

Gossip Girl

The for-real rags-to-riches story of *Necole Bitchie*, the infamous blogger who cannot tell a lie

BY ADRIENNE SAMUELS GIBBS

Necole Bitchie, the famously fearless gossip blogger, is afraid of the ocean.

In some circles, this fear is called thalassophobia. It's an intense dislike of open waters and a similar dislike for the fish-monsters that likely live in said spaces.

Bitchie recently took the bitch by the horns and dunked her in the Atlantic. What better way to cure the phobia than by jumping in feet first?

"I wanted to face my fear," says Bitchie, nee Necole Kane, creator/owner of a used-to-be-but-is-now-not-quite-so-mean-spirited blog that she says garners some 3.2-million monthly visitors, per Google Analytics. "I can swim. But the ocean? It just scares me. I went [to the Dominican Republic,] and I swam with dolphins; it was an amazing experience."

Said trip, taken over the Christmas holiday, wasn't technically a vacation. Bitchie, though one of the Internet's most bankable voices, only has one assistant, Kimmy, who temporarily took over the hourly blog posts, sending the items to Bitchie for approval prior to posting. It all makes for a 17-hour day with the daily arising at 6 a.m.; perusal of CNN, MSNBC, FOX and other news sites by 7 a.m.; checking in with sources about celebs and newsmakers by 9 a.m.; and posting of new, juicy gossip every hour or half hour until about 4 p.m. And then, while Stateside, there are the parties and happy hours. She's got to hit those up, too.

"I feel like I'm working all the time, to be honest," says Bitchie, who last year was the Black Weblog Award judges' pick for top gossip blog. "I've been working on my blog full time for about two years."

Then she gets sentimental. Sniffles. Starts to cry. Necolebitchie.com is her baby. Her family. It's all she has now that her mom, dad and grandma have passed on. It's her escape from a life that really wasn't that fabulous up until about mid-2008.

Here's what happened: After high school, she went to Morgan State University, then Towson University, but both runs were cut short by deaths in her family. The new plan was to snag a big-time record-label gig in New York.

She interned for Alicia Keys' manager, then temped for Major League Baseball. Then she didn't have a job at all. She needed a job-getting gimmick, so she became Necole Bitchie in mid-2007. Why?

Because Perez Hilton got big after biting off Paris Hilton, who got big after starring in *The Simple Life*, so why shouldn't Necole get big biting off Nicole Richie of *The Simple Life*, too? (The show also featured Nicole Richie.)

Success was slow, so still jobless and penniless, Bitchie returned to tiny Cambridge, Md. "I was, like, 26 at the time," says Bitchie. "I was at the lowest point of my life. My parents had passed. My grandmother had passed. The IRS came and froze my bank account for some taxes I owed from years back. I had no money. I lived with an aunt."

The best jobs in town were at Wal-Mart and the pickle factory in the town down the road. Auntie was only begrudgingly supportive.

"I was so devastated and embarrassed," Bitchie says. "I didn't want to tell my old friends from high school. And I didn't let my real friends from New York know. They had no idea I had to go back to Maryland."

All the while, she was reading self-help book *The Secret* and messing around with her Web site, figuring out where to take the Bitchie brand.

While fine-tuning her vision board, Bitchie dredged up salacious celebrity gossip, and her site fast became the repository of all things that most of us want to talk about, but don't. The Law of Attraction (like attracts like) was starting to work out. In return for her blogging frankness, 200 comments a day from the public weren't an unusual response.

Then, Auntie kicked her out.

"She thought I was playing on the Internet instead of looking for a job."

Bitchie wound up in Atlanta, taking over the remaining months of a friend's one-room-in-an-apartment lease. She was about to be broker than broke when she struck gossip gold with a particularly dirty tidbit about Chris Stokes, the former manager of boy band B2K. Stokes at the time had been accused of molesting one of his young charges. According to MTV news, Stokes denied the claims, but Bitchie seized on the juice and

followed its every turn.

The public loved it. B2K used to be the "ish." No matter what really happened, the story became part of a recipe for Internet clicks. Plus, there was more controversy: Bitchie posted so-called confession videos

Channeling
The Chick:
Bitchie's Fav Things

Spot:
Bar 89 in NYC and Peaches in Brooklyn

Smell Good:
Escada

Books:
Eat Pray Love and *If You Have to Cry, Go Outside: And Other Things Your Mother Never Told You*

Travel Bag:
My Cavalli is my new carry-everything case

Web Site:
Giltgroupe.com

Technology:
iPad, Macbook, iPhone, PC

"People thought my site was bigger than it was ... They thought I was popping."

that, according to her, got her "kicked off" YouTube. "I was keeping it updated," says Bitchie. "And it wasn't even something I'd normally write on."

She quickly learned that advertisers pay big bucks to Web sites that garner a few million individual viewers a month. The hits kept on coming. She showed a picture of Heidi Klum allegedly giving Seal a blow job just minutes after getting her engagement ring. "It was called, 'What to do when you get the \$10 million ring ...'" explains Bitchie.

Global Grind asked her to guest blog. As did Fuse TV. "People naturally thought my site was bigger than it was," she says. "I had labels [and others] hitting me up. They thought I was popping."

That's no surprise, says Maurice Cherry, a blogging expert and founder of the Black Weblog Awards. Bitchie is popular because of who she is: young, Black, female and in the know. "She's at the top of her game right now," says Cherry. "She's really been able to leverage her connections. She's been able to get video and get information that other sites are not getting."

These days, Bitchie lives completely off of her Web income. But it's not without its challenges. Writing gossip makes you a target, and every now and then, someone scary comes a-knocking.

"Remember the Rihanna nude pictures leak? Right after Cassie's [picture] leak? Well, six months before, someone had tried to sell me the nude pics," says Bitchie. "At the time, I thought they were fake. Photoshopped. I was like, 'No thank you, I don't feel comfortable releasing these to the public.'"

The next day, Rihanna's pictures were leaked by someone else. "I got kind of caught up in that," Bitchie says of the May 2009 escapade. "It was during the time that Rihanna was going through her personal situation with Chris [Brown]."

A private investigator showed up, says Bitchie, to ascertain who released the pictures. That's partly why she has toned down somewhat over the years. "I'm not trying to be looking over my shoulder every time I step out my house," she says.

This year, Bitchie is focusing on Bitchie TV and wants to teach girls to use the Law of Attraction to get what they want.

Not bad for a gal who dropped out of college and learned branding, self-reliance and self-promotion on the fly. In a weird way, none of this would have been possible if not for the deaths in her family. And in a weird way, that fact alone makes Bitchie a little less, well, bitchy.



Styling: Toye Adedipe
Hair: Gena Sullivan
Makeup: Kazumi Brown

HANIBAL MATTHEWS

NECOLE BITCHIE
16 WORDS

Optional cut here:

“The most my mother ever made was \$7 an hour,” says Bitchie. “Me doing the [Dominican Republic]? That’s something she never had the opportunity to do. I guess I get emotional now because I’m successful. My Web site is what keeps me going.”

“It’s a crazy thing, knowing that if my parents and grandmother were alive, I wouldn’t have this Web site and I wouldn’t be an entrepreneur.”

End optional cut above

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Sidebar:

Channeling the chick: Bitchie’s fav things

Spot: Bar 89 in NYC and Peaches in Brooklyn

Smell goods: Escada

Book: Eat Pray Love. And If You Have to Cry, Go Outside: and Other Things Your Mother Never Told You.

Travel bag: My Cavalli is my new carry everything case.

Website: Giltgroupe

Machinery: iPad, Macbook, iPhone, PC.