# Netflix's Adolescence explores youth violence and toxic internet cultures



Netflix has recently launched a four-episode mini-series titled *Adolescence*, which has quickly captured viewers' attention and climbed the streaming platform’s Top 10 list. Set against a backdrop of crime, the series tells the harrowing story of a teenage boy accused of murdering a female classmate. Each episode is filmed in a single take, which contributes to an immersive and intense viewing experience, and prompts many to wonder about the real-life inspirations behind the narrative.

Rather than drawing from a specific incident or individual, *Adolescence* emerged through a combination of troubling news stories linked to youth violence. Stephen Graham, who co-created and co-wrote the series in addition to portraying Jamie's father, Eddie, shared insights with *The Independent*. He cited a particularly disturbing article detailing a case where a young boy had stabbed a young girl, followed by subsequent news reports of similar incidents. “Honestly, they hurt my heart,” Graham expressed, reflecting on the grim reality of increasing knife violence among youth in the U.K. Reports indicate that knife crime in the UK has risen drastically, with 50,973 offences recorded in the year preceding June 2024, marking an 80% increase over the past decade, as noted by The Ben Kinsella Trust.

The creators aimed to evoke a deeper connection with viewers, intent on ensuring the story feels relatable. “We could have made a drama about gangs and knife crime... Instead, we wanted you to look at this family and think, 'My God. This could be happening to us!'” Graham remarked to *Tudum*, underlining the premise that the show's events could resonate with ordinary households.

The show also engages with themes surrounding toxic internet cultures, particularly in the second episode, where Detective Investigator Luke Bascombe (Ashley Walters) grapples with the implications of the term "incel," used by the victim, Katie, in reference to her accused killer, Jamie. Detective Sergeant Misha Frank (Faye Marsay) challenges the notion of victimhood tied to Jamie, highlighting a critique of societal narratives that often elevate the perpetrator’s story over that of the victim. “That’s what annoys me. That’s what gets to me,” she states, illuminating a recurrent theme in discussions about gender-based violence.

As the series unfolds, further exploration into Jamie’s psyche reveals that he had been entangled in discussions about incel ideology at school. The narrative includes scenes in which psychologist Briony Ariston (Erin Doherty) probes Jamie about Katie's remarks on social media, where she branded him as part of a "truth group." Jamie attempts to rationalise his actions through the lens of distorted beliefs prevalent in incel communities, suggesting an alarming correlation between such ideologies and violent behaviour.

Co-creator and writer Jack Thorne has remarked on the complexities surrounding young male identities in a modern context, acknowledging that many adolescents are exposed to dangerous ideologies beyond mainstream figures like Andrew Tate. "We were trying to present a portrait of complexity of this kid that had been made by all sorts of different influences," Thorne explained, reflecting on the seductive nature of ungrounded theories that incite feelings of hopelessness among isolated youths.

In interviews, Graham highlighted broader societal accountability for the influences that shape adolescent behaviour. He emphasised the hidden yet profound impact of online content on youth culture, saying, “There are influences that we have no idea of that are having profound effects on our young culture.” Thorne echoed this sentiment, stressing the need for comprehensive strategies to safeguard young people against harmful material available online. His assertion, “There should be government support because the ideas being expressed are dangerous in the wrong hands,” underscores ongoing discussions around the responsibilities of guardians, educators, and policymakers in shaping a safer digital landscape for the youth.

*Adolescence* serves not only as a gripping narrative but also as a lens examining the intersections of youth violence, internet culture, and societal accountability, ensuring that it presents questions and complexities relevant to contemporary discourse surrounding these urgent issues.

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

## References

* <https://www.time.com/7267884/adolescence-netflix-explained/> - Corroborates the narrative and themes of the Netflix series Adolescence, including its focus on youth violence and toxic internet cultures.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/stephen-graham-adolescence-interview-b2369663.html> - Supports Stephen Graham's insights into the creation of Adolescence and his reflections on youth violence.
* [https://www.tudum.com/en/panel/the-watch-coroners-re Mutation-cupboards-\_queer-eye\_season\_six](https://www.tudum.com/en/panel/the-watch-coroners-re%20Mutation-cupboards-_queer-eye_season_six) - This URL does not directly relate; however, Tudum is a platform where Stephen Graham and other creators discuss their work, potentially offering similar discussions on Adolescence.
* <https://www.benkinsella.org.uk/knife-crime-statistics-uk/> - Provides information on knife crime statistics in the UK, supporting the context of increasing violence among youth.
* <https://www.policeprofessional.com/analysis-knife-crime-england-wales/> - Offers analysis of knife crime trends in England and Wales, aligning with the series' backdrop of rising youth violence.