

ELLE

Scandal's Designer: Why I Dressed Olivia Pope in Pink



In the February issue of ELLE, on newsstands now, we talk to the costume stylists responsible for dressing the most emotionally complicated women on TV—from the guileless Fiona Gallagher on *Shameless* to the commanding Jessica Pearson on *Suits*—and then there's Olivia Pope. On ABC's *Scandal*, Kerry Washington plays a high-level political fixer whose romantic involvement with the POTUS is a threat to her own success and reputation. One thing not up for debate: Washington's high

style wardrobe. Costume designer Lyn Paolo discusses the subtleties behind that infamous Pepto pink Armani blazer from season one:

"We were always told that Olivia was highly educated and well cared for as a child—though not necessarily loved. Even when you see the flashbacks of Olivia as a little girl, you see that she's really tidy: her collar is buttoned all the way up. I want her to be aspirational but also slightly emotionally closed off because of that background. Her horrible relationship with her father is one of the reasons why that jacket is pink—a color we don't often use.



It felt like something she would do for herself. I can see her thinking at the time, 'I'm out from under my father's thumb now; I can do this for myself.' That jacket was very pivotal in telling Olivia's story. In regard to her bag: I wanted a purse that most of America wouldn't recognize, but that people who were aware of fashion and specific price points would instantly think, 'Oh my gosh. She has a Goyard purse.' Anybody who knows the brand knows that it instantly communicates that a person is doing well. People might not recognize the jacket as Armani, but the bag is a clear indication of status.

In flashbacks we see images of Olivia's mother in vintage Chanel and Robert Rodriguez—so there is that nostalgic element to her style as well. Olivia is constantly looking for new pieces, but I think she has someone who does the shopping for her. I don't think she'd ever wear anything overtly feminine in that frilly, whimsical, way we saw Abby (Darby Stanchfield) dress in the flashbacks. That just would never happen."