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CNN LARRY KING LIVE

An Interview With The Dixie Chicks

Aired May 31, 2006 - 21:00 ET

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(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)
(SINGING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

LARRY KING, CNN HOST: Tonight, a live prime time exclusive, the Dixie Chicks. Outspoken, defiant, controversial, the biggest selling female group in music history. Their first live prime time interview since they set fans off by taking on the president. Have they changed their tune? The Dixie Chicks for the hour, with your calls, is next on LARRY KING LIVE.

Good evening. Natalie Maines, along with Emily Robison and Emily's sister Martie Maguire, make up the Dixie Chicks, the biggest selling female group in music history. And thanks to an anti-Bush comment Natalie made in London just before the 2003 Iraq invasion, they're also controversial figures in the world of country music. They sing about that controversy in their new album, "Taking the Long Way." There you see its cover. And they're here tonight to talk about the wild ride these cow girls have been on for the last three years. The C.D., by the way, is No. 1 Billboard and No. 1 on Amazon.com.

Natalie, Emily and Martie join us. Those remarks, were they expected, Martie, or were they totally -- you came up with them?

NATALIE MAINES, SINGER: Natalie?

KING: Natalie, sorry.

MAINES: That's OK. What, what I said in London?

KING: Yes.

MAINES: They were not planned. That genius comes to me off-the- cuff.

KING: What was the modus vivendi? What happened?

MAINES: Well it was supposed to be the eve before war, the president's deadline was the following day. It actually happened a few days later.

But we were just living it like everybody else around the world. And at the time it wasn't thought about necessarily what I meant. Whatever I say on stage always does have some meaning, but looking back on it, everyone called me unpatriotic and said I didn't support the troops because I didn't support the war.

And I see their point of view, but, to me, I am patriotic because I didn't want people to die without a reason handed to us and shown to us, and proof.

And you know, when you're over in London, everyone is talking about Americans, like we're all one and we all think the same, and that bothered me. So by saying, you know, the Texas thing, I was just sort of pointing out we're American and we're even from Texas and we don't agree with the president.

KING: Were you surprised by it -- now we've got Martie, right? Were you surprised by it, Martie?

MARTIE MAGUIRE, SINGER: I wasn't. It went straight past me and it wasn't until our manager said that there had been ...

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(CROSSTALK)

KING: Did you do the same?

MAGUIRE: I heard her say it, but to me it didn't resonate as something that would get us in trouble.

KING: Did not?

MAGUIRE: No.

KING: So therefore, you were surprised by the reaction?

MAGUIRE: Yes. I was surprised that it went on so long. You know, I knew emotions were running high and nerves were exposed. You have to look back at the time in our country, too. And I think the fact that it got on the "A.P." I mean, we were in a small, little club, we weren't on the Internet. She wasn't saying it to the masses, we didn't think, until it kind of got picked up.

KING: Were you surprised, Emily?

EMILY ROBISON, SINGER: Was I surprised that she said it?

KING: By the reaction?

ROBISON: Oh, by the reaction? Yes, of course. When she said it, I did notice it that night that she said it, and I thought, ooh, Natalie's getting -- saying what she thinks. But, as far as the reaction, no, I don't think any of us thought that expressing your views was that, you know, worth all that.

KING: Did she speak for all three of you?

ROBISON: She wouldn't have said it unless she knew we agreed with her.

KING: So you all agreed, there was no backstage disharmony.

MAGUIRE: Well the Texas thing.

MAINES: They would have said it smart.

MAGUIRE: We knew what she was trying to say.

KING: Speaking of reaction, they got slammed by country stars everywhere, like Toby Keith and a lot of country radio stations stopped playing their songs. Let's look at some of the reaction.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It's an insult not only to my listeners, not only to the great state of Texas and this nation, but also to this radio station.

TOBY KEITH, SINGER: She's got a big mouth and it just gets her in trouble.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I wasn't at all happy with what Natalie had to say about the president and I thought it really could affect the morale of the troops and their families.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: Were you mad at Martie, Natalie?

MAGUIRE: Was I mad at Natalie? No. I actually felt kind of sorry for her, because she took it pretty hard. She really felt the pressure that she had spoken for us, and that she had made so many people angry.

I saw -- you know, I know her. We're good friends. I could see that she was deeply, you know, disturbed by the reaction we were getting and felt responsible and, you know, just really did not mean to hurt anybody.

KING: Were you hurt, Natalie? Emotionally?

MAINES: No, not immediately, probably more angry. The sad things came, you know, just down the road, watching children at those rallies stomping on our CDs. Or there was a mother holding her 2-year-old son outside of a show protesting, and telling our camera, "Screw 'em, screw 'em!" And then turned to her two-year-old and said, "Say screw 'em!"

And that just made me bawl because I just witnessed someone learned to hate and I didn't know that kind of hatred existed. And it was weird to see it be taught to someone.

KING: What effect, Emily, did it have on you, as a group professionally?

ROBISON: I think we're still figuring that out. I don't know that we have seen the end to the impact of it.

KING: You got the No. 1 song, No. 1 C.D. in America. ROBISON: Yes, and I thank our fans for that, our great fans, our wonderful fans.

KING: You have a concert tour starting this summer, the sales go on this Saturday.

ROBISON: This Saturday.

KING: For the concert. So it doesn't seem like you've been hurt.

ROBISON: You know, the things that hurt the most I think, are the things that are outside of our control. If it's just our career, I mean, a career is a small thing when you think about the safety of your family, or, you know, the safety of Natalie.

I mean, there's a death threat on her and we talked a little bit about that in the past, but just not feeling like you know where you're living anymore. I mean, I think that was the biggest surprise to me, was that I didn't know we lived in a time when just speaking your mind would bring out this much wrath in people.

KING: Disappoint in your country, Martie?

MAGUIRE: No. Disappointed in certain people, certain groups of people, yes. I didn't know that that statement could make people so angry. And all of a sudden, we're unpatriotic and we're sluts and we're -- I mean, all the things that we were called, and the hatred. Somebody wanting, you know, to kill Natalie. And you know, let's strap her to a bomb and fly her over Iraq was what one caller called in and said to a radio station. You know, it's just silly.

KING: Now Natalie, one of the cuts on the C.D. is "Not Ready To Make Nice." Now you did semi-apologize, saying you were critical of him, but not the office, right?

MAINES: Right.

KING: Now, you're saying you're taking back that, right?

MAINES: Well I don't know if I'm taking it back, but I don't have any respect for the decisions he's made and where he has led our country. And Katrina was more bizarre than watching everyone agree to go to a war that we didn't really know the reasons for. You definitely didn't know what country you were living in, watching those images.

KING: Weren't you kind of friendly with him when he owned the Texas Rangers?

MAINES: I wasn't in the band then.

ROBISON: He was just the son of, you know, George Sr. at that time.

KING: But he was a fan of yours, right? ROBISON: I don't know about that. We would sing the anthem at the Rangers games and he was a part owner in the Rangers so he was always there, so we would go take a picture. But I didn't know who he was politically or anything, he was just the famous son.

MAGUIRE: A friendly face at the Ranger game.

KING: As we go to break with the Dixie Chicks, Natalie, Emily and Martie, here's a clip from "Not Ready to Make Nice."

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

(SINGING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MAINES: You know, after the incident, ever since then actually, people ask all the time, do you want to take back what you said or apologize? Well, I thought about it and I thought, you know what, if I did that, Bush would just call me a flip-flopper, and I know he doesn't like flip-flopers, so I'm sticking to it. We must put an end to mad cowboy disease.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: You really hold back. How long have The Dixie Chicks been The Dixie Chicks?

ROBISON: The original band started in '89.

KING: You two were the original? The two sisters?

MAGUIRE: Don't show any old footage.

ROBISON: We actually started as four.

MAINES: It took two girls to do what I do.

ROBISON: Then one left and we were three, a woman named Robin and a woman named Marlich (ph) were the original lead singers and then Natalie joined in '95.

KING: A hit right away.

ROBISON: Didn't take long.

KING: Did the two of you pick her?

MAGUIRE: We auditioned her.

KING: By the way, President Bush did make one public comment about The Dixie Chicks fuss. In an interview with NBC's Tom Brokaw, here's what he had to say.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TOM BROKAW, NBC ANCHOR: The Dixie Chicks for example, would you have them come to the White House?

GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: The Dixie Chicks are free to speak their mind. They can say what they want to say. They shouldn't have their feelings hurt when just because people don't want to buy their records when they want to speak out. Freedom is a two-way street.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: Is it fair that people say, I like the way they sing but I won't buy the record?

MAINES: Sure. That was a misconception. We didn't get our feelings hurt because people didn't like us or like our music. It went way beyond feelings being hurt. It was this unbelievable hatred and people spending their days with nothing better to do than to be on the Internet calling and e-mailing radio stations.

ROBISON: And being organized about trying to ruin our career. It wasn't matter of I personally I'm not going to listen to you anymore, I disagree with you, I'm not going to buy your CD, even coming to a show and holding up a sign. These were groups

that are very well organized and basically either want to either harm you or just ruin your career.

MAINES: The FACT that the president was even talking about it, everything was just bizarre. I mean, in the time we were in, going to war an everything going on, I just cannot believe it was even a topic of conversation.

KING: Martie, do you think based on the course of events in Iraq, you've been proven all right?

MAGUIRE: You don't like to see it like that. I just was raised always to question and be as informed as I can be. You know, I think it's something I want to teach my children, to ask questions and not be afraid to disagree with people in power. Always question, scrutinize everything they do, because they are leading the country, and it's important to me. That is patriotic.

KING: Emily, what about those that say, you're in show business, stick to show business. That's your business. You sing good, sing.

ROBISON: Yes. That's what we love to do. Being a musician doesn't take away your right as a citizen to speak your mind. I don't think -- we are not a political band, definitely weren't at the time.

KING: You are now.

ROBISON: We are now and we will take that role seriously. I think at the time, it's just odd, you know, it was meant as a topical part of the show because we were on the eve of war. Getting up on a soapbox is not, you know, what she intended or what we like to do. But, still, we like to be honest, in the course of doing interviews and everything else, when this is what is happening in the world, I think you have to be honest about it, we don't have to shut-up because we happen to be musicians.

MAINES: Or in another country. That was the other thing that didn't make sense.

KING: Have you been asked to sing the National Anthem, Natalie, anywhere? Because you guys usually do that.

MAINES: It was funny, just the month before we had sang the National Anthem at the Super Bowl so we went from being the most patriotic girls in America to Saddam's angels.

KING: It's got you in a peculiar spot here, yet here comes your new CD, number one. Did that surprise you?

MAGUIRE: You know, after Natalie said what she said we went on tour and our tour was sold out, so it's almost like there was a disconnect with the hype and reality. So, I'm not that surprised. I think it's our strongest record and there's a disconnect definitely.

KING: As we go to break, we will be taking your calls at the bottom of the hour in this exclusive edition of LARRY KING LIVE with The Dixie Chicks. Here's their first hit. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

(SINGING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Natalie, how serious did you take the death threats?

MAINES: I mean seriously, you take all of the precautions, especially with kids out on the road. I think that's the part that most people feel strongest about or shocked the most. It actually wasn't for me, I wasn't that afraid, I don't know why. It's sort of like something that if you're afraid of that, then you're going to be afraid every single moment of your life and I couldn't live like that.

KING: Were you shocked at it?

MAINES: It was bizarre to see the note with my name on it and just picture someone sitting down and writing that about me. It was another surreal bizarre experience.

KING: How did you feel, Emily?

ROBISON: Well I think Martie and I were prepared to cancel the show, but we knew Natalie wouldn't do that. So we just went on with the show, and like she said, just took the precautions. But you can't live your life...

KING: ... Were you scared?

ROBISON: Yes, I'm sure at moments we were scared. But I think once we got into the show, it was just that adrenaline, it was more just resolve to not be scared and get going through it and just moving on.

KING: You, Martie?

MAGUIRE: At the time, I was. I think, being in the public eye at all, you're going to have, I think I was just reading in "People" magazine, some celebrity just had a stalker. And even without saying what she said and making people angry, I think people in the public eye have a problem -- they can have security issues. So, you know, I think we -- yes we just spend the money and take the precautions that we need to take.

KING: At the bottom of the hour, we'll go to calls -- the other areas where you've known controversy, you sued Sony music, right? You were the most underpaid, is that true, famous act in the world?

MAGUIRE: Not anymore.

MAINES: I didn't know that, but I would believe it.

KING: Were you then?

ROBISON: Oh, yes. We had sold a lot of records with not a lot to show for it.

MAINES: It was weird to hear Dan Rather -- we hadn't really done -- we knew that we didn't have a huge amount of money in our bank accounts, but when we did the "60 Minutes II" interview and Dan Rather told us how much money Sony had made, it was shocking. We didn't know that. So yes, we were very underpaid, but we got it.

KING: What happened in the lawsuit?

MAGUIRE: I don't even remember anymore.

MAINES: We renegotiated our contract.

ROBISON: You know, water under the bridge, in a lot of ways. Because Sony's actually been great through this whole thing. They've never asked us once to compromise, you know, our belief system or what we stood for, or try to get us to just whitewash over it or do anything that would, I don't know, not be true to ourselves, so we've been very appreciative to them for that.

KING: Overall, this whole controversial image which hangs around you, good or bad professionally? When we hear the name Dixie Chicks, good image? Bad image, mixed?

ROBISON: It depends who you ask.

MAINES: Yes, exactly.

KING: Well no one denies your musical abilities, right? You've never heard yourself -- have you heard yourself criticized musically?

MAINES: Well I mean, people can have a different taste of music. I think Martie and Emily's talents on their instruments are not achieved by any other females in the industry.

But I think it comes down to what you want to be as a person. I don't know, career-wise, if it's the best move, but I know for my boys to watch how I have dealt with everything and handled myself and didn't let people convince me not to be myself and speak out about things that I feel passionately about, that I know are OK, so to me, it's a great image, because it's who I am.

KING: And there's the obvious, would you do it all again?

MAINES: Well I don't regret it, and we wouldn't have had this album and we wouldn't have been able to write the songs that we wrote or even tap in to that sort of skill, but if I -- it's hard to say if I saw this happen to someone else, I could see myself going two ways.

Just not saying a word and staying under the radar or saying something even more, you know, disgraceful, following the day of someone else just to prove that it's wrong. I thought if everyone had said something in the days following us, then we couldn't have been made such a big deal out of because there would have been too much to go around. But that didn't happen.

KING: You did a song in 2000 Martie, called "Goodbye Earl," about how two friends get rid of an abusive husband by poisoning his black eyed peas. The Dixie Chicks do not advocate premeditated murder, you wrote, but loved getting even. Did you think twice about that or was that just having fun?

MAGUIRE: About the song or the disclaimer?

KING: The song.

MAGUIRE: It wasn't written by us so I think in a way we didn't feel like we were as responsible as if we had written it. But no, I think early in our career, we did poke fun at a lot of serious subjects that was our approach to heavy subjects. I think now we want to make -- I think our music is a little more mature and we take on heavy subjects but in maybe a more serious way.

KING: So you wouldn't...

ROBISON: ... The disclaimer was halfway a joke, but halfway, you know, we don't want anyone to die because of our song.

MAINES: But I always though, you know, it was great to have that sort of message because we have a lot of young girls who are fans and we would get a letter from a mother saying, "I'll never let my daughter hear that song." And I would think, well that's a disservice to your daughter, because I think when kids hear songs like that and they sing-along to them, they have fun, if they come in contact with a man who abuses them down the line, maybe, you know, they'll be stronger because they've heard about it.

You know, it's not -- they don't get taken advantage of. So, to me, it's not about killing someone, it's about not tolerating, you know, abuse. So I think that's a good message.

KING: The Dixie Chicks are here on this edition of LARRY KING LIVE. We will include your phone calls and we'll be right back.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

(SINGING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

(SINGING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: We're back with The Dixie Chicks, Natalie Maines, the lead singer who joined the group in 1995. Emily Robison and Martie Maguire are sisters. Emily is the younger one. Each of them plays several instruments.

MAGUIRE: I'm the youngest.

KING: Are you the youngest? Emily also looks incredibly like Julia Roberts. This is last week's issue of "Time" magazine. There's the cover called "Radical Chicks." The name of their upcoming tour, tickets go on sale Saturday, is "Accident and Accusations." Not bad. "Taking the Long Way" is the name of the CD which is number one already. Let's go to some calls. Seattle, hello.

CALLER: Hello, Larry and ladies. Good evening to you. I just have a quick two questions. First of all do you have any different feelings towards Toby or Reba and what do you think about Taylor Hicks?

KING: Who wants to take Toby or Reba first?

MAINES: I'll take Toby, you take Reba. So, you know, unfortunately, people have picked up on a small part of what we talk about. We don't have a beef or a battle with country radio or country artists, so it's unfortunate to us that names have been named and we'd just prefer it go away.

KING: Toby Keith is very politically conservative.

MAGUIRE: He said he's a self-proclaimed Democrat.

KING: Yes?

MAGUIRE: Yes.

MAINES: Plays to the core audience.

MAGUIRE: Reba and Toby were two people that went out of their way to bash us, when we were under so much fire, so it hurt, because I was a huge Reba fan growing up, and I still am. It was personal for me, when I felt like she went out of the way to say negative things about us.

KING: Taylor Hicks?

ROBISON: You know what, I have watched the "American Idol" in the past but I didn't watch this season so I'm feeling very unhip at the moment so I don't know that much about it

MAINES: I didn't watch "American Idol."

MAGUIRE: I don't have time. I've got twin two year olds.

KING: What do you think of that show? You're not going to be honest.

MAINES: I would be as honest as Simon if I were a judge on there. Probably, people would like me even less than they like him.

ROBISON: I'm a huge Kelly Clarkson fan. I think she's great.

KING: You like it?

MAGUIRE: I used to be a big "Star Search" fan. I think it's great people who have a music dream have a place to showcase their talent.

KING: Nashville, hello.

CALLER: Good evening, Larry. Good evening, ladies. Calling from Nashville, of course. Larry, I thank you for taking my call. I'm a blind veteran here in Nashville and I would like to ask the ladies, have you had any repercussions good or bad from the veteran's organizations, and Larry, I'd like to ask you a question, too, if I could?

KING: Go ahead.

CALLER: When are you going to have me on your show?

KING: Write us a letter and lay it all out, we'll get in touch. Veteran's organizations.

MAINES: We get a lot of positive response from families, a lot of letters. It was just Fleet Week in New York and a lot of the Navy officers came to our shows. I went and I took my kids on a tour of one of the Navy ships.

In the past, I've been a little -- everyone -- the far right sort of takes it upon themselves to label liberals as less patriotic or not supporting the troops. That has always really bothered me. Any time I saw a soldier in the airport or anywhere I felt embarrassed and self-conscious like they were thinking I didn't like them or I didn't support them. That just wasn't true.

Being on that ship last weekend just showed me, you know, the way for people to know that I do support them is for them to see me, and, you know, there I am on the ship. I support human life. We have lots of support from soldiers and their family.

ROBISON: I think soldiers are not just one homogenous group, just like Americans aren't. They all have different feelings about the war.

KING: Do any of them yell at you?

ROBISON: Yell. No. I've never been yelled at.

KING: Do you ever get booed?

MAGUIRE: We had a few boos at the show the other day. You know, I like a healthy debate. I don't mind if people have a problem with what Natalie said. If they want to boo that, that's great. That's their free speech. That's what free speech is all about. That's fine. That doesn't hurt.

KING: Hattiesberg, Mississippi. Hello.

CALLER: Yes. Good evening to all of you, Larry, Dixie Chicks. First, I want to say that I'm a long time fan. My question is about the title and the first song on the new album, "Taking the Long Way." I've actually adopted this as my personal theme song. I'd like to know both the motivation behind choosing the song as title and when you collaboratively wrote it, what was the back story behind that song?

KING: Good question. You want to take it?

ROBISON: Sure. We wrote this song as kind of a recap of where we've been and where we feel like we're going. It encapsulates our career a little bit. It was a little bit nostalgic to write it. The co-writer, Dean Wilson, kind of prompted us to do that.

I don't think we thought our history was particularly interesting. He said I think people would be interested in that. Everything from the pink RV, how we started, through the controversy, Natalie saying what she said. But overall that title, partly why we

named that album that, it is kind of a philosophy for us, we always felt like longevity is more important than anything else in this business. You do the things that create longevity. The music is always the most important thing.

KING: As Frank Sinatra said in that chair, there's a lot to be said for longevity. If you've been around a while, somebody is saying something right.

Is it as much fun to sing your own song as songs written by others, Martie?

MAGUIRE: I think that's a question for Natalie. In the studio, I heard it in her voice, just being able to sing something that was personal.

KING: You like singing your own better than somebody else's?

MAINES: Yes. I never knew that until we co-wrote this whole record. When you're writing things that are so personal and so -- we're very vulnerable, we really opened ourselves up and we've never done that before.

KING: Are you surprised how well it's doing, number one in a week?

MAINES: I know. Just very proud of our fans and people. I think a lot of people bought it not hearing our music from the past, but sort of feeling like they were having a voice.

KING: Would you call it country?

MAINES: I was interested to see what critics and other people called it. We've always called our music just Dixie Chick music. Everyone is calling it or I guess the majority of people are calling it sort of '70s California rock.

KING: Whatever. Everything goes so fast by the way. Next week, it's a golden oldie. We'll be right back with more. Don't go away.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

(SINGING)

MAINES: I still don't feel like we made it because none of these people are saying, we love you, Dixie Chicks!

(SINGING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

(SINGING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: We're back with the Dixie Chicks and we go to Boulder, Colorado, hello.

CALLER: Hi, chicks, this is the cat from Colorado. And a big meow to you guys, because you've given us a new high in the Rocky Mountain high with your philosophy and your courage to speak your truth. And remain true to who you are.

That being said, the question is how do you now feel about 70 percent of America, right behind you, right on your side of the wide open spaces and loving everything that you say and at least most of us do, does it give you a warm fuzzy feeling?

KING: I don't know if it's 70 percent, but it appears to be around 60 percent.

MAINES: Are you sure? I thought it was 72 percent. Wishful thinking. Well thank you for your compliments. And what it does, it doesn't give me warm fuzzies, it gives me hope that, you know, I think everyone was really afraid after 9/11 and we're ready for someone to just take the reins and lead us to safety.

And here was this person telling us he was going to do that, and so I kind of felt like, you know, like Emily said, what country are we in? What year is this? Why aren't people questioning this person in charge? And so it's just nice to see Americans back to being what I always thought Americans were. But I'd like to be in a room with the 30 percent.

KING: I know you'd like to. By the way, I understand we have a picture of the three of you from the cover of "Entertainment Weekly" in body suits. Can we see that?

MAGUIRE: Body suits.

KING: Body paint.

ROBISON: Birthday suits.

KING: What prompted that?

MAINES: All those things people called us. That was real, like Martie had said, you go from saying you don't like the war or the president and all of a sudden, you're a slut. You know, it didn't make sense, but all those things were written or said about us.

KING: Santa Fe, New Mexico, hello.

CALLER: Good evening, how is everybody doing this evening?

KING: Fine. What is the question?

CALLER: Well check it out, the Dixie Chicks are on LARRY KING LIVE," taking questions from the American public. Last week, Donald Rumsfeld was on LARRY KING, but he wasn't on LARRY KING LIVE.

KING: It was taped in the afternoon.

CALLER: Indeed, he didn't take questions from the American public.

KING: It's hard to take calls when you're taped. CALLER: Yes well, I would like to observe that the Dixie Chicks have guts and integrity and Donald Rumsfeld has shown he's a coward as well as a liar.

KING: Do you have a question?

CALLER: Yes, I do have a question.

KING: Go ahead.

CALLER: Dixie Chicks, what do you think of Donald Rumsfeld?

KING: OK, I guess we were getting to that. Could have began with that.

MAINES: He's hot. Go ahead, Emily, what do you think of Donald Rumsfeld?

ROBISON: He weaves around questions better than anyone I've ever seen.

MAGUIRE: I'll ditto.

KING: You all agree, he's the weaver?

ROBISON: He's the weaver. As most politicians are, but...

MAGUIRE: ... He has his story and he's sticking to it.

KING: We are going to pause now and check in with Anderson Cooper, the host of "A.C. 360" at the top of the hour. Tonight, Anderson is in New Orleans. He's always somewhere. What's up tonight, Anderson?

ANDERSON COOPER, CNN ANCHOR: Hey, Larry. Yes, we're back in the great city of New Orleans along the 17th Street Canal, literally right by the 17th Street Canal, where construction to repair the levees is going on around the clock and it has been going on around the clock for months now.

We're going to give you a look at repairs like you've never seen anywhere else, a birds-eye view. You won't want to miss that. They won't be -- the deadline tomorrow -- tomorrow marks the first day of hurricane season, of course. So the question is, will New Orleans be able to handle the next storm? We're going to look at that tonight in a very special edition of "360," Larry.

KING: Thanks, Anderson. That's Anderson Cooper, the host of "A.C. 360," who will be the guest on this show tomorrow night. He's with you at the top of the hour, and we're back with the Dixie Chicks, right after this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

(SINGING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Some of these things we show, they laugh.

ROBISON: You're trying to humiliate us.

KING: Is that the way you used to look?

ROBISON: No.

KING: That was yesterday. The Dixie Chicks by the way have seven children among them. Before I get back to calls, on one of your CDs, you sang of infertility, is that right?

MAINES: It's the new one.

KING: And Alzheimer's. You picked a lot of romantic topics.

MAINES: yes. It's very cheerful.

KING: What prompted to you do a song about Alzheimer's?

MAINES: My nanna has Alzheimer's and has had it a long time. It's a really sad disease to watch.

KING: A long good-bye.

MAINES: Yes.

KING: And infertility?

MAGUIRE: Emily and I both did the in vitro process to have our children.

KING: What was that like?

MAINES: Expensive, painful. Hormonal roller coaster. It's tough. You just kind of, as a woman, think it's a given but when you're ready, you're going to pop out a few puppies.

ROBISON: I don't know that we would have written a song if it didn't seem so pervasive between our friends and family and probably 50 percent of people I'm friends with are going through one form of infertility or another. It's crazy.

KING: Victoria, Texas. Hello.

CALLER: Thank you, Mr. King, for taking my call. I have a 20- year-old great niece serving in Iraq and I was wondering if The Dixie Chicks have any plans to go to Iraq and entertain and support our troops.

MAINES: Good question.

KING: Natalie? MAINES: Yes. I think that was one of the things I was talking about earlier. I used to think they wouldn't want us to come and I would be embarrassed because I would think they believed the rhetoric or whatever that we didn't support them, and then, you know, after being with the Navy last weekend, I realized that it wouldn't be like that and it would be great for us to do that.

KING: Would you go?

MAGUIRE: Absolutely.

KING: If anybody contacted you, want to set up a tour.

MAINES: If people wanted us to go, we would go.

KING: You would gladly go and sing for the troops. To Varie (ph), Ontario. Hello.

CALLER: Good evening.

KING: Hi.

CALLER: How are you? Hello, Dixie Chicks, how are you? Nice to see you back. Being a big fan from Canada, I'm sure I'm asking this on behalf of all the Dixie Chick fans in Canada, are you going to be able to take time out of your busy schedule to come and join us at Fanfare next week in Nashville?

MAINES: We are in London actually but we're coming to Canada on our tour several cities. Hope you get to come.

KING: Have you done Fanfare in Nashville?

ROBISON: One time or two times?

KING: I did a whole week of radio shows from there. That's the most -- the way public has access to stars ever. They're in booths.

MAGUIRE: That's the great thing about country music, the stars are very accessible to fans.

KING: Is Canada anywhere on the tour?

MAINES: Yes. Several stops in Canada.

KING: We'll be right back in the remaining moments with the Dixie Chicks right after this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

(SINGING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

(SINGING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: That was The Dixie Chicks at the Super Bowl, the last time they sang the National Anthem three years ago, the Oakland Raiders and Tampa Bay. I was at that game. Tampa Bay won that game. Are you supporting anyone in 2008?

ROBISON: Not yet.

MAGUIRE: Not yet.

KING: Haven't made up your mind yet? Where does the tour open?

ROBISON: Detroit.

KING: When?

MAINES: July 21st?

MAGUIRE: 21st. Yes.

ROBISON: July 21st.

KING: Tickets go on sale Saturday. You are doing 40 cities?

ROBISON: More, 50, I think.

MAINES: A lot of shows. I don't know how many cities. More shows than cities.

KING: Do you get revved up for this, Martie?

MAGUIRE: yes, I've been looking forward to this, getting out there with the families. Do you like it as much as recording or more?

MAGUIRE: I like the live show more and feel a real connection with the audience and I remember faces.

ROBISON: Martie looks at every single face. She has conversations.

MAGUIRE: I do.

KING: Do you forget what city you're in?

MAGUIRE: Maybe, but Natalie does for sure.

MAINES: I'm the only one who has to speak. She doesn't know where she is any night.

KING: We only have about 30 seconds. Do you ever regret, back to the initial question, saying what you said in London?

MAINES: No. Opposed to somewhere else? No. Everyone tried to say I would never have said that. I never in a million years would have guessed that anyone cared so I would have said that and I don't think the backlash would have been any different.

Like I said, I felt like I was defending America by saying that we don't all think the same and you can't just call us Americans like we all have one voice and one opinion. I have no regrets. Everything's been positive.

KING: We begin with no regrets and close with no regrets. Best of luck on the tour. Tickets go on sale Saturday, open in Detroit in July. The CD is Dixie Chicks, "Taking the Long Way."

It is number on Amazon and on Billboard.

Tomorrow night our special guest will be Anderson Cooper on a very special edition of LARRY KING LIVE. And that means we turn things over to Anderson now who is back in New Orleans, a place he's very familiar with, with major changes tonight. Right, Anderson.

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