



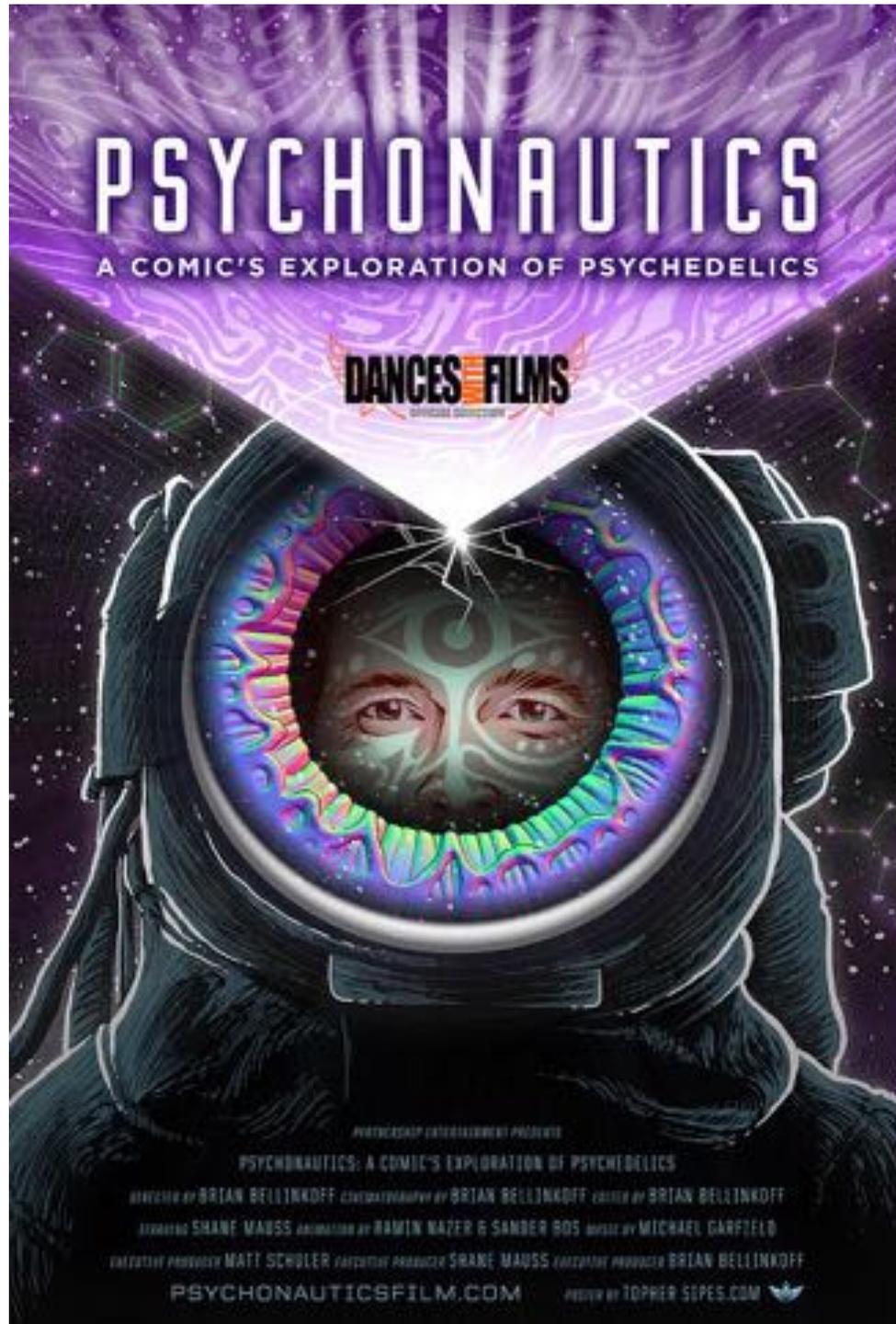
## **World Premiere**

**Friday, June 15th at 5PM  
TLC Chinese Theatre  
6801 Hollywood Blvd  
Hollywood, CA 90028**

**Psychonautics: A Comic's Exploration of Psychedelics**

**A documentary film by Brian Bellinkoff**

**Starring Comic Shane Mauss**



# PSYCHONAUTICS

A COMIC'S EXPLORATION OF PSYCHEDELICS

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PSYCHONAUTICS: A COMIC'S EXPLORATION OF PSYCHEDELICS

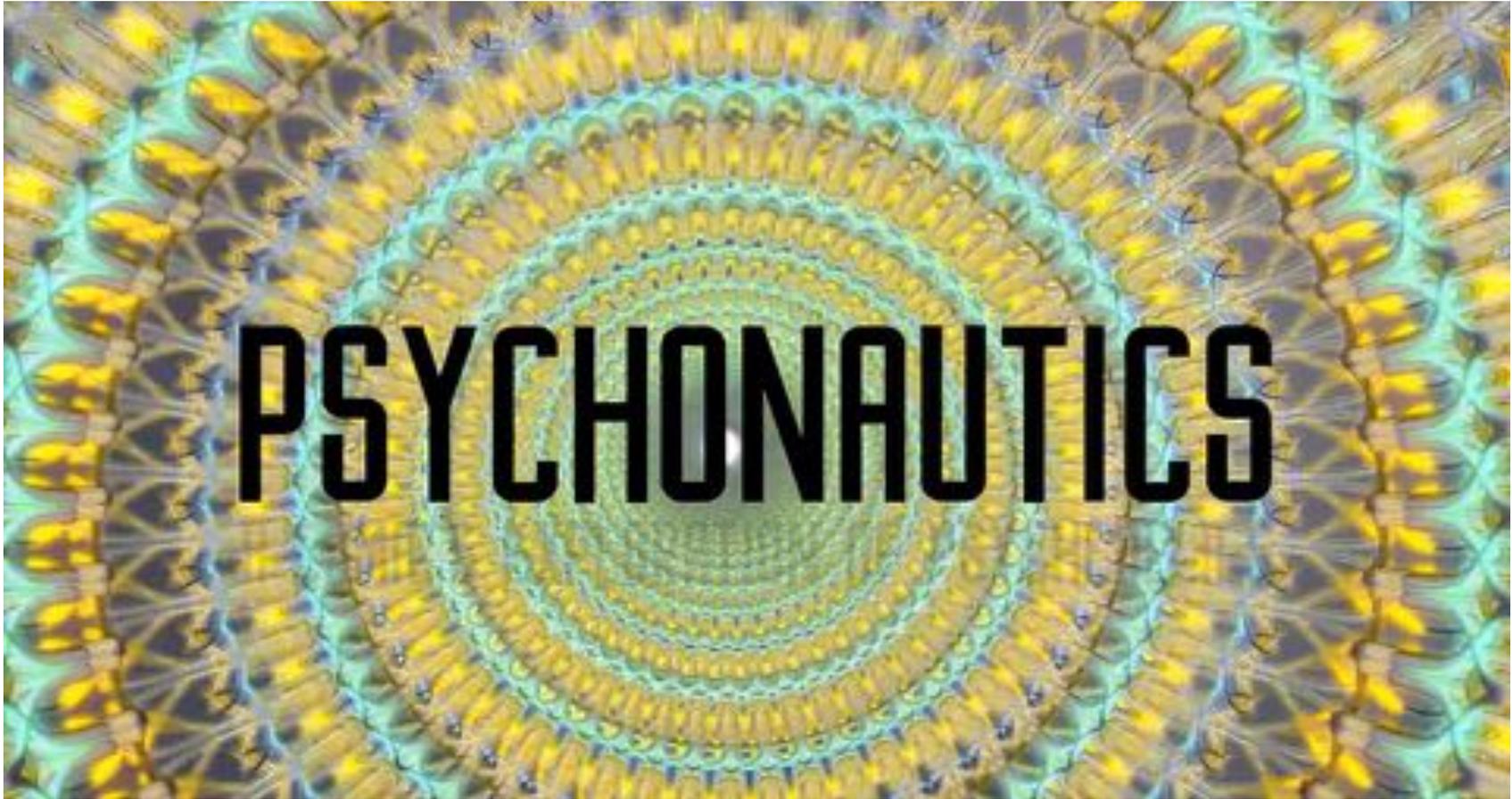
DIRECTED BY BRIAN BELLINKOFF COSTUME DESIGNER BY BRIAN BELLINKOFF EDITOR BY BRIAN BELLINKOFF

STARRING SHANE MAUSS JOURNALISM BY RAMIN NAZER & SANDER BOS MUSIC BY MICHAEL CARFELD

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MATT SCHULER EXECUTIVE PRODUCER SHANE MAUSS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BRIAN BELLINKOFF

PSYCHONAUTICSFILM.COM

POSTER BY TOPHER SEPES.COM



**Partnership Entertainment**

**A documentary film by BRIAN BELLINKOFF**

**FORMAT**

81 Minutes | 4K | Color | USA | English | Not Rated

**PRESS CONTACT**

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Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/269542995>  
Mushroom Picking Clip: <https://vimeo.com/269133802>

## **LOGLINE**

Comedian Shane Mauss goes on a series of adventures, and interviews scientists and experts, to deepen his understanding of psychedelics.

## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

Comedian Shane Mauss goes on a series of adventures to deepen his understanding of psychedelics. He describes the indescribable and takes us through some of his most intense experiences, while getting the added perspectives of some of the top scientists and experts in this realm. With moments of both confusion and clarity, this is as an honest account of the experiences of a genuine Psychonaut.

## **LONG SYNOPSIS**

Comedian Shane Mauss sets out on a mission to prove psychedelics are not as scary as they seem... by doing all of them. While describing the indescribable, he explores the beauty and mystique of psychedelics. He also brings in the added perspectives of some of the top scientists, researchers, and experts in this fascinating field of medicine.

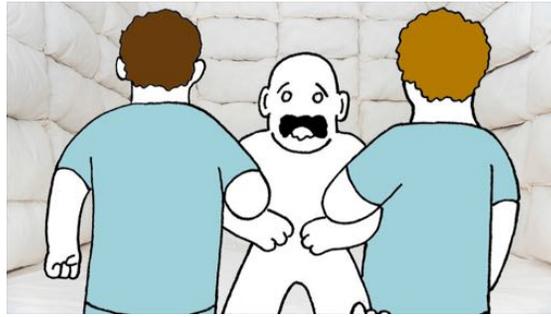
Shane goes mushroom picking with Eric Osbourne, a mushroom expert and Psilocybin retreat leader, to harvest some of the best mushrooms in the world. He learns about the vast medical potential of Psilocybin from Dr.



William Richards, a leading researcher at Johns Hopkins University, who began studying psychedelics in 1963. Rick Doblin, founder of MAPS (Multidisciplinary Association of Psychedelic Studies), takes us through the history of drug prohibition and explains the DEA's scheduling system, which suppresses the efforts of scientists to study the benefits of these substances. Shane talks to actress Heather Matarazzo about how MDMA assisted therapy was responsible for a life-saving breakthrough with her PTSD. Historian Erika Dyck reveals that research from the 1950s showed the power of LSD to help break alcohol addiction. Shane gets an intense Ketamine treatment in a clinical setting, he travels to another dimension with the aid of DMT, and he has a spiritual experience in a clandestine Ayahuasca ceremony.

This film shows the enormous potential that psychedelics have to treat disorders, improve our health, and open us up to amazing experiences. However, they can also lead to a month-long manic state and a trip to the psych ward... if not done responsibly.

This is a journey that takes Shane to the highest euphoria and the lowest depression, it opens him up to enlightenment, and it kicks him in the balls. With moments of both confusion and clarity, this is as an honest account of the experiences of a genuine Psychonaut.



## Q&A with Filmmaker Brian Bellinkoff

### 1. Why did I make the film?

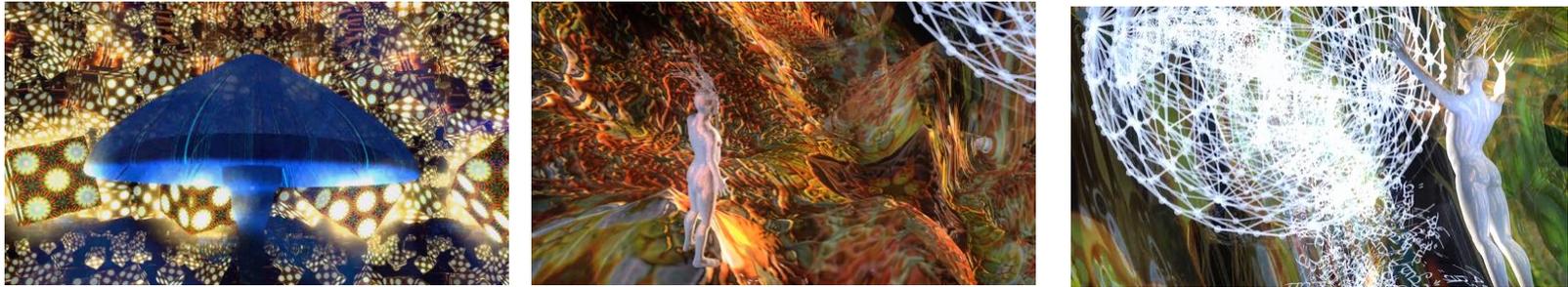
I felt like the time was right to make a film that could break the stigma of the 1960's and present psychedelics in a fun, honest, and mature way. I knew that mixing science and comedy around a polarizing subject would be a challenge, so it was important that the film didn't glorify the benefits or disregard the dangers. It was my intention that this film be digestible for all, and I was particularly focused on making a slice of the psychedelic world accessible to those without prior experience or knowledge. Once you start talking about dissociative-interdimensional-transformative-consciousness, you've probably lost a lot of people! I wanted to explain how these substances work in simple terms as well as hopefully capture a piece of their visual and emotional qualities. Luckily Shane's jokes do the heavy lifting in this regard.

### 2. What did you shoot on?

We shot mostly with a Sony a7sii DSLR. I knew I wanted to shoot in a relatively small 4k format and I'm a fan of the true colors and sharp images they produce for such an inexpensive camera.

### 3. What difficulties did you have making the film?

Honestly, making this film has been the most fun and easy process every step of the way. I have Shane and Matt to thank for that, but mostly it's because everyone in the psychedelic community is so generous and giving. There



were times that the effects of the psychedelics presented challenges for Shane, but that's also part of what makes the film interesting.

#### **4. What was the casting process like?**

We had another comedian cast in the lead role but he dropped out at the last minute so we called up Shane who was our third option. (Just kidding). The three of us met in March 2017 knowing the psychedelic science convention was happening in a month and there would not be another gathering like it for a while. We decided to go there and interview as many scientists, researchers, and psychonauts as we could, and luckily we came away with a treasure-trove of amazing interviews to use for the backbone of the film.

#### **5. What do you want audiences to take away from the film?**

I want audiences to come away from the film feeling entertained, but more importantly I want people to question their relationship with drugs in general. How do they work? Why do they work? Why do we perceive some drugs as safe and others harmful? I think this resurgence in psychedelic research by M.A.P.S. has enormous implications for our society. As more people recognize their potential as medicine, hopefully funding for studies will be easier to obtain.

#### **6. When/where did you shoot the film?**

We began filming in Oakland at the Psychedelic Science Convention in April 2017. We shot the rest of the film sporadically over the six months that followed in Kentucky, Colorado, and California.



## **7. Where did the idea come from?**

I had produced and edited a few other documentaries about serious subjects and really wanted to step out as a director and find a way to combine my two passions: documentaries and comedy. I shared this with my producer Matt Schuler who I've collaborated with for a few years and after months of kicking around ideas for documentaries he invited me to film Shane Mauss' performance at the Largo. I came away thinking that I'd never seen a show like it. Not only was he hilarious, but he completely reframed the way I thought about drugs in general. It became clear quickly that this was the right project.

## **8. What are some amusing anecdotes from making this film?**

I was editing the film every spare minute I had last year in order to meet a self-imposed deadline. Shane went crazy shortly after he had moved to Portland to be with his girlfriend and we hadn't heard from him for a couple weeks and one day Matt called me and said, "Hey! If Shane calls you don't pick up unless you have 30 minutes to waste. He just called me and he didn't make any sense. Just thought I'd warn you." I didn't pick up Shane's call and now I regret it. I may never get another chance to hear what crazy sounds like. I called Matt back concerned about Shane and his response was, "I'm sure he's fine. Just keep editing." Now, that's a great producer!

One of the remarkable things about Shane is his ability to talk through very intense psychedelic experiences. Maybe he's the Michael Jordan of tripping or maybe he is a prophet for another dimension but it was fun to see Dr. Early's amazement at Shane's ability to talk through his entire ketamine treatment.



One day we drove around L.A. interviewing Shane's friends and during lunch Matt erroneously got a text from a guy complaining about how a palette was stacked on a shipping truck. Matt told the person he had the wrong number but the guy kept responding so we went with it and are still texting with this person currently. So we always joke about how if the film doesn't do well, at least we have our shipping company.

**9. Please explain your approach and influences (if any):**

I wanted to get a Morgan Spurlock tone but without breaking the fourth wall as much as possible. In the beginning, we were feeling out how to accomplish this which led to a running gag on set of always trying to shoot it "all the ways." Once I started editing, it became clear that the best approach was to use his interviews as voiceover and his stand up as a narrative device to move us through scenes, give context, and transition from one section to the next without breaking the fourth wall.

**10. Most memorable experience.**

My most memorable experience was in Colorado where we shot Shane smoking DMT painted in syrian rue, which now opens the film. That same weekend we also shot him trying a marijuana therapy session, visiting an energy healer, tripping on mushrooms, and trying Kambo (an intense detox medicine derived from the skin of a poisonous Amazonian frog). These other scenes were ultimately cut from the film, but they were experiences I will never forget.



**11. How do you think this film fits into your personal growth as a director? How will it affect your future projects?**

Collaborating with comedians has always been a dream of mine so Psychonautics is exactly the type of film I've always wanted to make and continue to make as a director. As much as I love documentaries, most of them are very serious, which is probably why most people don't watch them. Generally, people just want to have an easy escape and I get that. I believe documentaries can touch upon social issues while still being funny and entertaining at the same time.

**12. Something unique about the film.**

The title of the film changed quite a bit. First it was "Your Shane on Drugs" but Shane didn't like having his name in the title because he's too humble for that. Then it was "So You're Thinking About Tripping?" for a long time, but we felt like it was alienating a large potential audience. Finally Shane suggested "Psychonautics" which is defined as a methodology for describing and explaining the subjective effects of altered states of consciousness, including those induced by mind altering substances, which is exactly what the film is about.

**13. What are some of your favorite films, and what are your other creative influences?**

Some of my favorite narrative films are: Forrest Gump, Wet Hot American Summer, and A Clockwork Orange. The only correlation between them I can think of is that they all involve drug use.

Some of my favorite documentaries are: Touching the Void, Wasteland, The Barkley Marathons, and Icarus.

I definitely look up to Michael Moore for his ability to mix comedy and social issues in his films.

## **About the Filmmakers and Subject**

### **Brian Bellinkoff (Director / DP / Editor)**

Psychonautics marks Brian's directorial debut. His previous documentary work includes producing, shooting, and editing "Men in the Arena" (Gravitas Ventures) and "From Fat to Finish Line" (Gravitas Ventures). His TV credits include the docu-series "LogHeads" for DIY Network, and numerous comedy specials for Showtime. Originally from Florida, Brian moved to Los Angeles in 2007 and immediately began freelance producing, camera operating, and editing branded content, viral web series, and documentaries. He is a graduate of the University of Miami and hopes to continue blending his two passions, comedy and documentaries.

### **Matt Schuler (Producer)**

Matt Schuler is a producer, focused primarily on comedy. He has produced several critically acclaimed comedy specials including Showtime's 'SXSW Comedy with Natasha Leggero' and Netflix's 'Michael Che Matters'. 'Psychonautics' is Matt's first foray into documentaries, but he has always been a big fan of the genre, and he has a passion for the subject matter. He is a graduate of Purdue University, and he began his career in the Motion Picture Lit department at UTA. He then worked as a talent manager for several years before transitioning into producing.

### **Shane Mauss (Comedian / Psychonaut)**

Originally from Wisconsin, Shane Mauss caught his first break when he was awarded 'Best Stand-Up' at the 2007 HBO US Comedy Arts Festival. Since then he has appeared on Comedy Central's This Is Not Happening, Jimmy Kimmel Live, as well as five times on Conan. He has done a Comedy Central half hour special and a Netflix hour special, Shane Mauss: Mating Season. He also hosts a popular science podcast, Here We Are, which has a five star rating on iTunes. Shane recently wrapped up a 111 city comedy tour, A Good Trip, which is a culmination of his 20 years of psychedelic experience and his 12 years of stand-up experience.

## CREW

Directed, Shot & Edited by	Brian Bellinkoff
Executive Producer & Psychonaut	Shane Mauss
Executive Producer	Matt Schuler
Executive Producer	Brian Bellinkoff
Animation by	Ramin Nazer
	Sander Bos
Sound Mixer Colorist	Craig Billmeier
	Andrew Finch
Associate Producer	Keith Blomberg
Camera Operators	Jesse Ricketts
	Paul Schneider
	Ben Dennis
	Jon D'Avolio
	Matthew Campbell
Sound Recordist	Jon Ganzmann
Timelapse Photography	Brendan Merrill
Production Assistant	Freddie Price

# CAST

## In order of appearance

Zach Sherwin

Ryan Singer

Dave Waite

Dr. Cole Marta

Ramin Nazer

James Fadiman, PhD

Michael Garfield

David E. Nichols, PhD

Eduardo Schenberg, PhD

Mary Cosimano

Eric Osborne

Dennis McKenna

Dr. William Richards

Amanda Fielding

Rick Doblin

Emanuel Sferios

Special Thanks 1

Bert Kreischer

Heather Matarazzo

Marcela Ot'alora

Erika Dyck, PhD

Dr. Terrence Early

Marc Aixala

Julane Andries

Selen Atasoy

Jacob Baker

Brad Burge

Boa Cowee

Amy Emerson

Kevin Franciotti

Sara Gael

Jim Hefner

Zach Leary

Aubrey Marcus

Dr. Gabor Mate

Daniel McQueen

Vanja Palmers

Leor Roseman

Duncan Trussell

Dr. Gregory Wells

Dr. Philip Wolfson

Berra Yazar-Klosinski, PhD

Special Thanks 2

Shane's Mom & Dad

Karissa & Justin

Kate Kowalski

Peter McGraw

Lizbeth Chappell

Jimmy Martin

Bruce Smith

Katherine Swope

Randy Fay

Purple Lady

Mysterious Interdimensional Entities

Special Thanks 3

A special thanks to Eric Osborne at MycoMeditations

Special Thanks 4

and a special thanks to MAPS for all their support

**Links:**

**Film's Website:** <https://www.psychonauticsfilm.com>

**Film's Facebook:** [facebook.com/Psychonautics-1853227244968791/](https://facebook.com/Psychonautics-1853227244968791/)

**Film's Instagram:** [instagram.com/psychonautics\\_/](https://instagram.com/psychonautics_/)

**Shane's Website:** [shanemauss.com](https://shanemauss.com)

**Shane's Twitter:** [@shanecomedy](https://twitter.com/shanecomedy)

**Shane on WTF with Marc Maron:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74LXkwhhkIM>

**Shane on CC's This Is Not Happening:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b57q4AH3hLA>

**Shane on Conan:** <http://teamcoco.com/video/shane-mauss-stand-up-05-02-13>

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