



Austin Carr, host of *Talking After Sets*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AUSTIN CARR

Comics Anonymous

Talking After Sets merges the stage and the green room

BY LUIS GAEL JIMENEZ

Part stand-up showcase, part live podcast panel, *Talking After Sets* is a comedy show that merges two different worlds of a stand-up comic—the rehearsed performance that happens onstage, and the relaxed conversations that happen behind the scenes before and after every show.

“The idea is to bring the green room to the stage,” creator and host Austin Carr told SN&R. “... I want the audience to get to know each comedian beyond just the material in their set, which they’ve spent the last few months or whatever working on and shaping. I want them to see the person behind the jokes.”

The traveling show works like this: As each comedian comes on stage, they perform a 2 to 3 minute version of their usual set and then take a seat on the panel of stand-ups, where they can’t rely on pre-canned punchlines.

“It’s something a lot of comedians don’t have a chance to do very often, hang out on stage with fellow comics and just shoot the s--t,” Carr says. “Sometimes we talk about our sets, sometimes we talk about life and other times it’s like an open mic-turned-AA meeting.”

When Carr isn’t producing the show, he manages security at the legendary Cobb’s Comedy Club in San Francisco. He lives, breathes, sleeps and eats comedy, and it’s why he allows comedians free entry to each performance of *Talking After Sets*.

“I want to give everybody stage time and exposure,” Carr says. “*Talking After Sets* is meant to be a platform for comics. Every show has a completely unique lineup with comedians local to the area.”

The Wednesday, Aug. 28 show at Punchline Sacramento features headliner Lance Woods, plus Sac comedians Emma Haney, Anthony K. and Alfonso Portella—all handpicked by Carr. The lineup is a mix of well-known comics and some up-and-comers who could use the spotlight, Carr says.

For Portella, *Talking After Sets* could be an opportunity to break out of his shell.

“Interacting with other comedians should be interesting. Maybe people will see how not-funny I am when I’m not doing stand-up,” Portella jokes. “It’s not very often you get five or six stand-up comedians on stage at the same time, so I’m excited to see how it goes, regardless.”

Carr says he hopes *Talking After Sets* is able to break some of the traditional barriers to comedy.

“Comedy is like an internship that never ends. There are all these weird rules and laws that say in order to do certain shows, you have to have done other shows or been passed by a comedy club in another city that only passes people who have been passed by some random booker in a part of the country you might not have even been to,” Carr says. “*Talking After Sets* is an attempt to bypass all of that and just put on good comedy.” □

The Punchline Sacramento will host *Talking After Sets* on Wed., Aug 28 at 8 p.m. General admission tickets are \$16. Comedians get in free for the show.

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