

## Interview with Nomi Daum (and Chaya)

Q:

Nomi:(14:43:23)Well actually I'm cutting this wig 'cause it just doesn't © its not a new wig, but we're gonna give it a cut 'cause its not looking good. So, we're gonna treat it just like hair, I washed it and for my convenience and the customer's convenience I'll be © I'm cutting it on the head instead on this doll head, not on a person. And we're © I'm just gonna be treating it like hair, cutting it, blowing it, and any other treatment it needs. but because its not natural hair its not on a person's head anymore, it is all human..this © this wig happens to be, because its not on the person's head, its © it doesn't have life anymore, so sometimes we need (baby noises) extra care for it. We need...

Q:

Nomi:(14:44:24) Uh, regular woman, young girl (baby noises), she's in her 20's (baby noises).

Q:

Nomi:(14:44:41)Well, I started off as I like doing it and I was good in it and then I just started working in it (baby noises). So uh...

Q:

Nomi:(14:45:19) A wig, its called, in Yiddish, in Jewish, its called a sheitl and in English its called a wig. Why its called a sheitl..I don't know, I don't think it really has any special significance in Yiddish, it means uh, it means..covering, I don't really know the significance, wh©what it really means.

But why we cover our hair is because married women have to cover their hair. So in order they should be able to look good they wear a wig © a sheitl. Some people are very careful, they wouldn't wear a wig either, they wear only kerchiefs uh snoods..there are different versions. Some people will wear um not real hair, which looks like real hair, supposedly coming out of their kerchief, out of their um..out of their kerchief, just uh, it depends on, on how I guess fanatic they are or some people only wear short, some people will wear a hat on their wigs..so uh these, these things are

different...

Q:

Nomi:(14:46:47) I wear a wig. A regular wig. This is a wig, some people could even mistake it for my hair, some people not I just uh, but uh basically I'm not uh © I'm not very worried about wearing a hat on my sheitl or onlt a kerchief (baby noises), I wear'∞\_∞\_ (baby noises). People who have to know see that its covered so I feel that I'm doing the right thing.

Q:

Chaya:(14:47:34) I wear a sheitl, she's doing my sheitl...

Q:

Chaya:(14:47:42) This is a permed look, curly, wavy, long (baby noises), not too long © shoulder length.

Q:

Chaya:(14:47:52) A lot of different ones © I have 4 (laughs). Some are with bangs, some are pulled back, longer, shorter, ponytail. (baby noises, phone rings)

Nomi:(14:48:23) Except that in here we're not too worried if it got a little bit too short (baby noises). And in a wig we'll always be careful, rather cut less, you could always cut more. But once you cut it you can't paste it back on, so we'll take that into consideration.

Q:

Nomi:(14:48:44) Yeah, but, I make sure to ask the customer exactly what they want and if they would ask me for something which really does not fit their face I'll tell her: "its not good for you" because once I cut it she'll see that its not good for her and then she'll be very upset and I won't be able to do anything about it. So I tell her: "Look, this is not good for you" or whatever and before I cut it I make sure that I know what I'm doing and the customer will be happy with it. And then I just go ahead and cut.

Q:

Nomi:(14:49:29) Right now I'm just cutting it a little bit shorter, not too much, just giving it a little trim to give it back its life 'cause (baby noises) its not new and..its not looking good anymore. This happens to be a wavy wig which too long is just looking too bushy and clumpy. By me cutting it is gonna give it back a nice fresh bouncy look...

Q:

Nomi: I guess all different...

Chaya: When you go to the sheitlmacher you yenta a lot.

Q:

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you yenta, you sit and you talk about everything from recipes, to married life to children to you name it, everyone's talking about it. Gossip, a lot of gossip.

Q:

Chaya:(14:50:57) Something like that. Uh which doctors you use and duhduhduh, this and when I was pregnant, like when you would go and get you hair done you would sit and talk to the barber about whatever, anything.

Q:

Nomi: How did you feel about it?

Chaya:(14:51:20) I was very upset about it. I had very nice hair, I didn't want to cover it, I had to, but it was very nice. So, I got © I got like a more expensive sheitl that looks like its growing out of my head, very natural, exactly like my own color and my own texture of my own hair (baby noises). That made it much easier but (baby noises) not everyone could afford it © this was very expensive, you know, but I was lucky enough to decide that's what I wanted so I got one. But uh some people they have to wear, ya know they can't afford nice ones like 100% human hair and they have to get fake synthetic hair, they look disgusting (laughs). I wasn't too thrilled about wearing one. It does have its advantages. When you go to a wedding it takes you two minutes...

(15:00:04)It does have its advantages, it takes you © as a single girl it took me two hours to get ready to go to a wedding, to go into a shower, wash your hair, make sure to blow it, up in hair

sprays and all that stuff, like this takes you two minutes, you have your hair all perfectly done, ya know, you throw on your make up and you look just fine, you don't have to sit and every morning start fixing and brushing, its all done already. Its a pretty good advantage.

Q:

Nomi:(15:00:38) Well, I guess..I didn't have as nice hair as my customer, but I missed my hair (baby noises) and uh I just know well this is what I hae to do so I try to get wigs which will look not wiggy but very natural and uh..I just uh do the best I could.

Q:

Nomi:(15:01:11) They grew up with it so I think they're happy about it, they don't feel deprived..they feel they're doing the right thing, they're making their husbands happy and uh basically they believe that its the right way to do it. So they don't feel resentful..and uh, they also © if they wear a hat over, they have very fancy hats today. I think they just do the best they could.

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Chaya:(15:01:56) When did I first realize my mother wore a sheitl? Growing up?....I never thought about it, I don't know.

Q:

Chaya:(15:02:07) Around the house she doesn't wear a sheitl, she wears a kerchief so I yeah, knew she was wearing a sheitl 'cause you can tell the difference right away I mean I don't know...

Nomi:(15:02:20) I basically would say that its a very natural thing, its a very natural thing for us when we grow up, the same way we wake up in the morning we wash our hands and face, we brush our teeth...a mother walks out of her room with her kerchief and when she walks out of the house she'll be wearing a sheitl (baby noises). We don't even think twice © twice about it and uh I,I mean I think many times about these people who shave their head and (baby noises) to me it would seem that I could never do it but I guess people who grow up with it again its natural for them they've never seen different, and for them that's the normal thing to do.

(15:03:04)So, I mean I know of someone she was gonna have her hair shaved off and she had beautiful blonde hair and she couldn't wait, she just couldn't wait so I guess it really is a natural thing (baby

noises) that when a person grows up with it its just (baby noises) part of their life and even though they do know different about other people, but they (baby noises) feel that this is their way of (baby noises) doing it and its the right way and best for them and they're very happy to do it.

Q:

Nomi:(15:03:50) I actually finished cutting this one, I put in some..silicon, its called, just to make the hair look a little bit fresher and softer 'cause (baby noises) its not a new one, as I said before and its not © its a little bit dried out. Sometimes even new ones come dried out a little bit, to give it the fresh shiny look I just put on a little bit of that stuff into it and I'm gonna give it a little bit of a blow and then let it dry naturally to give it a real bounce fresh look. Meanwhile I'm just brushing out this wig, I washed it and want it to be more ready and more..dry so I can work on it. I try not to blow sheitls too much not to dry them too much 'cause it burns the hair, as good as a sheitl is and as careful as one is its not too healthy for the hair to dry it too much and put it too much under heat.

Q:

Nomi: In what?

Q:

Nomi: In terms of how they dress. '∞ \_ ∞ \_\_

Nomi:(15:05:10) Um, Hasidic I guess are more.. , more particular about the (baby noises) way they dress in other words, if we have to cover our hair as I said before (baby noises), so some will cover with a kerchief, if we have to cover our legs some will wear thicker stockings, it depends on the Hasidic will probably wear © most of them (baby noises) wear thicker stockings, some will only wear brown, some will only wear thick black even in the summer, that doesn't make a difference to them if its summer or winter, if its hot or cold they'll always wear their thick black stockings and uh they don't, they don't feel bad about it, they're very happy, they might even look down at people who don't 'cause they think that's the right way to do it (blower goes on)...

(15:06:29) And before the customer will put it on her head I will of course give it the finished touch, give it © give the hair line a very natural look, make it look as if its really growing out of her

head. If you ask me how come you could have it looking grown out of her head, if it has to look like she's wearing something. The answer is I would have to say that as much as one would make it look growing out of their head you could always tell it is a wig, most times, sometimes its true if somebody pays a lot of money to have a custom wig done for them they could get away with it and uh it is good, but not when it looks too real, too much like hair that people can not tell the lady is married (baby noises) or belongs to someone else. Its...'cause she really does have to look like she's married and her hair is covered. So it could look natural and it could look like its growing out of her head, but still there is some hair on her head.

Q:

Nomi:(15:07:51) Beliefs © believing? I would say we all believe the same thing, its just some people, like when it comes to the smaller things some people are © take things more severly, © some it © some people even..its not coming from them its coming more from their parents the way they were brought up, the way (baby noises) their parents were brought up in Europe (baby noises) or wherever it is. Most people have all © have these customs, tradional from their parents, the way the mother does it (baby noises), if the mother covers her hair with a wig so will the daughter, if the mother wears a kerchief so will the daughter and so on...

(15:08:40)Believing © Jewish © the Jewish © the Torah is the same (baby noises) all over. Its just the little things everybody does different. Like when we cook chicken the chicken is all the same, its just some people put on different seasonings but its chicken (baby noises). So, its the same thing, we we all have the same beliefs (baby noises) but we might just look at the smaller things a little bit different (baby noises).

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Q:

(15:09:14) So, I © everyone I guess goes according to her husband, you can find people that when (baby noises) they're at home they're a certain Chassidus and when they get (baby noises) their husband is another Chassidus..but I guess that the parents who agree to that change, if not they wouldn't let their daughter go out with that person and uh basically probably the rebbe would help or guide his Chassidim to how to learn, where to learn, where to send their kids to school, how to do (baby noises) different things, to cover their hair with a sheitl, if uh different things then...their careful about (blower on)...Then again every rebbe has his own, well pitchikufus we call it, little nitty©gritty things, his ideas, one rebbe will have a tish and one rebbe will (blower on) have a fabrengen, I don't know, they call it different names, different things, they guide their Chassidim to do the right thing and uh to be good Jews, it doesn't matter, each one in their own way, but basically we're all aiming for the same thing. That to serve G@d, Hashem in the right way.(blower)

(15:10:56)My husband himself is not Chassidish, her family (blower on)..he has a Chassidisha background, so do I also come from a Chassidisha background, my grandfather was a Gerer and uh I do have Chassidisha blood in me, but (baby noises) I'm not Chassidish and nor is my husband. So certain customs could be (blower and baby noises) from a Chassidisha background...(baby and blowing noises) but I would say © people wouldn't call me Chassidish. But these things like I said before we have customs like from our grandparents, so we keep up with them...

(15:11:49) I mean if its a a real Chassidisha thing let's say my grandfather would have gone to tish which I don't think did either, but if he would have gone to tish friday nights to the Rebbe's tish I wouldn't do it now even though I would do what my grandfather does, but its like a very Chassidisha thing, its something (baby noises) totally different to (baby noises) what I was brought up, my father is even not very Chassidish so I just wouldn't do it. Not because I don't think its right, just 'cause I feel comfortable with what I'm doing (baby noises) and my parents are very happy and so was my grandfather very happy with what my father did, or else my father wouldn't do it, its not © not that he is not Jewish or he's, not keeping the Jewish laws or he's not doing what he has to, he's doing what he has to, just in a different way so basically I think every parent would be happy just to see their child growing

up, doing the right thing, each one is a little bit different, everyone is born different, there are no two people in the world who are born with the same fingerprint, why is that? Because every person's different, so also customs, you can't uh (blower on) tell a person you know you have to feel comfortable this way...(blower and baby noises)

Leah, you want to brush your hair? Very good. Do you feel pretty?—\_

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