It’s fair to say that Viola Davis’ potential next TV role will come with a lot of pressure.

The actress has signed on to play former First Lady Michelle Obama in a series titled “First Ladies” which is in the works at Showtime. The network has given the prospective one-hour drama a three-script commitment, with novelist Aaron Cooley on board to write and executive produce.
The series will peel back the curtain on the personal and political lives of First Ladies from throughout history, with season one focusing on Eleanor Roosevelt, Betty Ford and Michelle Obama. “First Ladies” will turn it lens on the East Wing of the White House, as opposed to the West, where many of history’s most impactful and world changing decisions have been hidden from view, made by America’s charismatic, complex and dynamic First Ladies. The series hails from Showtime and Lionsgate Television.

Davis and her partner Julius Tennon serve as non-writing executive producers on the project via their JuVee Productions banner, alongside Cathy Schulman via Welle Entertainment, Jeff Gaspin via Gaspin Media, and Brad Kaplan via LINK Entertainment.

Michelle Obama has been portrayed on film before, but never on television. She was notably played by Tika Sumpter in the 2016 picture “Southside With You.”

The Obamas are making the leap into content production themselves via their recently launched Higher Ground Productions. So far, the company’s originals slate is staying away from anything directly involving politics, with “Bloom,” an upstairs/downstairs drama series set in the world of fashion in post-WWII New York City, and a feature film adaptation of author David W. Blight’s “Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom” high up on the list.

Davis’ TV schedule is set to clear up in early 2020 as her five-year, six-season stint on “How to Get Away with Murder” comes to an end. Speaking at Variety’s Inclusion Summit earlier this year, Davis discussed some of her upcoming projects with JuVee and how to stop Hollywood from “dictating the storytelling” for people of color.

“If you look to the past and look at storytelling where there’s a huge deficit in terms of our voice and our presence, that’s not a good place to start,” she said. “What we have to fight for, and this is what I’m proud about with JuVee, is autonomy in storytelling and production and all of it. Don’t just tell me that the only way Viola can exist in the story is if a white person is leading the charge and I’m in the background.”

Cooley is repped by LINK Entertainment’s Brad Kaplan and attorney Rob Szymanski.