



JESSICA MIGLIO FOR NETFLIX (STILL)

CRAZY LIKE A FOX

Out of prison garb, "Orange Is the New Black" star Uzo Aduba is as stunning as her performance

By SARA LIEBERMAN Photography by ADAM KRAUSE

UZO ADUBA is barefoot and standing on tiptoes in front of a full-length mirror. "What do you think?" she asks the combination stylist-publicist-journalist entourage that has stuffed itself into a hotel room in Midtown Manhattan. With one hand on her hip, the other grazing the material of one of the two red dresses she's deciding between, she says, "Let me just try the other one on one more time."

The room is quiet, save for a Beyoncé song coming from the speakers of an iPhone. Aduba comes out dancing in dress No. 2, singing along. "She's everything," says the 33-year-old actress about "Bey."

For the moment, though, all eyes are on the one who plays Suzanne, aka Crazy Eyes, in Netflix's hit original series "Orange Is the New Black," whose second season debuts June 6. Based on the memoir by Piper Kerman, who spent a year in Connecticut's Federal Correctional Institution, it exposes the lives of a group of female inmates who are behind bars for various reasons. While season one only gave us a glimpse of Crazy Eyes' story—a mentally unstable convict obsessed with the show's main character—season two promises to dig deeper. "It would've been an easy thing to keep the mania going, but I am so grateful that [series creator Jenji Kohan] gave Suzanne so many colors and depth while still keeping some of that humor," Aduba says.

When she arrives at the photo shoot, it's difficult to even recognize Aduba from the character she plays on the show. Instead of orange prison scrubs, she's dressed all in black; instead of the tight knots she sports on the show, she wears her hair in shoulder-length curls. And the actress, who is of Nigerian descent but grew up the middle of five siblings in "itty-bitty" Medfield, Massachusetts,

is polite and complimentary, especially when it comes to fashion.

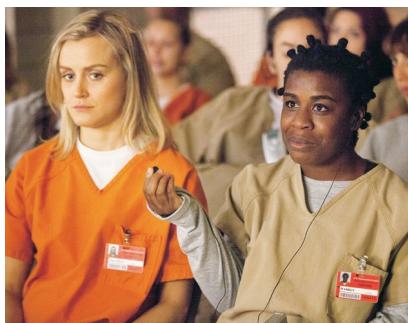
"I love that sea-foam green," Aduba says to the server in the hotel lobby lounge where we have our chat, eyeing her dress. After the server takes her leave, she adds, "I'm not really into fads, but I love classics matched with an edge or a personality that has something to say." She is "in love" with Oscar de la Renta, but "obviously not for every day," she says with a laugh, revealing her charmingly gap-toothed pearly whites.

Whether dolled up for the Emmys or strolling the streets in her neighborhood of Astoria, Queens, Aduba—who trained as an opera and classical singer at Boston University—is only just beginning to adjust to all the high fashion, fuss and fame. "I almost feel when [people] are looking at me that I'm looking at them with the same curiosity," she says. "When I see somebody who's famous, I think, 'I

know them.' Then I realize, 'No, that's Oprah. You don't know her at all. She was on your TV and that makes you think you know her, but you're not friends.'"

Of course, like many other fans, she would like to be pals with Winfrey. In fact, Aduba even carries a handwritten letter for her in the hopes that they may one day meet. She had a letter for Whoopi Goldberg, too, whom she met after performing on "The View" with the cast of "Godspell" in 2011. "The letters just basically say thank you for the impression you've left on me and my soul and my spirit as artists and women and actors and individuals that I look up to," she says.

If Aduba continues to live up to her given name Uzoamaka, which in the Nigerian language of Igbo means "the road is good," she may very well be on the receiving end of such reverence some day.



KNOT WHAT SHE
SEEMS Uzo Aduba
displaying her
character Crazy
Eyes' trade-
mark hairstyle,
alongside Taylor
Schilling as
Piper Chapman