

Meet the Personalities 004
Shannon Farren
Podcast Transcript
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Tom: Meet the Personalities is brought to you by LA Radio Specialist. Learn more about working with the very personalities you hear from within these podcasts at LARadioSpecialist.com. LARadioSpecialist.com, impactful marketing programs driven by influential personalities and the power of sound.

Tom: Welcome to “Meet the Personalities,” the podcast where we sit down with radio personalities for a candid talk about their take on the business of radio. Today, my guest is the lovely Ms. Shannon Farren. Shannon is on the “Gary and Shannon Show” on KFI AM 640, right here in the Los Angeles market, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. till 2p.m. And Shannon, thank you so much for joining me.

Shannon: Thank you for the lovely adjective.

Tom: How have you made your way to KFI, and what was your career path from the beginning to now?

Shannon: Well, I started out in Market 198. And if you're keeping score, that's the...

Tom: Wow.

Shannon: ... Chico-Oroville market. I was a student at Chico State...

Tom: One ninety eight is barely, barely immediate [SP] market. I think they gotten like 250-something or so.

Shannon: I think we had 5,000 watt station...

Shannon: ...which was pretty damn good for that market. And I started interning there. During high school I worked in a deli up in the Bay Area, and I went to Chico State. And I'd come back on the weekends and some long vacations to work at the deli again. And one of the family friends of the family that owned the deli said, "Hey, do you need work up there at Chico?" I said, "Sure." He said, "Well, one of my friends still works at a radio station. I'll give her your number," or "Here's her number," I forget and I got in touch with her.

I started interning at “KPAY Newstalk1290.” And within a couple weeks, I was on the air doing overnight weather and I loved it. I mean, I would stay up...well, I was...who are we kidding? It was Chico State. I was up at 2:00 in the morning. But at 2:06, I would turn on the radio, and I’d be like, “It's my weather report.” It was just such a kick, you know? And then I started working at the country station that was in the same building, 103.5 Hot Country KHSL.

I did some evenings there, some overnight work, loved it. But the only thing I didn't like about that was you, kind of, had to be this sugary, FM personality, which isn't always me, you know. I like to tell it like it is. And FM, you've always gotta upbeat and into it, and everything's gotta be positive. And that's great and I love FM personalities. It just wasn't gonna be me every day. And I wanted to use my mind more. I wanted to flex that muscle.

Tom: Sure.

Shannon: So, I got into reporting. I was doing reporting for KPAY. And then I was graduating from school and I applied at KFBK in Sacramento, and I got a job there a couple months out of graduation.

Tom: That's a big jump.

Shannon: Yeah, huge deal, but it was kind of a feeder station. There were a lot of reporters and anchors that went from KPAY to KFBK. But, anyway, yeah, nevertheless, it was a great, great break. And I was there for two and a half years,

covered a lot of great stuff. You know, Scott Peterson and the war. When the war was beginning in Iraq and Afghanistan and the invasions, I remember my boss saying to me, "Go cover the World Series." And it was the Giants and the Angels, and I said, "But I don't have a credential." And he said, "Make it happen." That's the kind of boss he was. He said, "Figure it out," you know.

And I got in the car. I drove from Sacramento down to Pac Bell, and I just was like, "How the hell am I gonna do this?" And my boss is like, "Don't screw this up. Figure it out." And I'm thinking, "Maybe I can get out on a boat in McCovey Cove." Like, "Maybe I can make a friend and I'll do live reports on the cell phone." And, you know, I'm 22 and, oh man, I'm sweating. And also and I meet a friend outside of the gate...not a friend but a new friend outside the gate.

I start talking to someone. It turns out he runs the PR company for Thomas Kinkade, the painter.

Tom: Sure.

Shannon: And Thomas Kinkade was painting the World Series from the owner's box. And they had an extra credential and gave it to me right outside...

Tom: The owner's box?

Shannon: Yeah. So, I sat at the World Series watching Thomas Kinkade paint the World Series with the owner...

Tom: Oh my.

Shannon: ...in a...yeah, it was insane. So, what I loved about reporting were days like that where you're given an assignment and just go out make it happen, do something different and I was hooked. And then I started working at KFI. I went to Seattle after Sacramento for a year at Cairo. And then Chris Little from the KFI Newsroom sent an email to me and said, "Hey, we got an opening at KFI," and I said, "LA?"

Tom: Was that a cold email?

Shannon: Yeah.

Tom: Cold call from Chris Little?

Shannon: Yeah.

Shannon: I hadn't even thought about it. And I always wanted to get back to San Francisco. And I came down here interviewed with Chris and he said, "What do you mean you don't know about LA? What do you want? You want the beach? You want the mountains? We have them both." And I thought, "Oh, that's a pretty good argument." And that was 12 years ago and I've been here ever since. So, I was reporting for a long time and then I started anchoring for John and Ken, and

got into giving my opinion more and more and decided I really loved it. And then Gary and I started our show.

Tom: You get to work pretty normal hours.

Shannon: I get up probably 6:00, 6:30 and I immediately am like that annoying person that looks at the phone, “What has happened while I've been sleeping? What news is going on,” because you gotta stay on top of everything, right?

Tom: Absolutely.

Shannon: And so then I get into the office around 8:00. And Gary and I and Oscar, or the producer, we just, kind of, talk about all the stuff that we've heard that has gone on the past, you know, 20 hours or whatever it is. And we talk about what we wanna do that day. What we have strong feelings about. What we think everyone else is talking about. We try to have fun and cover the stuff that you kinda need to know, and then we're out of here at 2:00.

Tom: What do you guys agree on most?

Shannon: I'd like to think that Gary and I are pretty much a lot of the time, middle of the road, you know? We're not one way or another when it comes to politics. We like to hold both parties accountable. We're not in love with the Republicans. We're not in love with the Democrats. We like to treat them both the same and

hold them up to the same standard, and go after people when they're being dumb. I don't know if you know this about us, but we've taken, kind of, the same path in life. Gary and I grew up about eight miles away from each other. We went to...

Tom: Really?

Shannon: Yeah. We went to the same college. We went to the same station, KFBK after college. We went to the same city in Seattle after that, and then we both landed at KFI.

Tom: Had you known each other at all those stops?

Shannon: Not until KFI did I meet him.

Tom: No way.

Shannon: Yeah. And he's eight years older, but we've had the same path, the same...like, a lot of the same life experiences at the same times and in the same places. So, we kinda see eye to eye on a lot of things. It's odd. It's like talking to my brother. It really is.

Tom: Personal life.

Shannon: I like to hike. My husband and I like to hike a lot. We live in San Gabriel Mountains area, so a lot of hiking on the weekends. I like to go to Santa Anita track, thanks to Tim Conway, Jr. and spend...I mean, donate money to that organization. Speaking of donating money, I've told you before I like to go to Vegas a lot.

Tom: Yeah, how did that work out last week?

Shannon: I'm a big Pai gow fan. Not well. Not well, Tom.

Tom: Pai gow?

Shannon: Yeah.

Tom: Wow.

Shannon: Yeah. I can spend days at a Pai gow table. What else? I love to go see sports. I love going to my 49er games. I loved watching them in the coliseum with the Rams on Christmas Eve. I like to go see the Dodgers play. Wine tasting, we go wine tasting a lot. Go up to Paso, Santa Barbara area. I live a life of fun, Tom. I'm very selfish.

Tom: What about when it's vacation time, where do you go?

Shannon: There's so many places in this country that I wanna see. Like, I've knocked off the bucket list things that I had with Paris and Italy, Japan, went to Greece, Spain. And now I want to see all the cool places and the nooks of this country, all the little towns. What I really wanna do, but my husband's not on board, is get an RV and hit the road. Now, he's not on board because he knows he'll drive it, and I won't. I'll just be in the back...

Tom: Sipping Chardonnay?

Shannon: ...you know, with my Chardonnay, right? Let's be real. But I always thought that would really be cool, you know? You get in an RV and you just go, and every day you, kind of, decide where you're gonna go and switch it up at the last minute.

Tom: When it comes to the business of radio first let's talk just generally speaking, endorsements and partnerships that you would love to consider from a category perspective.

Shannon: You know the woman drives a lot of purchases in the house...

Tom: Absolutely.

Shannon:...you know? And we own a home and there are a lot of decisions to be made. And I am not the person who says, you know, "Oh, we're going this way. We're doing this. We're using this contractor. We're doing this." But the wife is

always the one who gives the input that ends up being what happens usually, right?

Tom: Right.

Shannon: And so I am totally open to doing home improvement products or even, you know, a car. We're all into all of those things, it's not just men. But I love endorsing products that I love. Like, I endorse ovation cell therapy. I had heard people talking about this product for years around here, and I used it, and I loved it, and I'm happy to endorse it because it's like sharing with friends. Listeners are our friends. I mean, you go to a live event that we have, and people that you have never met will walk up and give you a hug because they feel like they know you.

And I feel like they're my friends, too, because they know me. They know all the ins and outs of our lives because they listen every day. And I love calling up my girlfriends and telling them about a new product. I mean, that's what we do, or a new service. And I'm happy to share that information with the listeners that are our friends. And so, when there's something that I love I'm more than happy to endorse it.

Shannon: The difference is with radio, and I can't stress this enough, the relationship between radio and the people on the radio and the listeners is so intimate. It is not a blog. It's not something that you sit down and waste time at work reading or whatever. It's something that you wake up with.

We're in your car or in your living room, or in your kitchen. Your kids listen to us. Your parents listen to us. It's a family thing a lot of the time.

Tom: What's the secret sauce to your relationship with Gary? Because that authenticity and the sincerity between you two definitely comes through? I mean, is it just natural?

Shannon: Yeah. I mean it's been pretty natural. Like I said earlier, it's like talking to my brother because we've had so many similar experiences through life. It was always an easy conversation between the two of us.

Tom: Do you guys hang out at all after work?

Shannon: No. Tom, we spend four hours a day talking to each other. Who do you spend four hours a day talking to?

Tom: No one.

Shannon: You know what I mean? It's like John and Ken said that, you know? That was my number one question for them. I was like, "Do you guys hang out? Are you guys best friends," you know? And they were like, "Please, you know, we've been doing this 25 years, talking to each other, four hours a day. No, we don't."

Tom: I understand.

Shannon: But, yeah. I mean, there are some events where we're all together. Of course, they're great. I love his wife. We have a great time, but do we need to spend extra time? Probably not.

Tom: What was the first concert you ever attended?

Shannon: This is embarrassing.

Tom: Always is.

Shannon: New Kids on the Block.

Tom: Nice.

Shannon: Nineteen eighty nine. Wait, wait. I take that back. Before then, I went with my parents to a Four Tops concert when I was a child, a smaller child. That's a better answer.

Tom: That is.

Shannon: Okay. I take back...can we delete that New Kids on the Block part?

Tom: No, we're gonna edit other parts. We're definitely not editing that out. But, we will leave in the Tops.

Shannon: Okay.

Tom: If radio wasn't in the equation for Shannon Farren?

Shannon: I've often thought about that, like what would I do for a real job? Like, if this thing ended tomorrow, what would I do? And I always just keep going back to, "Well, I'd just go be a reporter again. I would go do...or I'd make sandwiches." I loved that job in the deli. I loved making sandwiches. Sometimes, I tell my husband that.

Tom: Thank you again very much.

Shannon: You got it.

Tom: This is "Meet the Personalities." That was Shannon Farren's talk on the business of radio. Again, Shannon is on with "Gary and Shannon" KFI AM 640, Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. till 2:00 p.m. And that was Miss Farren's take on the business of radio. I'm Tom Smith. Thank you very much.

Announcer: This episode of Meet the Personalities was recorded by Gil Perez. It was produced and engineered by Micah Palmquist.

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