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Andrew Garfield speaks on his LDS detective role in 'Under the Banner of Heaven'

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SALT LAKE CITY (ABC4) – Andrew Garfield is starring in “[Under the Banner of Heaven](#),” which was released on FX on April 25, 2022.

Garfield plays a fictional young detective named Jeb Pyre, who is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, investigating the 1984 Lafferty murders of Brenda and Erica Lafferty. The murderers, Ron and Don Lafferty, had connections to Mormon fundamentalism, which put the murders in the center of the national spotlight.

Andrew Garfield attended a red-carpet premiere event for “Under the Banner of Heaven” right here in Salt Lake City at the Broadway Centre Cinemas. ABC4 was able to ask him some questions about his role in the miniseries

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The actor speaks positively about Utah, referencing an early research trip he did in preparation for the role.

“I had some really great hangouts with members of the LDS church, ex-members of the church, future ex-members of the church, and detectives who are also members of the church. What really stood out for me was the kind of diversity of people who have a connection to this faith,” Garfield explained.

Garfield mentioned specifically that he enjoyed the “warmth and good-heartedness” that he felt associating with Utahns in general.

Garfield continues by saying that he “understands the discomfort” that Utahn and LDS viewers might have when watching the series. In response to this discomfort, Garfield said, “I think our job as storytellers is to tell stories that illuminate parts of our culture that were previously not illuminated. I would hope for openness, and an open dialogue about the subject matter of the film.”

He concluded by saying that “the pursuit of the truth is always a good thing, even if it’s deeply uncomfortable.”

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Garfield has gone on the record in interviews with reporters from outside ABC4 saying this role was particularly challenging, but not necessarily in a bad way. Garfield has a dedicated fan following. He is beloved as one of three primary actors who have portrayed Spider-Man along with Toby McGuire and Tom Holland.

Garfield is no stranger to playing religious characters, such as his role as Seventh-day Adventist Desmond Doss in Mel Gibson’s [Hacksaw Ridge](#). Garfield also had a lead role as a deeply religious character in “[The Eyes of Tammy Faye](#).” Garfield is also no stranger to narratives centered on religious conflict. He co-starred with Adam Driver as 17th-century Portuguese Jesuit missionaries sent to Japan in Martin Scorsese’s “[Silence](#)” in 2016.

In many ways, Garfield’s acting resume makes him an obvious choice for his role as Det. Pyre, who is depicted as being emotionally and spiritually distraught by the darkness of the Lafferty murders in “Under the Banner of Heaven.” ABC4 has already [written](#) about how some elements of the television series are already being criticized over claims of insensitive representation of the LDS faith.

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The series is based on a [book by Jon Krakauer](#) under the same name. When released in 2003, [NYT book critic Robert Wright](#) praised the book's nuance when discussing the LDS church and Mormon fundamentalism, both of which are related to the Lafferty murders. Wright wrote how the book demonstrates that "most religions have odes to violence in their scriptural past. The question is what makes some people more inclined than others to latch onto these passages."

In reference to the book, Garfield says his first exposure to the LDS faith and Mormon fundamentalism was through Krakauer's book which he "loves."

The miniseries will be available for [streaming on Hulu](#) on April 28, 2022.

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