Once again, a member of Utah's polygamous Kingston clan is being prosecuted for allegedly having sexual relations with a close family member.

Jeremy Ortell Kingston, 32, appeared in 3rd District Court on Tuesday charged with one count of third-degree felony incest in connection with his alleged 1995 marriage to LuAnn Kingston when she was 15 years old.

Kingston's court appearance comes just two months after his uncle, David Ortell Kingston, 27, was released from prison after serving four years for committing incest with a 16-year-old niece.

Prosecutors said 23-year-old LuAnn Kingston -- who purportedly was Jeremy Kingston's fourth wife -- will testify that they had normal sexual relations during their marriage until she left him in May 2000.

By virtue of the Kingston family's tangled web of intermarriages, LuAnn is a first cousin to Jeremy Kingston, as well as his aunt, according to prosecutors. (LuAnn Kingston's father is Jeremy Kingston's grandfather, and LuAnn's mother and Jeremy's mother are sisters.)

Jeremy Kingston told news reporters he has no "ill feelings" toward LuAnn Kingston, who left him and the clan three years ago, taking their children, ages 3 and 5, with her.

"I care about her and her family and her children," Jeremy Kingston said. "And I want the best for them."

He declined to comment on whether he will attempt a plea bargain agreement or fight the accusations -- a course of action that ended in a prison sentence for his uncle.

David Kingston was convicted by a jury in 1999 of third-degree felony counts of incest and unlawful sexual contact with a minor for having sex with a niece who had become his 15th wife.

Jeremy Kingston was arrested July 24 at the Kingstons' annual Pioneer Day celebration, which was attended by as many as 800 family members. He posted $50,000 bail the same day through Sportsman's Bail Bonds, a Kingston-owned company.

Kingston appeared in court with family attorney Carl Kingston, also a purported polygamist. Jeremy Kingston's next court appearance is an Aug. 21 scheduling hearing before Judge Joseph Fratto.

Carl Kingston called Jeremy "an outstanding citizen ... a good citizen who has had no problems."

On his bail release sheet, Kingston listed himself as an "unemployed consultant."

But so-called polygamist czar Ronald Barton, who investigates polygamy for the Attorney General's Office, believes Jeremy Kingston has worked at several Kingston-owned companies, including Advance Vending, Standard Restaurant Supply and Mountain Coin, which sells video gambling machines out of state.

The 1,200 or so Kingston family members who make up the Latter-Day Church of Christ run numerous businesses along the Wasatch Front that have an estimated worth of $150 million.

Assistant Utah Attorney General Polly Samuels called incest the most appropriate charge that could be filed. She added that other crimes having to do with the alleged victim's age in relation to the defendant's could not be filed because the four-year statute of limitations has lapsed.

The charges against Kingston were filed May 16, but sealed by the court until he could be arrested.

According to court documents unsealed Tuesday, authorities believed he was living in Albuquerque, N.M.

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Utah Attorneys Key Figures in Polygamist Kingston Clan

By Ray Rivera

The Salt Lake Tribune

Sunday, July 19, 1998

It might have been any wedding, anywhere in America. The one-story brick house in the tree-lined Bountiful neighborhood could barely contain the guests. Dozens of women and children and the few older men sat on folding chairs or leaned against walls.

The father held his daughter by the arm and marched her down the makeshift aisle between the living and dining rooms. Then, as one of the leaders in his church, he performed the ceremony.

But this wasn’t just any wedding. When Salt Lake attorney Carl E. Kingston gave away his 16-year-old daughter in holy matrimony that June day in 1987, the groom was his first cousin. And, the groom’s two other wives were in attendance, standing next to him in bridesmaid gowns as he exchanged vows with his newest wife.

So another knot was tied in the Kingston group, a 1,500-member polygamist clan that for 60 years has seamlessly blended its estimated $150 million financial empire with the Salt Lake business community while zealously guarding the privacy of its religious practices.

Officially known as the Latter Day Church of Christ or the Davis County Cooperative Society, the order is so secret it has been known to place armed guards outside its Sunday services.

Two central figures in the clan are Kingston and his cousin, Paul Kingston, an enigmatic 38-year-old CPA and attorney. Paul Kingston’s father was John Ortell Kingston, whose brother Charles Elder founded the order in 1935. John Ortell led it for nearly 40 years until his 1987 death. Members elected Paul to replace him a year later, elevating him ahead of three older brothers.

Former members estimate Paul has 30 wives and more than 50 children. He and Carl are members of the Utah State Bar, despite signing state oaths agreeing to uphold the Utah Constitution, which specifically outlaws polygamy. Carl Kingston is believed to have fathered 20 children from two wives and another child from a third wife who has left him.

But apart from Article III of the Utah Constitution, polygamy is a non-issue in state law circles.

When asked what discipline a polygamous attorney might face, Billy Ray Walker of the bar’s Office of Professional Conduct refused to comment, even hypothetically. And the state Supreme Court has said that prosecuting plural marriages is as difficult and futile as punishing fornication and adultery.

Even if the law were enforced, groups like the Kingstons often protect themselves by legally marrying only one wife and wedding the rest in secret, undocumented weddings.

That was the case in the June 1987 wedding at Carl Kingston’s home, which The Salt Lake Tribune learned about through witnesses. Carl Kingston refused to comment on this story.

“You can print what you want,” he said. “You’re going to say what you want to say anyway.”

Paul did not return phone calls seeking comment.

Paul Kingston was groomed for his leadership role, say former classmates from the now-closed South High School in Salt Lake City. He was student body president, a member of Boys State and lettered in swimming and cross country. He went on to earn an MBA and law degree from the University of Utah.

A quotation he selected that is under his senior picture in the 1978 high school yearbook states: “He who would kindle a fire in others must first himself glow.”
"Paul was always a hard-working student, I don't know that he ever slept," said Salt Lake attorney Ed Flint, a former classmate who served as vice president under him for his senior year.

Flint, who is not associated with the group, attended Kingston's first marriage.

"The weirdest thing is that he dated this one girl for a year-and-a-half during high school and then about a month after school he came around with wedding invitations and he was marrying a different girl," Flint said.

"We all went to the wedding," he added. "I don't remember it well, but there were a lot of women and a lot of children, you didn't see too many men and the ones you did see were pretty old."

Other classmates say Paul had a gregarious personality, and Flint recalls him attending at least one class reunion. But for all that, Paul has remained out of the public spotlight. He is listed in only a few of the order's numerous businesses and land holdings. Merlin B. Kingston, Paul's uncle, is named president of the church in its incorporation papers in Utah and Nevada.

About the only time Paul's name appears in ink is in stories and civil lawsuits filed against the clan by former members.

Carl Kingston, on the other hand, is better known in the Salt Lake law community. He represents the clan and its businesses in most legal matters, and is listed as an agent or director of at least 12 Kingston-run enterprises. His photograph hangs inside the University of Utah Law School building, where he graduated in 1969.

Carl is currently at the center of a case that has drawn national media attention. He is representing John Daniel Kingston, Carl's cousin and Paul's older brother, who is accused of beating his 16-year-old daughter after she tried to escape her polygamous marriage. The girl told police she was the 15th wife of her uncle, David Ortel Kingston, the same groom in that 1987 wedding at Carl's Bountiful home.

It's the second-high-profile case in which Carl has represented a family member.

In 1983 he defended John Ortel Kingston when the state sued him for massive welfare fraud. Investigators claimed that at least four wives and 29 children of John Ortel had collected hundreds of thousands of dollars in public assistance over 10 years, despite his estimated assets of $70 million, according to investigators at the time.

John Ortel never admitted guilt but paid the state $250,000 to settle the case. The settlement circumvented court-ordered blood tests that would have established paternity of the children.

Two other members were convicted and served short prison terms in connection with the case.

The settlement and convictions were considered victories for the state, but also illustrated the government's unwillingness to prosecute polygamy -- even when taxpayer money was being bilked through fraudulent welfare schemes.

Randall Sken, the former assistant Salt Lake County attorney who represented the state in the case, said the state was reluctant to pursue the civil suit and then never followed up with criminal charges against John Ortel.

"After we got the money back, they kind of dropped the whole thing," said Sken, who left the county office shortly after the settlement and is now in private practice. "If I had been calling the shots, I would have prosecuted every one of them."

No simple task, Sken admits.

"The problem was we didn't have strong ties to the [Kingston] men, just the women," he said. "We were lucky to get [John Ortel] Kingston because someone in the group ratted him out."

On April 18th 2002 the Utah Court of Appeals upheld the conviction of David Ortel Kingston. Kingston, a polygamist, was convicted for having sex with his 16-year-old niece. And the court specifically ruled against his claim that the jury was prejudiced by hearing about his polygamist lifestyle during his trial in 1999. Appellate judges likewise rejected any claims by Kingston against his trial attorneys.

Kingston's niece claimed he took her as his 15th wife and then had sex with her four times during 1998. Kingston, 36, is now in prison serving his sentence, which could last ten years.

Utah Assistant Attorney General Laura DuPaix claimed a "moral victory" and said, "I'm hoping it will encourage more young people, who want to get out of this."

Kingston Gets Maximum Term, Lecture on Incest
The Salt Lake Tribune, July 10, 1999
By Ray Rivera

David Ortel Kingston's lifestyle, unique even by polygamist standards, was an undercurrent in his trial -- implied but seldom mentioned.

In his sentencing, it was the driving force.

Kingston, convicted of having sex with his 16-year-old niece who was also his 15th wife, was ordered to serve two consecutive terms of 0 to 5 years in Utah State Prison. He also was fined $10,000 and ordered to pay the girl's counseling expenses.

Imposing the maximum penalty, 3rd District Judge David S. Young raised the issue of polygamy but particularly condemned the incestuous practices of the Kingston clan.

"You have been taught in some way that relationships with nieces as plural wives are acceptable, and that's flat-out not true," Young said.

But the judge also implied the defendant was a product of his environment. Kingston, a 33-year-old accountant, grew up in the 1,000-member clan, officially known as the Latter Day Church of Christ, and is the younger brother of its leader, Paul Kingston.

The group, headquartered in the Salt Lake Valley, is the most secretive and affluent of Utah's half-dozen organized polygamous sects, controlling an estimated $150 million business empire reaching into several Western states.

An investigation by The Salt Lake Tribune earlier this year revealed several instances of Kingston leaders marrying half sisters, first cousins, nieces and aunts as part of their religious beliefs.

"Mr. Kingston has been a victim of some misguided family instruction and teaching," the judge said, adding later: "But your family is wrong ... [and] you have lacked the judgment to recognize that mistaken illegal doctrine that you have followed."

The penalties were much more severe than the 6 months in jail and 2 years in a counseling program and halfway house suggested by his defense attorneys.

The sentence was also a stark contrast to the penalty imposed on his brother, John Daniel Kingston, who is the girl's father. John Daniel, 43, pleaded no contest to child abuse in May and was sentenced to 7 months in Box Elder County jail for severely beating his daughter when she attempted to flee her arranged marriage to her uncle.

Polygamy was never mentioned in John Daniel's court proceedings in front of 1st District Judge Ben Hadfield, nor were the girl's claims that her father arranged her marriage and performed the secret rites. But the lifestyle played heavily into David Ortel's sentencing because of its effect on rehabilitation and treatment, Young said.

"It's a very closed society that he lives in, and if he's out in the community he is going to continue to engage in that lifestyle and continue to commit illegal acts," Young said.

The girl, now 17 and living in foster care, stunned investigators and fueled a media frenzy when she told of the price she paid for attempting to escape a life of
polygamy and incest. Polygamy was outlawed by the Utah Constitution and abandoned by the Mormon Church a century ago but has only been sporadically prosecuted since the 1950s. Today, there are an estimated 30,000 adherents scattered throughout the West, mostly in Utah.

Most polygamous groups say they forbid incest, and refute claims by detractors who say it is widespread. The Kingstons are the only group that incorporates incest into its religion.

Former members say they hope Friday's sentence is the beginning of the end of the Kingstons' church and polygamy as a whole.

"Their whole structure is beginning to quake, it's like a low-level earthquake," said Rowenna Erickson, a former Kingston bride and the group's most vocal adversary.

"I want an end to [polygamy], and I see an end in sight."

Jurors rendered a split decision on June 3 after a three-day trial, finding Kingston guilty of one count of incest and one of unlawful sexual contact with a minor. He was acquitted of two other sex counts.

The girl, known as M.K. in court documents, testified she was pulled from junior high school and was forced to marry her uncle on Nov. 15, 1997. The newlyweds spent their wedding night at a Park City hotel, the girl said, but they did not have sex. She said she had sexual intercourse with her uncle on four occasions between January and May 1998. Kingston would show up carrying a suitcase, they would have perfunctory sex, and he would leave the next day, she said.

Kingston, who maintains his innocence, pleaded for leniency Friday.

"I do have a large family with young children who need their father," Kingston said. "I don't know what my family and children will do without me to help them."

Kingston's attorney Susanne Gustin-Furgis urged the judge not to follow the sentencing recommendations of Adult Probation and Parole, which she said was influenced by the enormous publicity accompanying the case.

"There's been a lot of political pressure in this case for AP&P, and everyone involved, to exact the maximum punishment," she said.

She also said Kingston did not deserve prison because he had no prior record and he does not fall under the category of a traditional sex offender. Kingston was driven by religious -- not sexual -- impulses, she said. Assuming "Mr. Kingston is a polygamist, as has been alleged, this is really a religious practice," she said. "It's not a compulsion and so therefore he can be treated more easily than someone who has these entrenched fantasies and compulsions and drives."

Prosecutor Dane Nolan said Kingston should not be seen as a victim.

"He chose to engage in this lifestyle, and he chose to engage in this conduct," Nolan said.

He also noted the dangers of Kingston's incestuous practice.

"If a child is conceived in that relationship, it faces a greater risk of being born with birth defects, mental retardation, et cetera," he said.

Kingston has hired a different attorney to handle his appeal.

[Polygamy] Polygamist with secretive Mormon sect released from Utah prison
Item 3469 • Posted: 06/18/2003 • Weblogged by Religion News Blog
http://www.religionnewsblog.com/archives/00003469.html

Associated Press, June 12, 2003
http://www.zwire.com/

Polygamist David Orrell Kingston was released from prison Tuesday after serving four years of a potential 10-year sentence for incest with his underage niece, who testified she was forced to become his 15th wife.

"He walked out the front door at the prison about 10 minutes ago," said Jack Ford, spokesman for the Corrections Department just after 10 a.m.

Kingston was convicted of third-degree felony incest and unlawful sexual contact with a minor and was sentenced in 1999 to two consecutive terms of up to five years in prison.

Rather than parole him, the state Board of Pardons and Parole opted to terminate his sentence. As a result, the prison has no responsibility to follow up on Kingston.

Todd Utzinger, one of Kingston's former attorneys, said the parole board's decision to not supervise Kingston recognizes that "he has taken full responsibility and is prepared to go on and live a crime-free life."

"In all likelihood, you will never see David Kingston committing a new crime," he said.

Kingston was an accountant for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, one of Utah's most secretive polygamous sects. It is believed to have about 1,000 members and a $150 million business empire in six Western states. Marriages of half-sisters, first cousins, nieces and nephews are part of their religious beliefs.

Kingston is the brother of church leader Paul Kingston. David Kingston's 16-year-old wife was the daughter of another brother, John Daniel Kingston, who was sentenced to 28 weeks in jail for severely beating his daughter after she attempted to flee the marriage.

Until losing an appeal, Kingston denied having had sex with his niece.

During his parole hearing last August, he admitted for the first time that he had sex with the girl. He vowed never again to commit incest or have sex with an underage girl.

Kingston also told a parole hearing officer he would "encourage (family members) to follow the law," he added: "I recognize the hurt and sorrow I have caused (the victim) and my family."

Parole board hearing officer Kent Jones said the evidence showed that Kingston forced himself upon a girl who was repulsed by him. However, Kingston maintained that the girl spoke to friends and family about having a relationship with him, and the two were wed in a spiritual ceremony only after the girl and her family all agreed to it. Jones recommended he be released.

Salt Lake Tribune
08/23/1998

Paternity Claims Against Kingston Led to Welfare Settlements;

State says that 29 children were one church leader's offspring, but mothers claimed they were sired by various truck drivers, oil workers

Byline: BY GREG BURTON
and BY RAY RIVERA THE
All four women had last names of Johnson or Jensen, claimed they were never married and could not remember the name or whereabouts of the fathers of their children -- 29 in all.

On Sundays, they attended services at their polygamous church. They wore long, plain dresses, lived in a coal yard in what appeared to be abject poverty and told sordid tales of catfishing with truck drivers and railroad employees.

They collected hundreds of thousands of dollars in public assistance in 10 years, despite the
estimated $70 million empire of the true father of their 29 children, a man investigators say was polygamy leader John Ortell Kingston.

"On the applications for welfare and birth certification, the women all said they were so-and-so Johnson and Jensen and they only saw the father of their kid once and then he disappeared," says Randall S keen, a former deputy Salt Lake County prosecutor who sued Kingston in 1983 concerning welfare payments to the 29 children.

One of the four women, Isabella Johnson, bore 12 children in 18 years for Kingston, and one of those children was Andrea Johnson, investigators say. Six years after Andrea Johnson died of complications from childbirth, county investigators have reopened an investigation into her death.

"There are still a lot of questions they never answered," S keen says about Andrea's mother and aunts. "And I'm certain there are more women out there just like these four."

Fifteen years ago, investigators used tissue sampling to determine all 29 children had come from the same father. Even so, the women insisted the fathers were truck drivers--or they had met at a night club or in the coal yard.

But it took polygraph examinations of two of the four women before John Ortell Kingston settled the paternity cases.

"They were clearly deceptive when they denied knowing who the father of their children was," says David Raskin, a polygraph expert and former University of Utah professor who interviewed the women. "They denied [John Ortell] Kingston was the father of their children, and it appeared they weren't telling the truth."

S keen is less diplomatic: "They failed miserably."

"As I recall, one of the women had 13 children," Raskin says. "She told me she didn't know who the father was because she worked at the coal yard and many guys would come into the store and ask for sex. Most of them, she told me, went into a back room with her--many different men. That was her story."

Based on the polygraph examinations, Utah prosecutors obtained subpoenas for a sample of John Ortell's tissue, which they would have used to compare to the DNA collected from the 29 children named in the paternity case.

"I just got the results and we brought the four women in right after that to take their depositions," S keen says. "At that point, as I recall, they broke down."

Kingston dubbed the first appointment to deliver a tissue sample, claiming he was ill. A day or two before his second appointment, he settled the cases for $200,000. Written into the settlement, however, are two caveats: "That defendant Kingston does not acknowledge paternity...[and that the] Settlement Agreement shall remain strictly confidential and shall not be released to the media."

"Kingston wanted to keep secret a lot of the things that he was involved in," S keen says. "The quick closure and caveats irked some investigators, but when Kingston ponied up the funds, Utah took the settlement."

"One problem was we could only go back four years to check on the welfare payments collected by Kingston's children," says Sheila Woolf, an investigator with Utah's Office of Recovery Services who helped prepare Utah's case. "We lost a lot of money because we were barred by the statute of limitations."

"When we would find clusters of people on welfare that should not have been we would take an accounting over to Carl. It was a kind of cat-and-mouse thing, and I'm sure we didn't get all of them, but we got a few."

S keen says the Kingstons acquiesced in later cases rather than risk subsequent court entanglements or face the inevitability of more DNA sampling.

"It seemed like every time we had a paternity case that looked suspicious we would call Carl and the next thing you know we had a check in the mail and the family was off welfare," he says.

In the end, at least one element of the women's stories was true--two of the families did live in a cramped shack on a Kingston-owned coal yard. Andrea Johnson's mother, Isabella Johnson, lived in that coal yard with her 12 children, says Johnson's oldest daughter, Connie Rugg. Isabella Johnson told her children their father was a truck driver. Each weekday, Rugg and her brothers and sisters would walk down the industrial lane from their home to catch a school bus. On their way, they'd see big trucks roll past.

"We'd try to get the truck drivers to honk their horns because we thought one of them might be our dad," Rugg said.

When she was 8, her mother told her the truth.

"I remember she took me into the bedroom and she asked, 'If you could choose any one to be your father, who would it be?' I said I
didn't know because I couldn't think of any man I liked. But she insisted that I choose so I chose Ortell because in our family he was a god. He was admired more than any other person.

'She said, 'Well, that's who your father is', and she seemed happy that I chose him.'

The same coal yard was home to the 16-year-old daughter of John Daniel Kingston who today is the center of criminal cases against two of John Ortell Kingston's sons. John Daniel is awaiting trial on felony child abuse for allegedly below-shaping the 16-year-old, his daughter. David Ortell has been charged with incest and sexual abuse for allegedly marrying the girl, his niece, in a secret polygamous ceremony, and having sex with her.

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**Polygamist David Kingston Seeks Parole**

**BY STEPHEN HUNT**

**THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE**

GUNNISON -- Vowing to never again commit incest or have sex with an underage girl, polygamist David Ortell Kingston told an officer of the Utah Board of Pardons he wants to be released from prison -- now.

Kingston, who has served 3 years of a potential 10-year sentence for "marrying" his 16-year-old niece, pleaded Tuesday for an immediate parole date.

"I've done a lot of soul-searching," said Kingston, who admitted for the first time Tuesday that he had sex with the girl. "It's not going to happen again."

Holding back tears, the 36-year-old accountant insisted his incarceration has been harder on his family than himself. "My family has suffered much sorrow and loneliness," Kingston said, adding that he has a 3-year-old son whom he has never held.

Hearing officer Kent Jones said he would recommend that Kingston be paroled "in the not too distant future," depending upon completion of a sex-offender therapy program. "You've done enough time," Jones declared.

But ultimately, Kingston's fate is in the hands of the five-member parole board, which typically releases decisions three to four weeks after a hearing.

Kingston was sentenced to two consecutive prison terms of up to 5 years each in July 1999, after a 3rd District Court jury convicted him of third-degree felony convicted incest and unlawful sexual contact with a minor. He was acquitted of two similar counts.

Kingston -- a member of one of Utah's most secretive and affluent polygamous sects, The Latter Day Church of Christ -- took the girl as his 15th wife in 1997.

The illegal union came to the attention of police after the girl's father whipped her for running away from home to escape the arranged marriage. Kingston's brother, John Daniel Kingston, was sentenced to 28 weeks for beating his daughter.

David O. Kingston composes himself during his parole hearing Tuesday at the Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison. A hearing officer said Kingston has served enough time for having sex with a 16-year-old girl and that he will recommend Kingston's release "in the not too distant future."

The victim -- who said she wanted to finish high school rather than become her uncle's spouse -- was placed in foster care. She testified during trial they had sex four times during the marriage.

Kingston said he would never again have sex with a minor.

"Do you think you'll ever commit incest again?" asked Jones.

"No, I don't," Kingston replied.

"As a parent, or an ecclesiastical leader, would you encourage relations in the first-degree? [sex with a brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or first cousin]?" asked Jones.

Replied Kingston: "I would encourage them to follow the law." He also said:

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"I recognize the hurt and sorrow I have caused [the victim] and my family."

A 1999 investigation by The Salt Lake Tribune revealed several instances of the 1,000-member Kingston clan marrying half-sisters, first cousins, nieces and aunts as part of their religious beliefs.

Relative Theron Kingston side-stepped queries about whether David Kingston's conviction had sparked any change in the clan's marriage philosophy.

"There are a lot of things that should be brought out in their true light," Theron Kingston said after the hearing.

The victim's mother and grandmother attended the hearing and sat with David Kingston's first wife, Sharli Kingston -- the only woman to whom he is legally married.

During that hearing, Kingston's oldest son, David Kingston Jr., held his younger brother, 3-year-old Ortell Kingston, who was born about six months after Kingston was incarcerated.

Kingston's psychological evaluations show a low risk to re-offend. While incarcerated, he has avoided any disciplinary write-ups and has completed the first of three phases of sex-offender therapy.

Kingston is also a volunteer tutor for inmates trying to complete high school, and he is a paid teaching assistant in the prison's college program.

In conclusion, Kingston asked: "What more do I need to do?" Said Jones: "Be patient. Don't give up. Your life is not over."

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Polygamist pleads guilty to incest.

Jeremy Ortell Kingston listens in the courtroom Thursday with his wife Benny. (Rick Egan/The Salt Lake Tribune) By Stephen Hunt

The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah's latest prosecution of a polygamist ended almost before it began. Jeremy Ortell Kingston pleaded guilty as charged on Thursday to third-degree felony incest.

"I've done a lot of soul-searching," said Kingston, who admitted for the first time Tuesday that he had sex with the girl. "It's not going to happen again."

Holding back tears, the 36-year-old accountant insisted his incarceration has been harder on his family than himself. "My family has suffered much sorrow and loneliness," Kingston said, adding that he has a 3-year-old son whom he has never held.

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Replied Kingston: "I would encourage them to follow the law." He also said:
The estimated 1,200 Kingston family members who make up the Latter Day Church of Christ quietly run numerous businesses — with an estimated worth of $150 million — along the Wasatch Front and elsewhere in Utah.

The lid was blown off the reclusive clan in May 1998 when a 16-year-old Kingston girl went to police after being beaten by her father, John Daniel Kingston.

The girl had twice run away after becoming the 15th wife of her uncle David Kingston. To punish the girl, her father took her to a family ranch in northern Utah and whipped her 28 times with a belt before she passed out.

Both her father and uncle were charged with crimes.

John Kingston eventually pleaded no contest to third-degree felony child abuse and was sentenced to 28 weeks in jail.

David Kingston was convicted by a jury of one count each of third-degree felony incest and unlawful sexual contact with a minor.

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A Trio of Kingston Troubles

News stories that detail some of the troubles that Utah polygamous clan/church/cult referred to as the Kingston group that has become public knowledge as of late.

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Did Teen Mom Die Harboring a Secret?, Authorities may reopen case involving polygamous clan, allegations of incest; Young Mother: Illness Long Went Untreated

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE COPYRIGHT 1998
Byline: BY RAY RIVERA AND GREG BURTON

Andrea Johnson was almost five months pregnant when her kidneys stopped working properly, her blood pressure shot up and her 15-year-old body swelled like a blow-up surgical glove.

Doctors performed an emergency Caesarean section that summer of 1992, and her little boy came into the world as light as a loaf of bread, just 1 pound 11 ounces.

Andrea's symptoms were familiar to her sister. Connie Rugg had developed the common condition known as pre-eclampsia, which is easily treatable with proper prenatal care. Another of Andrea's sisters also contracted pre-eclampsia during pregnancy.

The difference was Andrea died.

Rugg said there was another significant difference: Andrea was married in a secret wedding to her half-brother Jason Kingston, and the polygamous clan's desire to keep the incestuous relationship quiet prevented her younger sister from receiving the prenatal care that might have saved her life.

James B. Burns, the doctor who signed Andrea's death certificate, wrote that the girl must have exhibited signs of hypertension for "at least two weeks" before her death at University Hospital in Salt Lake City. He noted that the underlying cause of death, eclampsia, had persisted for an "unknown duration."

When the girl finally died, on June 11, 1992, Burns wrote that the immediate cause of death was a brain hemorrhage that had been developing for 12 days.

Rugg said her mother, Isabell Johnson, was well aware of pre-eclampsia's symptoms because her other daughters endured similar symptoms.

"My mother had told me at least a month before [Andrea] died that she was afraid of the swelling," said Rugg, a 38-year-old postal worker who lives in Salt Lake City.

Isabell Johnson denies telling Rugg anything such thing. She said she thought Andrea had the flu, but refused to go into more detail.

"What does it matter?" Johnson asked. "It has been six years."

Investigators with the state Human Services Department and the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office initiated a probe even before Andrea died, said sheriff's Lt. Leslie Collins. "I was able to get enough information to get an investigative subpoena for the medical records," said Collins, who was a detective in the sheriff's juvenile division at the time.

The investigation slammed shut, however, when University Hospital claimed Andrea's medical records had vanished.

"That struck me as odd," Collins said. "because that was a pretty powerful subpoena. Everything in that case pretty much hinged on the medical records."

Yet, with lingering doubts about the adequacy of Andrea's at-home care — and a hint that the records may still exist — the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office said it would reopen its investigation.

"There is no statute of limitation on a homicide, and a death due to neglect would be at the very least manslaughter," sheriff's spokeswoman Peggy Faulkner said Friday. "We are going to do the best we can to find our case report and those records would just have to be resubpoenaed."

Last week, University Hospital spokesman John Dwan said officials could not release Andrea's medical file because of patient confidentiality. He added that the girl's mother called more than a week ago and wanted assurance the file would remain confidential.

Because investigators were told six years ago that the medical file was lost, The Salt Lake Tribune asked Dwan to confirm whether the hospital had the records or if they were indeed missing. A day later, Dwan said: "Our lawyers said we can't tell you anything, that we can't confirm or deny that she was here because of a patient's right to privacy."

The girl's $48,000 bill at University Hospital was picked up by Medicaid, a taxpayer-funded medical assistance program for the poor.

Andrea L. Johnson was born on July 19, 1976, the 11th child of Isabell Johnson and a fictional truck-driving father named Steven Joseph Johnson, whose name turned up on her June 13, 1992, funeral notice and her death certificate.

But according to her sister and the findings of a state investigation in 1983, all of Isabell's 13 children are the offspring of John Ortell Kingston — the late enigmatic leader and church prophet who built the 1,500-member Kingston clan into a multimillion-dollar business empire while allowing many of his purported 13 wives and dozens of children to survive on government assistance.

Andrea grew up in a small two-bedroom home in a Kingston-owned coal yard at 197 W. 3900 South in Salt Lake County. Her mom, brothers and sisters shared the tiny quarters with another of John Ortell's wives and her children, Rugg said.

"There were a few fun times, but mostly it was crowded, noisy and there were lots of babies that needed caring for," said Rugg, who was 16 when Andrea was born.

Rugg rebelled when she was 17, running off with a boy who was from the group. The two married and later divorced, and Rugg lost contact with most of the Kingston sect.

But she kept in touch with her mother and some of her brothers and sisters. It was through them that she discovered Andrea had married her teen-age half-brother, Jason Kingston, in a secret ceremony.

A former member of the clan, Elaine Jenkins, also confirmed that the so-called celestial marriage between Andrea and Jason took place. As is custom in the polygamous community, the "spiritual" ceremony was not recorded by a government office.

Jason Ortell Kingston is the youngest brother of Paul Kingston, the spiritual leader of the polygamous Latter Day Church of Christ based in Salt Lake City, which appears to hold services in Standard Restaurant Supply, a Kingston-owned business.

Jason, his mother, LaDonna Kingston, and his new bride Andrea lived in a one-story home set back from the street at 1760 S. 500 East in Salt Lake City, Rugg said. Andrea became pregnant while Jason worked on his undergraduate degree at the University of Utah.

Andrea grew sicker and sicker, but neither her "husband" nor her polygamous
mother-in-law would take her to the hospital, Rugg claimed.

They hesitated, Rugg said, out of fear that hospital staff would want to determine the father of Andrea's baby, and his relationship to the mother.

That fear stemmed from the state suing Jason's father in 1983 for massive welfare fraud -- linking John Ortell to four polygamous wives who claimed they were single mothers needing state assistance for their 29 children.

Isabella Johnson was one of those wives.

Rugg contends the family worried about leaving a similar trail of evidence that might have led to incest charges -- a third-degree felony -- against Jason Kingston. Now 23 with an MBA under his belt, Jason is employed by the state auditor's office. He declined repeated requests for interviews.

Ultimately it was Isabella Johnson who took Andrea to the hospital.

According to Rugg, LaDonna Kingston phoned Isabella Johnson -- who lives on a Kingston-owned ranch in Ibapah in Utah's west desert -- and told her Andrea needed medical attention. Johnson sped the 170 miles to LaDonna's home in Salt Lake City.

"When they got there she was swollen beyond recognition," Rugg said.

"She was in bed screaming, 'Why won't anybody help me?'"

Three days after arriving at University Hospital, doctors performed a Caesarean section. The baby survived, but 11 days later, while still in the hospital, Andrea died. The child's whereabouts are now unknown.

"My daughter was well and happy, then she got sick all of a sudden one day," said Isabella Johnson. "We just thought it was the flu because a lot of people were getting it. So I came in from Ibapah to see what was wrong and I took her to the hospital that day."

Johnson claimed Andrea was not swollen when she arrived, a contention Collins refutes.

"I remember she had severe edema [swelling]," said the sheriff's lieutenant. "She swelled up a lot."

Rugg said the swelling affected Andrea's brain, causing it to crush against the skull and her retinal nerves. "She was blind by the time they took her to the hospital," Rugg said.

Asked why another family member couldn't have taken Andrea to the hospital before Johnson made the three-hour drive to get her, Johnson said: "I'm not going to talk about that."

Andrea Johnson was buried on June 13, 1992, at the Bountiful Memorial Park. Church leader Paul Kingston conducted the service and his brothers John Daniel and David were speakers.

Jason Kingston served as pallbearer, helping to carry Andrea's coffin.

Hospital records and death certificate do not list her as having a husband. In death, her only official link to the Kingdoms is the name listed on cemetery records as owner of her burial plot, "J.O. Kingston."

Jason is the youngest child of John Orrell and LaDonna Kingston. He is also the youngest brother of John Daniel Kingston, 43, who is awaiting trial in Box Elder County on charges that he belt-whipped his 16-year-old daughter for rebelling against an arranged marriage to yet another of John Orrell's sons, 32-year-old David O. Kingston.

The 16-year-old girl told police she had become David's 15th wife last October -- and came to live at the same coal yard on 3900 South where Andrea and Connie had grown up. David has been charged with incest. The girl also told police that her father, John Daniel, and mother are half brother and sister.Tribune reporter Norma Wagner contributed to this story.
"Have we taken he-said, she-said cases?

Yes, we have. Have we lost cases based on that? Yes, we have. Have we won cases based on that? Yes, we have," says Bell. "Sex offenses usually come down to he said, she said.

There usually are not a whole lot of other witnesses."

But the fact the alleged sexual activity took place months ago does not preclude the possibility of physical evidence. If the girl had not had sexual intercourse prior to privately "marrying" her uncle, or since, a medical examination could prove intercourse took place.

Sex crimes involving close relatives are not uncommon and are commonly prosecuted.

In 1991, 56-year-old Wayne County farmer Jonathan Hunt was convicted of incest with his daughter and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

He had three polygamous wives who died after delivering 23 children.

In 1996, when Gary Morns, a 58-year-old Michigan man, was sentenced to as many as 40 years for repeatedly raping his granddaughter -- who investigators believe was also his daughter -- Michigan and New Jersey were the only two states without a criminal incest law on the books.

Utah's statute defines incest as intercourse with an "ancestor, descendant, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or first cousin." Or sex with a stepchild while the marriage is in force, or sex between a half-sister and half-brother.

Of an average 150 sex crimes investigated each month in Utah, about 60 percent involve close relatives, according to statistics from the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS).

"A majority of the cases the division investigates involve someone that is either a caretaker or sibling or extended relative," says Katy Larsen, regional director of DCFS's northern division, where John David Kingston's 16-year-old daughter has been sheltered since her May escape.

"The reason we get involved is protection issues," Larsen says. "Incest is a prevalent problem, one that doesn't get the exposure because investigators and the media, out of kindness, want to protect the parties involved." (The Salt Lake Tribune does not publish a sex abuser's name if it identifies the victim, and in cases of incest, will only say a "relative" was victimized.)

Unfortunately, Larsen adds, the choice not to publicize the crime shields the extent of the problem.

And there are many problems for children of incestuous couplings.

Former clan prophet John Ottell Kingston, who died in 1987, paid the Medicaid bills for a child born with severe birth defects after Utah investigators linked the wealthy father of more than 65 children to the baby.

While he never admitted paternity with any of his children who received federal or state assistance, in 1983 Utah collected $200,000 in welfare-fraud damages from him. This includes an estimated $60,000 hospital charge for the deformed baby, who investigators said John Ottell Kingston likely conceived with a close relative.

At least two of his children, in turn, secretly "married," and conceived the 16-year-old girl who told police she had been given in marriage to David Ottell Kingston, her uncle.

David is also John Ottell Kingston's son.

Children born from brother-sister, uncle-niece matings come from a closely shared and, consequently, less diverse gene pool than children from unrelated parents.

Because of more easily paired negative, recessive genes, inbred children have far higher rates of birth defects and low intelligence, including mental retardation, impaired fertility, congenital birth defects and weakened immune systems.

"For, say, parent-offspring or brother-sister matings, they share half their genes so half their genes are identical," said Lynn Jorde, a professor of human genetics at the University of Utah School of Medicine who researches genetic causes of birth defects. "So if you have any recessive disease gene, you have a higher probability of getting two of them."

"There have only been a few studies done on the biological effects of incest, it's obviously hard to get subjects," he continued. "But the studies that have been done generally show that a fourth to half of those children have problems."

Salt Lake Tribune reporter Norma Wagner contributed to this story.

Dead Girl's File Exists;
Probe involving polygamists now may ensnare U. Hospital;
Medical File Has Been There All Along
Byline: BY RAY RIVERA and GREG BURTON THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

[Andrea Johnson Corrections: A sworn deposition given by Jason Ottell
Kingston's sister, Ruth Kingston Brown, says that he is married to his niece. The
Tribune on Tuesday incorrectly reported the blood relationship of the couple.]

The medical file of a pregnant 15-year-old girl who died at University Hospital
has resurfaced -- six years after detectives were told it had vanished.

Andrea Johnson, a member of the polygamous Kingston clan based in Salt Lake
County, died on June 11, 1992, after allegedly suffering weeks at home with a
condition known as pre-eclampsia, which affects multiple organs and the blood
system.

The girl's sister contends the clan refused to get Andrea medical help for the
easily treatable condition until it was too late. Connie Rugh believes clan
members hesitated out of fear that hospital authorities would learn Andrea had
been impregnated by her half brother, Jason Ottell Kingston.

On Sunday, The Salt Lake Tribune reported that investigators with the state
Human Services Department and the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office, alarmed at
Andrea's condition, initiated a probe even before she died.

Lt. Leslee Collins, who was a detective in the sheriff's juvenile division at the
time, said she personally delivered a subpoena to University Hospital six years
ago and was told by records personnel that the file had disappeared. Without the
records, the investigation slammed shut.

Now the hospital is saying the file was there all along. The Sheriff's Office,
which has reopened its investigation into Andrea's death, has not ruled out the
possibility that the hospital could be investigated for obstruction of justice, said
sheriff's spokesman Deputy Peggy Faulkner.

Hospital spokeswoman Anne Brillienger said Monday that the files were not
intentionally kept from investigators.

"I can't go back to 1992 and remember what was said to whom and what effect,
but I can tell you we do have the medical record. We have always had it
and we want to cooperate with the law-enforcement investigation," Brillienger
said. "I'm sure Miss Collins is accurate in her memory but we have no memory
of what happened in 1992."

Record keepers may have refused to turn over the file because it might not have
been complete, Brillienger said. For example, it might have lacked an autopsy
report or a relevant doctor's report.

"If the record was not complete at that time, we would have said, 'No, you have
to wait until it is complete and then you can subpoena the record,'" Brillienger
said. "It would not have been representative of a patient's total care."

But Collins on Monday insisted hospital record keepers never told her to come
back for the complete file.

"What I was told was that the files were missing."

Without reviewing her records, Collins could not recall what follow-up she did
with the hospital officials, but added, "I'm sure we made some calls.

I'm sure I didn't just say, 'OK, bye, see you later.'"

Last week, a hospital representative refused to acknowledge whether Johnson was ever even a patient. But aware of the publicity surrounding the death, Brillinger said she called sheriff's investigators Monday afternoon to say the file existed -- and investigators were welcome to see it. She made the call despite a request from the girl's mother, Isabell Johnson, asking that her daughter's records not be released.

"It is my impression law enforcement can get the file with just an ordinary subpoena, despite the mother's wishes," she said.

Faulkner said detectives have retrieved the sheriff's case file from archives. Collins, who is now a watch commander, will assist Det. Marianne Suarez in the investigation.

"She [Collins] has always had a lot of heartburn over how this case wound up back then," Faulkner said.

"She asked to be included."

Suarez also is investigating an incest and child-sex-abuse case filed against David Ortell Kingston, a clan member accused of having sex with his 16-year-old niece, who police say was his 15th wife.

That same 16-year-old girl is at the center of a Box Elder County case in which her father, John Daniel Kingston, has been charged with child abuse after allegedly belt-whipping her for rebelling against an arranged marriage to David.

The two cases have reignited a statewide debate on polygamy, a practice that was outlawed by the Utah Constitution and banned by the Mormon Church more than a century ago.

Andrea Johnson was a daughter of John Ortell Kingston, the late leader and church prophet of the Kingston group, otherwise known as the Latter Day Church of Christ, a state investigation found.

Andrea was the half sister of John Daniel and David O. Kingston.

[Andrea Johnson Corrections: A sworn deposition given by Jason Ortell Kingston's sister, Ruth Kingston Brown, says that he is married to his niece. The Tribune on Tuesday incorrectly reported the blood relationship of the couple.]

According to her sister, Rugg, Andrea was married in a secret ceremony to another half-brother, Jason Ortell Kingston, who was 17 at the time. She became pregnant soon after.

The doctor who signed the death certificate wrote that the girl would have displayed symptoms of pre-eclampsia -- including severe swelling -- for at least two weeks before her death.

But Isabell Johnson told The Tribune her daughter was not sick until the day Isabell rushed 170 miles from Ibapah, in Utah's west desert, to Salt Lake City to take her to the hospital. Johnson believed Andrea suffered only from the flu, she said.

Three days after Andrea arrived at the hospital, doctors performed an emergency Caesarian section, delivering a 1 pound, 11 ounce boy. The boy survived, but 11 days later Andrea died.

The whereabouts of the boy are unknown. His father, Jason, now 23, works for the state auditor's office.

A sworn deposition given by Jason's sister, Ruth Kingston Brown, to the state Attorney General's Office in 1994 indicates he is now married to his niece. Jason has ignored repeated requests for interviews.
A Brief History of the Kingstons

Part One: A Cult is Born

Charles Chats With God

It all began in the great depression. The unemployment rate in Utah had reached 60 percent, far higher than the national average. Roosevelt's New Deal was years from fruition, and relief seemed an unattainable ideal. No one had work. Charles Elden Kingston saw all this and wondered how to end the suffering. In 1935 he had a vision, a revelation from God that would put all things in order and foist the Kingston Clan on the west.

Like his counterpoint, Joseph Smith, the story of his epiphany is a maze of conflicting reports. The exact nature of the revelation, or even where this defining moment took place, varies with the teller.

Charles Elden Kingston, founder of the clan.

One version has Charles Elden praying near a cave in Bountiful, Utah when God informed him he had to start a religion based on Fundamentalist Mormonism, including polygamy, a practice outlawed in the orthodox church since the 1890s.

Others claim Charles Elden's father, Charles W. Kingston, authored a tract in 1931 that championed the fundamentalist canard that former Mormon president John Taylor had set aside a select group. These elected were charged to keep polygamy alive even though the church was publicly distancing itself in a bid for Utah statehood.

Charles Elden was just following in dear-old dad's footsteps when he launched The Davis County Cooperative Society (a.k.a. the Latter Day Church of Christ a.k.a. the Kingston Clan) in 1935.

Yet another version has Charles Elden whiling away the time in Idaho when God commanded him to venture forth unto the state of Utah. Once in Salt Lake City, Heavnenly Father expanded on the revelation, telling the visionary that he needed to create a "United Order." Obidient prophet that he was, Charles Elden started this communal fundamentalist group that has come to be known as the Kingston Clan.

Whatever the origin of Charles Elden Kingston's extraordinary vision, by 1941 the Davis County Cooperative Society had incorporated and the Kingstons began their long journey to become the richest and most secretive fundamentalist Mormon sect in Utah.

Charles Elden brought his two brothers along for the ride. John Ortell Kingston and Merlin Barnum Kingston adopted the marrying ways of their brother and began acquiring multiple wives.

Not only were the Kingston brothers interested in adding to their commnial numbers, but they also began acquiring other members and--more importantly--property, all consecrated to the new fundamentalist church. This was the beginning of the Kingston business empire that is so intertwined in modern Utah.

Breeding with John

John O. Kingston, took over as head of the church, when his brother, Charles, died in 1948. It was under John Ortell's leadership that incestuous practices began which made the Kingston Clan notorious, according to ex-members.

John Kingston, a dairy farmer, began applying the same breeding practices in his family that he practiced on his holsteins. Owner of Kingston Dairy in Woods Cross, John Ortell fuzted around with genetics to improve the yield of his dairy cows.

"My father experimented inbreeding with his cattle and then he turned to his children," said Connie Rugg in an April 1999 interview with The Salt Lake Tribune. Rugg was one of John Ortell's estimated 65 children. Faced with a forced marriage to an uncle, Rugg fled the clan.

"My father manipulated and controlled people," Rugg said. "He wanted to control his children and grandchildren through genetics. He believed he had superior bloodlines."

During his thirty-year reign as the head of the Latter Day Church of Christ, couplings of uncles, nieces, half-brothers and half-sisters became commonplace among the Kingston elite.

It is John Ortell's imprint that informs the modern Kingston clan as much as its founder, say many ex-members. Six sons and two daughters of John Ortell and favored wife LaDonna have marriages to at least 20 nieces, half-sisters and first cousins between them, a mind numbing version of keeping it in the family.

Not to be left out of all this relative marrying, Merlin Kingston counts four nieces and a half-sister among his wives, according to ex-members.

In a move much like the Holstein and pigeons he bred, John Ortell tried to control the better breeding practices of his flock by wielding marriage approval for members of the clan. Hence many young nieces were chosen by John Ortell for polygamous marriage to much older brethren in the clan. All the better to keep pure the bloodline.

Also under John Ortell, the Kingston empire began to grow. The Kingstons acquired businesses and wealth. Amazingly, all this relative wedding and empire building happened under the wire. The Kingstons remained a secretive sect that most folks knew little about or even that such an animal existed.

Despite the clan's wealth, John Ortell prized a very modest life for the sect members. He himself lived in dilapidated housing and demanded the same from his wives, children and followers.

He also appears to have been parsimonious in providing monetary support for his many wives and children and often let the state welfare system help bear the load. That led to the first glimpse to the world at large of Kingston life. It was also a precursor of troubles to follow.

The State's First Salvo

In the early 1980s the state of Utah was a little miffed at John Ortell. It seems that three of his wives and 26 of his children (whose
paternity he denied) had collected some $200,000 in welfare assistance in spite of boasting a moneybags father and husband. The state wanted that money back.

A Utah judge had ordered him to undergo a paternity test to determine if the children were in fact his seed. This was the Kingston clans’ first brush with the law under the public eye. It would not be the last.

John Ortell sidestepped the issue by settling out of court and paying back the welfare cash (pocket change for the clan). In return he didn’t need to submit to paternity testing and was not required to acknowledge paternity. The Kingstons dodged a bullet.

One of John Ortell’s wives, Mary Gustafson defends his memory and claims much of the ballyhoo about the Kingston’s is nothing but an invention of a scandal mongering press. She is John Ortell’s niece and third wife.

"Most of what you print is lies, lies, lies," Gustafson said in an April 1995 interview with the Salt Lake Tribune.

She defended arranged marriages between John Ortell’s sons and her daughters.

"Those boys are the most moral, upstanding and wonderful people I know," she said.

Kingston is Dead, Long Live Kingston

In 1987 John Ortell Kingston gave up the ghost. His empire passed to his son, Paul Kingston. Paul would be the head of the clan during its most trying times.

In the 1990 the Kingstons would be yanked from relative obscurity and thrust into the headlines in a series of salacious scandals that could only happen in Utah. The cat would finally be out of the bag.

Paul Kingston was a golden boy from the start. He was elected student body president of South High School in Salt Lake City, lettered in cross county and swimming, and a member of Boys State. A real charmer.

Paul moved on to get an MBA in business and a law degree from the University of Utah. This guy was going places.

So it was no surprise when family members voted him to lead the Kingston clan, vaulted to the top slot ahead of three older brothers. Paul is a member of the Utah State Bar, along with brother Carl E. Kingston, a more upscale polygamist than one is used to in the fundamentalist roll call.

It is also estimated by former members that he has 30 wives and more than 50 children.

Head of a polygamist sect worth more than $150 million bucks, though Merlin Kingston is the head of the Latter Day Church of Christ in official records, Paul was seated high on the cabaret seat. The Kingston clan was acquiring fistfuls of cash. The media and world at large seemed blissfully ignorant of the clan’s practices and wealth. But the worm was about to turn.

In 1998 sixteen-year-old Mary Ann Kingston called the Box Elder Sheriff’s office from a gas station pay phone. The teenage girl had trod over seven miles from the Kingston-owned Washakie Ranch to make the call.

She claimed her father forced her into a polygamous marriage with her 32-year-old uncle, David Ortell Kingston. The man pushing her into the incestuous marriage, John Daniel Kingston, was also David’s brother.

John D. Kingston

Dad beat her senseless with a belt because she had not taken to the marriage with the proper fervor, Mary Ann claimed. She attempted an escape from the distasteful situation and was shipped to the Kingston home for wayward wives, the Washakie Ranch for her trouble.

The media went wild. This story had everything Utah; mysterious polygamous sects, teenage wives and sex, sex, sex. After almost 60 years of relative obscurity, the Kingston name was splashed across front pages all over the nation.

The dreaded newspaper vultures were not only interested in the salacious nature of David O. and John Daniel’s crimes, but probed deeper into Kingston affairs. Slowly, the true extent of the Kingstons’ lifestyle and voluminous business holdings began to emerge.

Another blow to Kingston privacy came later that same year. Rowenna Erickson, a former Kingston wife, formed Tapestry of Polygamy (later Tapestry Against Polygamy) with three other ex-multiple wives. She was eager to blow the whistle on the Kingstons’ more sordid practices.

Erickson has been one of the Kingstons’ most vocal foes. But soon others came forward, including Mary Ann Kingston. Newspapers around the west began including stories on the clan, dissecting their practices and revealing businesses owned by the fundamentalist sect.

David O. Kingston served nearly four years in the Utah State Prison for third degree felony incest and unlawful sexual contact with a minor. John Daniel pleaded no contest to felony child abuse and served 28 weeks in jail.

Now that the public eye was focused on the clan, their troubles seemed to keep coming and coming. The public, the press, and the law just couldn’t get enough of those wacky folk.

To Be Continued

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A Brief History of the Kingstons

Part Two: Into the Spotlight

(In the previous installment we examined how the Kingston Clan was
started by Charles Eldon Kingston. Its religious practices were
refined by his successor, John Ortell Kingston. The polygamous
group operated pretty much out of the public eye until 16 year-old
Mary Ann Kingston bolted the clan in 1998 to escape a forced
marriage with her uncle. In the process she spilled the beans on
Kingston practices and the public ate it up.)

All The Kingsons That's Fit to Print

The media pig-piled on the hapless Kingston Clan. Local newspapers
like The Salt Lake Tribune and The Ogden Standard Examiner ran an
endless stream of exposés. Even out-of-state papers like The Rocky
Mountain News and The San Jose Mercury News got in on the act.
Salon and Time magazines ran in depth stories. The Kingsons, after
years of obscurity, were news.

Rowenna Erickson
Rowenna Erickson was willing to tell tales about her Kingston ordeal
to anyone that would listen. "Ex-members" dished up the dirt to
reporters with wanton abandon. Everything Kingston became fair
game for the starved media.

Countless stories about teenage brides, incest convictions, and
business holdings filled newspapers.

For the most part, the Kingsons hunkered down in siege mode and
kept their mouths shut. Maybe they hoped the feeding frenzy would
play out and they could get on with the business of acquiring wealth
and wedding relatives away from the steely gaze of the public.

Elden Kingston, owner of record of several Kingston enterprises like
Rocky Mountain Coin, did give a faxed interview to The Rocky
Mountain News. He claimed the Kingsons were just plain folks
trying to make their way in the world.

Elden Kingston
"If you ever got to know me, you would see that I put my pants on
one leg at a time, the same as you," Elden Kingston claimed in the
article. "I follow the Denver Nuggets, Broncos, Utah Jazz and other
sporting events. I pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in state, local
and federal taxes, and I try to comply with all the laws."

Just an ordinary guy!

Usually, the best the media can hope for is a terse response from Carl
E. Kingston, clan leader Paul Kingston's brother and the lawyer
handling most of the Kingsons' woes.

More Troubles

However, more and more of the clan's practices came out under
media scrutiny. What really disturbed folk was how often various
Kingston businesses intersected with government affairs.

Paul Kingston
Under public pressure, Jason Kingston resigned from his job at the
Utah State Auditor's office after his polygamous marriages were
uncovered. Jason worked with a team of accountants reviewing books
of public or quasi-public agencies.

The Kingston-owned garbage company A-1 Disposal often bid on
jobs funded by tax dollars. Standard Restaurant Supply, another
Kingston venture, was also revealed to have done business with
state-funded agencies.

The biggest blow to the Kingston business empire came in September
2003 when a former worker at the clan-owned Co-op Mines in
Huntington publicly complained of bad conditions in the coal mining
operations. Bill Estrada claimed the company hired mostly immigrant
workers and handed out piss poor wages with no benefits for
dangerous work.

Unions organized and picketed other Kingston businesses such as the
East Side Market in Salt Lake City. The media jumped on the story
and painted the Kingston clan as sweatshop employers. Estrada
claims he was canned for trying to start a union. Co-op mine officials
say he falsified a report about his job performance.

While all this mining hoopla was playing out another Kingston
member was sentenced to a year in jail for marrying a 15-year-old
cousin. Jeremy Ortell Kingston was convicted less than a year after
David Ortell Kingston was released from prison for the crime that got
all the scrutiny started in the first place.

A Pesky Lawsuit

Jeremy Kingston and family
His ex-wife, Mary Ann, has struck hard at the Kingston clan in a
move that could prove the biggest threat to the secretive sect. In
August 2003, she filed a $110 million lawsuit against the Kingsons.
The suit names 242 members and 97 businesses operated by the
Kingstons.

Mary Ann claims the Kingsons are "secretive religious society and
economic organization" that teaches and promotes sexual abuse of
young girls through illegal and underage marriages, incest and
polygamy.

The clan kept silent about her abuse and aided it, she says. And she
wants pay back.

"I am pursuing this lawsuit with the hope that other young girls and
boys in the same position that I was in will see that the leaders of the
Kingston organization are not above the law, even though they tell us
that they are," Mary Ann said in a press conference. "I also hope that
the people that we are bringing this lawsuit against, will realize the
harm they have caused and continue to cause and that they will
change their ways."

A trial of such magnitude threatens to reveal more about Kingston
business holding than has previously come to light. Though the
plaintiff and her lawyers are having a hard time serving papers on
those named in her suit and that the case is progressing at a snail's pace,
this lawsuit poses the biggest threat to the Kingston clan yet.

The Kingston org is well aware of the danger. Two Davis County
couples, allegedly members of the clan, quickly filed countersuits
against Mary Ann. They claimed she had defamed their character in a
press conference about the lawsuit.

This tactic seemed to have been scotched in August, when a Davis
County judge threw out the countersuit. Judge Michael Allphin ruled
that the comments at the press conference were too general and did
not defame individual members of the clan.

The Kingsons Strike Back
The Kingstons fired back on September 14. They refilled an amended
counterclaim and third-party complaint against Mary Ann asking for
millions in damages for defamation, invasion of privacy, and other
charges.

The countersuit expands its scope in seeking damages. Named along
with Mary Ann are her attorneys, the Salt Lake Tribune, three Trib
employees (reporter Pamela Mason and editors Tim Fitzpatrick and
Tom Baden). The suit also takes aim at one of the clan's biggest foes,
Rowenna Erickson.

The document states Mary Ann Kingston's lawyers misused the court
system in particularly unsavory ways. Mary Ann's law sharks sued
innocent parties to blackmail put upon Kingston relatives into
becoming "unwilling agents" for Mary Ann Kingston and others
named in the suit. "Little fish" forced to become Mary Ann's pawns
"as a way of getting to big fish," according to the countersuit.

The suit also contends this gathering of information through the civil
discovery process is a ruse to provide dirt to government agents on
the Kingstons that could be used against them.

Whether this is a heartfelt move by the clan to combat what they feel
is discrimination or a tactic to force an out-of-court settlement and
keep their dirty laundry from being aired in a public forum such as a
trial remains to be seen.

One thing is sure; Mary Ann's lawsuit isn't coming to court in the
foreseeable future. However, the Kingston Clan, once an unknown
polygamous quantity, is in the public eye, their practices feeding an
insatiable public appetite for all things Utah and weird. And that ain't
ending anytime soon.

A Matter of Custody

In October 2004, a 3rd District court judge in Salt Lake City ordered
Heidi Mattingly Foster to cut all ties with the Kingston Clan.
Following this order was the only way for the Kingston wife to regain
custody of her eight children.

John Daniel Kingston
This ruling meant she would have to give up her home and her job,
both owned by the Kingstons. Foster was born into the polygamous
family. She is one of the 14 "spiritual wives" of John Daniel
Kingston.

The much-publicized case, in Utah anyway, was not a matter of
religious persecution, but one of domestic abuse, according to
assistant attorney general, Carolyn Nichols.

"It has to do with abuse - child abuse and domestic violence,"
Nichols said.

Kingston and Foster's 13-year-old daughter testified that the father
had struck his wife several times and not provided adequate support
for his family.

The Kingstons had a different view, of course. A statement released
by Rachel Young, head of The Davis County Cooperative Society
and daughter of John Ortell Kingston, called the ruling "an outrage."

"The state of Utah has torn this family apart." Young's statement
read. "It is wrong to hold children hostage to further a political
agenda. How can this kind of prejudice and injustice still exist in
America? Every United States citizen should be outraged and
ashamed."

At least every citizen that doesn't have a problem with incest,
underage marriage and polygamy, a cynic might add.

Foster has been ordered to attend domestic violence therapy and is
allowed to collect a little over in two grand in support until she can
find a non-Kingston job and home.

John Daniel will be allowed "weekly supervised" visits with his eight
young ones.

This is not enough according to Young: "We love Heidi and her
children very much. We will not rest until this family is reunited."

And the Kingston Clan media circus goes on and on. However, one
thing is clear, the Kingstons will no longer go quietly into that good
night. They have joined the fray. Utah weirdness lives on. The
Kingston have stepped forward, out of secrecy, to help bear the
banner.