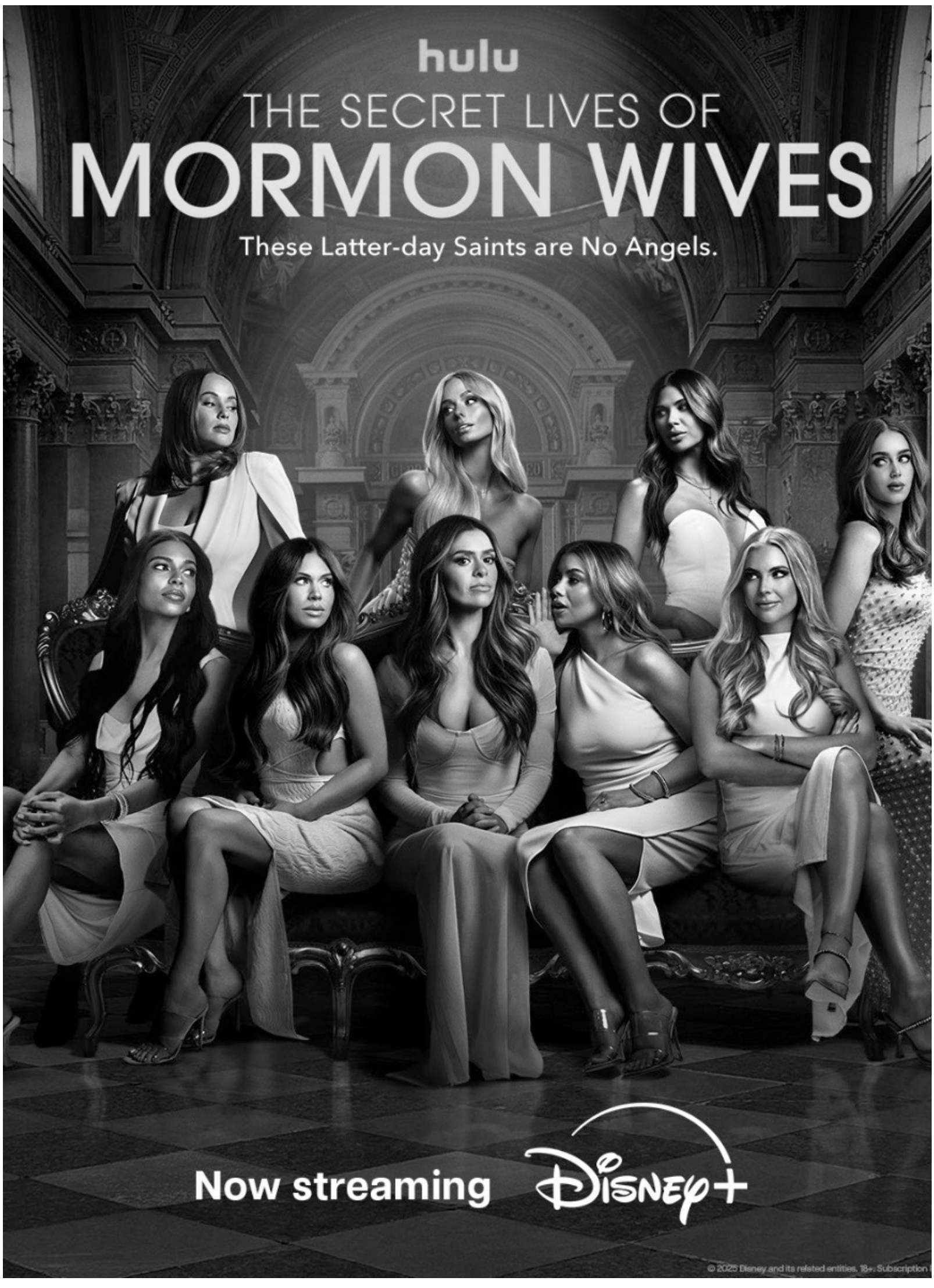
Life

MOMTOK'S MESSIEST CHAPTER YET:

INSIDE 'THE SECRET LIVES OF MORMON WIVES' SEASON 5

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Promo for the new season of the Hulu reality TV series, "The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives." The fifth season premiered Sept. 10.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @DISNEYPLUSUK ON INSTAGRAM

MomTok, a subculture composed of Utah-based Mormon mothers, on TikTok, is officially back as season 5 of the Hulu drama "The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives" premiered on Thursday, Sept. 10.

For those unfamiliar, the series follows a group of MomTok influencers caught in a swinging scandal that disrupted their careers and personal relationships. Their content typically centers around lifestyle, raising kids and religious topics, but this series follows their posts and fallouts as they navigate scandal.

Season 4 ended with a cliffhanger after Taylor Frankie Paul rekindled her relationship with her ex-boyfriend, Dakota Mortensen, the night before she was supposed to make headlines as the new Bachelorette in ABC's hit reality tv series.

Season 5 picks up right in the mess, and the show doesn't seem interested in walking the audience through exactly what happened. Instead, it's more about watching everyone react to the news in real time. That's kind of the appeal of MomTok — it's not really the scandal that hooks the audience, but it's being able to watch these women perform their way through it on social media. Their whole brand is a curated, wholesome momfluencer look, so it's almost irresistible for viewers to watch that image crack on reality television.

Thematically, this season dives more into the tension between the religious culture in Utah and the influencer culture more than earlier seasons did. They're still creating get-ready-with-me videos and sponsored content, but now the audience can't help but read every caption differently after knowing what was going on behind the scenes.

The main question throughout the season remains: Can the religious, wholesome, curated mom aesthetic survive scandal, or does it just swallow it away and turn it into more content? The show doesn't really answer that. It just kind of lets you sit with it, which honestly might be the smartest thing about this season.

People compare the series to "Vanderpump Rules," and that is fair between the confessional interviews, the friend group basically functioning as an ensemble cast and alliances flipping every other episode. But the Mormon angle keeps it from just being "VPR" with different accents. "VPR" was always about watching hot messy people be hot and messy. This show is more about watching people whose entire public image depends on being put-together and wholesome, get messy anyway.

One thing worth noting is that this season is noticeably shorter than usual, with just five episodes compared to the usual 10 or 11. Cosmopolitan reported that production hit an unexpected two-month pause after a blowup between Paul and Mortensen during filming. The rest of the cast reportedly wasn't thrilled about continuing to film under those circumstances either, which only added to the delay. Production kicked off again in May, but just to film confessionals, not to continue the plot.

As for hype going into the premiere; it was high. Most of that is thanks to season 4 cliffhangers, plus months of fans piecing together Paul and Mortensen's relationship status.

The funny thing about an influencer reality show is that the "big reveal" usually isn't much of a reveal at all, because the cast basically spoils themselves online before the episode airs. Season 5 seems to know this and doesn't fight it. Instead of building toward some twist, nobody's going to end up being shocked by — it just leans into the emotional aftermath of the women's fight and lets that boil over instead of rushing to the next dramatic moment.

Reception so far has been kind of split, but people are clearly still watching and talking, which is honestly the sweet spot for this show. Some fans think the pacing feels slower than past premieres; more setup, with less chaos. Others think that's the right call, and that the fallout deserves to be taken seriously instead of blown past. And with only five episodes to work with this time, there's less room for filler; every episode moves something forward. Either way, people won't stop talking about it, and for a show like this, that's exactly what the producers want.

Rating: 4/5

SUBOG Weekly Events:

September 13th - September 20th

Giants vs Cowboys Travel Trip – Details located on our Instagram

Suicide Prevention Week – A Talk with Chamique Holdsclaw – 7 pm – 8pm in SU Theatre

Dive Into SUBOG – 2 pm – 5pm – SU Mall

Six Flags Travel Trip – Details located on our Instagram

Any questions? Email subog@uconn.edu and check out @subogatuconn on Instagram for updates on our events!