

= Pilot (American Horror Story) =

" Pilot " is the first episode and the series premiere of the television series American Horror Story , which premiered on the network FX on October 5 , 2011 . The episode was co @-@ written by series creators Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk and directed by Murphy . Falchuk and Murphy had previously collaborated on the Fox musical comedy @-@ drama Glee .

In this episode , the Harmon family ? Ben (Dylan McDermott) , Vivien (Connie Britton) and Violet (Taissa Farmiga) ? move from Boston to Los Angeles after Vivien gives birth to a stillborn baby and Ben has an affair with one of his students . The family moves to a restored mansion , unaware that the home is haunted . While Vivien tries to deal with intrusive neighbor Constance (Jessica Lange) , Violet connects with troubled teenager Tate (Evan Peters) .

In the United States , the series premiere achieved a viewership of 3 @.@ 18 million . The episode garnered a 1 @.@ 6 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , translating to 2 @.@ 0 million viewers according to Nielsen Media Research . This made the episode the network 's best series premiere ever . Critical reviews of the pilot episode were mostly positive , with Metacritic awarding it 62 out of 100 points . Pilot was nominated for a Primetime Emmy award for Outstanding Art Direction for a Miniseries or Movie in 2012 . This episode is rated TV @-@ MA (LSV) .

= = Plot = =

= = = 1978 = = =

A young Addie (Katelyn Reed) stares up at an old mansion when two troublesome twins Brian and Troy (Kai and Bodhi Schulz) arrive , planning to enter the house . Addie warns them not to enter the house , but they ignore her warning and enter the house anyway . While they wreak havoc , Brian discovers a dying animal and the twins find an open door to the basement . They enter the basement where they find jars containing animal remains and human fetuses . After complaining about the smell , Brian leaves the basement only to find that his brother has gone silent . He searches for him and finds him with his throat slit , gasping for air . The Infantata (Ben Woolf) appears behind him and kills him off screen .

= = = 2011 = = =

Having previously suffered a miscarriage , Vivien (Connie Britton) visits a fertility doctor . Arriving home , Vivien hears a noise and immediately dials 911 to report a burglary but when she investigates , she finds her husband Ben (Dylan McDermott) having sexual intercourse with Hayden (Kate Mara) one of his students .

Nine months later , the family leaves Boston and drive to Los Angeles . Their teenage daughter Violet (Taissa Farmiga) is unhappy about the move . They come across a newly restored mansion where they are taken on a tour by the real estate agent Marcy (Christine Estabrook) . She mentions the deaths of the previous owners , a gay couple named Chad and Patrick who died from an apparent murder / suicide . The family decides to buy the house and move in .

On the first day , Vivien meets next door neighbour Constance (Jessica Lange) and her daughter Adelaide (Jamie Brewer) who has Down syndrome . She also comes across the house 's maid Moira O ' Hara (Frances Conroy) who appears to be a young , seductive maid (Alexandra Breckenridge) in Ben 's mind . Vivien re @-@ hires Moira . On that same night , Ben fights with Vivien , trying to apologize for his infidelity . Afterwards the two make love .

On her first day of school , Violet is harassed by a bully named Leah (Shelby Young) with her friends , Abby (Bianca Lawson) and Becca (Christian Serratos) who later fight her in the cafeteria . Ben begins therapy sessions with a possibly psychotic boy named Tate (Evan Peters) , who begins a relationship with Violet . To help Violet with her bullying problem , he suggests scaring her in the house . After his shower , Ben finds Moira masturbating . He does the same thing but is

caught by a burnt Larry (Denis O 'Hare) .

Bringing Leah to the house for drugs , Violet leads her into the basement where Tate sits on a rocking chair . He and the Infantata attack Leah and scare Violet who is terrified of Tate and tells him to leave .

In the attic , Vivien finds a latex gimp suit . While in bed , she finds a man in the gimp suit who she believes to be Ben but is in fact the " Rubber Man " , and the two have sex . Downstairs a sleepwalking Ben is drawn to the stove and tries to burn the house down , but Constance stops him . The next day , Larry approaches Ben . He tells him that he killed his family by setting them on fire , and warns Ben that if his family doesn 't leave the house , they will die . Ben declines and tells him to stay away from him .

At the house , Vivien announces to Ben that she is pregnant .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception and development history = = =

Series co @-@ creators Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk began working on American Horror Story before their Fox series Glee began production . Murphy wanted to do the opposite of what he 'd done previously and thus began his work on the series . He stated : " We 're doing some squeaky clean , sweet , optimistic , non @-@ cynical piece , I wanted to do something that sorta tapped into the different side of my personality . " 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 . He said : " You want people to be a little bit off balance afterwards . " The dark tone of the series was influenced by the 1970s ABC soap opera Dark Shadows , which Murphy 's grandmother forced him to watch when he was younger to toughen him up . In addition , the series draws inspiration from classic horror films such as Roman Polanski 's Rosemary 's Baby and Stanley Kubrick 's The Shining .

In February 2011 , FX officially announced that it had ordered a pilot for a possible series from Murphy and Falchuk , with both as episode writers and Murphy as director . Dante Di Loreto was announced as executive producer . Production on the series began in April 2011 . On July 18 , 2011 , FX officially announced the project had been picked up to series . On August 3 , 2011 , it was announced that Tim Minear , Jennifer Salt , James Wong and Jessica Sharzer had joined the series as writers .

= = = Casting and filming = = =

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 Ryan 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 . Denis O 'Hare joined the cast in late March as Larry Harvey . Jessica Lange joined the cast in April as Constance , marking her first regular role on television . Lange was attracted to the role because it didn 't require a 22 episode commitment . " 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 , " he said . " 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] . "

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 . " Ryan 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 . "

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 around 1908 by Alfred Rosenheim , the president of the Los Angeles chapter of the American Institute of Architects , the Tudor or Collegiate Gothic @-@ style single family home was previously used as a convent . The series is filmed on sets that are an exact replica of the house . Details such as Lewis Comfort Tiffany stained glass windows , and hammered bronze light fixtures , were re @-@ created to preserve the look of the house .

= = Promotion = =

As part of the promotion for the series , FX launched a " House Call " campaign , in which viewers at home could sign up and come face @-@ to @-@ face with a character from the series . Prior to the series premiere , FX released several clues to shine light on the series . They were offered on the show 's official YouTube channel . Ten clues were released , entitled " Cello " , " Baby " , " Couples " , " Coffin " , " Lying Down " , " Fire " , " Stairs " , " Melt " , " Red Cello " and " Rubber Bump " .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , the premiere of American Horror Story was seen by an estimated 3 @.@ 18 million household viewers and gained a 1 @.@ 6 ratings share among adults aged 18 ? 49 , according to Nielsen Media Research . 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 pilot episode aired on November 7 , 2011 across Europe and Latin America on Fox International Channels , ranking # 1 or # 2 among all Pay @-@ TV in most metered markets across Latin America and Europe for its time slot . In the UK , it premiered on non @-@ terrestrial channel FX , with 128 @,@ 200 viewers . The episode was seen by 3 @.@ 2 million viewers total in 59 countries .

The pilot episode scored 62 out of 100 on Metacritic based on 30 reviews . Ken Tucker from Entertainment Weekly awarded the pilot episode a B + , stating : " American Horror Story 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 . " IGN TV 's Matt Fowler wrote that the pilot episode contained a lot of " style over substance " but that it was also " totally watchable . " Fowler went on to write that it was a " haunting , subversive television experiment " and enjoyed the references to Amityville Horror , The Shining and Twin Peaks . 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 , and so full of strange sounds , sights and characters that you likely won 't forget it ? even though many of you will wish you could . "