

Big love

Business



The fictional TV show Big Love, based on a polygamous Utah family aired its series finale on March 20, 2011. Over the seasons the show brought up many issues about polygamy in the modern United States. By switching from the stereotypical polygamy compound life to polygamists living an average life, the show was able to capture many of the polygamous ideas that captivate modern day Americans. Big Love was a show based on love.

The love between a man and woman, the love between women, “ the love between families”, love of religion, etc. The Hendricksons’, the family on the show, was the ideal American family. Instead of a husband and a wife there was one man with three wives... This type of marriage is called polygamy and is practiced mainly by Mormons. When hearing about polygamy in the news it is most often about compound raids. These raids are to rescue children who the authorities fear are being abused or in danger of being abused. Most polygamists who live on a compound are very different then the Hendrickson family displayed on Big Love.

The Hendrickson family has three wives and one husband. Barb, Nicki, and Margene are all married to Bill, and each has multiple children with him. Each wife brings a different view to the whole idea of polygamy, which allowed for interesting plots and story lines. The typical polygamist family lives in a compound, where life is very different from the average person’s life. On the compound women and female children wear long dresses with tight braids down their backs. They also do not wear makeup.

Girls do not receive a full education since they are being homeschooled. Males work around the compound or outside of it making money to support

the church. Families live in large houses with more than one mother, because of their fathers' multiple wives. Most families contain over 20 children. The idea of plural marriage keeps the society going.

Big Love showed that not all polygamists live like this. In truth only a small percentage of practicing polygamists live in compounds, and most compounds are set up differently from one another. Each polygamist compound is run by an apostle who rules how that community will follow the "Principle." In Big Love the Henricksons, do not live on a compound, but live on an average street with three houses (one for each wife). Throughout the seasons, each character became to represent a different outlook on polygamy.

Bill was devoted to keeping his family together, no matter what it took. He struggled to provide for all of his wives and children and also pursue a fourth wife. Bill was banned from the compound, Jupiter Creek, as a teenager and came to resent it. Bill's first wife, Barb, was not brought up as a polygamist, and became a believer in polygamy when Bill married his second wife, Nicki. As the seasons progressed, Barb struggles with living a polygamist life, and longs for a monogamous marriage. The second wife in the Henrickson family, Nicki, is the daughter of Jupiter Creek's prophet.

She has been taught to obey the principle and believe in plural marriage. As the seasons continued, Nicki strived to be the wife in control. When Bill marries Margene Nicki takes it as an opportunity to gain some leverage. Margene is sixteen when she marries into the Henrickson family. She has never really had a family and enjoys the new found love she receives. She

longs for independence as the seasons go on and in the finale she is shown to be leaving to fulfill her goals.

These three women take center stage in the show illustrate the woman's side of a polygamist marriage. It is through their distinct personalities that they bring all the children in the family up, each contributing a different view. Many outsiders have viewed the polygamus society as a cult that abuses its children. Children are supposedly forced into marriages with elders of the community. Big Love demonstrated this idea with talk about a joy book, which is a book viewed by the elders to pick their next wives.

Nicki's daughter is going to be placed in this, which causes Nicki to have great fear considering that was her marriage to her first husband was determined. By bringing up problems like this and basing scenes on actual things that have happened in polygamous society, Big Love was able to reach a wide range of people. Viewers were fascinated at the unique way the Henricksons lived. This fascination allowed for the American public to view polygamy in a new way. Big Love has also made the American public more suspicious of families practicing polygamy living around them. Due to suspicion more and more polygamous families have been ousted.

These newly ousted polygamous families have faced mixed perception from the public. Some families have been accepted and some have had to pick up and move their whole entire lives. One family, the Brown family recently came out to the nation as polygamists through their television show Sister Wives. A critic from huffingtonpost. com said, " The Browns have kept their lifestyle an open secret until now, so the show is a coming-out party." By

coming out the public the Browns have received a mixed reaction and the children have been teased at school.

As polygamous practices become more popularly known it shows how Big Love really has impacted society. Before the show many of these families practicing polygamy were afraid to show the public, now families are coming out. This gives hope to other polygamous families. Big Love did wonders for the polygamy society in America.