

**NKU
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BY: CHRIS COLE



WIGGING OUT

**Cara Hannah Sullivan: Engulfed in the Chaos
of SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE**



The panic has set in. About 20 feet away, Fred Armisen sits on a white sofa before a studio of about 300 spectators and a live television audience of almost 9 million. Playing the popular Saturday Night Live character Manuel Ortiz, he has just invited Maya Rudolph to the stage.

It's May 8, 2010, and tonight is a big one for SNL. Along with Rudolph, several of the show's beloved alumni have returned, including Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, Molly Shannon, Rachel Dratch, and Ana Gasteyer. JayZ is the musical guest, and Betty White is hosting.

None of that matters right now. Because in about 30 seconds, Manuel Ortiz will invite Gasteyer to the stage, and she's not ready. Her hair, a giant pouf of wigged brown curls, is perfect. Her makeup, just right. But she is wearing only pantyhose, heels and a bra.

Sometime between dress rehearsal and this moment, her brown mini skirt got tangled. And it just won't come undone. Wardrobe passes it to makeup; makeup hands it to hair. "Oh, my gosh, it's time to go on!" the frantic actress tells the crew. In a moment of desperation every bit as funny as the skit about to go live, SNL hairdresser Cara Hannah Sullivan ('00) rips off her own shirt and hands it to Gasteyer.

"Here, take this!" Sullivan says. "And I'm standing there in my bra and a pair of pants handing this to her. And she's like, 'OK, fine, fine.'" At the last second, the dress untangles and the actress throws it on—inside out—as she makes her grand entrance. Onto The Manuel Ortiz Show.

LIVE FROM NEW YORK, IT'S SATURDAY NIGHT!



SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE EMPLOYS ABOUT 80 DIFFERENT WIGS **PER EPISODE**
& THEIR HAIR DESIGNERS CRAFT ABOUT 1,600 UNIQUE WIGS PER SEASON.



Sullivan is at her creative best in these unscripted moments of chaos. Her moment of Zen happens 30 seconds before the cast goes live and she has to get one wig off and another on while wardrobe is doing a full costume change and makeup is still touching up, she says. "You can't think about it. You've just got to go! Go! Go!"

Each SNL cast member has a designated hair stylist (currently Sullivan works with Nasim Pedrad), wardrobe designer, and makeup artist. With a cast of about 14, that's more than 50 people running around the small studio each Saturday night. "It surprises me that no one ever seems to get hurt," she says.

Each Saturday begins with a technical walk-through at noon. Afterward, Sullivan and the hair crew spend all day making adjustments before the formal dress rehearsal with full cast at 8 p.m. "They're changing things all the way up until the last moment," she says. "So the show has already started and they're like, 'No, wait. We want to change wigs; we want to change costumes.' It's a crazy house on Saturday."



Nasim Pedrad

Sullivan *wouldn't* have it any other *way*. "This is my dream job," she says. "It's got a little bit of theater and a little bit of TV, and the *whole world* gets to see it on one night. And that's pretty exciting."

In the six years Sullivan has spent at SNL she's garnered four Emmy nominations. Last year, she and her coworkers *won* for Outstanding Hairstyling for a Multi-Camera Series or Special for their *work* on the Zooey Deschanel episode.

Fittingly, Sullivan *wasn't* on the red carpet that night. She *was* back in New York preparing for a dress rehearsal of the Joseph Gordon-Levitt episode *when* she found out she'd *won* the Emmy via Twitter. "There *was* something so real about being *with* all my girls at the place that you love and *winning* the Emmy for that. *We were* so happy, and that *was* the best news on the face of the planet that night."

