

= American Horror Story : Murder House =

American Horror Story : Murder House (originally titled as American Horror Story) is the first season of the FX television series American Horror Story , aired between October 5 , 2011 , through December 21 , 2011 . The season was produced by 20th Century Fox Television , and the executive producers were Dante Di Loreto and series creators Brad Falchuk and Ryan Murphy .

It centers on the Harmon family : Dr. Ben Harmon , Vivien and their daughter Violet , who move from Boston to Los Angeles after Vivien has a miscarriage and Ben has an affair . They move into a restored mansion , unaware that the house is haunted by its former residents and their victims .

The first season of American Horror Story received mixed reviews from critics . The cast was generally praised , while the writing was criticized . The series drew consistently high ratings for the FX network , ending its first season as the biggest new cable series of the year . The season was nominated for various industry awards , including the Golden Globe Award for Best Television Series ? Drama , and received a total of seventeen Emmy Award nominations . In addition , Lange won the Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actress , the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series , and the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Miniseries or a Movie .

The Murder House made an appearance in the series ' fifth cycle , Hotel , with Christine Estabrook also returning as Marcy , the nosy realtor . Matt Ross , who portrayed Dr. Charles Montgomery , appeared in the episode " Room 33 " of Hotel , and Sarah Paulson reprised her role as Billie Dean Howard in the season finale .

= = Plot = =

The first season follows the Harmon family : Ben (Dylan McDermott) , Vivien (Connie Britton) and Violet (Taissa Farmiga) , who move from Boston to Los Angeles to start a new life in a Victorian mansion , after Vivien has a miscarriage and Ben has an affair with Hayden (Kate Mara) , one of his students . On arrival , they learn from Marcy (Christine Estabrook) , the real estate agent , that the previous owners of their new mansion , a couple named Chad and Patrick (Zachary Quinto and Teddy Sears) , died in an apparent murder / suicide . Their neighbor Constance (Jessica Lange) and her daughter Addie (Jamie Brewer) become frequent , and sometimes unwelcome , guests . Addie seems to have a connection with the house 's mysterious past . Larry Harvey (Denis O 'Hare) , a former resident of the house who has suffered from horrible burns , also begins inserting himself into the Harmons ' lives , giving Ben a cryptic warning about the house . The house also " comes with " Moira O 'Hara (Frances Conroy / Alexandra Breckenridge) , a housekeeper who appears young and seductive to men , but old and matronly to women .

Ben begins seeing patients out of his home office . One in particular , a possibly psychotic teenage boy named Tate Langdon (Evan Peters) , takes interest in kindred spirit Violet , who suffers from depression . Ben is unaware that Tate is both a ghost and the son of Constance . As the family settles into the home , bizarre events begin to occur with increasing regularity . It is soon revealed that there have been upwards of 20 violent deaths in the home over the course of its history , so much so that it has come to be known as " The Murder House " . The family struggles with their own personal tribulations , oblivious to the reality that their home is haunted by ghosts . While exploring the attic , Vivien discovers a latex bondage suit . She later is raped by a man wearing it , who she believes is Ben , but is actually Tate . Vivien 's rape results in the rare occurrence of becoming pregnant with twins by different fathers . It is later revealed that Tate 's motive in having sex with Vivien was to conceive a baby for Nora (Lily Rabe) , a ghost in the house who lost her own child . Hayden comes from Boston and tries to blackmail Ben into abandoning Vivien , so they can start their relationship over , threatening to tell Vivien that she 's pregnant with Ben 's baby . She is killed by Larry and buried by Ben in the house grounds , thus coming back as a ghost . Several ghosts in the house , including Hayden and Nora , conspire to drive Vivien mad so that they can raise the babies as their own .

On Halloween , the one day in which the dead can walk among the living , Violet learns that Tate is

an infamous school shooter , who killed a library full of his classmates (as well as crippling a teacher and setting Larry Harvey on fire) to punish his mother Constance for having Tate 's younger (and deformed) brother euthanized . Addie is run over by a car , and Constance fails to get her corpse to the Harmon 's property in time to imprison her spirit so that she can be reunited with her brother 's ghost . Vivien , meanwhile , learns from the " Murder House Tour " that the house was the home of a back alley abortionist and that the still @-@ living monster in the basement of the house is the creation of the doctor , whose son was killed by a patient 's vengeful boyfriend , dismembered and resurrected as the monstrous " Infantata " .

Faced with the monster Tate is , and her own romantic feelings for him , Violet kills herself , something she doesn 't realize was successful until weeks later when she discovers she cannot leave the house . After many poltergeists , Vivien is committed to an insane asylum , while Ben is convinced that the second twin was fathered by Luke (Morris Chestnut) , a neighborhood security officer . Meanwhile , Constance enlists the help of a medium , Billie Dean Howard (Sarah Paulson) , to help her talk to Addie . Constance discovers from Billie Dean , to her horror , that Tate 's child with Vivien will become the Antichrist . After Ben learns of Tate being the " Rubber Man " , he has Vivien freed from the asylum .

Vivien gives birth to the twins in the house , with Moira recruiting the more benevolent ghosts of the house to help her deliver the children . Vivien and one of the newborn babies die , leaving Ben with the surviving twin . Violet breaks up with Tate after Chad reveals that Tate raped Violet 's mother and murdered him and his boyfriend due to their inability to produce a child . Ben tries to get into contact with his now dead wife and daughter , who refuse to show themselves . As he grieves he contemplates suicide to be with them . Instead , Vivien shows herself and convinces Ben to leave the house immediately for the protection of the baby . As Ben is leaving the house , he is caught and murdered by Hayden , who hangs him to simulate a suicide . Hayden attempts to take the baby , but Constance , with the help of the ghost of a lover named Travis (Michael Graziadei) , whom Hayden murdered , takes the child instead . Constance hides the baby and tells the police that Ben killed himself out of grief for his wife 's death and that Violet (whose body is never found) ran off with the surviving child .

Now trapped in the house , the Harmons team up with Moira and the other benevolent spirits to keep other families from moving in by scaring them away . Meanwhile , Tate has consigned himself to living with Hayden , both of whom have been blocked out by the Harmons using a trick that Tate taught Violet . As the Harmons are decorating a Christmas tree , Tate promises to wait for Violet forever , as he and Hayden watch on through a door frame . Three years later , Constance (who left town) returns to Los Angeles , but finds that her grandson , Michael (the Antichrist) , has murdered his nanny . She slowly walks towards the smiling child as he rocks back and forth . She then smiles and whispers , " Now what am I gonna do with you ? "

= = Cast and characters = =

= = = Main = = =

Connie Britton as Vivien Harmon
Dylan McDermott as Dr. Ben Harmon
Evan Peters as Tate Langdon
Taissa Farmiga as Violet Harmon
Denis O 'Hare as Larry Harvey
Jessica Lange as Constance Langdon

= = = Special guest stars = = =

Kate Mara as Hayden McClaine
Zachary Quinto as Chad Warwick

Charles S. Dutton as Detective Granger
Eric Stonestreet as Derek

= = = Recurring = = =

Frances Conroy as Moira O 'Hara
Lily Rabe as Nora Montgomery
Alexandra Breckenridge as Young Moira O 'Hara
Jamie Brewer as Adelaide " Addie " Langdon
Christine Eubank as Marcy
Morris Chestnut as Luke
Matt Ross as Dr. Charles Montgomery
Bodhi Schulz as Troy
Kai Schulz as Bryan
Michael Graziadei as Travis Wanderley
Celia Finkelstein as Nurse Gladys
Eve Gordon as Dr. Hall
Rosa Salazar as Nurse Maria
Teddy Sears as Patrick
Azura Skye as Fiona
Kyle Davis as Dallas
Sarah Paulson as Billie Dean Howard
Shelby Young as Leah
Rebecca Wisocky as Lorraine Harvey
Sam Kinsey as Beauregard " Beau " Langdon
David Anthony Higgins as Stan
Mena Suvari as Elizabeth Short
Malaya Rivera Drew as Detective Barrios
Ben Woolf as Thaddeus Montgomery / The Infantata
Eric Close as Hugo Langdon
Brando Eaton as Kyle Greenwell
Ashley Rickards as Chloe Stapleton
Alessandra Torresani as Stephanie Boggs
Jordan David as Kevin Gedman
Alexander Nimetz as Amir Stanley

= = Episodes = =

= = Production = =

= = = Conception = = =

Creators Murphy and Falchuk began working on American Horror Story before their Fox series Glee began production . Murphy wanted to do the opposite of what he had done previously and thus began his work on the series . He stated : " I went from Nip / Tuck to Glee , so it made sense that I wanted to do something challenging and dark . And I always had loved , as Brad had , the horror genre . So it just was a natural for me . " Falchuk was intrigued by the idea of putting a different angle on the horror genre , stating that their main goal in creating the series was to scare viewers . " You want people to be a little bit off balance afterwards , " he said .

The dark tone of the series is modeled after the ABC soap opera Dark Shadows , which Murphy 's grandmother forced him to watch when he was younger to toughen him up . He also cited Rosemary

's Baby , Don 't Look Now , The Amityville Horror , and Stanley Kubrick 's version of The Shining as influences for the series as well .

From the beginning , Murphy and Falchuk planned that each season of the series would tell a different story . After the first season finale aired , Murphy spoke of his plans to change the cast and location for the second season , while retaining some actors from the first : " The people that are coming back will be playing completely different characters , creatures , monsters , etc . [The Harmons '] stories are done . "

In February 2011 , FX officially announced that it had ordered a pilot for a possible series from Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk , with both Murphy and Falchuk writing and Murphy directing . Dante Di Loreto was announced as executive producer . Production on the series began in April 2011 . In July 2011 , FX officially announced the project had been given a series order consisting of 13 episodes . On August 2011 , it was announced that Tim Minear , Jennifer Salt , James Wong and Jessica Sharzer had joined the series as writers .

= = = Casting = = =

Casting announcements began in March 2011 , with Connie Britton first to be cast , portraying female lead Vivien Harmon . Britton stated that she took a risk in taking the role of Vivien . When Murphy presented the role to her , he said : " This is something we 've never seen you do before . It will be turning what you 've just been doing on its ear . " She was intrigued by what he had presented her and ultimately decided to take the part . In an interview with Entertainment Weekly , series co @-@ creator Ryan Murphy stated that he had told Connie Britton , early on , that her character Vivien would die in the first season . " We 've really had the whole season mapped out from the beginning , " he said . " In the meetings with the core actors , the three leads being Connie , Dylan [McDermott] and Jessica [Lange] , as we tried to snare them we were able to say this is where you start , this is the middle , and this is where you end up . So , yes , I was able to tell Connie really the whole run of the series . "

Denis O 'Hare joined the cast in late March 2011 as Larry Harvey . Jessica Lange joined the cast in April 2011 as Constance , marking her first regular role on television . Lange was attracted to the role because it didn 't require a 22 @-@ episode commitment like a series on a broadcast network . " That was huge for me ! " she said . " I wasn 't about to commit to , you know , six months . It was cable , rather than network ... I 've been offered network [shows] before , and determined not to do it , just because I can 't make that kind of time commitment . "

Dylan McDermott was cast as the lead Ben Harmon in late April 2011 . His character was initially described as " a handsome and masculine but sensitive therapist who loves his family but has hurt his wife . " McDermott stated that he wanted to do the role to break away from his previous role as Bobby Donnell in the ABC series The Practice . " This was exactly why I wanted to do this show ? to change it up and do a different kind of character . People think of me as the guy from The Practice ... I wanted to turn that [notion] on its head and hopefully I 'm doing that [with this show] " , he said .

In May 2011 , Taissa Farmiga and Evan Peters were the last lead actors to be cast , portraying Violet Harmon and Tate Langdon , respectively . Farmiga said that she loved Violet " immediately " and that " she had spunk to her , she had attitude . " Murphy has described Tate as the " true monster " of the series , adding : " To Evan 's great credit and the credit of the writers , I think Evan 's done an amazingly difficult job making a monster sympathetic . "

= = = Filming = = =

The pilot episode was shot on location in a house in Country Club Park , Los Angeles , California , which serves as the haunted house and crime scene in the series . Designed and built in 1902 by Alfred Rosenheim , the president of the American Institute of Architects ' Los Angeles chapter , the Tudor or Collegiate Gothic @-@ style single family home was previously used as a convent . An adjoining chapel was removed from exterior shots using CGI .

The series is filmed on sets that are an exact replica of the house . Details such as Louis Comfort Tiffany stained glass windows , and hammered bronze light fixtures , were re-created to preserve the look of the house . The house became available for rent on Airbnb in February 2016 .

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 , the thirteenth episode , would be thirty minutes shorter than planned . Finally , the thirteenth episode was dropped and they made the twelfth episode 10 minutes longer (52 minutes) . The finale aired on December 21 , 2011 .

=== Title sequence ===

The opening title sequence was created by Kyle Cooper and his company Prologue . He also created the title sequence for the AMC series The Walking Dead and the 1995 film Se7en . The theme music was composed by sound designer Cesar Davila and Irizarry and musician Charlie Clouser . The sequence is set in the Harmons ' basement and includes images of postmortem young children , unborn (or aborted) babies in jars , skulls , a Christening dress , a nurse 's uniform , and a figure holding a pair of bloody hedge clippers . Murphy described the sequence as a mini-mystery and stated that : " By the time you see the ninth episode of this season , every image in that title sequence will be explained " .

== Reception ==

=== Reviews ===

American Horror Story has received mixed to positive reviews from critics . The first episode scored 62 out of 100 on Metacritic based on 30 reviews . The review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes reported an 64 % approval rating with an average rating of 5 @. @ 7 / 10 based on 42 reviews . The website 's consensus reads : " Convoluted yet effective , American Horror Story is strange , gory , and twisted enough to keep viewers hooked . " Ken Tucker from Entertainment Weekly awarded the pilot episode a B + , stating : " AHS is pretty much all scare , all the time : a whole lotta screams , sex , jolts , mashed faces , psychotic behavior , and dead babies . " Chuck Barney of the San Jose Mercury News said : " Most TV shows , after all , quickly fade from memory . This one will haunt your dreams . " Hank Stuever from The Washington Post said in his review that : " Overdoing things is one of Murphy 's trademark flaws , but this show has a captivating style and giddy gross @-@ outs . " The New York Times ' Mike Hale called the show " a more classically minded chiller , " taking into mind the success of HBO 's True Blood and AMC 's The Walking Dead . However , not all reviews were favorable . Alan Sepinwall of HitFix gave the series a D ? , saying : " It is so far over the top that the top is a microscopic speck in its rearview mirror . "

=== Awards and nominations ===

In its first season , American Horror Story was nominated for 65 awards , and won 19 .

* The FX network submitted the series to the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences in the miniseries , rather than the drama series , category for its 64th Primetime Emmy Awards .

=== Ratings ===

The pilot episode gained a 1 @. @ 6 ratings share among adults aged 18 ? 49 and garnered 3 @. @ 2 million viewers , and totalled 5 @. @ 2 million between two airings . These were the best numbers FX had ever received for a series premiere . Taken together with equally strong numbers for the station 's returning original series ? Sons of Anarchy , It 's Always Sunny in Philadelphia and The League ? the episode helped make October the most @-@ watched month on FX ever . The

episode was seen by 3 @. @ 2 million viewers total in 59 countries .

Ratings increased as the season progressed , with the fourth episode receiving a 1 @. @ 7 ratings share among adults 18 ? 49 , a tenth of a point higher than the pilot episode . The seventh episode had a viewership of 3 @. @ 06 million , receiving a 1 @. @ 8 ratings share in the 18 ? 49 demographic ; a series high . The season finale was watched by 3 @. @ 22 million viewers and received a 1 @. @ 7 ratings share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . The first season tied with the TNT series Falling Skies as the biggest new cable series of the year among adults 18 ? 49 .

American Horror Story 's November 2011 international premiere across Europe and Latin America , on Fox International Channels , drew rankings of 1st or 2nd among all Pay @- @ TV in most metered markets for its time slot . In the UK , it premiered on non @- @ terrestrial channel FX , with 128 @, @ 200 viewers . The second episode saw an increase of 27 % , receiving an overall viewership of 158 @, @ 700 .

= = Home media release = =