) and directed by Lesli Linka Glatter (*Homeland*), ***Love & Death*** tells the unbelievable true story of Candy Montgomery (Elizabeth Olsen), a 1980s Texas housewife accused of murder. Despite a loving family, a picture-perfect home, and an active presence at church, Candy is unable to shake her sense of suburban ennui. After an unexpectedly charged moment with fellow church member Allan Gore (Jesse Plemons), Candy finds just the risk-taking thrill that's been missing from her life. Their ensuing, meticulously strategised affair unfolds mostly as planned – until their respective spouses, Pat (Patrick Fugit) and Betty (Lily Rabe), each discover their secret...and someone picks up an axe.

2. Episode descriptions

Episode 1 “The Huntress”

At a church volleyball match, Candy and Allan share a surprisingly charged moment on the court, while their spouses, Pat and Betty, navigate a misunderstanding in the stands. Though Candy assures her friend Sherry that Allan is “fall-in-love-proof,” she later finds herself spontaneously proposing a first liaison. After initially insisting he can't cheat on Betty, Allan suggests he and Candy carefully weigh the pros and cons of an affair.

Episode 2: “Encounters”

During Candy and Allan's second encounter, Allan recounts the impact of an earlier affair on his marriage and shares concerns that a now-pregnant Betty's postpartum depression may return. As their arrangement unfolds over the next several months, Candy fears she and Allan are at risk of breaking their most important rule – no feelings.

Later, Candy bristles at news that Allan and Betty are going on a Christian marriage retreat.

Episode 3: “Stepping Stone”

After Allan tells Candy he needs to focus on his family, Candy is left to take another look at her own marriage – and suggests that she and Pat go on the same marriage retreat. Later, when the Gores and Montgomerys dine together, Candy finds she's completely over Allan. A sense of normalcy returns... until Pat makes a discovery that leads him to seek answers from Sherry.

Episode 4: “Do No Evil”

Following a grisly struggle, a dazed Candy attempts to go about her day as normally as possible. Away on a business trip, Allan grows concerned when his repeated calls to Betty go unanswered. Later, Candy gives her version of events to the police, who also question Allan about the fidelity of his marriage.

Episode 5: “The Arrest”

After detectives intensify their questioning, Candy and Pat visit fellow church congregant Don Crowder, who quickly advises Candy to retain him as her attorney. At a funeral service in Kansas, Allan admits to Betty's relatives his affair with Candy... and that she's a suspect in the case. Later, Pat grows frustrated over being kept in the dark.



Episode 6: “The Big Top”

October 1980. After Don’s explosive opening remarks reveal a strategy that shocks the community, Candy gets a visit from a furious and hurt Pastor Jackie. Later, Allan’s testimony about Betty’s state of mind rankles her father, Bob Pomeroy, and a series of witnesses describe the grim scene at the Gore house.

Episode 7: “Sssssh”

Despite Don’s concerns about her mental clarity, Candy testifies, telling the packed courtroom that she feared for her life. As they await the verdict, Candy hopes things will return to normal, but Pat tells her their lives will never be the same.

3. Adapting an American Tragedy: Inside the Storytelling of *Love & Death*

In a career that has spanned nearly four decades, it’s hard to imagine a genre that eight-time Emmy-winning writer and producer David E. Kelley – creator of such TV juggernauts as *Big Little Lies*, *The Practice* and *Ally McBeal*— hadn’t tackled as a storyteller.

But something stirred in him when he read *Texas Monthly*’s two-part feature *Love and Death in Silicon Prairie*. The investigative piece, originally published in 1984, centred on the-crazy-but-true-story of Texas housewife Candace “Candy” Lynn Montgomery, who was accused of murdering her lover’s wife, Betty Gore, in Wylie, TX on June 13, 1980. During the assault, Gore was struck 41 times with a wood-splitting axe, leaving local authorities to investigate one of the more gory, disturbing cases in state history.

Montgomery, who at the time was just 30 and married with two small children, was arrested but ultimately found not guilty on October 30, 1980 — by a jury of nine women and three men – on the grounds of self-defence and lingering childhood trauma, which her attorneys say triggered the violent act.

“I was fascinated and immediately wanted to read the book,” says Kelley of authors Jim Bloom and John Atkinson’s deeper examination of the tragedy, *Evidence of Love* (2018). “I was engrossed in the characters and their pathology, juxtaposed against this bucolic, warm and familiar town. It all drew me in – the place, the people and, of course, the insane plot.

Kelley discussed the prospect of adapting the material for television with his go-to collaborating producers at Blossom Films— Emmy-winners Nicole Kidman and Per Saari (*Big Little Lies*, *The Undoing*). They agreed that the tone and focus of an adaptation of this story would eschew a “true-crime” mantle and instead approach the material as a thoughtful examination of a tragedy.

“With David, we always trust that his writing will reflect the human condition, which is what Nicole and I are most drawn to,” says Saari, adding that even a story about a gruesome axe murder also had to be entertaining. “It has to feel human,” he says. “We experienced this making *Big Little Lies*. The characters are in very challenging situations, but we presented them like a cappuccino: frothy on top, but underneath there’s a bitter taste that gives you that punch.”

Love & Death had the added onus of telling a painfully true story. “We had to honour the facts and spirit of who these people were,” says Saari. “Candy wasn’t a ‘psychopath;’ she



was – and is - a real person who had feelings and complexities; Betty too. And we feel for Betty so much because she was literally fighting for her life.”

Adds Kelley, “When I consider doing any series, the first question I ask is ‘Why?’ And if the story has a strong plot with characters that can entertain and provoke – those are good jumping-off points. And all of that was in these characters. I could relate to them. I grew up in a small town too. I’ve been to those churches, I’ve seen people singing in choirs and socialising at picnics. I felt as if I knew them. At the same time, I didn’t know what some of them, especially Candy, were capable of becoming.”

4. Crafting the Look, Feel and Tone of *Love & Death*: Inside the Series with Executive Producer and Director Lesli Linka Glatter

Kelley and Saari brought to *Love & Death* an unflappable track-record for telling complex, female-centred stories. But they needed an undaunted visionary to help them realise their ambitions.

Enter eight-time Emmy nominee and three-time Director’s Guild Award-winner Lesli Linka Glatter (*Homeland*, *Man Men*) who faced a particular challenge in crafting an appropriate look, feel and tone for this story as the series’ helmer-executive producer.

“I wanted to dig deeply into these characters and their world, all the while balancing the tonal shifts in the original story,” says Glatter. “The story is very much about a perceived version of the classic American dream. It’s about life in the late-1970s— a time when people got married at 22, had kids and church was their social network. I didn’t want the narrative to be without levity. Life isn’t like that. This is also a story that if it wasn’t true, you couldn’t actually make it up.”

Glatter says she saw particular appeal in Candy as a protagonist. “She has holes in her heart and soul that are immense and she picks absolutely the wrong thing to fill them. There was also a giant disconnect between the public and private Candy, which I don’t think was uncommon for women at that time.”

Most importantly, they couldn’t “let Candy off the hook” for her terrible deed.

“I have a lot of compassion for her, but also for Betty. She was trapped too. And there is also a tragedy to be explored in a culture that fostered a collective inability to express feelings,” Glatter says. “And that’s what I wanted to explore; not just tell a story about a horrible murder.”

Despite having each carved out legendary statuses in both TV and film, Kelley and Glatter had somehow never previously collaborated. And Glatter says it was clear from one of their earliest conversations that theirs would be a partnership defined by equity. “We were having dinner and he said ‘You are the directing showrunner and I am the writing showrunner.’ We were instantly a team. None of it could happen without David’s amazing words, and it was my job to bring those words to life,” she says.

Kelley began his writing process in December 2020 – during the peak of the COVID 19 pandemic – with the intention of writing all seven hours of the series. Glatter started scouting locations in Texas in May of 2021 and filming began in September of 2021.



It wasn't lost on Glatter, a native Texan herself, the novelty of being able to shoot in her home state, just hours from where the events of *Love & Death* took place 42 years ago. "I love Texas—the wide open spaces, the sense of possibility," says Glatter. "This is absolutely a Texas story and the fact that I'm from there hopefully gave me even more compassion and perspective."

One of the team's most exciting and daunting tasks was securing *Love & Death's* key cast, namely the role of Candy Montgomery, a role that required its performer to possess a rare combination of gravitas, playfulness and accessibility, all within an actor in her early 30's.

"When I read David's amazing scripts, I thought immediately of Elizabeth Olsen," says Glatter. "I remembered her from her breakout film [2011's] *Martha Marcy May Marlene*. Her career is such an interesting combination of provocative indie films and commercial projects like *WandaVision*. Lizzie is an incredibly intelligent and layered actor - she's so smart, coming from the theatre and studying Russian literature at NYU. She's the real deal."

Adds Glatter: "We wanted viewers to fall in love with Candy. She was the life of the party, but she was not all that she appeared to be on the surface, so we needed an actress that could thread that very delicate needle. Elizabeth had everything we'd hoped for."

For the role of Allan Gore, Glatter admits "all I could think of" was Oscar-nominee Jesse Plemons (*The Power of the Dog*) who is an extraordinary actor. For Candy's engineer-husband Pat, it occurred to Glatter, "Oh, my God. What about Patrick Fugit?"

Emmy-nominee Lily Rabe (*American Horror Story*) was cast to play the doomed Betty Gore; Emmy-nominee Tom Pelphrey (*Ozark*) as Candy's bombastic attorney Don Crowder; and the cast was rounded out by acclaimed supporting players, including Krysten Ritter (*Jessica Jones*), Keir Gilchrist (*Atypical*) and Elizabeth Marvel (*Homeland*). "We have an absolute dream cast," says Glatter. "I also loved being able to cast in Texas, too. We found so many great local actors."

As she designed her directorial approach for *Love & Death*, Glatter was struck by numerous "human" moments in Kelley's scripts, which served as potent reminders of her mission. "I wanted to refine the IP and make the series about character and story—the scenes at the church, Allan and Betty's Marriage Encounter therapy weekend... I wanted to embrace the unique and sometimes humorous environment, without making fun of it," says Glatter.

Within these smaller moments, Glatter still had to navigate at least three very distinct genre shifts over the course of the series: the dark humour beneath Candy and Allan's affair; the horrible and gruesome murder and subsequent police investigation; and the courtroom drama of Candy's trial.

These narrative ebbs and flows coalesce in a way that elevates the material from its basic "true-crime" foundation. "Candy chooses to have an affair, but she doesn't pick the 'hot guy'—she picks the little-bit paunchy nice guy she stands next to in the church choir. None of it makes sense, and yet it's incredibly moving," says Glatter. "And they talk about it for months before they act on it. It wasn't lascivious. It was, 'Let's think about it over lunch.' It was about being seen and heard rather than just about sex. I wanted to play all of that with respect and realism."



As for the violence, “I can say without a doubt that shooting the murder was a horrible experience for all of us,” says Glatter. “And we wanted it to be. We didn’t want to glorify anything. I based all the choreography on what was written in the book and police forensics. We tried to be very specific in how we dressed the scene—the dog bowl, the child’s teaching toilet, the book of nursery rhymes. It all adds to the tragedy and trauma.”

In conceiving the courtroom scenes in episodes 6 and 7, Glatter recalled a particular classic film and how, despite the real-world events it depicts, it managed to create a sense of mystery in the viewer. “Every time I watch *All The President’s Men*, I still wonder, ‘Is it going to be a different ending?’” says Glatter of director Allan Pakula’s 1976 Watergate thriller starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman.

“That’s what I was trying to achieve with the courtroom scenes here too. I wanted both the prosecution and defence to be seen as equally powerful so you’re wondering, ‘Oh my God, is she *not* going to get off? And of course she does, but it isn’t at all joyful. They didn’t find her ‘innocent;’ they found her ‘not guilty.’ Nothing good came of this ordeal for anyone involved, and for me, it was an incredible test to portray,” says Glatter.

5. Reflecting on Love, Loss and a Story Too Terrible to be True with Cast Members Elizabeth Olsen, Jesse Plemons, Patrick Fugit, Lily Rabe and Tom Pelphrey

Love & Death’s on-screen talent each came to the project with varying degrees of knowledge of the tragedy. For Jesse Plemons, the story had an added eeriness. “My family lived in the Dallas area until I was five and then we moved to another town about an hour away. So, I should have heard about it, but I didn’t,” says Plemons (“Allan Gore”). “So when I finally read the *Texas Monthly* article, I was gripped and totally freaked out. It’s so hard to imagine this happening in your backyard. That’s what’s so scary and intriguing about it.”

It was the story’s domestic-horror tone that intrigued lead actor Elizabeth Olsen to want to play Candy, alongside of the added twist of approaching Kelley’s scripts with as much neutrality as possible. “I have to defend any character I play, but with this story, there was the added challenge of knowing the effect these events have had on so many peoples’ lives,” says Olsen. “But I almost have to cut that part of my brain off because, while we are telling a true story, we’re still telling a creative story. We *have* to take certain licences because these people weren’t famous; we don’t know, say, their speech patterns or other personal details. There’s a lot of room for invention.”

Olsen and Plemons shared a fascination with their characters’ naivete and almost childlike behaviour. “I think I would have related to Allan a lot when I was younger. His dynamic with Candy is like something you’d normally see between teenagers,” says Plemons. “There is a repression and shame around sex; a feeling of not fully being able to express themselves and all the baggage attached to that. It was really interesting to explore Allan essentially coming into himself, which David captured so well in the scripts. There are funny moments, which seems odd to say considering the events that ultimately took place.”

Olsen, who had no contact with the real Candy Montgomery – who is now 72 and reportedly living in Georgia – calls her character “an incredibly persistent woman” and someone who approached everything in her life with a rare optimism.

“She was always trying to solve problems, especially the huge internal conflict she was experiencing about her identity,” says Olsen. “Her kids were already old enough to be in



school, but she was still young and – she felt – still sexually desirable. At the same time, she was also trying to start her own business. There was a lot of playfulness and joy that came with her relationship with Allan. She was able to fully be herself around him.”

One of *Love & Death's* most genre-defying devices is the loving, if imperfect, marriages depicted between Allan and Candy and their respective spouses.

Patrick Fugit, who plays Candy’s adoring if “somewhat clueless” husband Pat, says his character couldn’t have been a bigger departure for him as an artist. “Lizzie and I talked a lot about, ‘Why were they even together in the first place? Does Pat understand what Candy needs? Clearly, he doesn’t! He feels electrified by her, but she’s reaching outside of their sphere for something bigger. And she doesn’t know what that is. And Pat sure as shit doesn’t know either,’” says Fugit.

Echoing Plemons, Fugit agrees that Pat and Candy too reflect the 1950s values they inherited from their parents. “It’s sad, actually. They were immediately thrust into an adult world with adult consequences, but still so young,” he says. “They weren’t given tools by the previous generation about how to have and maintain a happy family and a marriage.”

Lily Rabe (“Betty Gore”) says while she is quite opposite in many ways to Betty, she of course found deep connection to her character and loved the challenge of doing so since they move through the world so differently. “At one point while shooting after Jesse and I had become friends, he said, ‘You really could not be more different from Betty’. But there are certainly commonalities I share with Betty as a woman and a mother,” says Rabe. “I was very protective of her while we were shooting. I think she had an overwhelming degree of fear, which became her motor. And that feels dangerously relatable. It can consume you. It’s a choice I find myself having to make every day: to not over-water the soil my fears are growing in.”

Olsen, Plemons, Fugit and Rabe felt a collective appreciation during production for the carefully curated, respectful approach that Kelley employed in painting their characters with empathy and believability “A universal positive of David’s writing is his conversational tone,” says Fugit. “It can feel awkward at first, but when you’re in the moment with your fellow actors, you’re like, ‘Wow, this feels like a real conversation.’ And while he’s never written ‘true crime,’ he’s written a ton about human nature and that gives you a lot of ideas as an actor. I could tell the others felt that, too.”

The cast’s closeness was particularly useful for Olsen and Rabe when they had to film the harrowing scene in which Candy murders Betty in the latter’s laundry room. The actors share in Glatter’s assessment of the experience as emotionally taxing. “It was fucking awful,” admits Olsen. “Filming it came with a crazy surge of adrenaline. I was incredibly overwhelmed over those three-plus days. I’ve killed people on-screen before, but this was truly awful. And maybe the hardest part of that whole sequence was trying to make a light axe look heavy!”

Rabe says she’s also done her “fair share of murder scenes,” but that sequence was one of the most intense she’d experienced. “Lesli is pretty unflappable as a director but I remember, when it was over, she just held my hand and we wept,” says Rabe.

Adding to the stress and heightened emotions, says Rabe, “Betty had a daughter, a young baby *and* believed she was pregnant with her third child. I was in fact pregnant with my third child while shooting the series, which was incredibly poignant. Betty was fighting for her life,



in a way that was almost superhuman. That willfulness, to me as a mother, and to someone who was pregnant, felt like the most human thing there is. I still can barely talk about it.”

Olsen and Rabe say their intimacy as actors and friends proved to be crucial. “Our bond grew tenfold during that time,” says Rabe. “We knew we had to have a certain kind of endurance, both physical and emotional. A few times we just sat quietly in our corner with a hand on a knee, like teammates at halftime.”

Amidst the bleakness of *Love & Death*, there’s a welcome levity in the character of bombastic attorney Don Crowder, whom Candy hires to defend her in her murder trial. Actor Tom Pelphrey admits his knowledge of Don and the case at large was scant, but Kelley’s scripts blew him away in ways he didn’t expect. “What really got me was I couldn’t stop laughing. All the characters, except for Don, are so earnest and lacking guile and irony. The story struck me as so virginal in the tone,” he says.

In preparing to play Crowder, Pelphrey read all the IP, “did all the Google image searches” and gleaned fascinating insights in an interview with Crowder’s wife Carol (played in the series by Olivia Grace Applegate), published after the couple had divorced in the mid-1990’s.

“Reading that helped me filled in stuff between the lines about Don,” says Pelphrey. “What most struck me was that he and Carol remained best friends and were very respectful with each other, which is incredibly rare.”

Pelphrey was also moved by Crowder’s real-life commitment to helping foster children and those who had been abused and/or neglected. He seemed to gravitate to helping people cope with trauma, which likely informed his willingness to take Candy on as a client. And his strategy in defending Candy was very much ahead of its time in how he framed both trauma and emotional triggers as explaining her actions. “We’re accustomed to this kind of language now, but back then, this wasn’t something anyone was talking about in the context of a criminal defence,” says Pelphrey.

Sadly, Crowder died by suicide in 1998, which cast a larger, tragic pall over the character. “I was surprised when I learned Don committed suicide. While it’s always tragic- this felt especially so. Don seemed like such a vital, good man; he was constantly championing the dispossessed and the underdog.” says Pelphrey. “I really connected with that mission, and the fact that he didn’t like authority very much. I can relate to that too, one hundred percent.”

6. Building the World of *Love & Death* with Production Designer Suzuki Ingerslev

Glatter says one of the production’s “greatest gifts” was being able to shoot the series on-location in Texas, just three or so hours from the events of *Love & Death*. But it became clear early on that securing the retro, quaint locations outside of Dallas needed to tell this story – churches, motels and era-appropriate homes – would be difficult.

“The small towns where the events took place – Wylie, Lucas and McKinney – have grown so much since the late 1970s,” says Glatter. “Back then, Wylie had around 3,700 people; today it has around 70,000. Had we decided to be based in Dallas, we sadly couldn’t shoot in those surrounding towns because they’ve all changed too much. So we chose the Austin area instead.”



Glatter enlisted the expertise of 13-time Emmy-nominated production designer Suzuki Ingerslev (*True Blood*, *Six Feet Under*). Ingerslev was energised by the multilayered approach required for the project, namely re-creating a number of iconic worlds within the larger narrative of *Love & Death*, including: Candy and Betty's domestic environments, the community's church spaces and various hotels and motels. "Small-town America has an incredible, bucolic beauty, and I wanted to show that in every scene," says Ingerslev. "And this process always begins with making sure the characters feel like real people."

At the core of her challenge was crafting personalised and tonally-on-point home environments for Candy and Betty; spaces that could tell their stories without the actors ever saying a word. "They were such different women. Candy saw herself as a designer; Betty was a Sears-catalogue person," she says. "Candy and Pat had money to have the newest appliances. In contrast, Allan and Betty lived in a different part of town. She was more conservative and they were *not* going to spend money on nice furniture."

Continues Ingerslev: "The Gores were also Midwestern transplants to Texas. They had their cherished wedding memories up on the wall, the pictures of the kids. We made things more matchy-matchy in their house— toilet seat covers and floor mats. They lived in a tract house, where Candy and Pat had a custom-built house."

Despite the glut of modern construction in Texas, there were thankfully still a lot of "dated interiors," says Ingerslev, so then it became a strategic matter about how best to hide modern flourishes in spaces where they filmed.

"We were also still in the pandemic and coping with various supply-chain issues too," she says. "But we found some great vintage tile and flooring places in L.A. We also used an amazing business that creates custom wallpaper. So before I left to go to Texas I spent a time at that warehouse flipping through old wallpaper books. I picked the patterns that I liked and we printed all our own wallpaper."

Ingerslev adds, laughing: "We spent a *lot* of money on wallpaper, but it really gave us bang for the buck; it's stuff you could never find for sale now."

Per supply-chain issues, set decorator Gabby Villarreal had to employ some creative tactics for sourcing various set accessories. "I don't know how she did it, but she went across state lines to Mississippi and found stores that carried original hosiery from the 1970s still in the original packaging," marvels Ingerslev. "She also sourced chairs, TV's and toilets. We had an entire warehouse filled with 1970s collectibles. I thought, 'We should keep this collection, we're never going to find these things intact again!'"

For scenes that took place in the community's Methodist church, Ingerslev employed Rev. Cynthia Kepler-Karrer as a local adviser for her expertise. "She walked us through the different seasons, religious holidays and colours that would have been appropriate for the various time periods," says Ingerslev. "I kept thinking, 'It's all about the stained-glass.'"

One of the funniest, and frankly most bizarre, locations in the series is a hotel where Betty and Allan, and later Candy and Pat, stay for a Marriage Encounter weekend, which was based on photos of the actual hotel outside of Dallas. The hotel had a medieval "knights of the round table" theme that Ingerslev says they couldn't have dreamed up if they tried.

"It's funny, before we left for Texas, [assistant director] Sunday Stevens, Lesli and I actually went to Disneyland to see if we could shoot these scenes at one of their hotels, but reality



soon set in that we'd actually be in Texas for the whole shoot," she says. "So we looked far and wide in Texas to find anything we could remotely use. We went to a town called Kerrville that was completely dated and found two hotels that could work. We had to redecorate, but the bones were there—the heavy woods, the beams, the stone—all these lovely, lush layers for us to change up a bit," says Ingerslev.

Finding the perfect old, cheap motels where Candy and Allan meet for their romantic trysts proved *Love & Death's* biggest production-design "get" as very few even exist. (Ingerslev says many had been converted into low-income housing.) And when they *did* find one that's functioning as a motel, "It was so run-down," she says. "So we repainted it and ended up using over like 120 gallons of paint. We put up new drapery, replaced all the doors and repaved the whole entire parking lot." A bonus of all this added labour was that the motel owners were essentially gifted a free retro-renovation. "They were very nice and let us do everything we needed to," says Ingerslev. "They were very happy with the results!"

7. Dressing the Players of *Love & Death*: Costume Designer Audrey Fisher Reveals Trade Secrets

"I've worked with Lesli before, so I know she's going to bring a seriousness and commitment to the narrative," says veteran costume designer Audrey Fisher (*Homeland*, *Barry*). "And the script is always my map for how best to approach a story's costume design."

In her first presentation to Glatter, Fisher relied heavily on photography, news footage and fashion of the times. "Screenshots of TV news stories, black and white photos, newsprint stories and footage of Candy entering and exiting the courthouse in 1980 with her entourage—it was all great source material," she says.

With a self-professed obsession for detail and accuracy, Fisher had to remind herself along the way that they weren't making a documentary. "My goal is always to recreate with as much accuracy as possible, but as you can guess, it's very difficult to do as you rarely find the *exact* item you see someone wearing in an old photo."

What was fun about dressing Candy, says Fisher, is that her "courtroom look" wasn't at all reflective of her regular style. "Don Crowder wanted her to project a more demure, calm, quiet housewife who couldn't possibly have done this horrible thing," she says.

One piece was crucial to curating this image for show: When the trial began in the fall of 1980, the weather was already cold and Candy wore what Fisher calls "a duffel coat."

"She has it on in many of the news images—it's a heavy, boiled wool coat that has a hood and toggle buttons. Its cream has horizontal stripes, it's very distinctive," says Fisher, whose team found images of the coat for sale in various retro-catalogues they had on hand for research.

But she couldn't have imagined how the search for this garment might net out: Her assistant designer, Brie Harris, found the exact coat on Etsy.com. "And it was the perfect size for Lizzie! I think it was maybe \$100? And it was in perfect condition. A total miracle," says Fisher.

But in Candy's life before the trial, she had a more playful, youthful approach to dressing, says Fisher. She was probably driving to Dallas and shopping at higher-end stores as opposed to little shops in her town. "She was making trips with her friend Sherry, played by



Krysten Ritter, who had a hair salon in a bigger city. They were both more leading-edge than the people around them.”

Fisher estimates the total number of garments she made and/or sourced for Olsen to be around 115. “And of those, I estimate we constructed around 20 percent of those ourselves. The great thing about fabrics of the 1970s— polyester, Dacron – is they’ve survived very well. Silk and cotton both get dry-rot. That’s why vintage clothing is so expensive when it is in good condition. You realise why a dress costs \$500!”

As for dressing Candy’s husband Pat, “Well, he’s a total nerd,” laughs Fisher. “He would wear the same thing every day or wear things that Candy had purchased for him.”

Much in the way Ingerslev leaned into Betty and Allan Gore as outsiders in creating their living space, Fisher channelled a similar approach in crafting their looks. “I used their economic reality and very traditional gender roles in their marriage,” says Fisher. “In their world, women were home all day tending the kids. There’s a lot of church business and picnics. Betty was much more religious than most of the people she knew. It was important for us to make Betty the anti-Candy, but still adorable in her own way. Each woman had something appealing going for her.”

Fisher says Lily Rabe’s real-life pregnancy added “an interesting puzzle-dimension” to her process.

“And she was only getting *more* pregnant throughout the shooting,” says Fisher. “What’s surreal is that, within the narrative, Betty is pregnant, then hugely pregnant and then not pregnant then postpartum. If we had been shooting in order, it might’ve all synced up, but that’s never the case with filming. So we had to have a postpartum belly, a three-month belly, a five-month belly, and a seven-month belly. The funniest time was when Lily was around six months pregnant herself, but we had to put a belly *over* her to make her look like she’s about to give birth. And then, for a long time, we had to hide her belly entirely.”

Add Fisher: “For someone who’s pregnant and going through all of the physical realities of that, just even a long fitting is so exhausting. They have to take breaks, they have to make sure to eat a snack. In fact, in our first fitting, Lily was very newly pregnant. It was likely tough, but she didn’t for a second let on. I was like, ‘Wow. Powerhouse, professional.’”

The experience only reinforced the passion Fisher has for her for her work. “It’s of the utmost priority to make sure that, whatever an actor is going through, I’m there to support her or him. What they’re wearing directly impacts their performance, and that’s a huge responsibility.”

8. Closing Thoughts on *Love & Death* From its Creators and Cast

Having taken careful pains to tell the tragedy of Candy Montgomery and Betty Gore with nuance, levity and respect, the series’ creatives are hopeful for the series to spark thoughtful conversations.

“Do I think the real Candy Montgomery will watch this show and like it? I don’t know,” muses Glatter. “I really don’t think she intended to kill Betty. If she had just walked out the door when they started arguing, maybe it would have never happened? We will never know. I hope embedded in this story is compassion for the human condition. We are fallible beings and we need to embrace the holes in our heart before damage ever occurs. Secrets are so



damaging. I think that is very potent. And real life is always stranger than anything we could try and create.”

Kelley offers an immense amount of credit to Glatter— whom he calls “a phenomenal leader” —and her contagious commitment. “This was a labour of love for everybody and it’s a real tribute to Lesli the way the crew and the actors showed up. You don’t always have that experience on-set,” says Kelley.

“Lesli’s a total force of nature,” agrees Saari. “And not to mention during COVID and extreme weather conditions! There is no captain who’s more of a pro and steady at the helm.”

Saari also acknowledges his producing partner, Kidman, whom he credits for having “incredible insight and acumen for scripts, casting and the whole process leading up to production. She’s a bit of a guardian angel for us and is very proud of the series.”

“David and Lesli were absolutely the right people to tell this story with holistic care, while simultaneously making it a show I think people will want to watch,” says Rabe. “I first worked with David on [HBO’s] *The Undoing*. I love him. I trust him. And he is in his own class when it comes to writing thrillers centred on women who are fully realised.”

Pelphrey says that he hopes viewers can look beyond the violence of the story and perhaps glean a life-saving lesson. “Maybe there’s a conversation, albeit a hard one, you should have with your partner, instead of looking elsewhere for happiness,” he says. “If a relationship is so bad that you’re about to be unfaithful then you might as well risk ending it! At that point, what have you got to lose?”

For Olsen, who bears *Love & Death*’s greatest burden – infusing objectivity into a notorious murderer – the story never ceases to be first and foremost an American tragedy.

“A lot of people have asked me, ‘Do you feel weird protecting this woman, protecting this character? And to that I feel like that my job as an actor – for as long as I want to be one— is to try and understand people whom we immediately want to judge,’” says Olsen. “And then try and understand where they are coming from, understand their circumstances and, maybe, along the way, gain empathy.”