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Adolescência

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Resumo

Este short communication tem como objetivo discutir a série *Adolescência* (Netflix, 2025) a partir das implicações da dinâmica familiar no comportamento juvenil e no cometimento de crimes. A minissérie acompanha o caso de Jamie Miller, de 13 anos, preso após o assassinato de uma colega de escola — crime registrado por câmeras de segurança. Embora Jamie seja retratado como membro de uma família amorosa, a narrativa revela falhas parentais relevantes, como a ausência de controle sobre o uso da internet e a dificuldade em perceber sinais de sofrimento emocional. A série aborda de forma superficial o bullying sofrido pelo adolescente, assim como a resposta institucional escolar. A atuação da psicóloga forense, pouco realista, é um ponto frágil da trama. Já o sofrimento familiar, especialmente do pai, oferece uma reflexão sobre culpa, herança emocional e limites da parentalidade moderna. A obra destaca a importância do diálogo, da imposição de limites e da supervisão digital na prevenção de atos de violência na adolescência.

Palavras-chave: adolescência; psicologia forense; crime.

Abstract

This short communication aims to discuss the Netflix series *Adolescence* (2025) through the lens of family dynamics and their influence on juvenile behavior and crime. The miniseries follows Jamie Miller, a 13-year-old arrested for the murder of a schoolmate — a crime captured by security footage. Although Jamie is portrayed as part of a loving family, the narrative reveals significant parental shortcomings, including lack of supervision over internet use and an inability to recognize emotional distress. The bullying Jamie suffered is only superficially addressed, as is the school's institutional response. The forensic psychologist's performance, marked by clinical implausibility, weakens the depiction of psychological assessment. In contrast, the emotional suffering of Jamie's family — especially his father — offers insight into guilt, emotional inheritance, and the limits of modern parenting. The series underscores the importance of open communication, clear boundaries, and digital supervision as key strategies for preventing adolescent violence.

Key-words: adolescence; forensic psychology, crime.

Resumen

Esta comunicación breve tiene como objetivo analizar la serie *Adolescencia* (Netflix, 2025) desde la perspectiva de la dinámica familiar y su influencia en el comportamiento juvenil y la comisión de delitos. La miniserie sigue a Jamie Miller, un adolescente de 13 años arrestado por el asesinato de una compañera de escuela, crimen registrado por cámaras de seguridad. Aunque se muestra que Jamie pertenece a una familia afectuosa, la narrativa revela fallas parentales importantes, como la falta de control sobre el uso de internet y la incapacidad de detectar señales de sufrimiento emocional. El acoso escolar que sufrió Jamie es tratado de manera superficial, al igual que la respuesta institucional de la escuela. La representación de la psicóloga forense carece de realismo clínico, debilitando la credibilidad de la evaluación psicológica. Por otro lado, el sufrimiento de la familia, especialmente del padre, permite reflexionar sobre la culpa, la herencia emocional y los límites de la crianza moderna. La serie destaca la importancia del diálogo, los límites claros y la supervisión digital como estrategias clave para prevenir la violencia adolescente.

Palabras-clave: adolescência; psicologia forense; crimen.

The widely watched Netflix series *Adolescence* has been praised by its actors' performances and one-take filming technique. But it has also left many parents worried, asking how can a boy with such affectionate parents commit such a horrible crime?

Episode 1 initially surprise us by the police violent invasion of Jamie Miller's house, a thirteen-year-old British boy. With a click on the internet we learn that children are criminally responsible in Great Britan as of 10 years of age. Jamie is accused of killing a girl

from his class. The episode ends with a surprise even larger— there is no doubt about the crime’s authorship as Jamie’s father watches a video at the Police station in which his son, an innocent looking child, stabs the girl to death. (Strangely, the girl does not defend herself or runs away.)

Since there is no more authorship questions, we wonder: why would Jamie commit such a hideous crime?

On the second episode, the police officer responsible for the investigation concludes that Jamie was bullied by Katie, the murdered girl. The officer gets help from his own son who is in the same class as Jamie to elucidate the motive as his son shows emojis from Katie to Jamie referring to him as an *incel* (an internet coined term for an involuntary celibate.) In Jamie’s case, the girls did not find him attractive. The bullying topic is superficially presented in the series, which is harmful as the seriousness of the phenomenon is precisely associated with its intensity and repetitiveness.

Nevertheless, what called my attention to Episode 2, was the chaotic and out-of-control school climate, with teachers and students screaming in addition to students shouting profanities out loud. A Canadian friend who studied in England told me that “yes, teachers there scream with the students.” My son-in-law who is a High School teacher in Ottawa, on the other hand, said: “That part was strange... after the occurrence of something traumatic like that, there would be a group of specialists right in the school to help out.” He is right, I worked for over a decade in the 80-90s in Toronto’s public school system where I was part of the city’s Tragic Event Team where a group of psychologists, one psychiatrist, social workers and specialized nurses would immediately come to a particular school to support teachers and students after the occurrence of a traumatic event.

In Episode 3, we see Jamie already in mandatory internment, being interviewed by a psychologist who is supposed to conduct his assessment. In my opinion, this was the weakest part of the series as a severe case

like Jamie’s could never have been assessed by someone who behaves like an unprepared intern as opposed to a professional. The psychologist would have to have shown competence, presenting pertinent and elucidatory questions, balancing empathy with firmness and serenity to prevent outbursts by the kid. In addition, if the child did get out of control, instead of looking scared like a high school student, the psychologist should have to calmly distance herself from Jamie, encouraging him to calm down instead of paralysis, and the offer of a second hot chocolate to him as if to reward his melt-down. Jamie was more mature in this case, telling her that he did not deserve the chocolate. In its critical review of *Adolescence*, the *New Yorker* defends that the psychologist had not been hired to be Jamie’s mother. I agree, but she was hired to be a professional.

Finally, in Episode 4 (the final one) we witness the suffering of Jamie’s father, mother and adolescent sister on the day the father turns 50 and the modest plans to celebrate his birthday are frustrated. Due to a series of events associated with Jamie’s notorious crime, the family is unable to even go shopping without being recognized. We finish the series with a question that *Adolescence* does not intend to elucidate: is it possible to have affectionate parents like Jamie’s and create a murderer? The answer is difficult as we don’t have enough knowledge, particularly about Jamie. We know that he can lose control like he did with an inexperienced psychologist. His mother mentioned in the final episode that Jamie had a temper like her husband, but a lonely kid like him who suffers bullying would be more prone to suicide than murder. At the end of the series, we are touched by seeing Eddie’s (Jamie’s father) suffering. He tells us that his own father was abusive and Eddie had promised himself that he would never use violence against Jamie.

The film’s writers and producers chose stabbing, as this is the most common murder type committed by adolescents in England, in contrast to gun shooting in the US. However, given the scientific knowledge available, I bet

that adolescents in England who have stabbed a colleague did not have Jaimie's profile in the sense that they probably presented a gradual increase of aggressive behavior over the years with considerable probability of having a history of family violence.

If the series is not perfect in some respects, it has made a fantastic contribution pointing to the negligence by parents in allowing Jamie to have a computer in his own bedroom. Jamie's mother reinforces this issue, by saying that, in the middle of the night, she would often see Jamie's bedroom light on and did nothing about it.

Thus, I would like to suggest for parents: please continue to be affectionate with your children, curbing the use of violence by all means, combined with much guidance about the excessive use of screen and frequent conversations about your children's online lives.

Referências

Netflix. (2025). *Adolescência* [Série de televisão]. Netflix. <https://www.netflix.com>

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