

DIXIE CHICKS *HATCH* PLAN TO SPLIT UP!

Sisters have had enough of outspoken Natalie

THE Dixie Chicks are getting ready to fly the coop!

The controversial country superstars have secretly decided to split up after the Grammy Awards – because Emily Robison and Martie Maguire no longer want to share the nest with outspoken Natalie Maines, say sources.

“The Chicks are tired and wrung out,” said a group insider. “They feel they’ve come to the end, and they want a break from each other to spend more time with their families.”

The three women, who have seven children among them, are at odds over Natalie’s blunt political ramblings. And while sources say sisters Emily and Martie share many of Natalie’s anti-George W. Bush views, they feel her public rants have taken the focus off their music.

“They’ve supported many of her political beliefs, even though it’s put their lives and the lives of their families in jeopardy,” said the insider.

“They’ve received death threats, and it’s made them all nervous wrecks.”

And although Natalie’s been the one making the outspoken off-the-cuff remarks, all three women have felt the backlash.

Ticket sales for their *Accidents & Accusations* Tour this summer were far below expectations – at



ODD CHICK OUT: Natalie may soon be chirping on her own

least four U.S. cities had to be dropped, locations had to be changed to smaller venues, and Houston radio stations refused to even sell tickets. Their documentary, “Shut up and Sing,” has been a box office disappointment.

And only now that the other Chicks are getting ready to split does Natalie seem to be having a change of heart.

She recently told an interviewer that if she had to do it all over again, she wouldn’t have made the now-famous remark in 2003 about the Chicks being “ashamed” of President Bush being from Texas.

“Our livelihood is playing live,” said Natalie. “And we had to cancel concerts on this tour because we couldn’t sell tickets. The radio stations won’t even accept advertising for our

shows, much less play our records.”

Now, however, it may be too late for regrets.

Despite years of success, the group – which made famous such songs as “Wide Open Spaces” and “Cowboy Take Me Away” – can hardly be in the same room together these days.

“Martie and Emily are normally very passive – but Natalie has so ruined things for the band that they just can’t stand to be around her, and they get in huge in-your-face shouting matches,” said another music industry source.

“At this point, it’s hard to imagine that they could continue to play music together – much less go on tour for months at a time with one another.”

The Chicks, who are up for five Grammy awards, are planning to attend the February 2007 ceremony.

But, added the source: “I wouldn’t be surprised if it’s the last time they ever appear together in public.”

by **ROBIN MIZRAHI**
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