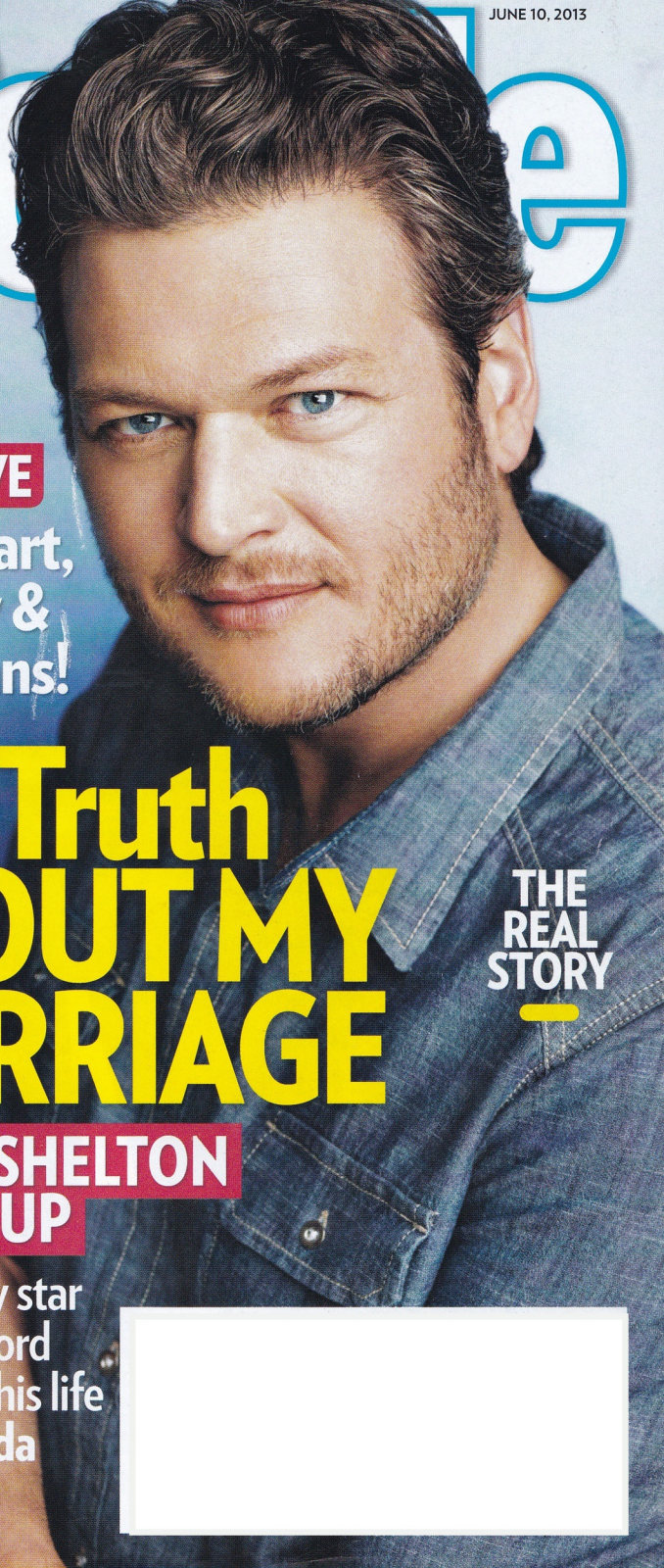


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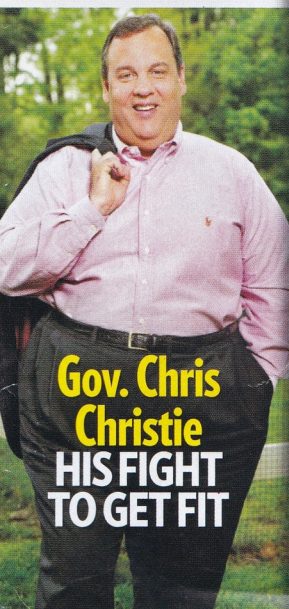
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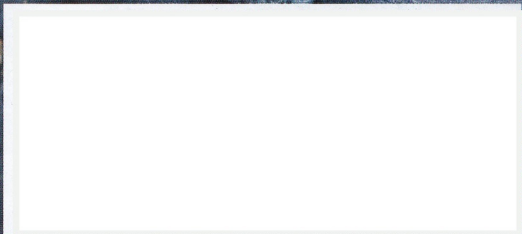
LeAnn Rimes
MY BATTLE
WITH
DEPRESSION



Gov. Chris
Christie
HIS FIGHT
TO GET FIT

**BLAKE SHELTON
OPENS UP**

The country star
sets the record
straight on his life
with Miranda
Lambert



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Hello, summer! Our hot-weather special includes celeb-approved self-tanners, the prettiest mani/pedi color combos, and going blonde like Anne Hathaway!



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COVER STORY

How we make it work

As rumors swirl about his marriage to Miranda Lambert, country music superstar Blake Shelton opens up about how they keep their love alive.

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Blake Shelton

'I Have Nothing to Hide'

FACING DOWN THE
RUMORS, THE COUNTRY
STAR AND VOICE COACH
OPENS UP ABOUT HIS
MARRIAGE TO
MIRANDA LAMBERT



"She's a powerful force, and that's the thing I love and respect about her," says Shelton (with Lambert at the Grammys in Los Angeles Feb. 10).



On any given morning in the Blake Shelton-Miranda Lambert household in Tishomingo, Okla., there's one thing you can count on, sometimes before the coffee's even been brewed: "I'm always pestering her," Shelton says with a laugh. "I just cannot get enough because she gets irritated so quickly." Even Lambert's beloved pooches aren't off limits from his teasing. "Maybe I'll tell her one of her dogs is missing, let her believe it for 10 minutes or so," he says. "It's terrible! Anything I can think of to get a rise out of her is a sport for me."

A healthy sense of humor has come in handy for the country star couple. Since their wedding two years ago, they've had to get used to living under the glare of the spotlights, and the tabloid rumors that come with it. From week to week, either their marriage is in ruins (She's lonely and drinking! He has a wandering eye! She's jealous



of his *Voice* costar Shakira!) or they're having a baby. "If you're in the public eye, people are going to take shots at you," Shelton, 36, told PEOPLE COUNTRY. In response, the couple have laughed off all that talk. "I just read in a tabloid that our marriage is falling apart!!!" he tweeted March 17, referencing a story linking him romantically to another singer. "Oh no! Can't wait to read if we make it or not," Lambert, 29, responded.

Quips aside, the country star—whose

first marriage to Kaynette Williams ended in divorce—is dead serious about making his union to Lambert last. Their No. 1 rule: Total honesty means there's no need for jealousy. "[I tell Miranda], 'I have nothing to hide from you.' That's always been our policy: 'Here's my phone. Go through it,'" he says. "That's really the kind of trust we have. There are no secrets. [I'll say,] 'Go dig through my drawers or my computer if you feel like you need to.'

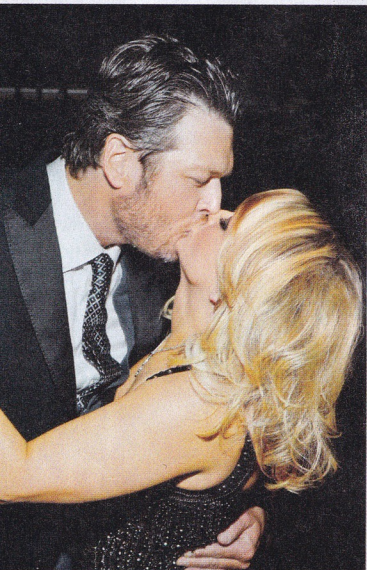
And that's been a really good thing, because I don't want her to ever have any doubts." And he readily admits the potential for jealousy goes both ways: "I guarantee you," Shelton says, "if I saw some guy flirting with my wife, it would p--- me off." Of course, he adds, "I haven't seen a man brave enough to do that—mostly because I think they'd be afraid of *her* reaction!"

And when that fiery reaction is aimed at him, Shelton says, "it really is important to work things out all the way through, not just put a Band-Aid on it." He adds that with each passing day, he's learning to be a better husband. "I've got a way better handle on it," he says. "I know what her insecurities are and how to be there for her."

Even when they're not physically together. With both their careers white-hot—Lambert is promoting her new album with the Pistol Annies, and Shelton is wrapping season 4 of *The Voice* while gearing up for his *Based on a True Story* summer tour—the pair struggle with how to balance it all. "We won't go more than two weeks without seeing each other," Lambert told PEOPLE last year. But Shelton admits maintaining that has been a challenge. "You come up with all these different ideas and theories—'We're going to make sure we have this many days together,'" he says. "But the truth is that you just got to take advantage of every window of time that you have, and you can't force it to happen."

For her part, Lambert, who has said "divorce is not an option," has been a key force in making sure they fit in time together. With his grueling schedule for

The Voice—he's been stationed in Los Angeles for much of this year—Lambert has often flown out to Hollywood since Shelton can't easily return home to Oklahoma. "She's been a lot better about finding me if I'm stuck in L.A. She'll always fly instead of going home, even if it's just a day or two," he says. "I can't express how important that's been to



BIG STARS, BIGGER HEARTS

Shelton and Lambert (left, at the ACMs in April) united to honor Oklahoma tornado victims on *The Voice* May 21 (above) and performed at a May 29 televised benefit on NBC. Of how they influence each other's music careers, Shelton (below, with Usher) says, "We definitely have tons of input. I'm not saying we always take the advice, but there are always opinions flying around."





our relationship and why we're doing so good, because I'm the kind of guy who doesn't want to drive down a hill to go grocery shopping, much less fly across the country."

Still, Shelton has made his fair share of romantic gestures. Days before their May 14 anniversary, he jetted to Bakersfield, Calif., for an unannounced performance at one of Lambert's shows. "She threw her arms around him and yelled, 'Surprise,'" says concertgoer Ariana Garcia. "And everyone started screaming." Not that every attempt to please his wife has gone off without a hitch: While looking for a temporary home in L.A., he thought a grand mansion might

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**I DON'T WANT
MIRANDA TO
EVER HAVE ANY
DOUBTS”**
//////////

win the small-town girl over to the West Coast lifestyle. He was wrong. "[I found] this big-ass nice house with a pool," he says. "And the first time she ever came, she was like, 'This is dumb. Why did you get a house this big?' And

I was like, 'I thought you'd like it!'"

But a bigger home will come in handy, as Shelton confesses he's contemplating one day expanding the Shelton-Lambert brood beyond their pack of dogs. "I'm thinking about a family," he says. Their two years of marriage have helped him prepare for their next chapter. "Learning to not be selfish is what has changed in me the most since being married. I'm thinking on behalf of someone else [now]," he says. "Just like I hope she's doing with me."

By Kevin O'Donnell. Reported by **Eileen Finan** in Nashville and **Jessica Herndon** and **Melody Chiu** in Los Angeles