

## ROUGH DAY – A True Story

Tuesday morning started early for me this week. I woke up before the rooster crowed (my alarm clock). Instead of waiting for the rooster, I went ahead and got up, brushed my teeth, washed my face – noticed it was 4:25 a.m. – oh well. Then I noticed my hair was headed mostly in the wrong direction, so I put some of my famous Velcro rollers in as a means to gain some control of the cow licks. (Those of you who have been guests at my house or traveled with me, as well as some of my neighbors, are familiar with those rollers.) Then it was off to the kitchen for my first cup of coffee. Tank (the dog) was ready to go outside, so we headed to the back door, and out of habit, I grabbed the lightweight hoodie hanging on the kitchen chair even though it was unusually warm outside. (The hoodie will re-enter this story later.) It was then that I noticed the back door was slightly ajar. I had locked it before I went to bed, but apparently did not close it all the way and the gale force winds that blew all night, blew through the security door and opened the wooden door. As I opened the security door, I saw that my rosemary plant had been blown off the table and walked out with the dog to rescue rosemary. In that moment, the wind blew the wooden door shut. As I was gathering rosemary off the ground, it occurred to me that I had not unlocked the wooden door as I normally would have since it was not closed. With a sinking heart, I tried the door, and yes, it was locked. Here I am at 4:30 a.m. in the morning out on the patio in my pajamas and Velcro rollers holding my cup of coffee. How I wished I had had that extra set of keys made to hide in the backyard. Hum, what to do now.

Well, I sat down and finished what I knew would be the only cup of hot coffee I would have for a while, and then headed out the gate to see if any neighbors were awake yet. The dog went nuts as he had never seen me go out the gate and leave him in the backyard all alone in the dark. After calming him down in a loud enough voice that I hoped would awaken someone, I trotted (actually shuffled) on out to the street.

Looking around and hoping to see a light on somewhere, I was elated to see a light on in the garage of a lovely retired couple that reside a few doors down the street. Knowing that they often go out in their garage to smoke, I was sure one of them was in the garage! When I got to the garage, I peered into the window (good thing I am tall). Well, there was a little TV turned on, but no human. I pecked on the garage door, but saw no movement. Thinking they must have stepped inside to get a cup of coffee, I went to the front door and knocked. (Didn't want to ring the bell and wake up a sleeping person.) They also have security cameras at the door, so I waved at the camera hoping they would not be frightened by my appearance, but recognize me as that sweet lady down the street with the beautiful flower beds. Well, no one came to the door. I looked back in the garage door and saw no one. So, down the street I went.

There were no lights on in any house on my street, so I headed to the main drag and went to the next block. I knew a police officer lived on that street and thought maybe he would be up or the guy at the end of the cove that worked the early shift somewhere, but alas, no lights were on in any house on that street, so I set off back to the main drag. As I got to the corner there was a car coming down the street – I waved my arms and used a

form of sign language to plead with them to let me use their phone. They never even slowed down, in fact, they sped up. So, I walked back to my street to check and see if there were any lights, nada. I then walked the other direction to the block north of me and once again, there were no lights on anywhere. So, I went back to my street and back to the house with the light on in the garage – still no sign of life. Even went back to their front door and knocked and waved at the camera, no one came. I knocked on the front doors of the neighbors on both sides of me and across the street – no one came.

It was at this stage of the morning that I got the idea to try to jimmy my garage door open. Other than using the remote to get in the garage, I know very little about its mechanics. There is a handle on the outside – I turned it – the handle locked up tight – wouldn't budge. (The part of this story will become important later on.)

Well, as there were still no lights on anywhere, I went back to the main drag and attempted to flag down every vehicle (only a few) that came by. As you may well imagine, no one stopped. Crazy old lady in her pajamas with curlers in her hair standing in the street flailing her arms – I don't think so. I might add at this point that because the wind was still blowing at close to gale force strength, my poor rollers were having a hard time holding onto the hair, so I kept taking them out and putting them in the pockets of my hoodie. This was good as it kept me from losing my precious rollers, but at the same time I think it made me look a little dangerous – what with two bulging pockets to compliment my overall look. Was actually hoping someone would even call the police on me – at least they would have maybe called my mother for me.

Then, I heard the most wonderful sound! It was the paper delivery guy! (His car is in need of a muffler or some sort of repair as I can hear him blocks away.) Based on the color of the sky – a lighter shade of black, I knew it was getting closer to 6:00 a.m. [I will also add this tidbit here – I live outside the city limits, so we have no street lights.]

Well, I went to the end of the street and sure enough, he was turning into the block before mine. Oh happy day, he would be on my block soon. As he turned onto my street I began waving my arms and yelled “Do you have a phone?” Much to my dismay, he kept going, but only for a few moments – then he stopped!! I ran up to the window, apologized for my appearance, explained I had been locked out of my house since 4:30 a.m. and just needed to use a phone to call my mother who had my spare garage door opener. He handed me his phone, but I asked that he dial the number as I certainly didn't want to mess up his phone. The call to wake my mother up was quick – “Hello, I am locked out of my house – can you come soon – can't talk any longer – paper delivery guy must get on with his route.” I handed the phone back to my knight in rusted armor and thanked him profusely. (I will catch him again one morning and give him a monetary thank you.)

Relief at last, I was going to get in my house soon. I made my way to the back yard where the dog was ecstatic to see me. He went running to the back door, ready to go inside and go back to bed. He is not a morning person and on a normal day would have been sound asleep for the past hour. He was most distressed and confused when I sat

down in the rocker and just rocked. As I had some time to kill, I dug into the cig butt bag and found a couple to light. Then my hands were all stinky and black, so I had to go to the birdbath to wash them. Yuk.

The sky was getting lighter and I knew my mother was on her way, more relief. (Still very twisted mentally, but relieved.) Figuring she should be almost to my house, I made my way back to the front of the house and awaited her arrival. As she turned onto my street, she began pushing the remote for the garage door. I could hear the door make a noise, but it did not open. Then I remembered what I had done with the outside handle. Now what do I do?

I explained to her what I did with the garage at which point she reminded me that I was never ever to turn the handle. She then handed me a set of keys to my house, but in order to use those keys the garage door had to be open and as my back door has a different lock, they didn't help the situation. You may be thinking to yourself – don't you have a front door. Well yes, and the keys my mother has only open the wooden door as in the fall she misplaced her key to my front security door. So, I am still in dilemma mode.

By this time (6:30 a.m.) some of my neighbors are now up. Thank goodness my next door neighbor has a garage full of tools and knows how to fix stuff. I rang the door bell and he was getting ready to leave for work. When he answered the door, he was on the phone with someone – he told them he would be late for work as his neighbor “needed help”. Wonder what his first clue was?

Luckily, my next door neighbor was able to take that garage door handle thing completely off and release whatever it was that prevented the garage door opener from working. In at last – hallelujah!!!

I thanked my neighbor and my mother and went inside to get my second cup of coffee for the morning and let the poor dog in – it was then 6:40 a.m.

No, I did not go back to bed, although I seriously contemplated the idea. I just drank coffee and tried to get a handle on my neurotic self and called my boss and let him know that I would be late for work.

Aside from the sheer idiocy of it all, there are some positives to this long tale of woe. For one, it was not raining. And secondly, it was not the normal temperature for January, but in the 60's! And yes, I have had keys made and they reside in a wonderful hidden spot, for which I will need a flashlight to find, so I guess the next thing is to find a place on the patio to stash a spotlight. And, if this gave you a chuckle, we'll consider that another positive.