

CAN WE PULL YOU FOR A CHAT?

THE SECRET LIVES OF MORMON WIVES' STARS ON BANISHING 'SHAME'

JESSI NGATIKAURA & WHITNEY LEAVITT

The *Secret Lives Of Mormon Wives* has become an instant hit. And given it emerged from the online controversy surrounding a group of swinging Mormons, it's little surprise we're so obsessed with the show. Season two has

brought even more drama to Utah – with friendship fallouts, relationship breakdowns, and alleged affairs. *heat* spoke to Jessi Ngatikaura and Whitney Leavitt, both 32, about what it's like starring on one of the world's biggest shows...

How does it feel watching yourselves back?
Jessi: It sucks! [Laughs.] No, it's scary. You live it and film so much, but only 10 episodes are made. Things get cut and put together differently than you expect.
Whitney: It's reopening



Wifey material: the swingers of Utah



Jessi (left) and Whitney star in season two of the hit show

wounds, and then also hearing what other people have to say about them... Then that opens new wounds! **J:** The internet's like a character on the show, because it sets a narrative. A good example of that is Zac and Jen [Affleck]. Obviously, Zac showed a side of himself in season one, but the show flashed

'Tell me everything, but I don't want to be a part of it.' I think having my baby during that time was definitely a blessing. **Jessi, *Vanderpump Villa*'s Marciano Brunette alleged you two had an affair at the end of season two. How have things been?**
J: I was freaking out for a little bit, because I knew it was coming.

'I dissolved all my fillers'

to a text message. TikTok read it, and it became a narrative. The internet takes our stories to the next level and you always have to prepare for that. **Whitney, you were at the centre of the drama in season one. Was it nice to be on the sidelines this time?**
W: It's very relaxing over there, let me tell you. [Laughs.] I'm like,

'Then I was like, 'Oh, I can't talk about it until the next season.' It was scary, but I feel like I've got a lot of support online. There's way more to the story, and that will unfold. It's going to be a rough few months, but we'll get through it. **What were some of the most shocking scenes to watch?**
J: Oh gosh. For me, it was Taylor's barbecue

[where her family pushed her to get back with Dakota Mortensen].

W: We'd heard about it, but watching it was so different. It looked hard. **J:** Yeah, that was a hard watch.

You're all about breaking taboos on the show. Do you get a lot of people reaching out?

J: Yes, specifically a lot of Mormons or ex-Mormons, who grew up in the church and have some trauma from feeling that they didn't have a voice or couldn't ask questions. I've had a lot of messages saying, 'You've made me feel more confident in my skin,' or, 'Now I'm more comfortable asking this.'

W: The big thing is having no shame. We share so much of the nitty-gritty of our lives and we're so vulnerable, so I hope other people don't feel shame for mistakes they've made or interests they have. **What's your biggest personal change from season one?**
W: I think season one

Whitney thought everybody would think the way she thinks. I was so confused! I was like, 'I don't get why this is such a big deal to you.' Season two Whitney really wanted to listen to everyone else and understand their perspectives. Now, I'm like, 'Let me put myself in your shoes.'

J: I dissolved all my fillers and had a whole new face! [Laughs.] During season one, I was kind of just getting to know everyone and building connections. Season two, I think I integrated into the story a little bit more. I would say Taylor and Jen are the ones who really showed their personal lives this season, but as time goes on, you're going to get to know us more. Each season, I just get more vulnerable and open. All of us do. ■

The Secret Lives Of Mormon Wives is streaming on Disney+



Whitney and her family



Jessi with her boys, Jagger and Jovi

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