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Slim-down secrets

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FOR LOVE & MONEY

The **DIXIE CHICKS** on their nasty legal battle – and their new roles as wives and moms!

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RETURNING TO THE FLOCK

The Dixie Chicks emerge from a messy legal turmoil with personal triumphs and a benchmark album

Imagine a newsstand jammed with newspapers, all screaming out true-to-life Dixie Chicks headlines – NATALIE'S LIL' SLADE GOES VAROOM! ... EMILY PAINTS NURSERY BLUE, WORRIES ABOUT BELLY/DOBRO CONNECTION ... MARTIE GETS IRISH RE-HITCH, PUTS OFF BABY ... DIXIE CHICKS STAY IN SONY NEST FOR BARNFUL OF BUCKS ... UNRUFLED CHICKS RETURN – AND ROCK THE COOP!

In the past year, the Chicks – Natalie Maines, Emily Robison and Martie Maguire – have made front-page news while putting their own twist on the old saying, *When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade*. Industry naysayers crowed when the mega-talented trio took their record company to court, certain it was a career-ending move. How wrong the tongue-waggers were!

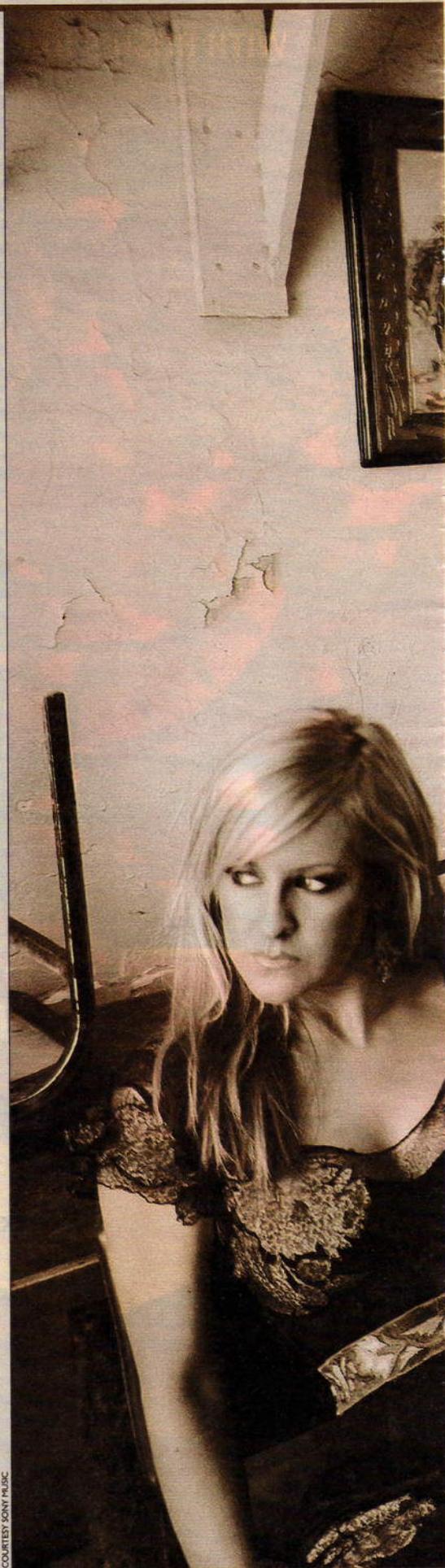
Now the gals are back, with a legal settlement netting them a more lucrative contract and a multimillion-dollar advance. Plus they're again making musical waves with a gutsy new album, *Home*, powered right out of the box by "Long Time Gone," the fastest-rising single of their career!

"A lot of people have the misconception that we were out of the limelight and not working because we were in a legal battle with Sony," notes Natalie. "In actuality, that time away was *very* planned. We'd been working nonstop for five years and felt like we deserved some time off. I was pregnant and having Slade. And Emily got pregnant, too.

"All of us needed to be with our families, find our new houses in Texas and do that sort thing. It was a great time, and it was almost like the Sony lawsuit just fit into the plan."

The Chicks definitely made lemonade during their time off – in fact, they squeezed out so much personal and

Story by Larry Holden



COURTESY SONY MUSIC



"We'd been working nonstop for five years and felt like we deserved some time off," says Natalie. "That time away was very planned."

DIXIE CHICKS professional nectar that they could've bottled the beverage and marketed it with Long Time *Good* labels. In this first major interview since their self-imposed media hibernation of almost a year, Natalie, Martie and Emily reveal all that was going on in their lives during their months out of the spotlight.

Now, about those newspaper headlines ...

NATALIE'S LIL' SLADE GOES VAROOM!

"Jackson Slade, now 17 months, is motoring around nonstop," laughs Natalie. "And he's obsessed with motorcycles. He does his hands like he's on a motorcycle and runs around going *varoom, varoom.*"

And her active son imitates his proud papa, actor Adrian Pasdar, when he goes

for "nothing but net" with his imaginary basketball. "Slade walks around pretending he's just shot a basket – and he's got a good follow-through!"

The young "jock" doesn't like typical kid stuff on TV. "We've tried to get him to watch cartoons," confesses Natalie, "but the only thing he'll watch is ESPN. He's fascinated with sports and balls of all kinds."

So who does Slade most look like – Natalie or Adrian?

"Me," she proclaims. "He's a blondie!"

And who does he most act like?

"Adrian and I are both high-energy people and we're both performers. Slade's a high-energy show-off who *loves* to be the center of attention!"

Slade definitely takes after his musical mom. "He bops to music and dances really funny," declares Natalie. "He's *very* musical."

"In the song 'The Wheels On The Bus Go 'Round And 'Round,'" she adds with a motherly smile, "there's a verse where the bus driver says, 'Move on back, move on back.' When Slade hears that, he motions 'move on back' by pointing his thumb over his shoulder."

EMILY PAINTS NURSERY BLUE, WORRIES 'BOUT BELLY & DOBRO CONNECTION

"My due date is Nov. 14," notes Emily. "We're having a boy. Most likely his first name will be Charles, after Charlie," referring to her singer/songwriter hubby, Charlie Robison. "But we could call him by his middle name, which we haven't decided yet."

Emily has decided about the new nursery. "We're remodeling our home and the nursery is being worked on right now. I'm excited about it, and I'm waiting on my nursery furniture."

Her pregnancy has gone very well. "Even so, it's a roller-coaster ride," she confides. "You go through periods of testing, which are nerve-racking. But he's healthy, so I just say my prayers every day."

Emily's also praying she can figure out how to play her instruments as her stomach expands. "I've got to work out playing around this belly," she laughs. "I can probably play the banjo 'sidesaddle,' but



not the Dobro. I might have to get a special stand made for it.

"We have a show on Oct. 19 at the Texas State Fair – three weeks from my due date. I'm sure I will be quite the spectacle for the fans who come out!"

MARTIE GETS IRISH RE-HITCH, PUTS OFF BABY

When Martie and her Irish beau, Gareth Maguire, married in an impromptu Hawaii ceremony on Aug. 10, 2001,



The Chicks' contract war won battles for other artists as well, contends Natalie. "We were fighting for our industry," she says.

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Emily, who's expecting her first child in November, can still play all her instruments comfortably — except the Dobro.

COURTESY FRONT PAGE PUBLICITY

divorced Martie. “You gotta have your partner with you. I want my life intertwined with his.”

Martie also wants a baby.

“When you’re young, you’re trying so hard *not* to get pregnant before you’re married,” she declares. “And then you *want* to get pregnant and it just doesn’t happen on cue. I definitely see having a baby as a true miracle now.

“I’ve actually taken a hiatus from trying to have a baby. I need to wait until Natalie’s ready for her second and *try* to get on her schedule. Her pregnancy was perfect timing, as far as touring is concerned.

“We want to tour next year, starting late April. If I got pregnant now, I’d be really big in the middle of the tour or I’d be having the baby then. That wouldn’t be right, ‘cause we’d have to cancel dates.”

**DIXIE CHICKS STAY IN SONY NEST
FOR BARNFUL OF BUCKS**

When the 10-month legal battle between the Dixie Chicks and Sony Music ended with a settlement, the Chicks got a \$20 million advance, increased their future royalties and got their own record label, to be marketed by Sony.

“We felt like we were fighting a battle for our industry,” declares Natalie. “It wasn’t just about us getting more money. We were taking on our contractual battle, while wanting to win battles for other artists along the way. We were doing more than playing it safe and taking our measly however-many-cents per album that we’ve worked our asses off for.”

Emily admits there was only one tough time during the legal ordeal. “That was near the end when we had the music done. You never want the music delayed because of something happening in the business. That’s not fair to the fans and it’s not fair to us as artists.”

**UNRUFFLED CHICKS RETURN —
AND ROCK THE COOP**

The Chicks’ *Home* CD, due out Aug. 27, is the first release on the trio’s own Open Wide Records.

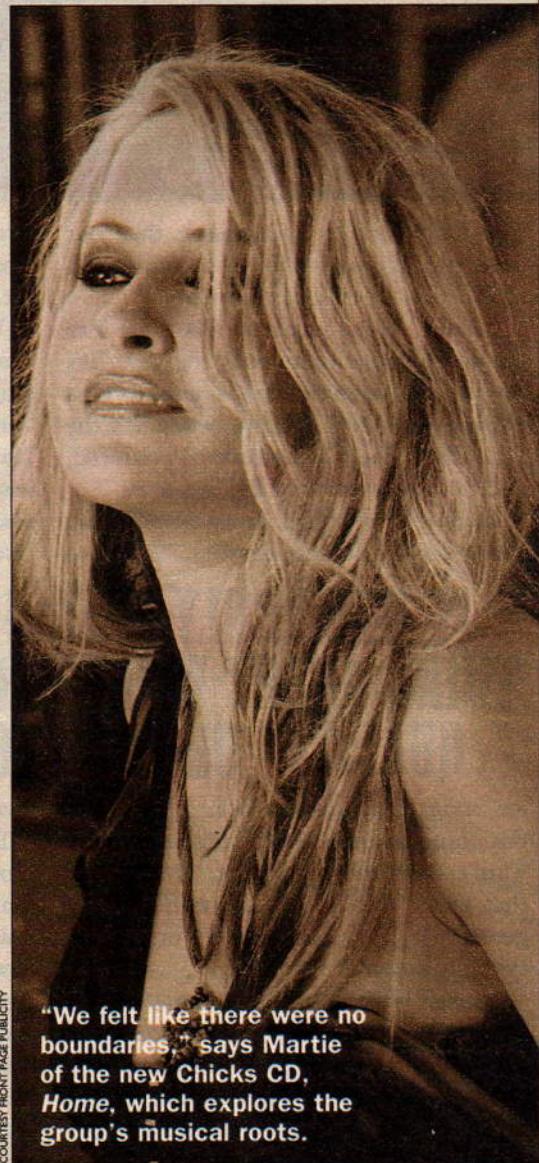
“The music on *Home* comes from what was inspiring us at the time,” explains Martie. “I

was listening to Irish music my husband turned me on to. Natalie was influenced by Alison Krauss; she even had one of her records playing in the delivery room! And Emily was also listening to a lot of acoustic music.

“After Natalie was a stay-at-home mom for a while,” continues Martie, “we were all ready to make music again. We thought we’d go into the studio with Natalie’s musician-producer dad, Lloyd Maines, and record some songs. And, since at that time we didn’t have to turn an album in to a label, we felt like there were no boundaries.”

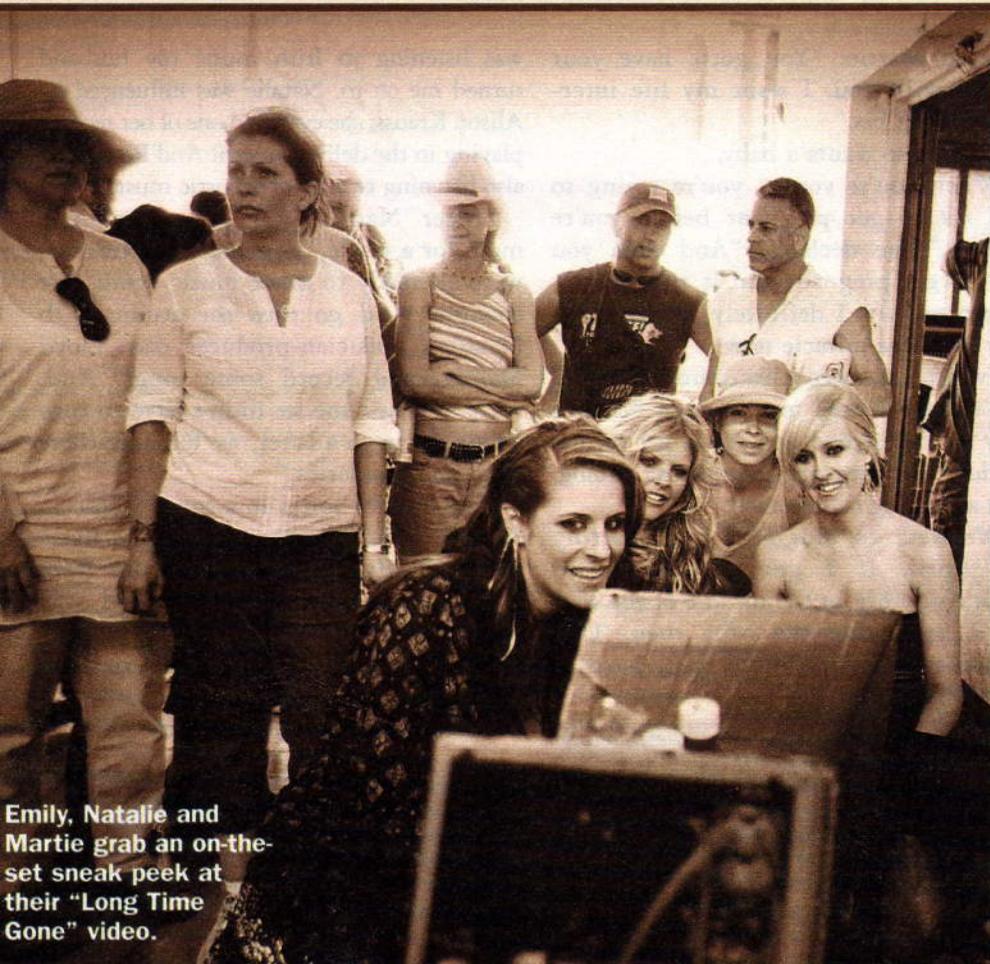
“We did the songs in a small studio in Austin, where Martie and Natalie live,” recalls Emily. “And I’d drive up from my home in nearby Bandera and stay with Martie.

“It was truly freeing not to have to think about whether a song is ‘single quality’ or ‘too long for radio.’ Although the new CD



COURTESY FRONT PAGE PUBLICITY

“We felt like there were no boundaries,” says Martie of the new Chicks CD, *Home*, which explores the group’s musical roots.



Emily, Natalie and Martie grab an on-the-set sneak peek at their "Long Time Gone" video.

N NAME CALLING

Behind closed doors, what little sweetie-pie pet names do the Chicks call their men?

EMILY: "When we're around the house my nicknames for Charlie are pretty ordinary – mostly 'Sweetie' and things like that."

MARTIE: "I hate the nickname 'Honey.' I don't care how comfortable we get, I'll never call Gareth that! It just sounds so yucky to me."

NATALIE: "Adrian calls me 'Bunny,' and I call him normal pet names, like 'Honey.' "

is a little rootsier and grassier than our other two albums, it's our most commercial album yet – because it's limitless."

Natalie, whose vocals on *Home* soar into the stratosphere, champions the CD. "It's my favorite album. Martie and Emily's playing just keeps getting better. It's the first album the Chicks have co-produced, and to do that with my dad was great."

Many of the songs, notes Natalie, are about home life and families. "A lot of

Bruce Robison (brother of Emily's Charlie); and a pair penned by alternative rocker Patty Griffin.

The CD's second single will be "Landslide," written by Fleetwood Mac singer Stevie Nicks. "I've heard 'Landslide' my whole life," explains Natalie, "but I never connected to it the way I did last year. The line *I'm getting older too* resonated with me. I sure feel like I'm changing with the years, being

"But then," she adds with a giggle, "I love 'White Trash Wedding' – it makes me smile." It's definitely a hoot of a song and the only one on the album written by all three Chicks. "We wrote it in about 20 minutes," recalls Emily. "That was fun."

And "fun" is the perfect label for the CD's lone instrumental. "My dad, Martie and Terry Hendricks wrote it," notes Natalie. "And since Slade was at the studio while we were making the album, we named it 'Lil' Jack Slade.' Now maybe our other babies will also have instrumentals written for them."

Right now, the Dixie Chicks continue to write their own ticket to country music stardom. "I just never want to look back and say we played it safe on any album," declares Emily. "How boring is that for listeners not to be able to go on a journey with an artist to different musical places?"

So far, with *Wide Open Spaces*, *Fly* and now *Home*, that journey with the Chicks has been unique, history-making and entertaining – a country mile from boring. And the ride's just begun. 

IT WAS TRULY FREEING NOT TO HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHETHER A SONG IS "SINGLE QUALITY" OR "TOO LONG FOR RADIO."

the songs we'd chosen before Sept. 11, but some of them were chosen after. It wasn't, *Oooh, this a great Sept. 11 song*, but that tragic day is the first event in my generation that's had such an impact on everyone's lives."

Along with the hit debut single, "Long Time Gone" by Darrell Scott, the album features two song collaborations written by Martie, Natalie and Marty Stuart; a touching soldiers' tribute from

a wife, mother and businesswoman."

Emily interjects, "I'm all emotional, hormonal and pregnant, so half the time I listen to the Radney Foster song 'Godspeed (Sweet Dreams)' – another song on the new CD – "it's so sad I can't stand it. Natalie's got a son and I've got one on the way, so the parent-child bond means even more to us. Our biological clocks are thumping loudly, shaking the walls. That's why that song is so emotional for us.

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