

Chapter 22

Chapter 22 reflects a transformative moment in my life, marked by chaos and personal growth. In the months after Jayden came home, everything felt disorienting. I had to navigate the aftermath of a painful breakup while also adjusting to the overwhelming responsibilities of motherhood. Amidst this, the media circus continued, heightening my sense of isolation. My physical appearance became a focal point, and in an attempt to regain some control over my life, I found myself dealing with a series of hair mishaps—starting with black dye during pregnancy, then trying to bleach it blonde, and eventually requiring professional help to fix the mess. It felt like every aspect of my life mirrored this struggle—something was always out of sync, but I kept trying to push forward. The chaotic personal life, combined with the relentless media pressure, made it difficult to maintain a sense of self. However, one thing that grounded me during this tumultuous time was my work. Recording for *Blackout* gave me a sense of freedom I desperately needed, allowing me to focus on my creativity and musical expression in ways I hadn't done in years.

Working on *Blackout* allowed me to tap into a new realm of creativity. I was introduced to fresh sounds, particularly by the talented producer Nate Hills, also known as Danja. He brought a unique blend of dance and EDM influences into the mix, pushing me to experiment and expand my musical horizons. For the first time in a while, I was not bogged down by the pressures of meeting expectations; I was able to focus solely on the music I wanted to create. The environment in the studio was liberating, providing me with the space to express myself freely. The music became my escape, a sanctuary where I could block out the turmoil of my personal life. Although everything else in my life felt out of control, the studio was where I found my peace. There, I felt like I could be truly myself, without the constraints of the world outside.

The *Blackout* album was more than just a project for me—it was a statement of independence. After years of being controlled, both in my personal and professional life, I decided to take matters into my own hands. Instead of adhering to the usual formula, I filmed music videos on the streets, with no major production team involved. One video, “Gimme More,” was particularly infamous—though I wasn’t proud of it, it worked for what it was. The low-budget, DIY approach reflected my desire to break free from the expectations placed upon me. It may not have been the most polished video, but it resonated with people because it was real and raw. The more I stepped outside the traditional boundaries of the industry, the more I felt like I was reclaiming my power. This newfound freedom allowed me to rediscover the joy of creating, even in the midst of everything else falling apart.

Recording *Blackout* was, in many ways, a spiritual experience. One of the most memorable moments was recording the track “Hot as Ice,” when I found myself surrounded by a group of large men in the studio. Despite their imposing presence, there was a sense of calm in the room as I sang, and I reached heights with my voice I hadn’t thought possible. It felt effortless and natural, as if the music was guiding me to new places within myself. The entire recording process was cathartic—it was a place where I could fully express myself, free from the judgment of others. For a brief moment, I was able to let go of the constant pressure and simply focus on the art. It was a reminder of why I started making music in the first place—to express my feelings and connect with others on a deep level. Despite everything I was going through, the music was my constant, my outlet, and my salvation.