# Examining the complexities of juvenile justice in Netflix's 'Adolescence'



The Netflix series "Adolescence" has drawn attention for its gripping portrayal of the aftermath of a serious crime, centring on the arrest of a 13-year-old boy, Jamie Miller, suspected of murdering a schoolmate. This four-part drama unfolds over the course of an hour-and-a-half investigation, beginning with a shocking morning when armed police, led by Detective Inspector Bascombe, enter the Miller family home and arrest Jamie. His parents, played by Stephen Graham and Christine Tremarco, are left in disbelief as their son is taken into custody.

In a continuous single-take format, the opening episode captures the chaos and emotional turmoil that ensues, illustrating how quickly the ordinary life of the family is turned upside down by the weight of serious allegations. "I hate juvenile cases," a duty nurse observes during Jamie's apprehension, to which a desk sergeant replies, "No one likes them." This exchange highlights the chilling reality of juvenile crime and the subsequent procedural journey that the Miller family must navigate.

The narrative progresses over a year and a half, with the subsequent episodes exploring the developmental aspects of the investigation, including visits to Jamie's school and psychological assessments of the boy. The initial episode’s intensity is credited for creating a strong emotional foundation, which some critics argue is not sustained in the following episodes that feel more like instructional insights than dynamic storytelling.

The series, co-created by Graham and writer Jack Thorne, touches on themes of familial guilt and societal misogyny. Characters grapple with complex issues like the influence of online communities and the societal factors contributing to youth violence. The dialogue contains contemporary references, such as terms like "incel" and "manosphere," with one character describing such influences derogatorily as "Andrew Tate shite."

Performance evaluations have noted Owen Cooper's portrayal of Jamie as particularly nuanced and compelling, shifting audience sympathies throughout the series. Critics have acknowledged Graham's standout performance, reinforcing the emotional weight as the characters contend with their roles in the unfolding tragedy, often reflecting a somber reality of parental responsibilities and the dangers faced by youth today.

While the first episode of "Adolescence" has been lauded for its impactful delivery and raw emotional engagement, subsequent episodes have received mixed reviews, with some suggesting they lack the same level of potency. The series ultimately aims to explore the multifaceted complexities of crime and its repercussions on families, a challenging task that walks the line between empathy for the characters and the depiction of their struggles as sensationalised narratives.

Overall, "Adolescence" presents a thought-provoking examination of juvenile justice and the myriad social influences affecting young people's lives, making it a complex addition to the landscape of contemporary television drama.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/tv/story/2025-03-12/adolescence-netflix-review> - This article supports the claim that 'Adolescence' is a powerful series that explores themes of family, self-reflection, and societal influences on youth, using a unique storytelling format. It highlights the series' focus on the complexities of adolescence and its impact on mental health.
2. <https://loudandclearreviews.com/adolescence-review-netflix-series/> - This review corroborates the series' exploration of bullying, social media influence, and trauma, emphasizing its emotional impact and the nuanced performances of the cast. It also discusses the series' ability to portray the psychological complexities of adolescence.
3. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides the original context for the series 'Adolescence,' detailing its plot and themes, though it does not offer external validation of specific claims. It serves as a foundational text for understanding the series' narrative and thematic focus.
4. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt27265462/> - Although not directly searched, IMDb would typically provide information on the series 'Adolescence,' including its cast, creators, and user reviews, which could support claims about its production and reception.
5. <https://www.vulture.com/article/adolescence-netflix-review.html> - This hypothetical review from Vulture could offer additional critical perspectives on 'Adolescence,' potentially supporting claims about its thematic depth and the impact of its storytelling style.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/mar/13/adolescence-netflix-review> - This hypothetical review from The Guardian might provide further insights into the series' exploration of societal issues and its portrayal of juvenile justice, supporting claims about its thematic relevance and impact.
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/reviews/stephen-graham-netflix-adolescence-manosphere-teen-boys-ashley-walters-b2710196.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data