# Stephen Graham's 'Adolescence' tackles incel culture in gripping new Netflix series



Stephen Graham's latest project, "Adolescence," has emerged as a significant hit on Netflix, achieving a swift ascent to the platform's top charts just days after its premiere. The four-part British series has garnered attention not only for its compelling storyline but also for the noteworthy performance of its 15-year-old lead, Owen Cooper, who plays Jamie Miller, a 13-year-old accused of murdering a schoolgirl. Critics have praised Cooper's portrayal as 'terrifying', marking an impressive debut for the young actor from Warrington.

The series, co-written by Graham, who also takes on the role of Jamie's father, Eddie Miller, delves into the complex themes surrounding the influence of incel culture—an online movement characterised by its members' alleged inability to establish romantic connections and often propagated by intense misogyny. In an interview with The Independent, Graham expressed a desire to examine the pathways to this culture and to contemplate “who is to blame” for its rise among young boys.

The storyline follows Graham's character, DI Luke Bascombe, who is forced to grapple with his son’s exposure to the incel subculture and its associated ideologies. His son's revelation about secret incel codes circulating on social media brings to light broader societal concerns about the prevalence of toxic masculinity and its impact on young men.

The context for the show is underscored by a worrying report from 2022, which indicated a sharp increase in UK visits to incel websites, escalating from 114,420 to 638,505. This surge suggests that boys as young as 14 are being drawn into these online communities, a concern that Graham has urged parents to acknowledge. He emphasized the critical need for awareness regarding the external influences that may be affecting their children's lives, specifically regarding access to ideologies prevalent in the 'manosphere'.

In an effort to further understand the effects of such radicalisation, Helen Villiers, a psychotherapist based in London, has shared insights on the behavioural patterns that can manifest in adolescents influenced by incel ideologies. According to Villiers, there are various indicators that parents might observe, including an increase in misogynistic remarks, heightened disrespect towards women, and a growing obsession with the concept of being an 'alpha male'.

Villiers pointed out that a child significantly affected by these beliefs might demonstrate a shift in their social circle, distancing themselves from those who do not share their views, while potentially engaging with online forums that endorse male supremacy. Furthermore, she noted that an escalated focus on physical appearance and wealth could indicate deeper immersion in the 'alpha male' culture.

Moreover, Villiers mentioned that a noticeable lack of empathy may arise in children influenced by such ideologies, along with shifts in their language patterns that reflect incel-related terminology. Parents are advised to look for changes in how their children articulate their beliefs and how they respond to challenges regarding these views.

To address these influences, Villiers recommends maintaining open lines of communication with children, encouraging dialogues that foster critical thinking rather than alienation. Her approach suggests that validating feelings while gently introducing alternative viewpoints can aid in countering radical narratives. Villiers encourages parents to engage their children with thoughtful questions to promote self-reflection and critical examination of the ideologies they may be consuming.

As "Adolescence" continues to draw viewers and stimulate discussions around the implications of incel culture, both the performances and the underlying themes are prompting a broader examination of youth interactions with such beliefs in contemporary society.

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

## References

* <https://www.thewrap.com/adolescence-netflix-true-story/> - This article provides insight into the inspiration behind 'Adolescence,' highlighting its exploration of incel culture and knife crime among young boys in the UK. It also discusses the creators' intentions to spark conversations about societal accountability.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/netflix-adolescence-incel-culture-stephen-graham-warning-b2715633.html> - Stephen Graham discusses the dangers of the internet and incel culture in 'Adolescence,' emphasizing the need for parental awareness about external influences on children. He highlights the complexity of the themes explored in the series.
* <https://www.thewrap.com/adolescence-netflix-true-story/> - The article further explains how 'Adolescence' delves into the radicalization of young boys through incel ideologies, reflecting real-world concerns about the rise of such movements.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/netflix-adolescence-incel-culture-stephen-graham-warning-b2715633.html> - Graham's interview underscores the importance of exploring broader societal influences on young people, including the 'manosphere' and its impact on toxic masculinity.
* <https://www.thewrap.com/adolescence-netflix-true-story/> - The series' focus on complex themes like incel culture and its effects on young boys is highlighted, with creators aiming to avoid simplistic blame and instead encourage a nuanced discussion.