

Reincarnation Cases with Intermissions of Less Than Nine Months

Reincarnation cases with intervals between lives (intermissions) of under nine months mean that the returning soul or consciousness has joined the body during its gestation period. This raises the questions of when exactly reincarnation occurs and whether such cases are better classified as possession than as reincarnation. Interestingly, cases with intermissions under nine months are particularly likely to have congenital physical anomalies associated with the previous lives.

Basic Issues

When does the 'soul' join the body in reincarnation? Opinions about this vary widely. According to some traditions, notably Buddhism, it is at conception. Most other belief systems allow for it to occur during the gestation period, although Jains affirm that the soul passes at death immediately into some other form, not necessarily human, and Druze hold that the soul moves at death directly into the body of a child then being born.¹

[Ian Stevenson](#) and other researchers have studied numerous cases of verified past-life memory in which there is less than nine months from death to rebirth. In these cases, a pregnancy was underway when the previous person died, so it might seem that reincarnation does not have to occur at conception. However, it could be that another reincarnation did begin then and that the previous person displaced it in the womb; thus, Stevenson took the position that it was a matter of preference whether cases with intermissions of less than nine months should be considered reincarnation or possession.²

Stevenson also studied cases in which there was a replacement of personality following birth. After initially classifying these cases as ones of reincarnation, he came to regard them as possession instead.³ Reincarnation researcher [James Matlock](#) has proposed that possession be defined simply as the occupation of a body by a spirit, which would make reincarnation possession by its nature. Long-term possession by this definition is reincarnation; short-term possession, involving the temporary displacement of one personality by another, is possession.⁴

Displacement after birth Matlock terms [replacement reincarnation](#) if it is long-term and lasts until death. From Matlock's perspective, there is no difficulty conceiving of reincarnation as starting at any point during gestation (or in replacement cases, after birth). Nor in his view must there be a reincarnating essence (a soul or 'consciousness stream') present from conception. Consciousness could join the body at any point in utero and Matlock thinks that a foetus might have to be sufficiently developed for a reincarnating consciousness to make connection with it.⁵

There are variations in the median intermission lengths in different cultures in which Stevenson studied cases and these variations reflect beliefs about when reincarnation occurs. Although the global median in Stevenson's collection is fifteen months from death to birth, in Buddhist cultures, such as Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar, the median is longer and there are few cases with intermissions under nine months, whereas among the Druze, the median is eight months. In another culture, the Haida First Nation of British Columbia, Canada, it is only four months.⁶

Studies have found shorter intermissions associated with violent deaths,⁷ especially deaths by suicide,⁸ and intermissions tend to be shorter in cases with family connections than in cases in which the previous person was unknown to the present family.⁹ Some cases with intermissions under nine months include examples of these types, but not all such cases are associated with violent deaths or have family relationships.

An important finding that has emerged from the study of cases with intermissions of less than nine months is that most have birthmarks, birth defects or other congenital physical anomalies.¹⁰ Of 38 published cases, only four lack physical anomalies, and in three of these the cause of death was of a sort that would not be expected to lead to physical traits manifesting in the next life. The most dramatic birth defects occur with intermissions of seven and eight months, but birthmarks and minor birth defects have been reported in cases with intermissions as short as a few days.

The implications of these findings for deciding the issue of reincarnation versus possession are considered in the Discussion section below, following a table of cases arranged by length of intermission¹¹ and summaries of seven cases selected to demonstrate key features in cases related to deaths that occurred whilst pregnancies were underway.

Table of Cases

38 Reincarnation
Cases with
Intermissions Less
Than Nine Months in
Length

<i>Name / Source</i>	<i>Country/ Ethnicity</i>	<i>Intermission Length</i>	<i>Relationship Status</i>	<i>Cause of Death</i>	<i>Congenital Anomalies</i>
1. Bhopal Singh Stevenson (1997), 1:910-29	India	< 9 months	stranger	murder	present

2. Julaluddin Shah Stevenson (1997), 2:1618-24	India	< 9 months	family	horse kick	present
3. Giriraj Soni* Pasricha (1998), 284-88	India	8 months	stranger	murder	present
4. Ma Thoung Stevenson (1997), 1:1110-18	Myanmar	8 months	acquaintance	beheading w/ sword	present
5. Kuldip Singh Pasricha (1998), 274-77	India	8 months	stranger	murder w/ knives	present
6. Bruce Peck* Stevenson (1997), 2:1361-66	Canada Haida	7 months	family	heart attack, drowning	present
7. Ramniri Jatav Pasricha (1998), 277-79	India	7 months	stranger	run over by bus	present
8. Semih Tutuşmuş Stevenson (1997), 2:1382-1403	Turkey	c. 7 months	stranger	accidental gunshot	present
9. Ma Zin Mar Oo* Stevenson (1997), 1:860-65	Myanmar	<7 months	family	stroke at age 60	present
10. Ma Khin Hsann Oo* Stevenson (1997), 1:650-59	Myanmar	6.5 months	family	accidental fire	present
11. Maung Soe Tun Stevenson (1997), 2:1906-11	Myanmar	6 months	acquaintance	illness at age 78	present

12. Sanjeev Sharma Stevenson (1997), 1:683-97	India	6 months	family	natural at age 100+	present
13. Metin Köybaşı Stevenson (1997), 1:350-62	Turkey	5 months	family	gunshot to neck	present
14. Wilfred Meares Stevenson (1997), 1:503-8	Canada Haida	17 weeks	family	car crash	present
15. Ravi Shankar Gupta Stevenson (1974)	India	16 weeks	stranger	murder beheading	present
16. Cruz Moscinski Haraldsson & Matlock (2016)	USA	16 weeks.	acquaintance	suicide	present
17. Toran (Titu) Singh* Mills (1989), 156-71	India	12 weeks	stranger	murder gunshot	present
18. Thian San Kla Story (1975), 168-72	Thailand	12 weeks	family	knife wound	present
19. Maung Aung Myint Stevenson (1997), 2:1665-79	Burma	12 weeks	family	killed in knife fight	present
20. Shadrack Kipkorir Tarus* Matlock (2021)	Kenya Kalenjin	9 weeks	family	illness at 82	present
21. Wael Kiwan Haraldsson & Abu- Izzeddin (2004)	Lebanon Druze	8 weeks	stranger	suicide by hanging	absent
22. Navalkishore Yadav	India	4-8 weeks	family	suicide by hanging	present

Stevenson (1997), 1:783-90						
23. Ali Uğurlu Stevenson (1997), 1:291-300	Turkey Alevi	<8 weeks	acquaintance	stabbed in quarrel	present	
24. Deepak Babu Misra Pasricha (1998), 266- 69	India	<6 weeks	stranger	murder w/ knife	present	
25. Tali Sowaid Stevenson (1997), 1:362-81	Lebanon Druze	<6 weeks	acquaintance	shot through head	present	
26. Rajani Singh Pasricha (1998), 261- 64	India	5 weeks	family	suicide by immolation	present	
27. Faris Yuyucuer* Stevenson (1997), 2:1598-1611	Turkey Alevi	4-6 weeks	acquaintance	drowning	present	
28. Dellâl Beyaz Stevenson (1997), 1:491-503	Turkey Alevi	4 weeks	stranger	accidental fall on head	present	
29. Semir Taci Stevenson (1997), 1:745-59	Turkey	2 weeks	acquaintance	snakebite	present	
30. Yusuv Köse Stevenson (1997), 2:1344-51	Turkey Alevi	<1 week	stranger	knifing in quarrel	present	
31. Mehmet Zamioğlu Stevenson (1997), 2:1442-54	Turkey	c. 5 days	stranger	murder gunshot	present	
32. Cemil Fahrıcı† Stevenson (1997),	Turkey	<3 days	family	suicide gunshot	present	

33. Zouheir Chaar Stevenson (1980), 98- 16	Lebanon Druze	<3 days	acquaintance	illness	absent
34. Naripender Singh Pasricha (1998), 264- 66	India	<2 days	acquaintance	accidental gunshot	present
35. Punkaj Chuahan Stevenson (1997), 1:1118-23	India	1 day	acquaintance	murder gunshot	present
36. Yahya Balci Stevenson (1997), 1:333-39	Turkey Alevi	<1 day	acquaintance	murder gunshot	present
37. Faruq Andary Stevenson (1980), 77- 97	Lebanon Druze	same day	family	suicide by poisoning	absent
38. Nasir Toksöz* Stevenson (1980), 324-39	Turkey Alevi	two hours?	acquaintance	tetanus infection	absent

*Summarized below.

†Eight weeks
premature.

Example Cases

Giriraj Soni (8 months)

Giriraj Soni, an Indian boy, was born with extraordinary physical defects. He began speaking between 24 and 30 months, but was late standing and walking. He did not start to do so until he was four years old but then began claiming that he had lived before as Subhan Khan of Amla, a town 27 kilometres from his home. The foreskin of his penis was absent at birth, considered significant because circumcision is a Muslim practice but not a Hindu one, and Giriraj's family were Hindus. As he grew older, Giriraj behaved in many ways like a Muslim man, including praying in the Muslim style and requesting meat in his vegetarian family.

Giriraj related many details of Khan's life and described how Kahn had been killed. Khan was notorious throughout the area for bullying and robbing; he had even attacked police officers and been convicted of the crime. Eight months before Giriraj's birth, Kahn's enemies banded together and assaulted him with heavy batons (known as lathis), swords and stones. He was badly injured, as reflected in Giriraj's birth defects, including a severe curvature of the spine (kyphoscoliosis). After Khan's death, many people went to view his body; amongst them were Giriraj's parents, although Khan was unknown to them personally.

The case came to the attention of [Satwant Pasricha](#), who besides interviewing witnesses to both lives, obtained a police report describing the injuries to Subhan Khan and the postmortem examination of his body. An ultrasound examination of Giriraj's internal organs showed his left lung to be much smaller than his right, which was of normal size. In her case report, Pasricha wrote:

The anterior part of Giriraj's left chest looked as if it had been battered in. The pelvis was tilted so much that the left iliac crest was abnormally elevated ... The concavity of the left anterior chest corresponds to fractures of the left 5th and 6th ribs reported in the postmortem report on Subhan Khan.

Giriraj had another birth defect in the midline of the occipital region of his head. The abnormality was a soft, protruding mass, measuring about 3 centimeters in width and 2 centimeters in length. It was hairless and painful when pressed. ... This defect corresponds in location to an incised wound noted in the postmortem report "near the midline on the occipital region of the head." ...

Giriraj also had two scar-like hairless areas on the left parietal region of his head. One was roundish in shape and about 2 centimeters in diameter. The other was lenticular in shape and measured about 1 centimeter in length and 0.2 centimeters in width. These birthmarks correspond in approximate location to two incised wounds described in the postmortem report as being 5 and 8 centimeters from the left ear, one in the occipital region, the other in the parietal region.¹²

Bruce Peck (7 months)

Bruce Peck, a Haida, was recognized at birth as the reincarnation of his paternal grandfather by a severe birth defect – two thirds of his right arm and hand were missing (hemimelia). Bruce's grandfather, a fisherman who had spent much of his life throwing out and pulling in fishing lines, had repeatedly expressed his wish to be reborn without a hand, so that he would not have to work as hard in his next life. Seven months before Bruce's birth, he suffered a heart attack while fishing at sea and fell overboard. He was pulled from the water but died in the boat shortly afterwards.

Bruce never related memories of his grandfather's life, but in his early years, he was very fearful of water and of boats; he was 22 before he learned to swim. He did not allow himself to be limited by having only one arm, however, and enjoyed sports with other boys. As an adult, he found jobs on land in clerical positions, and it was

whilst engaged in one of these that Stevenson met him. In the course of his investigation, Stevenson obtained copies of x-rays that had been made when Bruce was eleven. The accompanying notes stated: 'There is a congenital forearm amputation on the right side with certainly not more than 3 inches of stump distal to the elbow joint. The radius measures 5.3 centimeters and the ulna about 6 centimeters in length'. Bruce's mother had taken no drugs during her pregnancy with him.[13](#)

Ma Zin Mar Oo (< 7 months)

Ma Zin Mar Oo, of Myanmar (Burma), was recognized at birth as the reincarnation of a maternal uncle (U Kyaw Oo) of her father by a birthmark on her lower right leg. As Kyaw Oo lay dying, his wife used her finger to take some soot from the bottom of a cooking pot and smear it about the front and side of his left leg, just above the ankle. She made a wide mark but did not extend it completely round the leg. Two other family members watched her do this. The practice of cadaver marking, found throughout East Asia, is intended to produce an [experimental birthmark](#) that will allow the deceased to be identified in his next life. Zin Mar Oo's birthmark had the exact appearance of the mark made on Kyaw Oo's leg. When she was old enough to talk, Zin Mar Oo said that she had seen the marking done, although Kyaw Oo was believed to have been unconscious at the time.

Zin Mar Oo's family was prepared for Kyaw Oo's return as their child because of an [announcing dream](#) her mother had had not long before her birth. In the dream, Kyaw Oo had come to their home wearing a white shirt and a white towel on his head, a common form of headdress in Burmese villages. In the dream, he declared, 'I am staying with you. I am not going back.' Ma Zin Mar Oo's mother did not want him in her family because he was an alcoholic. She told him this, but he persisted, saying, 'I am not dead. I am living with you.'

At the age of four years, Zin Mar Oo began to say she was Kyaw Oo and to narrate memories of his life. She pointed in the direction of Kyaw Oo's home, saying it was hers. She exhibited a strong attachment to Kyaw Oo's widow and wanted to stay with her, as she was sometimes allowed to do. Zin Mar Oo also had a precocious interest in alcohol and tobacco, of which Kyaw Oo was also fond. She would snatch cheroots from visitors to her home and when her father drank alcohol, she would try to steal some from his cup.[14](#)

Ma Khin Hsann Oo (6.5 months)

Ma Khin Hsann Oo is another Burmese girl, unrelated to Ma Zin Mar Oo (Oo is not a surname, but means 'first' or 'eldest'; Ma is an honorific similar to 'Miss'). She was born with large hyperpigmented birthmarks (nevi or moles) on her chest, back, face and limbs. The largest, running from her midriff down her thighs to her knees, was what is known as a 'bathing trunk nevus'. Khin Hsann Oo's parents recognized these birthmarks as probably derived from a previous lifetime but had no idea who she might have been.

When she began speaking at about eighteen months, Khin Hsann Oo talked about an earlier life, although she did not give her name until she was three years old. She

then said she had been a woman named Ahmar Yee who had died when the car in which she was riding overturned and burst into flames. The car was Shik-koe's, she said. This was enough for her parents to identify the accident, in which a truck, owned by a man named Shik-koe, that was carrying boxes of unrefined sugar overturned and caught fire, killing ten people, amongst them a woman named Ahmar Yee.

The accident occurred about six and one half months before Khin Hsann Oo's birth. Stevenson was unable to obtain records of Ahmar Yee's injuries, but he confirmed the date of her death from her tombstone and the date of Khin Hsann Oo's birth from her horoscope, prepared from a note recorded in a notebook.[15](#)

Toran (Titu) Singh (3 months)

Toran Singh (who when young went by the nickname Titu) was an Indian boy born with a round mark on his right temple, another mark on the crown of his head, and three more on the back of his head. He started speaking at eighteen months, sooner than his siblings, and soon thereafter began telling his mother about his previous life. His first comments concerned the wife and children he had left behind. He was taking his meals at his present home, he said, but wanted to get word to them that he was all right.

Titu demanded insistently to be taken to see his previous family. One day he told a friend of his eldest brother that he was the owner of a transistor radio shop named Suresh Radio in the Sadar Bazaar district of the neighbouring town of Agra. He wanted to go there. His brother and his friend declined to take him, but went themselves, and there met the widow of Suresh Verme, the shop's late owner, who confirmed what Titu had been relating about his life and death.

Suresh Verme had been a player on the local black market. He had been executed in his car by a shot to the right temple. Suresh's widow and several members of his family went to visit Titu, who recognized them and welcomed them excitedly. Suresh's family confirmed that the birthmark on Titu's temple was in the place the bullet had entered, and they thought that the three birthmarks on the back of his head represented places it had exited. The birthmark on the top of Titu's head matched a similar birthmark on Suresh, his family said.

During her investigation of the case, [Antonia Mills](#) obtained Suresh's autopsy report. This showed that the fatal bullet indeed had entered Suresh's right temple but had exited behind his right ear. Mills examined Titu and found a bony protrusion, a minor birth defect, at the exit point shown in the autopsy report. Suresh apparently had no injuries that would account for the birthmarks on the back of his head.

Matlock has suggested the three birthmarks on the back of the head might be related to a different incarnation, displaced by Suresh in the womb, in his rush to get back to avenge his murder, making this an instance of replacement reincarnation before birth. Suresh's date of death is known, but unfortunately, Titu's date of birth is uncertain. His father, however, believed it to be three months after Suresh's death and Mills accepted this date as most likely correct. Titu's

mother had had an uneventful pregnancy until her last trimester but was ill throughout that period.¹⁶ For a longer summary of this case, see [here](#).

Faris Yuyucuer (4-6 weeks)

Faris Yuyucuer was a Turkish Alevi boy. At birth, he was seen to have a large port-wine nevus flammeus mark on his left buttock. His penis was abnormally small (micropenis) and he had a five-to-six millimetre vertical scar on his lower lip. None of these defects meant anything to his parents and they did not identify him with any person they knew until two or three months later, when his mother had a dream about a six-year old boy named Hasan from their city (Adana) who had drowned four to six weeks prior to Faris's birth.

Hasan's death had made news and Faris's mother had gone to view his body, which is how she was able to recognize him in her dream. In the dream, she had gone looking for Faris and found him drowned in the lake in which Hasan had drowned. She took Faris in her arms and he grew, changing into Hasan. Suspecting from this that Faris was Hasan reborn, Faris's mother visited Hasan's mother, who was sceptical until shown the birthmark on Faris's buttock. She then began to weep, saying that it was exactly like one Hasan had had in the same place.

Faris's mother learned as well that Hasan's sister and father had dreamt about him also, after his death but before Faris's birth. In these dreams, Hasan told his family not to worry about him, that he was coming back near them; his father recalled dreaming that he specified that he would be reborn near the grocer's, evidently meaning a shop Faris's father owned and operated, which had been patronized by Hasan's family.

Stevenson believed that Faris's micropenis was associated with an operation on Hasan to remove a calculus. In order to free the stone, the surgeon incised Hasan's penis to the urethra. This was done under local anaesthesia and terrified Hasan at the time, but he recovered fully and enjoyed good health thereafter. Faris's penis was still less than one centimetre long at seven months but by six and a half years, its appearance was normal. The mark on Faris's lip was more difficult to account for. Stevenson heard divergent testimony on whether it was related to an injury in the lake or to an accidental laceration by people trying to revive Hasan when his body was pulled from the lake.

Faris had a phobia of water from an early age and preferred foods that Hasan liked. He said little spontaneously about Hasan, but when he was two and a half years old and heard his elders talking about another child who had drowned in the lake, he said, 'Just like me! Just like me!' When he was six, he remarked that Faris was a 'silly' name and said he would prefer to be called Hasan.¹⁷

Nasır Toksöz (< 2 hours)

Nasır Toksöz was another Turkish Alevi boy. The intermission in his case is the shortest of any of Stevenson's published cases. The length is not known precisely, but it was certainly less than two hours. Nasır had no congenital physical marks, but these would not be expected, because the man whose life he recalled died of a

tetanus infection and had no scars that might have provided a model for a birthmark.

During the night before Nasır's birth, his father dreamt of a man of his acquaintance, Nasır Alev. Nasır informed him, 'I am coming to sit with you', which in the dream Nasır's father took to mean that he was going to be reborn to him. At the time, Nasır's mother was pregnant and close to term. Nasır's father promised that he would name the child Nasır and this was accordingly done.

Not knowing Nasır Alev well, Nasır's father did not know that he was dying. Then roughly seventy years old, Alev had fallen down stone steps near the front door of his house, injuring his forehead and causing his nose to bleed. A few days later he became unable to speak although he remained at home for another week before being carried to hospital, where the history of his illness was taken. He died two days later, at 10.30 am, according to records Stevenson inspected. The attributed cause of death was tetanus, likely resulting from his fall and injury to his forehead. Nasır Alev's death came on the morning following Nasır Toksöz's father's dream, more or less coinciding with Nasır Toksöz's birth, whose exact time was unfortunately not recorded.

As Nasır Toksöz grew, it became clear that he was left-handed, unlike others in his family but like Nasır Alev. When he was between two and three years old, he began talking about what claimed were his children, including a son that had gone to Belgium (as indeed one of Nasır Alev's sons had done). The next year his mother took him to see his father in their olive orchard, whence he saw in an adjoining orchard a woman he recognized as Nasır Alev's daughter. She acknowledged that she was Nasır Alev's daughter and asked him to show the way to their home, which he did. There he recognized other people and places related to Nasır Alev. He began to visit the Alev family regularly and was welcomed by them as their relative reborn.[18](#)

Discussion

Do these seven cases help us decide the question of when reincarnation takes place, invariably at conception or potentially at any point from then onwards? Six of the seven cases have congenital physical anomalies and the seventh – the one with the shortest intermission – features the apparent carryover of a genetically-linked preference (handedness) that is in its way a birth defect as there is no history of left-handedness in the family of Nasır Toksöz. However, although all of these cases involve deaths that occurred after pregnancies were underway, they do not rule out the possibility that there was another soul or consciousness present from conception that was replaced in the womb.

The case of Toran Singh provides some evidence for a replacement-in-the-womb scenario; replacement could account for the three otherwise-unexplained birthmarks on the back of his head as well as for his mother's illness during her last trimester. If replacement occurred in this case, perhaps it occurred in others also, but there does not appear a way to assess this possibility from the case data alone. That there are so many of these cases – they are in the majority among the Druze and Haida – might lend support to the idea that consciousness is not necessarily

present at conception. However, if this problem is ever resolved it will likely be on the basis of the foetus's quickening and other objective indicators, perhaps confirmed by the mother's sense of a new presence within her.[19](#)

These cases raise the question of how physical traits can be transferred from one life to another. Again, Stevenson and Matlock understand the process differently. Stevenson speculated about a type of astral body he called a 'psychophore', which would reflect wounds or marks on the body of the deceased and act as a 'template' for a new body.[20](#) Matlock points out that this model cannot explain why birthmarks and defects do not always appear where one might expect them, nor does it readily explain why wounds inflicted postmortem reappear as birthmarks or defects, and it is not clear what happens to a psychophore if it joins a body whose development has begun. Matlock prefers to think of the new body as the template, to which the reincarnating consciousness makes changes psychogenically, through psychokinesis.[21](#)

Matlock's idea implies a psychological dimension to the transmission of physical traits, which would make it easier to explain why physical effects might be produced intentionally (as in the case of Bruce Peck), carry over across successive lives (Toran Singh, Faris Yuyucuer), or result from the intentional marking of a dying body or cadaver (Ma Zin Mar Oo). Similarly, it could explain the reappearance of left-handedness in Nasır Toksöz. A psychogenic process implies awareness and agency during the intermission period, something suggested also by [intermission memories](#) and [announcing dreams](#).[22](#) In the end, however, the case data poses more questions than it provides answers and we will have to await further research developments for clarifications.[23](#)

James G Matlock

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Endnotes

Footnotes

- [1](#). Matlock (2019).
- [2](#). Stevenson (1997), vol. 1, 1142.
- [3](#). Stevenson included the case of Jasbir Jat in *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation* in 1966 but the similar case of Sumitra Singh as possession in 1989 (Stevenson, Pasricha, & McLean-Rice, 1989).
- [4](#). Matlock (2019), 174.
- [5](#). Matlock (2019), 159.
- [6](#). Matlock (2019), 180.
- [7](#). Chadha & Stevenson (1988).
- [8](#). Haraldsson & Matlock (2016), 246-53. See also [here](#).
- [9](#). Matlock (2019), 186. This is most apparent in [European cases](#) and [American cases](#).
- [10](#). Matlock (2023).
- [11](#). The table is adapted from Matlock (2023).
- [12](#). Pasricha (1998), 286-87. The full case report appears on pages 284-88.
- [13](#). Stevenson (1997), vol. 2, 1365. The full case report appears on pages 1361-66.
- [14](#). Stevenson (1997), vol. 1, 860-65.
- [15](#). Stevenson (1997), vol. 1, 650-59.
- [16](#). Mills (1989), 156-71; Haraldsson & Matlock (2016), 191-95.

- [17.](#) Stevenson (1997), vol. 2, 1598-1611.
- [18.](#) Stevenson (1980), 324-39.
- [19.](#) Matlock (2023).
- [20.](#) Stevenson (1997), vol. 2, 2083-88.
- [21.](#) Matlock (2019), 158-59.
- [22.](#) Matlock (2019), 164-65.
- [23.](#) Matlock (2023).

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