

## MUSINGS ON AMUSING

### **PHONE DISSERVICE**

For more than six months, my cell has turned itself off more times than the amount of calls that I have made. It has arbitrarily decided which voice mails and text messages I actually receive and this is all in addition to the calls that just “drop out.” I suppose I now feel some empathy for those Hollywood execs who get frustrated with their assistants.

After waiting over half an hour at the AT&T store by my house to talk to someone about my situation I am told that they cannot do anything for me there, but that I need to go to the AT&T service support center up in Westlake Village... about a forty minute drive away. I figure now that I’m “working for the government,” I have some time on my hands and head out for the journey up the 101.

I arrive to find the twenty-something phone technician/sales associate, Massy, on a very important phone call involving the previous Saturday’s activities which included her friend Lisa’s interlude with a guy named Sean... or Shawn... she didn’t spell it for my benefit. After waiting at the counter for a few minutes and a significant rolling of the eyes, Massy pauses her convo with Lisa with an emphatic “Ugh,” and places her hand over the receiver and asks me if I’ve signed in. I glance around the office. Other than some cell phone accessories for sale, it’s just Massy and me. I write my information onto the clipboard, describing my phone’s inability to do its job and wait as Massy continues on with the great adventures of Lisa and Sean... or Shawn.

Another customer enters the office and Massy finally ends her chat with Lisa and turns her attention to me and asks about my phone. I explain the situation and ask if this happens a lot with this particular model. She nonchalantly says, “yes.” I ask if there is a way to get a different model since my phone is still under warranty so that I can avoid coming back to exchange my phone. Again, without eye contact or further explanation she says, “No.” I think that perhaps she didn’t hear me or I didn’t explain myself correctly, so I ask if anything can be done to avoid continually exchanging my phone in the future until my warranty runs out and I’m just stuck with it. She replies with another curt “no.”

She holds out her hand for my phone and inspects it. “You have some phone numbers stored on your SIM card, and others stored directly onto your phone.” I wonder if this is meant to elicit a response as I shrug and ask if she will be able to transfer all of my phone numbers over.

\*\*\*(I once spent FOUR HOURS at the AT&T store with the sales person trying to transfer my phone numbers, only to have to sit and input them myself manually.)

She says that she cannot guarantee that all of the numbers will transfer over, but she will do her best. I ask if I can take my old phone with me to do the remainder myself and am

told with another rolling of the eyes that she cannot let me leave with two phones. After waiting for her to offer a different solution, I ask if I can sit in the store and do it to which she begrudgingly agrees and heads for what I assume is a 'back room.'

I wonder if Massy is just having a bad day, forgot to take her meds or it's just me. I wonder if Sean/Shawn was an old flame of hers and it's awkward for her to talk about him with Lisa. I ponder if her boss has just informed her that due to the state of the economy, effective at the first of the month, her services will no longer be needed. And now she has been spending the day calculating how she is going to pay for the new Temper Pedic Memory Foam Mattress she just purchased for the back problems she's had ever since she got whip lash from riding the Riddler's Revenge at Six Flags last summer. Or perhaps she had a fight with her sister who went off to Bali without telling her to visit their eccentric grandmother.

Maybe she just plain hates me!

Massy returns about twenty minutes later with a new phone. I ask if all of the phone numbers transferred and Massy let's out the sigh of a teenage girl responding to her mother. "I don't know." After a brief moment, again hoping for a further explanation or suggestion of how we can check this, I ask, "Well, is there any way for me to check it with my other phone?" And this is how the rest of the conversation went:

MASSY: No.

JESSICA: Okay, well is there a way to see how many phone numbers I had in my original phone and if that number matches the new phone and then we can assume that all of the numbers transferred?

MASSY: No.

JESSICA: All right, well then can I have my original phone and just sit and compare the two contact lists and move over any information that might be missing?

MASSY: Here.

Massy hands me my original phone.

I take the phone and realize it does not have a battery and therefore it will not turn on. I alert Massy to this fact and she goes to the back again as she lets out another sigh. Okay, maybe she just as a breathing condition.

After Massy returns, I turn on the phone, which alerts me that it cannot access my contacts because there is no SIM card inserted into the phone. I explain the phone display and ask,

JESSICA: Is there is a way to see what numbers were stored on the phone itself and not on the SIM card?

Massy takes the phone from my hands, does not open it, just turns it over and responds with another apathetic:

MASSY: No.

JESSICA: Well, can we put another SIM card in to see if that would have any effect?

\*Get ready for her answer... seriously... brace yourself. Hold onto the chair you are sitting on so you don't fall off.\*

MASSY: Well, if YOU have a SIM card on you, you can use that; otherwise I guess you can't check.

I think about saying, "No, no I don't have a few spare SIM cards just hanging out, ironically playing the SIMS video game in my pocket!" But I instead say,

JESSICA: No, I don't have another SIM card, I just thought that perhaps you would have one in the store.

MASSY: Why would we have extra SIM cards around?

BECAUSE YOU ARE A CELL PHONE TECHNICAL SUPPORT FACILITY AND STORE!!!

JESSICA: Is there someone else that I can speak with so I can make sure I leave here with all of my contacts?

MASSY: Everyone's at lunch and there's no manager here today anyway.

JESSICA: Is there ANY way to check to see if all of my contacts have been transferred, and if they haven't, a way to access them?

MASSY: No.

ARRRGHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

I retrieve my phone from Massy's hand, confirm that her name is in fact Massy and leave the store. I think about calling Customer Service, but I realize all that would accomplish is me being placed on hold for over 30-minutes and perhaps getting an apology. So I hop in the car for my 40-minute return home hoping that I have all of my contacts.

So, if you call me and leave a message, make sure you leave your number just in case I don't have it. And since I now expect my phone to rudely hang up on people and continue not to cooperate, I have named it Massy.

\*Names WERE NOT changed in the story to protect anyone.