

Issue 856  
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WEEKLY

# Us

**SHOCKING SPLIT!**

# LAUREN'S BROKEN HEART

**She believed Kyle was  
The One, but after  
three years and  
no ring, Conrad  
finally got the  
courage to  
say goodbye**



**BLAKE EXCLUSIVE  
MIRANDA  
SAVED ME**



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# MIRANDA SAVED ME

Before he wed **Lambert**, country singer **Blake Shelton** was a self-proclaimed hell-raiser. Now the Voice star tells *Us* how love tamed him **BY IAN DREW**

**W**AITING IN THE wings of an L.A. sound-stage on June 26 to rehearse for The Voice's finale, Blake Shelton can't mask his excitement. "I'm having such a good time doing this," the multiplatinum-selling crooner, 35, tells *Us* of his first season as a mentor on the top-rated NBC smash. But today, the Oklahoma native — whose jocular yet empathetic TV presence has helped his new single, "Honey Bee," sell more than 1 million digital downloads — is anxious to finish up and bounce from the set. That's when he can see his wife of seven weeks, Grammy-winning country star Miranda Lambert, 27, who just flew in from a tour stop in Wisconsin to meet him at his rental house. "I can't wait to be with her," Shelton says. "It's so empty and cold when she's not there! Just me and my manager sitting around with the TV. Then Miranda shows up and it becomes

home." And for Shelton, a former party boy with a past that includes heavy drinking, late-night carousing and infidelity reports, home is now where his heart is. The newlywed, whose eighth disc, *Red River Blue*, is out July 12, tells *Us* how Lambert reformed him.

#### So, how's married life?

It's amazing. By just taking that step I've gotten even closer with her. I always thought, We'll get married because we clearly can't be apart, so we'll just put it down on paper and make it legal. But being up in front of all of those people we love and taking those vows made me even more dependent on her. I honestly don't do that well when I'm away from her for more than a week and a half. We just have to be in each other's lives.

#### Describe how falling in love with Miranda changed you.

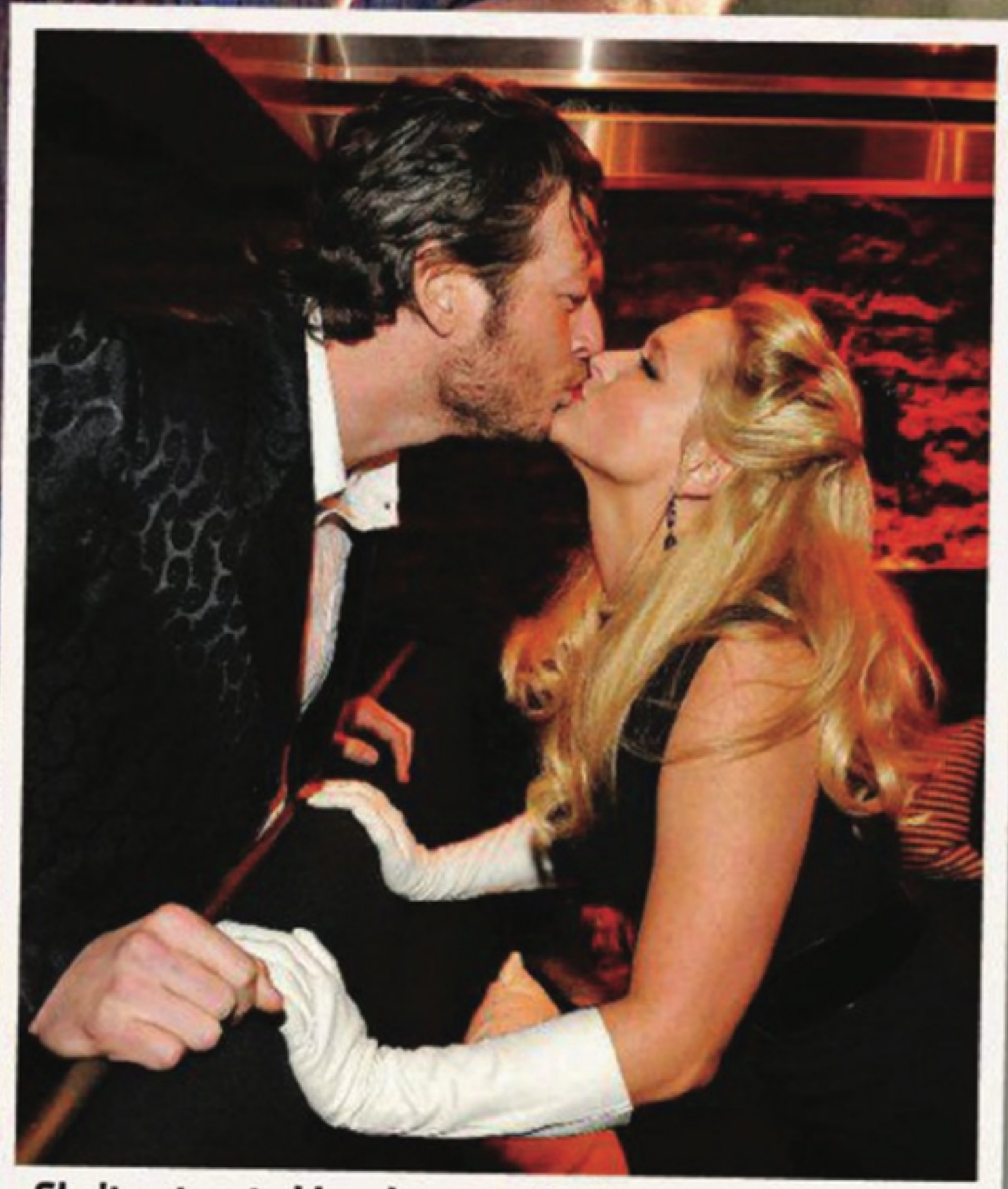
The old days for me involved

being a guy in his twenties who had hit songs on the radio, was on tour and was partying all the time. I was a single male country singer raising hell, going out after concerts to bars and drinking and doing whatever I wanted. And why the hell not? I wouldn't take it back, either. Man, I don't know where in the hell I got the energy. I'm getting old now, and my hair's going gray.

#### You dated five years before proposing. Did you need to grow up first?

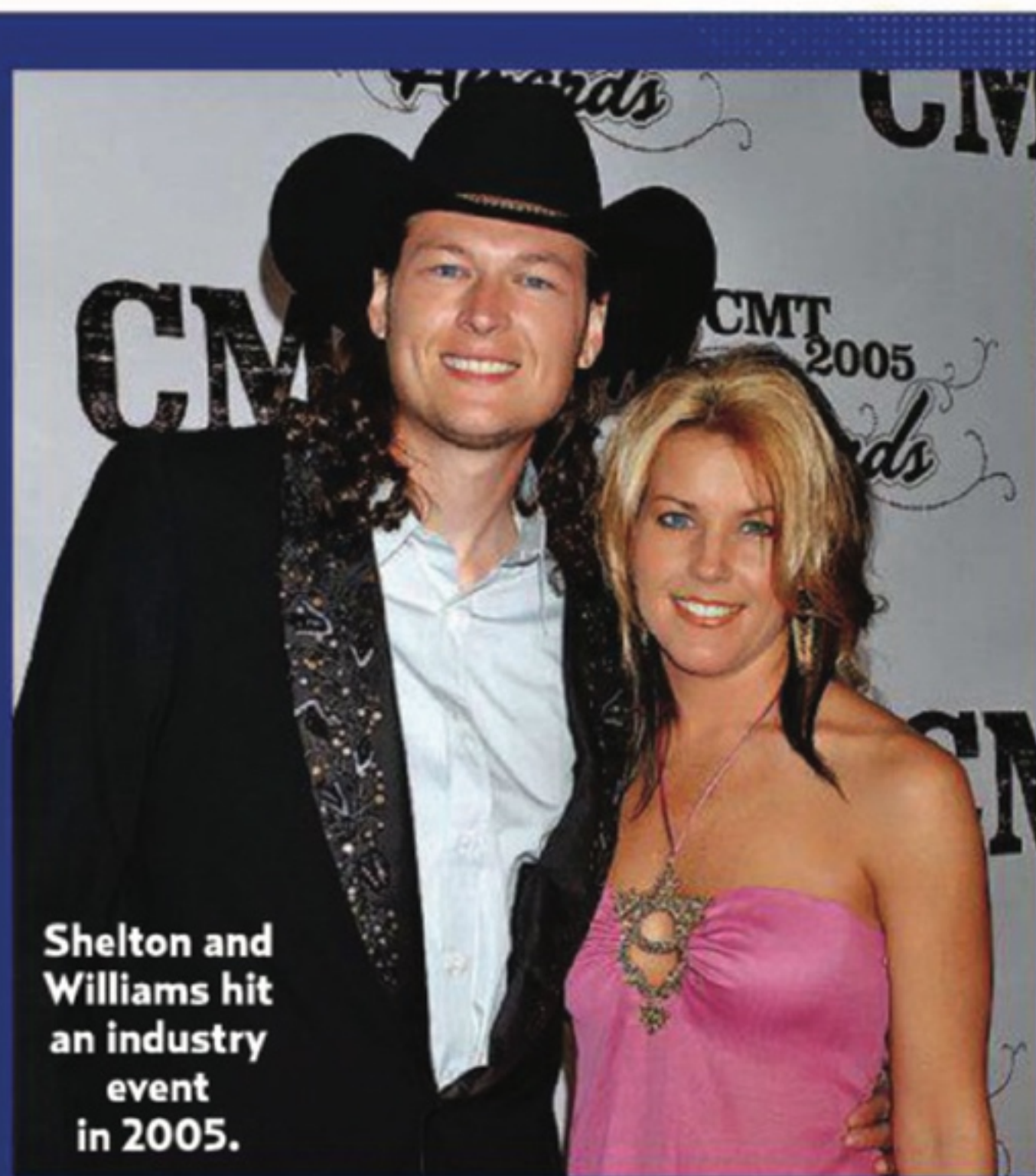
Yes. A lot of it is just getting older, slowing down on stupid stuff and growing into a normal, adult routine. I grew tired of going out drinking until 7 A.M. and then waking up at noon and eating pizza. Now if I want to go drinking, I only want to sit at the house with Miranda watching *Snapped* on TV at home. It's crazy because even if I'm just out on her bus while she's on the road or watching her do her shows, I'm 100

**"I know she's the person I want to be with for the rest of my life," Shelton says of Lambert (in Charlotte, TN, in 2010).**



**Shelton toasted Lambert at a 1940s-themed Nashville party in February 2010 after her first single hit No. 1.**

KRISTY HOGAN; RICK DUMAS; GETTY IMAGES FOR BMI (INSET)



Shelton and Williams hit an industry event in 2005.

## Did He Cheat?

Shelton denies reports that he got together with Lambert in 2005 while still wed to Kaynette Williams, 38. (He and his former road manager divorced in 2006.) "I got a divorce, met Miranda and fell in love with her," he says. "Life isn't perfect, so you find what makes you happy and you do it."

percent comfortable because she is there. She really is that rock for me and the center of all this.

### How did your 2006 divorce from Kaynette Williams guide your decision to remarry?

That's also part of what made it take so long. Neither one of us was ready until the day I proposed. The day I decided I wanted to marry Miranda Lambert was two days before I asked her to marry me. I just woke up one day, the clouds went away and the sun came out, and I said, "I'm ready. I wonder if she is. I'm gonna ask her." I've gone through all that crazy

stuff a guy goes through with divorces and partying and crazy s--t. I did all of that. Now when people see me, they're looking at a guy

"The worst thing I could do is overthink my success and try to change things. I'd rather continue to just be myself."

SHELTON TELLS US

who's mature. I still love life and have fun and party, but now I just want to do what's right. And if people don't





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Six weeks before their May 14 wedding, Lambert and Shelton performed together at the Academy of Country Music Awards in Las Vegas.

understand that, they can kiss my ass.

**Your parents split when you were 9, and you were 14 when your brother was killed by a drunk driver.**

**How were you affected?**

I've never been one of those people who makes excuses not to move on and do what you want to do. Also, my brother loved music, and I think he is up there smiling, and my parents are proud of me, so part of my happiness is for them. But I wanted to have this life for me.

**Did you and Miranda ever have a rough patch?**

We broke up for a week or so about three years

ago. The title song on my new album that I sing with Miranda, "Red River Blue," is about that period. There's so much that ties us together right now, though. We know what's going on out there. When someone tries to get in between us, it's almost comical to us. It happens a lot — behind the scenes, people in the industry still try to draw a wedge for whatever reason. But it's funny because nobody gets our relationship like we do. It's hard to explain the bond between us.

**Now that you're such a big star, there must be temptations with other women on the road.**



## WILL HE RETURN TO THE VOICE?

Now that *The Voice* has its first champ, one question remains: Will the mentors return to their spinning chairs when the show returns in February? "I can't imagine all four of us not coming back," says Shelton, who's negotiating his contract. "If we're not, I'll cry because this is a dream job." However, the singers' tour schedules are a sticking point: "The only reason we wouldn't is we have other jobs to work around. It's a lot!"

FROM LEFT: TAMMIE ARROYO/AFF-USA.COM; JEROD HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES FOR ACM; MICHAEL DESMOND/NBC

# MIRANDA & BLAKE Their Love Story



**2005**

Love at first song: The singers meet when they pair up on a CMT duets concert. "We hit it off!" Shelton says.



**2007**

Shelton tells *Us* he spends downtime with Lambert "hunting, fishing and driving down back roads."



**2008**

"We always find ways to see each other," Shelton (at the Grammys) says of his and Lambert's busy schedules.

You know, it's so far off my radar, and maybe that's why it's different all of a sudden now. I just played a country music festival in Manhattan, Kansas, and there were beautiful girls everywhere. And it didn't even register. I don't even go there. I mean, I do notice and say, "Oh, that's a cute girl," and it's just amazing how it doesn't ever go through my mind now beyond me thinking, I wish my tour manager would meet her. Or, She's hot, I hope my buddy asks her out. It's odd because I'm a normal, everyday, red-blooded guy — but now that I'm married, it's just

not there anymore. I'm not blind, but at the same time, I don't care. It's crazy!

"Miranda and I had the kind of ups and downs that are hard to make it through. And, honestly, that's why we're so close now."

SHELTON TELLS US

**The Voice catapulted you into the spotlight. How are you handling all of the newfound attention?** It's odd because the country

fans have known me for 10 years, and they're used to my personality. I could always get away with a lot more as far as my mouth goes. They know I'm either drunk or lying or just full of crap all the time. I mean, I'm not a politician. I'm an artist who makes records, and I am who I am. It's always just me trying to be funny. But now it's really polarizing all of a sudden. If I get on Twitter and say, "I just pissed my pants!" the world goes, "What the hell is wrong with this guy?" It's a quick learning curve, and I have to watch myself more these days.

**Case in point: You came under fire in May after one of your tweets — that paraphrased a Shania Twain song — was deemed homophobic.** And that's one of the more G-rated things I've ever written! I was just trying to be funny. In my world, there is no hate. I have a lot of gay friends and it makes me look at myself and go, Man, that would devastate me if they were hurt. I say all kinds of crazy stuff, but I learned a lesson. The first person that texted me when that happened was [fellow *Voice* mentor] Adam Levine. He said, "You're gonna have to watch what you say from now on. You say stupider



2009

Lambert joins Shelton on stage at an April ACM event in Las Vegas.



2010

"I was shocked," Lambert told *Us* of Shelton's May 9 proposal.



2011

The pair wed May 14 in front of 550 guests at a 125-acre Texas ranch. "I couldn't get over how beautiful she was," he beams.

stuff on Twitter than I do!" So it made me feel better because he taught me that people care what I say now. None of us ever meant to be TV stars, and we never thought we'd have to be politically correct all the time. So this is new.

**Have you and Miranda discussed having kids yet?**

We do talk about it. We're both interested in it, but we agreed to revisit it later. We just want to wait and put it on the back burner and talk about it again later on down the road, maybe a year or so from now. We'll see what happens then.

**So what is next for you?**

I have far exceeded what I ever thought I'd accomplish. My goal when I started was just to make enough money to buy 100 acres somewhere in Oklahoma with a gold record hanging on the wall so I could prove to everybody what I was doing. Everything else has been icing on the cake. I try not to think about how big everything is because it can freak you out. When *The Voice* is over, I'm gonna be thinking about simple things like, Man, I hope I get some rain because my watermelon patch looks like it's dying. I accidentally ended up here. But no matter what happens, I'm happy. **US**



2005

2011

**WEIGHT WINNER!**

Despite a trimmer figure, the workout-phobe insists he hasn't slimmed down since his early days. At least, not on purpose: "I'm as heavy and out of shape as ever! When you get old, your skin sags and it makes your face look thinner."

OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM LEFT: ROB HILL/FILMMAGIC; FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES FOR ACMA; FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES. THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES; FRANK MICELOTTA/GETTY IMAGES; ANDREW SOUTHAM; MARC MORRISON/RETNA LTD.; JOHN RUSSELL