

= Afterbirth ( American Horror Story ) =

" Afterbirth " is the twelfth episode of the first season of the television series American Horror Story and the season finale , which premiered on FX on December 21 , 2011 . The episode was written by Jessica Sharzer and directed by Bradley Buecker . Due to a very aggressive production schedule it was previously announced that the show 's first season would be cut short . This was the last episode to feature the Harmons . Murphy announced that a new cast will return for the second season .

In the aftermath of family tragedy , Ben ( Dylan McDermott ) tries to take his child out of the Murder House . Meanwhile , Violet ( Taissa Farmiga ) and Vivien ( Connie Britton ) accustom themselves to their new living arrangements , Constance ( Jessica Lange ) raises Tate 's child as her own and a new family buys the house . Kate Mara and Charles S. Dutton guest star as Hayden McClaine and Detective Granger .

The episode was well received by the majority of television critics and viewership and ratings for the episode reached a season high with 3 @. @ 22 million . It garnered a 1 @. @ 7 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , according to Nielsen Media Research . This episode is rated TV @- @ MA ( LSV ) .

= = Plot = =

= = = Nine months ago = = =

In Boston , after Vivien ( Connie Britton ) catches Ben ( Dylan McDermott ) cheating on her , he begs for her forgiveness , and says he would do anything to save their marriage . This includes getting out of Boston and relocating to a different city . He shows her pictures of a great house in an older district of Los Angeles , claiming Vivien loves old houses . He tells her the price of the house is strangely lower than those around it , and that it would be a great place for the family to start over .

= = = Present = = =

Days after Vivien 's death , Ben attempts to find Violet ( Taissa Farmiga ) in the house . He goes to see Constance ( Jessica Lange ) , who has been taking care of the baby since Vivien 's death . He discovers that she is Tate 's mother , argues with her , and threatens her before leaving with the child . Back at the house , Moira ( Frances Conroy ) reminds Vivien that she can show herself to Ben at will , allowing Vivien to ease his sadness , but Vivien notes she 'd rather not give Ben reason to stay .

Ben starts drinking and plans to commit suicide , but Vivien appears to stop him . He then reconciles with Vivien and Violet 's ghosts , who encourage him to take the child and start a new life away from the house . Before he can leave , Hayden ( Kate Mara ) , with the help of Dallas and Fiona , hangs him from a chandelier , killing him and making it appear like a suicide . Hayden takes the baby , but Constance reclaims the baby with Travis ' ( Michael Graziadei ) assistance . Later , she tells the police that she found Ben after he hanged himself and that Violet must have run off with the baby .

Moira explains that while some ghosts in the house only wish for the living to suffer the same fates they did , other ghosts are innocent and do not wish to see any more bloodshed . The Harmons realize the house is a danger to those living in it and resolve to protect future residents by scaring them away . Both of Moira 's ghostly forms ( Conroy and Alexandra Breckenridge ) and other ghosts , including nurse Gladys ( Celia Finkelstein ) , Beau ( Sam Kinsey ) , the exterminator ( W. Earl Brown ) , and the Black Dahlia ( Mena Suvari ) , join the Harmons to protect the Ramoses , a new family that moved in , against malicious ghosts .

Meanwhile , Tate , still in love with Violet , is concerned that she is lonely . He attempts to kill Gabriel ( Brennan Mejia ) , thinking he might be a better boyfriend for Violet , but she stops Tate , and gives him a goodbye kiss , allowing the boy to escape . Gabriel and his family flee the home ,

while the Harmons happily watch them drive off .

Tate seeks counsel from Ben , who wants nothing to do with him . Tate finally takes responsibility for his actions and apologizes , before asking for Ben 's friendship .

In the basement , Vivien discovers that the other twin had actually lived for a brief moment before dying , and its ghost is being taken care of by Nora ( Lily Rabe ) , who finds that she does not have the constitution to be a caring mother and returns the baby to Vivien . Vivien asks Moira to join their family as the baby 's godmother , which she happily accepts . Together , as one happy family , they all celebrate Christmas by decorating a tree in the abandoned house with various ornaments found in the attic . Watching from outside , Hayden tells Tate that Violet will never forgive him for what he did and that he should get over her , but he resolves to wait for her " forever " .

= = = Three years later = = =

Constance returns home from the hairdresser to find that her grandson Michael has killed his nanny . She smiles and remarks , " Now what am I going to do with you ? " as Michael gleefully smiles back , while swinging back and forth in his rocking chair .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by consulting producer Jessica Sharzer and directed by Bradley Buecker . Due to a " very aggressive " production schedule and the series ' pilot shoot having to wait for co @-@ creators Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk 's other show , Glee , to wrap its second season production , it was announced that the show 's first season finale would be thirty minutes shorter than planned . An option was given to Murphy by the network to drop the thirteenth episode altogether and air an hour @-@ long finale , but Murphy came up with a plan for a ninety @-@ minute episode .

After the episode aired , Murphy spoke of his plans to change the cast and location for the second season . He did say , however , that some actors who starred in the first season would be returning . " The people that are coming back will be playing completely different characters , creatures , monsters , etc . [ The Harmons ] stories are done . People who are coming back will be playing entirely new characters , " he announced .

In an interview with Entertainment Weekly , Murphy commented on the structure of the series ' first season . " I loved how it began . I loved it in the middle and I loved the end . The only thing really frustrating for me , to be honest with you , is that sometimes people would write this idea that we were making it up as we went along and I wanted to say , ' Really ? ' But I think now people are writing and saying , ' Oh yeah ! ' I 'm excited for people to see it on DVD , because now that they know how it ended , [ they can ] go back and see all of the little things , like people who have no reflections in mirrors . When you go back , you will see everything was set up . " When asked if the House " pulled " the Harmons to it , Murphy responded : " I don 't know if they were targeted . I don 't think the Internet site had any supernatural pull to it ... although that would have been hilarious . I thought it was two things : it was house porn because I think that house really is extraordinary . And also I think there 's always that allure in American lives of the fresh start , moving West , starting fresh . "

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Afterbirth " was seen by an estimated 3 @.@ 22 million household viewers and earned a 1 @.@ 7 rating share among adults aged 18 ? 49 , according to Nielsen Media Research , its highest numbers of the season . The first season tied with the TNT series Falling Skies as the biggest new cable series of the year among adults 18 @-@ 49 .

James Queally from The Star @-@ Ledger commented about the season and its finale : " After a wildly uneven first nine episodes ... and two red @-@ hot episodes leading up to the finale ... " Afterbirth " starts out flying high at the way too fast pace that has made American Horror Story an

enjoyable ride these past two weeks . But somewhere in the final 30 minutes of this episode , " Afterbirth " turns into a wandering epilogue . " Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club stated : " Part of the fun of those early episodes ? even when I really didn 't like them ? was that you never quite had a good sense of what the hell kind of show you were watching . The finale sticks us into what seems to be a pretty basic setup for season two . " Tim Stack of Entertainment Weekly called " Afterbirth " " an exhilarating shocker . " Matt Fowler at IGN gave the episode a score eight out of ten , signifying a " great " rating . He stated : " " Afterbirth " was a very odd finale and I 'm pretty sure that it was nothing like most of us thought it would be . "

The Horror Writers Association gave " Afterbirth " the 2011 Bram Stoker Award for Superior Achievement in a Screenplay .