Laura on Life

by Laura Snyder

â€œHello, is this Al?â€•â€¦

â€œIt isnâ€™t? I dialed the right number, I think.â€•â€¦

â€œNo I am not losing my mind.â€•â€¦

â€œOkay, no, I guess you arenâ€™t who I was trying to call.â€•â€¦

â€œWell, listen. Do you mind if I ask you a question anyway?â€•â€¦

â€œNo, not a personal question.â€•â€¦

â€œNo, this is not a crank call. I merely dialed the right number and the wrong person answered. Thatâ€™s not to say that thereâ€™s anything wrong with you, of course. But I still need to ask you a question.â€•â€¦

â€œOkay, then: Who is the Hard Rocker who was rumored to bite the heads off chickens during his show?â€•â€¦

â€œNo, this isnâ€™t Cash Cab, Iâ€™m in a beauty salon! Now please answer the question!â€•

This ridiculous phone conversation happened in my presence as I was getting my hair cut. Somehow the subject of what celebrity was or was not decapitating various birds on stage came up in a beauty salon full of women. Women who I wouldâ€™ve otherwise considered sane.

The answer was on the tip up our tongues (or on the tip of a pair of scissors, depending on which end you were on). But none of us could think of who it was.

The conversation started off fairly mundane and headed toward the bizarre shortly thereafter. My hair stylist mentioned a TV show that aired the night before, about former musicians and their wives and lives. Then someone mentioned Gene Simmons from KISS and wondered what he was up to. Another woman wondered if he was just as insane now as he used to be and thenâ€¦that rockerâ€¦ the one who allegedly has a taste for chicken heads and possibly some other assorted not-quite-real-birds. What was his name?

As we tried to think of it, my hair stylist became visibly more agitated and I became more and more concerned about the state of my hair. She was distracted and I wondered if she remembered that I only wanted a trim. Snip, snip, snip.

I tried desperately to come up with the name if only to save my hair from being butchered, but I kept coming up empty. â€œBoy George? No? Are you sure it wasnâ€™t Gene Simmons?â€•

I was just throwing out names hoping sheâ€™d light on one and start working on the other side of my head. It was getting mighty short on that side.

She said, â€œNo, No. This is going to keep me up all night if we donâ€™t come up with the answer!â€•

Is she kidding? I thought. I wonâ€™t be able to show my face at home, if there is no hair around it.

Another hair stylist said, â€œAl would know.â€•

â€œThen call Alâ€•, I practically begged her. Snip, snip, snip. â€œDo it now!â€•

She stared at me. She probably thought I was some kind of lunatic. â€œOkay, Okayâ€•, she said. She was smart enough not to mess with a lunatic. Thereâ€™s no telling what I had under that big tent-bib they put on me.

Al, I thought. That sounds right. Al Roker, Al Gore, Al Pacino, Alâ€¦ibaba. No, no, no!

â€œHello, is this Al?... It isnâ€™t?â€•

On no, I thought. I will be bald if we donâ€™t figure out the answer!

â€œAsk him anyway!â€• I shouted. Maybe she needed to think I was a lunatic.

Snip, snip, snip. Oh heavens, there will be nothing left but theâ€¦

â€œHe said he thinks Iâ€™m a prank caller and he hung up on me. Can you top that?â€•

Top. Cop. Copper. Cooper. Al Cooper. â€œAlice Cooper!â€• I fairly shouted in my relief.

And just like that, my hairstylist stopped snipping, picked up the hair dryer and my very short tresses were saved.

â€œOh,thank goodness!â€•, she said. â€œNow Iâ€™ll be able to sleep tonight!â€•

Yeah, I thought, and Iâ€™ll be able to go home!

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