

*The said*





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# Natalie Maines

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NATALIE MAINES, LEAD SINGER FOR THE DIXIE CHICKS, THROWS A POWERFUL VERBAL PUNCH. JUST CONSIDER THE UPROAR HER INFAMOUS ANTI-BUSH COMMENT CAUSED AT A 2003 LONDON CONCERT. BUT MAINES HAS A SOFT SIDE TOO. VIOLET RECENTLY SPOKE WITH MAINES ABOUT TAKING HER KIDS ON THE ROAD, ACTIVISM, AND HER COMMITMENT TO CURING AUTISM.



## **H**OW DID IT FEEL TO BE INVOLVED IN THE MULTI-NETWORK TELEVISION EVENT TO BENEFIT VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA?

To be honest, the telethon was the least we could do. We get such appreciation for it but it's nothing compared to what people have done and are still doing in the trenches. We plan on helping people financially get back on their feet for years to come.

## YOU ARE CURRENTLY IN THE STUDIO RECORDING THE NEXT DIXIE CHICKS RECORD. ARE YOU DOING ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY THIS TIME?

We have been in the studio for about six months now. We are working with Rick Rubin and it has really been a great creative experience. We have written all of the songs for the first time and are really experimenting with our sound. It's nice when you are doing so many new things to have someone like Rick telling you what is great and what isn't. He has such a natural sense of song structure that it takes away all of the questioning we might otherwise have about our own songs. He is very confident in his opinions and I think that is something we really needed while making this record. We hope to have it out by April.

## ARE YOU PLANNING TO STAY IN LOS ANGELES FOR A WHILE?

My husband Adrian and I have always had a place here and we like L.A. a lot. It's nice for the kids to have great weather for play all year round. I find myself having more in common personally and politically with people here. California is easy to get used to. I am rarely starstruck, but today I saw Vince from the TV show *Entourage* and I was pretty pleased. He is my only Hollywood crush.

## IT MUST BE A CHALLENGE, INCORPORATING YOUR KIDS INTO YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE.

You figure it out as you go. It changes every year as Slade gets older, but so far he likes traveling and being on the road. We will have seven kids on tour this time around. If someone wants a good reality show, they should follow us on our next tour. It should be one of those disasters you can't help but love to watch. Instead of *Eight Is Enough*, we could call it *Seven Is Six Too Many*.

## WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING ON THE ROAD WITH CHILDREN?

Ask me that in 2 years.

## DO YOU FEEL LIKE NOW THAT YOU'VE HAD ANOTHER CHILD, THAT YOU'RE MORE COMFORTABLE THE SECOND TIME AROUND?

I think Beckett is an easier baby than Slade was, but I also think that all of the lifestyle

changes that come with having a child were already made so Beckett didn't really create any surprises. Having two isn't any harder than one. As they get older, it is actually easier because they have that built-in playmate. After one child, I knew I didn't want more than two. Now after two, I think I could have a house- full if I had a different job. There is nothing more interesting than watching kids interact with one another.

## DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU RAISE YOUR KIDS SIMILARLY TO THE WAY YOUR PARENTS RAISED YOU?

I would like to think I am instilling a lot of the same values in my children as my parents did in me. I just get to raise mine in a much more privileged environment. That can be easier in some ways, and more difficult in others. I think if Adrian and I can teach humility, humor, compassion, and honesty, we will feel as though we succeeded.

## HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT SCHOOLS FOR YOUR KIDS?

I'm just starting to. It is pretty cutthroat in L.A. I think Slade will do kindergarten on the road, but we are filling out applications for the first grade now. We are not certain, but we might want him to go to public school because sometimes



people get more into the competitiveness of private school, as in "my kid was able to get in but yours wasn't so we must be better" kind of thing.

**THE COMMENT THAT YOU MADE ABOUT BUSH, WHICH IS NOW SO INFAMOUS, PUT YOU IN THE POSITION OF BEING AN ACTIVIST. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT IN RETROSPECT?**

Hmmm.... I feel so many things about that whole episode that you don't have enough pages to print it. I will say that we absolutely don't regret a thing and one of the many positives that came from it is that I am much more active in things I feel strongly about. I feel like I have nothing to hide. People pretty much know how I feel about things, so hopefully there won't be any more surprises.

**ARE YOU INVOLVED WITH ANY PARTICULAR ORGANIZATIONS AT THE MOMENT?**

Aside from hurricane relief, which we plan on continuing to financially support for the next few years, we are very involved in the Thoughtful House. It is a clinic in Austin started by Dr. Timothy Wakefield [a pioneering British gastroenterologist] that is doing research and treatment for autism. Many doctors just sort of regurgitate what pharmaceutical companies and medical journals say about autism instead of listening to parents. Nobody knows his or her child the way a mother knows their child, and if a mother tells you her child was a completely different person the morning after the MMR vaccine (measles, mumps, rubella) then she ought to be taken seriously. Dr. Wakefield is controversial because he listens to these mothers. He has had a lot of success treating children through the colon and with a gluten-free diet. It is amazing to hear parent testimonials about their children getting 90% better through Dr. Wakefield's treatments. I don't think a parent should ever take "there is nothing that can be done" as an answer. Find a doctor that is will-

ing to listen. As far as vaccines go, there are some very easy, specific rules to follow. First of all, spread out the vaccines. Secondly, there should be no vaccines for at least two weeks after a child has been sick. Lastly, the MMR should not be taken before at least two years of age and should be taken separately. Merck is the only drug company that sells them separated and you have to ask your doctor to order it that way. Whether or not these things have been proven to have any effect on the onset of autism, there isn't a parent I've met that wouldn't take precautions to ensure the health of their child.

**HAS TRAVELING SO MUCH GIVEN YOU A BETTER IDEA OF HOW OTHER COUNTRIES PERCEIVE US?**

I think by this point everyone has heard how other countries perceive us, unless your only news source is Fox News. Traveling, I definitely hear it first hand. I'm just glad I put it out there early on and have never been on the Bush bandwagon. I just try and remind people that there are still half of us who aren't.

**BEFORE YOU JOINED THE DIXIE CHICKS, WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU WERE GOING TO DO FOR A LIVING?**

I thought I was going to be a musician, just not a country musician. I love what I do, but I think being a surgeon would be the one thing I might enjoy more. At this point, I feel too old to start down that path.

**WHAT KIND OF HOUSEHOLD DID YOU GROW UP IN?**

I grew up in a normal, stable household. It was a musical household but nothing particularly interesting was going on. My parents always allowed my sister and me to be who we were. I went through an eight year vegetarian stage and instead of trying to get me to stop, my mom made meals that I could eat. I think they knew I

had strong convictions and opinions and in a way I think fathers especially like to see that in their daughters. It gives them reassurance that they won't be walked all over.

**IS YOUR HUSBAND, ADRIAN, HANDS-ON WITH THE KIDS?**

I know a lot of women think their husband is the best dad, but mine really is. Adrian has so much energy and creativity. I don't believe there is a more fun person for kids to be around. I will try not to gush too much, but anyone who knows me knows I don't hand out unsupported compliments.

**WHAT DOES HE DO FOR A LIVING?**

Adrian is an actor and a director. He is one of those really sickening people who can do everything at least a little bit. He can sing, play drums, play guitar, play piano. He sails, he can play every sport, and my favorite thing is that he does everything with more passion than anyone I know. I could stand to have a little more of his passion for life.

**IN TERMS OF BEING A MOTHER, WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT YOU'RE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT ON A POLITICAL AND GLOBAL SCALE?**

Let's put it this way, today I saw a bumper sticker that said "If you're not concerned you're obviously not paying attention." I'm paying attention.

**WHAT DO YOU PERSONALLY DO TO MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE?**

I hope that my biggest contribution to our world will be raising two strong, compassionate, self-sufficient boys.

**GIVEN YOUR POLITICAL AFFILIATION, DID YOU FEEL MORE CONFIDENT WHEN CLINTON WAS IN OFFICE?**

Yes, and for very good reason. The man can speak proper English at the very least.

