# Riding the True Crime Wave: Love & Death [C1]

Dalla nuova miniserie HBO ci attendiamo un capolavoro del true crime, iconico come la storia terribile e reale sulla quale è basata. Nella trama c'è una vita idilliaca, normale e borghese costellata da atti estremi e sconvolgenti.



Candy Montgomery was a mother from Texas who appeared to be living the American Dream. Then, on Friday 13th June in 1980 she violently murdered her best friend from church, Betty Gore, **delivering** forty-one **blows** with an **axe**. This is the true story behind the new HBO true crime miniseries Love & Death, starring Elizabeth Olsen as Candy and Jesse Plemons as Allan Gore, Betty's husband. LOVE & BOREDOM A **stay-at-home** mother of two from the **suburbs**, Candy had an apparently stable marriage and a happy life. However, out of **boredom**, she was **driven** to seek a love affair, and she chose Allan, her best friend's husband, as her partner. They agreed to keep it exclusively sexual, meeting in cheap motels and never letting romantic feelings **get in the way**. But shortly after they ended the affair, Betty was found **butchered** in the **utility room**, while her infant daughter slept in her **crib**. LOVE & NIGHTMARE This horrific murder has already fascinated generations of true crime fans. They are **hooked** by its strangeness: how can

a young, religious mother **smash** the **blissful** monotony of her life in such a gratuitous way? The story **begs the question**: is it inevitable for nightmarish darkness to **lurk** beneath the facade of the American Dream? What does that darkness look like when we **shine a light** on it? Iconic literary works, from Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman to Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, have tried to explore just that. Love & Death employs the true crime genre to tell not only a fictional story about the American Dream, but also a factual one. LOVE & BAD CHOICES Texan director Lesli Linka Glatter previously worked on hit series Mad Men and Homeland. She now turns her camera on the truths and fictions of 1980s America. In a presentation for Love & Death, she talked about what attracted her to the story. **Lesli Linka Glatter (American accent):** This story is about men and women of that particular time that... They did everything right. They got married at twenty, they had the two kids, they had the house in the **suburbs**... And why is it that there's a **hole** in their heart and psyche that's a mile **wide**? And how do you fill that? Obviously Candy makes a bad choice with how to fill that. But that to me psychologically is what's so intriguing about this. And that it was normal people. **PLAYING CANDY** **Despite** the evidence against her, Candy **pled** self-defence in court, **claiming** that a confrontation about her affair required her to kill Betty, her accuser. Surprisingly, Candy was found not guilty by a jury of nine women and three men. Actress Elizabeth Olsen says she **took on** the controversial role of Candy without judgement. **Elizabeth Olsen (American accent): **I would never judge a character I play. But that's just me. But you think of the circumstances, you think of the circumstances that led people to that point. You think of their **upbringing**, you think of their dreams and their wishes and the resources that they have at the moment these things occur that seem pretty absurd. And I think the reason why this show particularly was interesting to me is because it's a true story, and tonally it's small-town people dealing with **larger than life**, absurd circumstances. To me that makes for interesting storytelling. And so that was really my focus, not so much judgment on a person's actions. I mean... also, like, what good does it do [with] society to just judge people's actions without trying to understand the impetus? And so it's nice to have something to start with that's factual, for me, instead of **making it all up**. **HIDDEN MONSTERS** Love & Death shows

that appearances can be **deceptive** and convention dangerous. The inability to express emotions that deviate from the norm may amplify their violent nature, so that they become **ticking bombs**. Jesse Plemons plays Allan in the miniseries. He talks about how the **gap** between dream and reality can create monsters.  **Jesse Plemons (American accent):** There is that dream for most people to **check the boxes**: get a good job, have a family, you know, A-B-C-D... But that doesn't guarantee **fulfilment** or anything like that. To me what was interesting is, really [in] all four of the characters there's something that is **bubbling up**. And yeah, if you don't **acknowledge** that, and again at the time there wasn't, you know, **counselling** wasn't something that was really an option, and these things **rear their head** one way or another. **NUANCED STORIES** Lily Rabe plays Betty. Rabe points out the importance of **nuance** in the story, and how complicated relationships and events should not be interpreted in a simplified way. **Lily Rabe (American accent):** To me, this is not a story about bad relationships or bad decisions... The relationships are good, these are not bad marriages. There are **missteps** but we're always making these **missteps**.

**The stakes are very high** in what happens in this particular story, but I think the **nuance** of what everyone in these relationships — not just the romantic relationships but the friendships —, the steps that everyone is taking are trying to do the right thing, are trying to take care of one another and **figure out** how to be with another person and also have an identity, and as a woman, it's very complicated always, but at that time especially. THE GREAT STATE OF TEXAS In Love & Death, the state of Texas works almost as another character. Lesli Linka Glatter **highlighted** how crucial the **setting** is to the story. **Lesli Linka Glatter:** I think there's something about Texas: it's like big sky, big possibility, big disappointments, big, big, big everything, big stakes, big **servings**, big life... I don't know if that's a **breeding ground** for interesting characters or complicated behaviour... I grew up here thinking things are not what they appear to be. You have to look deeper to see what's really going on. So what's on the surface — and that's what I love about our characters, this show... — are [is] not what's going on underneath

# Glossary

- **utility room** = ripostiglio
- **hooked** = agganciare
- **lurk** = stare in agguato
- **shine a light** = fare luce
- **making it all up** = inventarsi
- **gap** = distanza
- **fulfilment** = appagamento
- **rear their head** = ritorcersi contro
- **nuance** = sfumatura, sottigliezza
- **suburbs** = periferia
- **driven** = spingere
- **get in the way** = intromettersi
- **figure out** = immaginarsi, capire
- **delivering** = assestare
- **blows** = colpi
- **blissful** = felice, beata
- **pled** = appellarsi
- **check the boxes** = fare la spunta delle caselle
- **Despite** = malgrado
- **took on** = prendere
- **ticking bombs** = bombe a orologeria
- **acknowledge** = ammettere
- **The stakes are very high** = la posta in gioco è alta
- **breeding ground** = terreno fertile
- **setting** = luogo, contesto
- **stay-at-home** = casalinga, madre a tempo pieno
- **deceptive** = ingannevole
- **missteps** = passi falsi
- **highlighted** = evidenziare
- **axe** = ascia
- **crib** = culla
- **smash** = distruggere
- **begs the question** = suscitare la domanda

- **upbringing** = educazione
- **counselling** = terapia
- **servings** = porzioni (di cibo)
- **boredom** = noia
- **butchered** = assassinare
- **hole** = buco
- **wide** = ampio
- **claiming** = sostenere, affermare
- **larger than life** = esagerate
- **bubbling up** = ribollire