

UNPACKING THE BUNKER

Sex, Abuse, and Apocalypticism in “Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt”

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Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt opens in a dark, sparsely furnished underground bunker. Four women (three white and one Latina) are decorating a Christmas tree. Their language is stilted, archaic; their dress and demeanor are extremely conservative. They are celebrating Christmas by singing about ending the world to the tune of “O Tannenbaum”: “Apocalypse, apocalypse! We caused it with our dumbness.” These are the members of the Reverend Richard Wayne Gary Wayne’s Spooky Church of the Scary-pocalypse.

From the very first scene, viewers of *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* know they’re looking at a cult. These women are isolated. They live in apparent poverty. None of them look related, but they call each other “sister,” suggesting a complex family structure. They’re all dressed alike and are very conservative in their appearances—long-sleeved prairie dresses in muted pastels, no makeup, plain shoes. They all live together in a single space. Their singing reveals that they’re concerned about the apocalypse, and the reference to Christmas suggests that it’s most likely an apocalypse informed by Christian traditions.

Popular culture has conditioned viewers to expect cult members to look like these women, training audiences through countless television shows, movies, news reports, documentaries, and talk shows.¹ And the recognition that these women are in a cult inspires several viewer assumptions, because we all “know” what happens in a cult.² Among the things, viewers “know” to expect are a charismatic leader and passive,

primarily female followers, who are probably preparing for the end of days and most likely subject to sexual exploitation.³

Kimmy Schmidt echoes and amplifies a broader cultural narrative that links end-times religiosity with sexual abuse and women's vulnerability, inadvertently reinforcing a dangerous American conviction that women like Kimmy—and her real-life counterparts, women members of “cults”—need saving by outside forces. American state and federal agencies often read an overt apocalyptic worldview as evidence of irrationality on the part of minority religious community members, and participation in sexual difference as evidence of coercion and abuse. Popular culture depictions of new religious movements as irrational and abusive are frequently gendered: The movements' leaders, usually men, are portrayed as deliberately deceptive and disingenuous; the movements' members, usually women, are either too mentally or physically weak to leave of their own volition.

Popular culture depictions of New Religious Movements (NRMs)—like *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*—contribute to Americans' conviction that cult members need “our” help, whether they know it or not. While Rev. Wayne kidnaped Kimmy and two other “Mole Women,” Gretchen (the fourth woman in the bunker) joined his church willingly. The kidnaped women were grateful to be released, but many women members of apocalyptic new religious movements join or stay willingly. The stakes in these comedic episodes are fairly low, of course—whereas real-life attempts to save women from apocalyptic cults often end disastrously for both the women in question and their would-be saviors.

“White dudes hold the record for creepy crimes”: cults in context⁴

Why should—*how could*—anyone join a cult?⁵ The answer, of course, is that they don't. No one joins a cult.⁶ People join groups that offer compelling answers to their moral quandaries, membership in a community that shares their commitments, belonging and meaning-making and purpose. America has been, since its inception, a space that both fosters and punishes radical religious innovation—we have enshrined certain religious protections in our founding documents, but disincentivize any religious difference deemed too far from the (predominantly white Christian) mainstream.⁷ Groups too far beyond the pale of acceptable American religiosity are “cults.”

Once a banal descriptor for a system of veneration or worship, cult in American parlance has come to signify religious practices deemed irrational, excessive, and—above all—dangerous. Sensationalist usage has largely robbed the word of any analytical utility. Cult is now shorthand for “religion we don’t like,” or perhaps more accurately, “religion we don’t trust.” Scholars of radical religious innovation prefer the term “new religious movement” though it lacks both the impact and the cultural resonance of cult.⁸ Certainly, new religious movements share a number of characteristics with popular imaginings of cults: They often—though not always—include charismatic leadership; a commitment to reordering or restoring the present world to fit the group’s commitments; willingness to share goods and finances in common; space for sexual difference; and a concern for when and how the world will end.

Despite these resonances, the space between “new religious movement” and “cult” is more than semantic. New religious movement intends to identify and analyze emergent sects in the context of religious studies, acknowledging that all innovation builds from historically established beliefs and practices. Using the word cult—or “culting,” as Catherine Wessinger calls it—discredits religious communities, dehumanizes religious practitioners, and marks spaces of radical religious innovation as unincorporable to the American body politic.⁸ Calling a religious group (or any group for that matter), a cult is to mark that group as not “real” religion, to dismiss its leadership as exploitative and disingenuous, and to brand its members as either coerced or irrational.

If, as Wessinger asserts, we all “know” what happens in a cult, what is it we think we know? Two of the most common assumptions about cults are that its members are irrational (“brainwashed”) and that its leadership is exploitative, coercing or duping members into surrendering their possessions and/or their bodies. To complicate these assumptions is not to dismiss them. Financial, physical, sexual, and emotional abuses absolutely can and do happen in marginal religious communities. But this abuse does not happen because the communities in question are religious outsiders—abuse happens in these communities because abuse happens everywhere. Abuse, particularly of women and children, is frighteningly, inexcusably commonplace.⁹ Sexual abuse of women or children is no more common within religious communities than it is among the general public—and in some marginal religious communities, incidents are below

the national average. To identify American minority religious communities as especially or uniquely abusive is to abdicate responsibility for our broader cultural complicity in the abuse of women and children.

Why, then, do Americans assume apocalyptic cults are uniquely rife with sexual abuse? There are, two imbricated factors in this assumption. First, new religious movements create space for sexual difference not afforded to members in more traditional religions. Gayle Rubin has compellingly argued that Americans subscribe to a “slippery slope” model of sexual difference, assuming that those willing to engage in transgressive sex are more willing, and even likely, to engage in harmful sexual behaviors.¹⁰ Second, new religious movements often forefront their apocalypticism in a way other traditions do not; popular American culture frequently holds up apocalyptic beliefs for ridicule, despite the staggeringly prevalence of end-times predictions throughout recorded human history.¹¹

Apocalyptic new religious movements have historically made more space for sexual difference than have more mainstream religions. The United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing, better known as the Shakers, believe in radical gender equality and practice celibacy as part of their millennial kingdom-building.¹² The Oneida community, also a progressive millennialist movement, practiced male continence (non-ejaculation) as a form of birth control, entered into complex marriages (consensual non-monogamous relationships among community members), and raised children communally.¹³ Members of the Unification Church, who had originally expected the end to come in 1967 and then 1977, enter into periods of celibacy before and after marriage; those marriages are arranged by church leaders and often performed en masse.¹⁴ The Children of God, a sect perhaps best known for its practice of “flirty fishing,” or evangelical seduction, received apocalyptic prophecies from founder David “Mo” Berg and his mother, Virginia.¹⁵ The Branch Davidian messiah of Mount Carmel, David Koresh, narrated his vision of the end of days across telephone wires before the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms set off a deadly conflagration in the compound; Koresh’s strategy of “winning in the bedroom” was meant to facilitate the outbreeding and outlasting of his opponents.¹⁶ Heaven’s Gate members strove to control their bodily impulses; before their mass Exit, some went so far as to have themselves castrated to curb sexual desire.¹⁷ This is not

an exhaustive list, but should serve to demonstrate the prevalence of sexually transgressive practices among apocalyptic new religious movements.

Engaging in transgressive sexual acts has frequently functioned as evidence of irrationality within American jurisprudence; judges have argued, for example, that one cannot rationally consent to sadomasochistic activities, because engaging in sadomasochism is evidence of irrationality.¹⁸ But for the American mainstream, the combination of transgressive sex, religion, and an apocalyptic worldview often serves as damning evidence of “cult” members’ beliefs. Too often, Americans assume that no one could or would consent to sexual transgressions or credit predictions about the end of the world (despite apocalyptic predictions being something of a traditional American pastime).¹⁹

American popular culture has frequently lambasted apocalyptic worldviews, using belief in an imminent global demise as to encourage viewers to dismiss “cult” members as irrational. Notable examples include the Movementarians, depicted in the Simpsons episode “The Joy of Sect,” a Heaven’s Gate-looking group in Family Guy’s “Chitty Chitty Death Bang,” and South Park’s infamous “Trapped in the Closet” (mocking Scientology) and “All About Mormons” episodes.²⁰ As Lynn Neal has argued, such depictions both echo and reinforce societal views about new religious movements, using popular entertainment to reinforce boundaries between normal and abnormal.²¹ Each of these episodes characterizes people who willingly join “cults” as both credulous and ridiculous, inviting viewers to dismiss membership in new religious movements as—at best—a joke. To illustrate: The story arc about the formation of LDS in “All About Mormons” is written in the style of musical theater; the refrain of the song is “Dum dum dum dum dum” (or rather “dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb,” except in the case of Lucy Harris questioning her husband’s belief in Joseph Smith’s revelation—the refrain to her verse is “Lucy Harris smart smart smart; Martin Harris dumb.”). American television shows in particular have relied on apocalyptic beliefs as shorthand for the irrationality of cult members.

By contrast, scholarship on new religious movements suggests that apocalyptic worldviews are not inherently irrational, and that mainstream failure to understand the internal logic of these worldviews tells us more about mainstream Americans’ definitions of religion than it does

about the mental capacity of NRM members. Eileen Barker was perhaps the first scholar to argue that joining an apocalyptic new religious movement might be a rational choice—her *Making of a Moonie* insists that social circumstances of converts, rather than so-called “brainwashing,” best explained conversion.²² David Chidester’s *Salvation and Suicide* similarly argues that those members of Peoples Temple who willingly followed the suicidal imperative of leader Jim Jones did so meaningfully, calling their actions “expressions of self-conscious and intentional religious possibility.”²³ While the American media portrayed the people of Jonestown as “not American, not religious, and ultimately not sane,” Chidester maintains that their “revolutionary suicide” was intended to redeem fully human identity from dehumanizing pull of an evil, capitalist/racist/fascist world through single, superhuman act of self-sacrifice.²⁴ Significantly, Gene Gallagher’s “Negotiating Salvation” argues that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms’ failure to understand the apocalyptic theology of the Branch Davidians at Waco as rational directly contributed to the violent deaths of more than eight members of the sect.²⁵

Barker, Chidester, and Gallagher all emphasize that—despite outsiders’ consternation with “weird” or “crazy” beliefs—new religious movements usually maintain an internal consistency. While lawmakers or law enforcement must concern themselves with public safety, belief in apocalypticism should not be taken as evidence of an absence of agency or an implicit intent to do harm to oneself or others. The failure (or potentially, the unwillingness) to understand apocalypticism as a rational and credible religious worldview has led to violent conflicts between new religious movements and law enforcement officials in recent memory especially at the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ Yearning for Zion ranch in Eldorado, Texas, as I discuss later in this chapter. At YFZ Ranch, attempts to save women and children from an abusive, exploitative “cult” leader resulted in further trauma for the members of those minority religious communities.

“Yes, there was weird sex stuff in the bunker”: abuse and apocalypticism in *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*²⁶

Viewers unfamiliar with the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (or FLDS) might wonder just what in the “ham sandwich”—to use Kimmy’s parlance—all this has to do with a wacky

feminist sitcom about a lovable, out-of-touch ginger who recently escaped captivity at the hands of the Reverend Richard Wayne Gary Wayne, would-be prophet and Durnsville, Indiana’s “worst wedding DJ.”²⁷ The show’s titular heroine, Kimmy Schmidt, is one of three women Rev. Wayne kidnaped and held hostage in an underground bunker for fifteen years. A fourth, Gretchen, is Wayne’s sole voluntary congregant. She “just thought he had some real good ideas.”²⁸

The women of “Savior Rick’s Spooky Church of the Scary-pocalypse” are all styled to resemble the women members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. They wear elaborate pompadour hairstyles and pastel-colored, long-sleeved prairie dresses. As mentioned above, they call each other sister, though none of them are obviously related. The women’s speech and dress not-so-subtly suggest to viewers that the women members of the Church of the Scary-pocalypse, like many Mormon fundamentalist women, are not sisters, but sister-wives—that Reverend Richard Wayne Gary Wayne’s church, like FLDS, practices polygyny, the marriage of one man to multiple women.

The first season of *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, which aired in 2015, is brilliant in many ways. Its characters are complex; its commitment to tackling race, class, and sexual violence is unwavering, if imperfect. But, like so many shows before it, *Kimmy Schmidt* portrays new religious movements as deceptive and dangerous, full of brainwashed women in need of saving. Tina Fey and Robert Carlock’s series suggests that women members of new religious movements are either tricked or forced into joining minority religions, into investing in an apocalyptic worldview, and into participating in unusual sexual practices.

The show is remarkable both for its candid acknowledgment of sexual abuse—as Kimmy aggravatedly reveals to her roommate, Titus Andromedon, “Yes, there was weird sex stuff in the bunker”—and for its refusal to limit Kimmy’s storyline to surviving sexual assault.²⁸ But the only sex that happens in the bunker is “weird” and coercive, and it colors Kimmy’s later sexual interactions.²⁹ She confides to Titus that “all the stuff [she] thought [she] knew about sex was way wrong,” and that in trying to sleep with her new boyfriend, she cracked his spine.³⁰ “He passed out for a second.” In another episode, a would-be suitor sneaks up and puts his hands over her eyes. She shrieks “I don’t like that!” and elbows him in the stomach, suggesting that she has suffered and survived similar

attacks at the hands of Rev. Wayne.³¹ Kimmy Schmidt reinforces stereotypes about new religious movements being sexually exploitative and abusive—and, because of the parallels drawn between the women of the Church of the Scary-pocalypse and the women of FLDS, suggests that polygyny is itself a form of sexual abuse.

The show doesn't dwell on Kimmy's traumatic sexual past, but it doesn't pull punches about her abuse, either. The narrative arc of *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* echoes a broader cultural narrative about minority religions, and specifically new religious movements—that doing religion in unusual ways leads to, or requires, “weird sex stuff.” Rather than portray new religious movements as making space for sexual difference, *Kimmy Schmidt* proposes that insincere leaders exploit credible women's irrationality to trick or force them into transgressive sexual practices.

Those unfamiliar with new religious movements frequently assume that apocalyptic worldviews are irrational and either obviously disingenuous or evidence of “brainwashing.” Certainly, the Reverend's own apocalypticism is transparently manipulative. During Wayne's trial for kidnaping, Kimmy plays “the Reverend's sacred [video] tape,” which contains his audition on June 5, 2006, for the 2007 season of *The Apprentice* (shades of apocalypses to come?). Since Wayne had predicted the world would end on June 6, 2006, “at 6:66 pm,” the judge concludes that this Spooky Church leader never believed in the Scary-pocalypse he preached.³² “You never believed in anything!” Kimmy accuses Wayne. “You shut your mouth, Kimmy Schmidt!” the reverend retorts. “If God had wanted women to talk, he wouldn't have made their mouths look so much like their privates.”³³ This moment underscores both the reverend's insincerity and his misogyny. Reverend Wayne is ridiculous, exploitative, insincere, and hateful, making any belief in his predictions necessarily irrational—and willing participation in his church seem impossible.

The show's first season portrays all religious belief, and particularly belief in the end-times, as worthy of mockery and motivated either by specious and sexist intentions, as with Wayne, or by weak-minded irrationality.³⁴ This is most evident in the show's portrayal of Gretchen, the only woman to have voluntarily joined Wayne's Scary Church. While the other three women were all kidnaped and forced to stay in Rev. Richard's

bunker; Gretchen stayed voluntarily. She tells the *Today Show's* Matt Lauer (speaking of sexual abuse) that she “joined this cult willingly.” “The Reverend bought some of my hair on eBay, and we started emailing, and I just thought he had some real good ideas.”²⁸ When Lauer asks her what’s next, she offers him her hand and says “I go with you now, yes? I’m married to you,” suggesting that she’s been conditioned to accept ownership by a man—any man.²⁸ She continues to evangelize for Wayne—specifically outside a Lucille Roberts weight loss clinic—even after the women have left the bunker. When Kimmy begs Gretchen to help them escape the bunker a second time, insisting that she “know[s] there’s still hope, no matter how brainwashed you are,” Gretchen retorts: “I’m proud to be brainwashed. I’ve got a clean brain. You could eat off it.”³⁵

The show portrays all the women of the Spooky Church as abuse survivors, which they are, but because she joined willingly and continues to believe the Reverend’s teachings, Gretchen is consistently the butt of the show’s jokes.³⁶ Though the first season resolves with Gretchen realizing that the Reverend was an insincere prophet—she’s the first to realize that Wayne taped his *Apprentice* audition (speaking, again, of sexual abuse) the day before his predicted apocalypse—the second season shows her continuing to seek out controlling male religious leadership. She joins the Apple Store (trading all her money for a magic watch), and then the Church of Cosmetology, finally attempting to (unsuccessfully) found her own apocalyptic cult.³⁷ Belief is a habit Gretchen just cannot shake, and it’s one the show consistently portrays as both regrettable and irrational.

Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt characterizes cult members as either men determined to victimize and abuse women (like the Reverend), or women too physically or mentally weak to escape an exploitative situation, detained by force or too dumb to disbelieve. The show reinforces the popular assumption that women—especially but not exclusively women members of minority religions—are somehow more vulnerable to coercion, violence, and exploitation than the general population—that the women of minority religions, in short, need saving.

Kimmy, Donna Maria, and Cyndee were grateful to the SWAT team that removed them from the Reverend’s bunker—which makes sense, as they *were* being abused. But Americans’ assumption that members of minority religions *need* saving has led to an alarming number of civil rights violations. One of the most vivid examples of these violations is

the 2008 raid on the Yearning for Zion ranch of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter-day Saints in Eldorado, Texas, which resulted in the largest custodial seizure of children in American history.

“Females are strong as hell”: against saving women from their apocalypses

In 2003, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (FLDS) purchased land outside Eldorado, TX. At roughly 10,000 members, FLDS is the largest branch of Mormon fundamentalism; they are an apocalyptic sect who practice polygyny, or theologically justified plural marriage. In part, plural marriage is theologically significant to FLDS members because a multi-partner can marriage bring more spirit children into material existence than are possible with in a monogamous relationship, thus helping to expand the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven.³⁸ The FLDS commune in Eldorado—where families lived, worked, farmed, and taught their children, all under the authority of prophet (and convicted felon) Warren Jeffs—was named Yearning for Zion, signaling the group’s collective apocalyptic longing for the second coming of Christ and their commitment to building the kingdom of God.

Almost immediately following FLDS’s arrival in Texas, state representatives attempted to pass a bill targeting FLDS by name as a sexually suspect fringe religion. The Texas House of Representatives Committee on Juvenile Justice and Family Issues expressed their intention to enter the FLDS ranch by force as early as 2004, despite possessing no evidence of abuse being perpetrated at the ranch.

Following a Colorado woman’s false report of sexual violence made by phone from outside the ranch, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services initiated the largest government detention of American children in the nation’s history.³⁹ In April 2008, SWAT teams, helicopters, police vehicles, and an armored personnel carrier descended on the ranch to assist in the removal of 439 FLDS children from Yearning for Zion (YFZ). Texas state services alienated and terrified the women and children they sought to help, and did not detain a single adult male member of the community.

The Yearning for Zion raid was motivated by a conviction on the part of Texas lawmakers, law enforcement officials, and social service providers that the practice of polygyny constituted evidence of sexual abuse. In its *Original Petition for the Protection of Children in an Emergency and for*

Conservatorship in Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DPFS) alleged that

Investigators determined that there is a wide-spread pattern and practice among the residents of the YFZ Ranch in which young minor female residents are conditioned to expect and accept sexual activity with adult men at the ranch upon being spiritually married to them. Under this practice, once a minor female child is determine [sic] by the leaders of the YFZ ranch to have reached child bearing [sic] age (approximately 13-14 years old) they are then “spiritually married” to an adult male member of the church and they are required to then to [sic] engage in sexual activity with such male for the purpose of having children.⁴⁰

The *Original Petition* further alleges that

it is the pattern and practice of the adult males to have more than one spiritual wife resulting in them having sexual relationships with a number of women, some of whom are minors. Minor boy children are expected, after they reach adult age and when their spiritual leader determines appropriate [sic], to enter into a spiritual marriage with a female member of the church designated by the leader, which female [sic] may be a minor.⁴¹

DPFS’ *Original Petition* further interpreted the practice of polygyny as a “pervasive pattern and practice of indoctrinating and grooming minor female children to accept spiritual marriages to adult male members of the YFZ ranch resulting in them being sexually abused” and that “minor boys residing on the YFZ Ranch, after they become adults, are spiritually married to minor female children and engage in sexual relationships with them resulting in them becoming sexual perpetrators.”⁴²

This petition reduces the theology and culture of FLDS to a “a wide-spread pattern and practice among the residents of the YFZ Ranch in which young minor female residents are conditioned to expect and accept sexual activity with adult men at the ranch upon being spiritually married to them.”⁴³ The petition uses bizarre language to discuss male children—“minor boy children...after they reach adult age”—implying that these boys are raised to be “sexual predators,” as stated above. Likewise, the petition asserts that FLDS “groom[s] minor female children” for sexual abuse. The Texas Department of Protective and Family Services

consistently conflates FLDS with polygyny and exaggerates the importance of its practice in FLDS communities. The petition also characterizes FLDS men as hypersexualized predators (and male children as predators-in-training), while failing to meaningfully distinguish between FLDS women and children, both of whom the petition suggests have been “indoctrinate[ed] and “groom[ed]” to accept sexual abuse.

The DPFS’ final report on the “Eldorado Incident” likewise defines the FLDS by the practice of polygyny and, more significantly, finds that practice evidence of “neglectful supervision” of children.⁴⁴ DPFS found that the parents of 274 children (including twelve who DPFS determined had been sexually assaulted) had subjected their children to neglect because they failed to “remove their child from a situation in which the child would be exposed to sexual abuse committed against another child within their families or households.”⁴⁵ This is to say that DPFS charged 124 people from ninety-one families with “neglectful supervision” because they allowed their children to live at the Yearning for Zion Ranch.⁴⁶ DPFS alleged that “in significant ways, the community functioned as a single household with a *pervasive belief system that groomed girls to become future victims of sexual abuse and boys to become future sexual abuse perpetrators.*”⁴⁷

Before returning FLDS children to their families, DPFS required FLDS mothers to create and implement “safety plans” to protect their children from sexual abuse—again implying that FLDS men were suspected of rampant sexual predation and coercion.⁴⁸ Indeed, the only mother to refuse to sign such a plan was forced to remand her child to the state.⁴⁹ As with the *Original Petition*, the “Eldorado Incident” report collapses FLDS into the presumably abusive practice of polygyny, portrays FLDS men as predators (and FLDS boys as predators-in-training), and FLDS women/girls as “groomed” to be “victims of sexual abuse.”

In an unprecedented move later ruled unlawful by the Texas Third Court of Appeals, DPFS and law enforcement officials treated the entire Yearning for Zion community as a single household, “under the theory that the ranch community was ‘essentially one household comprised of extended family subgroups’ with a *single, common belief system* and there was reason to believe that a child had been sexually abused in the ranch ‘household.’”⁵⁰ In what it called “the largest child protection case documented in the history of the United States,” the Department for Family

and Protective Services took custody without a court order of 468 persons believed to be children—twenty-nine of whom were legally adult women.⁵¹

Despite the state’s conviction that the women of YFZ lacked the will to resist, FLDS mothers mounted a massive public campaign in an attempt to regain custody of their children. Prior to the raid, most of these women had little to any contact with the world outside YFZ; but they did not mince words when their families were on the line. These women made passionate appeals to the American public, insisting that their children were safe and they themselves were happy.

Marie J. Musser is only one of dozens of women whose children were seized by CPS. Soft-spoken and sobbing, Musser stared directly into the *Salt Lake Tribune’s* camera:

They think we are brainwashed or whatever. How can you tell? Who will believe that they’re really happy? The children are so happy. They are being abused from this experience. They haven’t known abuse until this experience... I just want my children back.⁵²

Though initially the women were told that law enforcement officials intended to keep mothers with their children, Musser says that she and the other mothers were eventually given an ultimatum: either go to a shelter for “victimized women” or return to the ranch. An offscreen voice asked her “what did they tell you when you left the arena [where FLDS children were being held]?” Musser responded, “The CPS [Child and Protective Services] worker escorted me out to the bus. I says, ‘if I choose to go home, will I see my children again?’ and he says, ‘No, you will not.’” But we knew we could come here [to Yearning for Zion] and get the help we needed from our attorneys, we would have a better chance than going to the shelter.” Marie and many other women in the YFZ community do not and have not experienced polygyny as abusive.

The state of Texas is legally obligated to investigate all reports of abuse, but they seldom use helicopters and armored personnel carriers to do so.⁵³ While the Department of Family and Protective Services was obliged follow-up on the initial report of abuse, Texas’ militarized response was sharply disproportionate to the size and influence of the FLDS community in Eldorado. And as American religious historian

John-Charles Duffy argues in his review of *Saints Under Siege*, there is an inherent tension between the state's duty to prosecute child sexual abuse and the FLDS understanding of young adolescents as marriageable.⁵⁴

Sexual abuse of women and children is disturbingly and regrettably common throughout the United States.⁵⁵ Sexual abuse absolutely happened at YFZ; and any instance of sexual assault is too much. But by the numbers, the substantiated cases of child sexual assault at YFZ put the community well below the national average. State services in Texas reacted to Mormon fundamentalists in excessive and arguably unconstitutional ways. The Department of Family and Protective Services has concluded that the practice of polygyny represents a marked sexual risk factor. Nearly every adult member of the community is now a registered sex offender, despite very little substantive evidence of sexual abuse.

At the same time, "little substantive evidence of sexual abuse" is not an absence of evidence. As Duffy notes, "the courts did not exonerate the FLDS." Almost 125 adults were classified as "designated perpetrators" of sexual abuse or neglect, largely based on the adults' association with FLDS as a suspect entity. Twelve men were also indicted on charges related to underage marriages. Warren Steed Jeffs, leader of the FLDS, is currently serving a prison term of life plus twenty years for the sexual assault of a twelve- and fifteen-year-old girls, whom Jeffs had taken as wives. Nine other FLDS men were convicted of abusing or facilitating the abuse of twelve children at YFZ. Abuse absolutely happened within this community.

This is a troubling case study that requires us to hold several uncomfortable facts in tension. FLDS elders abused and helped create and sustain abusive conditions for the women and children of YFZ; these men engaged in illegal and reprehensible behaviors. At the same time, state officials consistently elided the FLDS religious practice of plural marriage (theologically prescribed polygyny) with sexual abuse, despite the insistence of many adult women that they had entered into and remained in these relationships willingly. The challenge of this case study is to both take these abuses seriously, to acknowledge that abuses did and do happen in minority religious communities, while also recognizing that there is nothing unique, or uniquely religious, about these kinds of abuses.

It's important to note that many members of the FLDS community have unequivocally condemned the sexual abuse of children, even while

the community's understanding of "children" might vary from more widely held American notions. Marie Musser, the FLDS mother whom I quote above, insists that "that kind of grossness has no place in our religion...if anyone treated another person like that in our religion, we would not put up with it and would turn the offender in... child abuse is far from the teachings we are taught."⁵⁶ Warren Jeffs' continues to lead the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from his prison cell in Palestine, Texas. But Jeffs lost the support of much of his former community when attempts to gather evidence of his innocence instead supported allegations of abuse. In a conversation with Oprah Winfrey on OWN's "Where Are They Now?" Jeffs' former head of security, Willie Jessop, explained that he found audio evidence that Jeffs sexually assaulted girls.

He [Warren Jeffs] had made confessions to doing it [sexually abusing FLDS children and young women], and we thought the government was discrediting him. We knew that people didn't have a tolerance for plural marriage, or polygamy. But we didn't believe that there was this underage group sex—these horrible things—and so with everyone's skepticism demonizing plural marriage, it created a perfect opportunity for Warren to use the distrust people had for that [plural marriage].⁵⁷

On the stand, Jessop was blunter: "Those sons of bitches were raping little girls down in Texas."⁵⁸ Jeffs is serving a life sentence for sexually assaulting two girls. One of these girls is Jessop's niece.⁵⁹ "All of our focus was on protecting Warren, protecting him legally, physically, financially—any way we could find to protect him, 'Jessop says.' And he was using that to be a terrible monster'."⁵⁹

Even one case of child sexual assault discovered among the FLDS community at Yearning for Zion warrants official investigation—though not the militaristic and disproportionate response of Texas law enforcement, nor the unwarranted violation of family integrity or parental rights.⁶⁰ At the same time, DPFS found little evidence of child sexual abuse at the ranch, and many women who had left Yearning for Zion with their children chose to return to the community of their own volition.⁶¹ Agencies invested in protecting victims of domestic and sexual abuse inadvertently discouraged FLDS women who might want to leave

the community from seeking out state services, exacerbating the community's isolation.⁶²

The failure to distinguish between sexual abuse and a theologically sanctioned and intraculturally accepted practice of religio-sexual difference—that is, plural marriage—led to the further alienation of FLDS women and children. This failure also arguably contributed to the conditions by which sexual abuse was made possible in this minority religious community. Ultimately, the state's response to *Yearning for Zion* did far more to discourage and disincentivize American religious and sexual difference than to protect women and children.

This, finally, is the challenge and the tragedy of *Yearning for Zion*: Public suspicion and condemnation of polygyny as essentially and exclusively abusive helped create the conditions by which abuse flourished in that community. At the same time, attributing sexual abuse to religious peculiarity rather than to systemic violence does little to address the root causes of abuse. According to the Department of Justice, one-third to one-half of all sexual abuse “committed against girls in the United States is perpetrated by family members,” regardless of religious affiliation. Studies have shown that religious membership is not a significant factor in incidence of abuse, though minority religious membership can complicate attempts to leave abusive situations.⁶³ This is not to dismiss abuse in minority religious communities, but rather to interrogate the discrepancy between the size and influence of these communities and the scale of public outrage and intervention. We must take seriously both Americans' moral outrage at the vulnerability of women and children—and FLDS women and children are vulnerable, made so by poverty, isolation, lack of education, and patriarchy, if not religion *per se*—and the culturally contingent definitions of abuse.

In raiding *Yearning for Zion*, Texas law enforcement and Family and Protective Services Department stigmatized this FLDS community. In their disproportionate and militaristic actions, these agencies emphasized that FLDS in its entirety—not the single alleged perpetrator originally investigated or the nine men eventually convicted of bigamy and sexual assault of children—was religiously and sexually suspect. In doing so, these agencies invested in protecting victims of domestic and sexual abuse inadvertently discouraged FLDS women who might want to leave the community from seeking state social services *and* exacerbated the community's

isolation. This is not to say that we should not concern ourselves with the plight of abused women. Far from it. But we must *also* concern ourselves with how our attempts to “save” women from their religion often work to damage the very women we try to save.

Conclusion

Why, in the end, should the women of *Yearning for Zion* matter to viewers of *Kimmy Schmidt*? In part, because the show’s creators, Fey and Carlock, are reenacting a tired, false dichotomy: women versus religion. Religion is not a source of comfort, or a system of meaning-making, or a mode for women’s leadership and authority in *Kimmy Schmidt*. Religion is belief, and it is a mistake—one that women make far too often.

The program’s take on religion is less provocative than it is, as Kimmy’s New York roommate Titus Andromedon would say, basic. *Kimmy Schmidt* delights in overplaying stereotypes, often to criticize inequality. But there’s little reason to believe that the writers are critiquing stereotypes of religion, and new religions in particular. Indeed, as Neal has noted, the cult stereotype most often functions proliferate antipathy toward new religious movements.²¹ Revered Rick’s Spooky Church of the Scary-pocalypse is another in a long line of pop culture portrayals of cults, a new religion led by a lecherous and charismatic huckster using religion to dominate and exploit women.

Throughout American history, new religions have pushed gender boundaries. Many facilitated women’s leadership and authority, as seen in figures like the Shakers’ Mother Ann Lee or Christian Science’s Mary Baker Eddy. New religious movements can prompt reconsideration of divine gender, as with contemporary Goddess worship. They can challenge traditional gender roles, identities, and performances, as evidenced in Spiritualism and many forms of Neopaganism. New religions are a space in which Americans negotiate gender and power. They are more than a punch line.

Titus warned Kimmy that people are drawn to stories like the Indiana Mole Women for three reasons. “One, it’s titillating like a horror movie. Two, it makes them feel like a good person because they care about a stranger. Three, it makes people feel safe that it did not happen to them.” These kinds of atrocity tales—even when couched as humor—portray new religions as inherently salacious, reinforce the inevitability of

women's victimhood, and focus on sexual abuse only when it happens on America's religious margins. Americans feel compassionate in wanting to save the dupes of new religions—we see a send-up of this self-satisfaction in the Today Show's assistant handing the Mole Women their parting gift bags, droning “thank you, Victims! Thank you, Victims!”—and safer in their assumption that sexual predators are religious kooks, and not their neighbors, friends, and family members.

Kimmy recognizes that “the worst thing that ever happened to me happened in my own front yard,” but this show isn't an indictment of domestic abuse—the most common form of abuse American women and children are likely to face. *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* exceptionalizes sexual abuse by locating it on a ridiculous but nevertheless dangerous religious fringe. Kimmy's abuser was not a family member or known acquaintance—the most likely scenario for sexual assault. It was the Reverend and his Spooky Church who tried to break Kimmy and betrayed gullible Gretchen's trust.

It might be tempting to dismiss *Kimmy Schmidt* as just one more depiction of new religions as crazy and abusive. But we cannot underestimate how little Americans actually know about new religions, or how much damage misconceptions about minority religions can do, as in the case of the raid on FLDS at Yearning for Zion. Kimmy Schmidt reinforces Americans' convictions that new religions are dangerous and that their women members need saving. “Don't be token in.”⁶⁴

Notes

1. Neal, Lynn S., 2011, “They're Freaks!': The Cult Stereotype in Fictional Television Shows, 1958-2008,” *Nova Religio* 14(3), pp. 81-107.
2. Wessinger, Catherine, “‘Culting’: from Waco to Fundamentalist Mormons,” *Religion Dispatches*, July 3, 2009, <http://religiondispatches.org/culting-from-waco-to-fundamentalist-mormons/>.
3. Neal, “They're Freaks,” 85, 88-9, 92; Goodwin, Megan, “Don't Be Taken in by *Kimmy Schmidt*'s Cult,” April 3, 2015, <http://religiondispatches.org/dont-be-taken-in-by-kimmy-schmidts-cult/>.
4. “White dudes hold the record for creepy crimes” is a line from the show's infectiously catchy theme song. See Rich, Katey, “Why You Can't Get the *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* Theme Song out of Your Head,” *Vanity Fair*, March 10, 2015, <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2015/03/unbreakable-kimmy-schmidt-theme-song>.
5. Barker, Eileen, *Making of a Moonie: Choice or Brainwashing?* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 1.

6. *Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple*, directed by Stanley Nelson (New York: Firelight Media, 2006).
7. On this point, see Moore, Lawrence, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford, 1986) as well as Goodwin, Megan, "Costs of Corporate Conscience: How Women, Queers, and People of Color Are Paying for Hobby Lobby's Sincerely Held Beliefs," in *Religion in the Age of Obama*, ed. Juan Marcial Floyd-Thomas and Anthony Pinn. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 94-107.
8. Wessinger, "Culting."
9. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence estimates that intimate partners abuse more than ten million women and men every year, that a third of women experience intimate partner violence during their lifetime and a quarter experience severe physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner. "National Statistics," National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, <https://ncadv.org/statistics>. There are an average of 63,000 victims of child sexual abuse every year. Most are between twelve and seventeen years old. Girls make up 82 percent of victims under 18. See the Rape, Incest, and Abuse National Network, "Children and Teens: Statistics," <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/children-and-teens>. According to the Administration for Children and Families' most recent Child Maltreatment report, there were 57,286 reported cases of child sexual abuse in 2015, meaning, 8.4 percent of American children experience sexual abuse. Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Child Maltreatment 2015* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, 2015), pp. 45-6.
10. Rubin, Gayle, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, eds. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Psychology Press, 1993), pp. 3-44.
11. "List of dates predicted for apocalyptic events," Wikipedia Foundation, last updated at 23:26 (UT) August 8, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_dates_predicted_for_apocalyptic_events
12. deWolfe, Elizabeth A., 1998, "Mary Marshall Dyer, Gender, and A Portraiture of Shakerism," *Religion and American Culture* 8(2), p. 237.
13. Foster, Lawrence, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Champaign: University of Illinois, 1984), p. 72.
14. Barker, Eileen, 1978, "Living the Divine Principle. Inside the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church in Britain," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 45(1), pp. 75-93.
15. Milikan, David, "The Children of God, Family of Love, the Family," in *Sex, Slander, and Salvation: Investigating the Family/Children of God*, eds. J. Gordon Melton and James R. Lewis (Stanford: Center for Academic Publication, 1994).
16. Reavis, Dick J., *The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995), pp. 111-9.
17. Goodwin, Megan, 2017, "Staying After Class: Memory and Materiality beyond Heaven's Gate," *Nova Religio* 20(4), p. 87.
18. Weiss, Margot, *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 93-4.

19. Altman, Michael, "Millennialism may be the most American of theological interests," March 12, 2017, <https://twitter.com/MichaelJAltman/status/841107686011883520>.
20. "The Joy of Sect," *The Simpsons*, Fox, first aired February 9, 1998; "Trapped in the Closet," *South Park*, Comedy Central, first aired November 16, 2005; "All About Mormons," *South Park*, Comedy Central, first aired November 18, 2003.
21. Neal, "They're Freaks!," p. 83
22. Barker, *Making of a Moonie*. Brainwashing refers to a process by which an individual's control over their own thinking, behavior, or emotions. While brainwashing was a popular explanation for an unprecedented number of young people joining new religious movements in the 1960s and 1970s, religious studies scholars and psychologists have largely discredited this theory as an explanation for membership in marginal religious communities. See also Chidester, David, *Salvation and Suicide: Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003).
23. Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, ix.
24. Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, pp. 128-9.
25. Gallagher, Eugene V., 1999, "Negotiating Salvation," *Nova Religio* 3(1), pp. 27-35.
26. "Kimmy Goes Outside!" *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, Netflix, first aired March 6, 2015.
27. *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, Netflix, first aired March 6, 2015.
28. "Kimmy Goes Outside!"
29. The series finally names the assaults Kimmy survived rape in season three. "Kimmy Can't Help You!" *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, Netflix, first aired May 19, 2017; see also Miller, Liz Shannon, "'Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt' Season 3 Finally Used the Word 'Rape': Why It's a Big Deal," *IndieWire* (May 22, 2017), <http://www.indiewire.com/2017/05/unbreakable-kimmy-schmidt-rape-season-3-spoilers-1201829912/>.
30. "Kimmy Is Bad at Math!" *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, Netflix, first aired March 6, 2015.
31. "Kimmy Kisses a Boy!" *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, Netflix, first aired March 6, 2015.
32. The Reverend's prediction refers to Revelation 13:18 in the Christian New Testament, which says that 666 is "the number of the Beast" (often interpreted as the devil). One assumes that the prophecy's referencing 6/6/06 at "6:66 pm" was intended to emphasize the extreme spookiness of this particular apocalypse.
33. "Kimmy Makes Waffles!" *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, Netflix, first aired March 6, 2015.
34. There is no overt mention of religion in the first season of *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* beyond the religion practiced by the Reverend and Gretchen. *TV Tropes* identifies Kimmy's landlord, Lillian Kaushtupper, as "ambiguously Jewish." Jacqueline Vorhees, Kimmy's boss, is Native, but does not address Native religion. In the ninth episode of the show's third season, "Kimmy Goes to Church!," the show does complicate religion by dividing it into "real" and "fake." "Real religion is about knowing we're not perfect but trying to be better. Together. Fake religion locks you in a box." "Kimmy Goes to Church!" *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, Netflix, first aired May 19, 2017.
35. "Kimmy Makes Waffles!"
36. The one exception to Gretchen and her credulity being the butt of the show's jokes is the moment when the women reenter the bunker. Gretchen marvels: "it's here! It's all...still...here," echoing Kimmy's delight in episode one, in finding the world had

- not—contrary to Wayne’s preaching—been destroyed. This scene is brief but heartrending. “Kimmy Goes to Court!” *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, Netflix, first aired March 6, 2015.
37. “Kimmy Kidnaps Gretchen!” *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, Netflix, first aired April 15, 2016 and “Kimmy Steps on a Crack!” *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, Netflix, first aired May 19, 2017. Part of Gretchen’s failure is her attempt to cultivate “child husbands,” who are portrayed as unshowered and annoying wards whose care consumes most of Gretchen’s time, preventing her from successfully evangelizing.
38. Bennion, Janet, “The Many Faces of Polygamy: An Analysis of the Variability in Modern Mormon Fundamentalism in the Intermountain West,” in *Modern Polygamy in the United States: Historical, Cultural, and Legal Issues*, ed. Cardell Jacobson and Lara Burton (New York: Oxford, 2011), p. 62
39. The report was made by a thirty-three year-old Colorado woman, Rosita Swinton, claiming to be an abused, pregnant 16-year-old girl living at Yearning for Zion. The affidavit about this incident alleges that Swinton may suffer from dissociative identity disorder. Kirk Mitchell, “Roommate stunned by claims Colo. Woman’s bogus call triggered FLDS raid,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 20, 2008, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/695273270/Calls-from-Sarah-kept-on-coming.html>. Swinton also conducted 30-40 hours of phone calls with former FLDS member and antipolygamy activist Flora Jessop., Stuart Wright and James T. Richardson, “Introduction,” in *Saints Under Siege: The Texas State Raid on the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints*, ed. Stuart A. Wright and James T. Richardson (New York: NYU Press, 2011), 3-6, as well as “Rozita Swinton’s Bad Call,” *Newsweek Magazine*, last modified July 26, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120417072447/http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2008/07/26/rozita-swinton-s-bad-call.html>.
40. *Original Petition for the Protection of Children in an Emergency and for Conservatorship in Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship*, Peggy Williams, Clerk (District Court of Schleicher County, TX, 2008), p. 5.
41. *Original Petition*, 5. It should be noted that marriage to a minor *per se* is still not illegal under Texas state law.
42. *Original Petition*, 5.
43. *Original Petition*, 16—affidavit of Lynn McFadden.
44. *Eldorado Investigation*, The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, December 22, 2008, 19.
45. *Eldorado Investigation*, 3. This finding directly contradicts that of the Texas Third Court of Appeals, which stated that “[t]he existence of the FLDS belief system as described by the Department’s witnesses, by itself, does not put children of FLDS parents in physical danger.” “ACLU Submits Brief In Texas FLDS Case Saying State Can’t Separate Families Based Solely On Beliefs,” American Civil Liberties Union, last updated May 29, 2008, <http://www.aclu.org/print/religion-belief/aclu-submits-brief-texas-flds-case-saying-state-cant-separate-families-based-solely->
46. *Eldorado Investigation*, 3, pp. 14-15, and Duffy, John-Charles, 2012, “Saints Under Siege,” review of *Saints Under Siege: The Texas Raid on the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints*, ed. Stuart A. Wright and James T. Richardson, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80(2), p. 554. If upheld, persons thus charged have their names entered into Child Protective Services’ abuse/neglect registry, are not allowed to work in some areas of child welfare, and may not

be foster or adoptive parents in Texas. See also Wright and Richardson, "Introduction," pp. 14-15.

47. *Eldorado Investigation*, p. 7.

48. *Eldorado Investigation*, p. 5.

49. *Eldorado Investigation*

50. "ACLU Submits Brief In Texas FLDS Case Saying State Can't Separate Families Based Solely On Beliefs," American Civil Liberties Union, last updated May 29, 2008, <http://www.aclu.org/print/religion-belief/aclu-submits-brief-texas-flds-case-saying-state-cant-separate-families-based-solely->. *In re Sara Steed, et al.* (Texas Court of Appeals, Third District, at Austin 2008), emphasis added. BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE, American Civil Liberties Union & American Civil Liberties Union of Texas, IN OPPOSITION TO RELATOR'S PETITION FOR MANDAMUS, No. 08-0391, *In re Texas Department of Family & Protective Services*, (Third Court of Appeals Austin, Texas filed May 29, 2008) ("ACLU Amicus Brief"), 8: "Despite the basic principle that legal standards must be proved on an individual basis, and the clear accordant requirement in the Texas Family Code, and despite the varied circumstances different ages, sexes, families, and living situations of the children before it, DFPS failed to provide evidence sufficient to show that each child was in danger, relying instead upon testimony about beliefs ascribed to the group as a whole and assertions of broad cultural harm."

51. Smith, Linda F., "Child Protection Law and the FLDS Raid in Texas," in *Modern Polygamy in the United States: Historical, Cultural, and Legal Issues*, ed. Cardell Jacobson and Lara Burton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 304. See also *ACLU Amicus Brief*, 19.

52. Musser, "Women and Polygamous Sister Wives."

53. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, *Eldorado Investigation*, December 22, 2008. The "Eldorado Incident" report notes that Texas state law requires DFPS to "investigate all reports of abuse or neglect 'allegedly committed by a person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare.'" *Eldorado Investigation*, 3. By contrast, Janet Bennion inquires, "Why do we send United States troops against a small Texas community for teen pregnancy when the entire nation is plagued by similar issues?" "The Many Faces of Polygamy: An Analysis of the Variability in Modern Mormon Fundamentalism in the Intermountain West," in *Modern Polygamy in the United States: Historical, Cultural, and Legal Issues*, ed. Cardell K. Jacobson and Lara Burton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 180.

54. This tension is exacerbated by the inconsistency among state marriage regulations, including within the state of Texas itself. When FLDS moved to Eldorado, it was legal for a fourteen-year-old girl to marry with parental consent. State legislators raised the legal age of marriage for both girls and boys to sixteen as part of their response to FLDS presence in the state. During arguments for the necessity of raising the age of marriageable girls, One member of the Texas House of Representatives Committee on Juvenile Justice and Family Issues remarked that girls of *sixteen* needed to be marriageable in cases where their parents insisted (presumably in cases of unplanned pregnancy out of wedlock). Not one person in the chamber commented on the irony of this statement in the context of concern for coerced marriage of adolescents. Duffy, "Saints Under Siege," p. 554. As Duffy notes, scholars can both attend to the religious intolerance at work in public attempts to regulate FLDS practices *and* note the public's sincere concern for the women and children of FLDS.

55. Precise numbers of incidents and victims of child sexual assault are hard to determine as these abuses often go unreported. According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, roughly one in nine girls and one in fifty-three boys experience sexual assault, which is to say roughly 11 percent of American are sexually assaulted. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services verified twelve cases of sexual abuse among the 439 children residing at Yearning for Zion (2.7 percent), well below the national average. See *Eldorado Investigation*, p. 21.
56. *Eldorado Investigation*, 21.
57. Jessop, “Blinded by His Faith”
58. O’Neill, Ann, “The Turncoat: ‘Thug Willie’ Spills Secrets of FLDS and Its ‘Prophet,’” *CNN*, last modified February 27, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/25/us/jessop-flds-warren-jeffs-short-creek/index.html>.
59. O’Neill, “The Turncoat.”
60. Ross, Catherine J., 2008, “Legal Constraints on Child-Saving: the Strange Case of the Fundamentalists Latter-Day Saints at Yearning for Zion,” 37 *Capital University Law Review* 361, p. 410. “Suspicion of those who live differently may impermissibly threaten important constitutional values and harm individual children. The case of Yearning for Zion Ranch may seem *sui generis*, but it powerfully illustrates what happens to children when child protective services workers disregard-or do not understand-the principles of family integrity and parental rights.” Cf. Bennion, “Many Faces of Polygamy,” p. 180.
61. Winston, Diane, “Texas Court Rules Against Polygamist Raid,” *Religion Dispatches*, last modified July 3, 2009, <http://religiondispatches.org/texas-court-rules-against-polygamist-raid/>. “Admit it: you were surprised by the unanimous Texas court ruling that the state had insufficient warrant to remove children from the Yearning for Zion ranch (a.k.a. polygamous Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ compound) in Eldorado. If so, you were hardly alone.” Gibson also notes that a third of women who were removed during the raid have left YFZ, though FLDS representatives claim these women are still with the church. “‘However Satisfied Man Might Be,” p. 291.
62. Gibson, “‘However Satisfied Man Might Be,” p. 289
63. Gilad, Michal, 2014, “In God’s Shadow: Unveiling the Hidden World of Victims of Domestic Violence in Observant Religious Communities,” *Rutgers Journal of Law and Public Policy* 11(3), pp. 471-550; Simon, Antonia, et al., “A Rapid Literature Review of Evidence on Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief,” United Kingdom Department for Education, October 24, 2012, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-rapid-literature-review-of-evidence-on-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-or-belief>.
64. Fey and Carlock had planned to call the show “Tooken,” “like that’s the way a child speaks about something that is taken from them,” Fey explains. “It was meant to sort of represent that part of Kimmy’s life had been taken from her and that she was determined to get it back.” Wieselman, Jarett, “Tina Fey Explores New Territory In Her Follow-Up To ‘30 Rock,’” *Buzzfeed News*, March 4, 2015, <https://www.buzzfeed.com/jarettwieselman/tina-fey-unbreakable-kimmy-schmidt-ellie-kemper>.