

Customer Service Ménage à Trois, Circa 2013

As of this writing, I am discovering the great alchemy of simultaneously listening to a cell phone and a landline on speaker.

The landline is piping a soothing simpatico of classical guitar and piano, abruptly interrupted by a stark “Please hold while I connect you with an agent” served on a backdrop of silence. This line goes to a state government agency.

By contrast, the cell phone, an old Razr from 2007 with all of the acoustic charm of a tin can chatters out a smooth jazz ditty weaved into an upbeat narrative of glimmering generalities which delivers me seamlessly to a long instrumental section that embellishes the vivid imagery the voice has heaped upon my imagination, leaving me to stew in a savory moment of my own excitement. This line goes to a direct marketing company.

Never have I felt both so desperately placated and also fiercely encouraged, as though I'm awash in an Irish coffee.

Like Evel Knievel being cheered on by the crowd before making a disastrous jump, and surrounded by the nursing team and his family members in the ICU, all at once.

It's the phenomenal thunderstorm that results when a swell of grieving meets a lap dance. Maybe this is what Charlie Sheen meant by 'winning'.