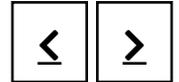


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Molly Shannon

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Actress/comedian Molly Shannon is one of funniest performers on television, film and stage. Shannon worked in restaurants while trying to get her comedy career off the ground. In 1995, she joined the cast of *Saturday Night Live*. She stayed on the show for six years, leaving in 2001.

Shannon has appeared in such films as *Superstar* (1999), *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (2000) and 2013's *Scary Movie* (*Scary Movie 5*). On television, Shannon has appeared on *Glee*, *30 Rock* and *Kath & Kim* and in 2016, Shannon appeared as part of the cast of HBO's *Divorce*, starring opposite Sarah Jessica Parker. She won the Film Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role in the film *Other People*. Shannon is also a published author with her first children's book, *Tilly the Trickster*.

Cooper: Can you give me a little background on how you got into comedy and acting?

Molly Shannon: I went to NYU drama school. After that I graduated from NYU, I moved to LA and I did a two-person show called "The Rob & Molly Show." And then I worked on that, developing characters and touring that show all around town. I would invite people. I was waiting tables; and I would use my money from restaurants to help pay for the show, to help produce it. So that's kind of how I got my start.

Cooper: How'd you get on SNL?

Shannon: It was from my show. Marcy Klein, who was the producer of *Saturday Night Live*, flew us to Los Angeles, and she came to see my stage show, "The Rob & Molly Show." And then I got invited to audition.

Cooper: So you went back and lived back in New York, then?

Shannon: No, I actually did that show in Los Angeles. I graduated from NYU and moved to LA, and then I developed that show over the years in LA.

Cooper: When you got the gig for SNL you moved back to New York?

Shannon: When I got the gig for SNL, yes, exactly, I moved back to New York, right. But I went to NYU, graduated, moved to LA, developed my show in LA all those years, and then when I got SNL, I moved back to New York. That's correct.

Cooper: So you got—those characters you developed you got to use on SNL?

Shannon: Yes. I developed those in my stage show.

My dad—we were in a car accident when I was younger. When I was four, my mom died and my baby sister and cousin were killed; and my dad was very badly injured, he injured his leg. So he had to learn how to walk all over again. He had to walk with a limp most of my childhood. But so many of my characters were, like, versions of him, like Sally O'Malley walks with a limp, but then she can stretch and kick. Kind of like a version of my dad, imitating how my dad walks. But then she has this physical strength. It's kind of my reaction to his disability.

Cooper: Wow, interesting. I had no idea. What was his thought when he first saw that character being developed?

Shannon: He loved it. He would let me do whatever I wanted. He was like, "Oh, you can always tell stories about me. Do anything. Maybe it'll help people." He always gave me free creative rein to do whatever I want and tell the stories I wanted to because he thought it could help people.

Cooper: Wow, nice. Is he still alive?

Shannon: No, he died when he was 72, in 2002.

Cooper: And how old were you when the accident occurred?

Shannon: Four.

Cooper: So you barely remembered your mother?

Shannon: Oh, I remember her, but I was very little.

Cooper: That's really—that's a really young age. Did he remarry?

Shannon: No, he did not remarry. He just raised us girls.

Cooper: How do you feel about the thoughts of growing up with just the father figure?

Shannon: He really did the best he could. It was great. He had to do the jobs of both mother and father. He did a great job. That was hard, what he did, having to take us to school every day and keep the house clean and make dinner. He did a great job.

Cooper: Sounds like a nice person. And your siblings?

Molly Shannon: My sister Mary, my dad raised my sister Mary and I.

Cooper: What kind of career did she go into?

Shannon: She's not in show business.

Cooper: What state were you in when you grew up?

Shannon: Ohio.

Cooper: As a kid you got into theater?

Shannon: I did. I did play at a place called Heights Youth Theatre. It was really popular theater where they did plays like *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Oliver!* I auditioned; and I got the part of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. I think I was in fifth grade. That was a really big deal. I continued to do plays, like in *Alice in Wonderland*. I played the White Rabbit. We would do it at these theaters and hundreds of kids would come. I started doing that when I was in about fifth grade, local theater. I loved it.

Cooper: So you got the bug early, then.

Shannon: Mm-hmm, I did, yeah. And then my friend, Ann, and I were always putting on shows in our backyard and making up little dances and stuff like that.

Cooper: (laughs) I can imagine. Did you get to reach out and stay connected with any of the friends you grew up with who were part of that?

Shannon: I do. I'm still friends with my friend Allison and I still speak to Ann. So two of my really close friends from growing up I'm still in touch with, yeah.

Cooper: That's always nice, to not lose touch of those innocent times.

Shannon: Yeah, exactly!

Cooper: Do you have any ideas of what you'll be doing next year?

Shannon: No, not that far in advance.

Cooper: Anything you're doing in the sense of nonprofit work?

Shannon: Nonprofit work? Let's see. Well, my husband and I are very involved in donating to Heal the Bay. My husband is a big environmentalist, and we like to do that, for cleaning.

Cooper: How did it come about with the royal wedding? Whose idea was that?

Shannon: Oh, with the royal wedding? Will and I have been friends for years, so that was just an idea that came from—through my friendship with Will. He was talking. Will and I are friends, and that was so fun doing that. I loved doing it. It was very exciting. It was just—I loved doing that. I love performing with Will.

Cooper: Was that improv or scripted?

Shannon: It's a little bit of both.

Cooper: It was really done well. I stumbled upon it not knowing what I was watching. It was really good.

Shannon: Thank you! That's so sweet!

Cooper: Thank you for being so funny. We both know Peggy Lane, she will be on

our next issue, how did you two meet?



PEGGY LANE AND MOLLY SHANNON

Shannon: I think we met years ago on *Will & Grace*, she was working on *Will & Grace*. She's just the nicest person, so kind and so talented. But I believe I met her on *Will & Grace*. She might know better, but I'm almost sure that's it. She's such a good actress.

Cooper: She says the same about you, how wonderful of a person you are, how kind and sweet.

Shannon: Oh, that's so sweet!

Cooper: One story she tells is the nomination where you nominated *Donna On The Go*.

Shannon: Oh, yeah, I did. I thought it was so good. It was so funny. I was so impressed. Wait, what was the question?

Cooper: It was more of a statement, but you can continue with your thought.

Shannon: I thought it was so good, and I was so proud of Peggy. She's such a talented filmmaker, and she's so funny. And I'm so impressed that she made that movie. It was just fantastic.

Cooper: Do you know what kind of equipment she used?

Shannon: No.

Cooper: That was—I was so—I couldn't believe she did this. What you saw with the runway scene with the wheelchair, that was—everything was filmed on an iPhone.

Shannon: Oh, my God! Are you serious?

Cooper: I couldn't believe that.

Shannon: That's amazing.

Cooper: And just one. There weren't even two phones, just one phone, one angle with several cuts.

Shannon: Oh, my God, that's amazing!

Cooper: This is her third season of producing that.

Shannon: That's amazing! That's incredible!

Cooper: She mentioned that she does some coaching as well. Was that—

Shannon: She does. She helped me—she does do coaching, and she's so good. When I auditioned for *Divorce*, I got asked to audition to read for my part, Diane; and Peggy is the one who helped me so much. We kept going over it and over it, doing it again and again, practicing and practicing and practicing. So when I flew to New York to audition, Peggy and I had that down pat. She had helped me so much. She helped me get that job. That's because of Peggy.

Cooper: That's a great endorsement for Peggy.

Shannon: Yeah. One hundred percent due to Peggy.

Cooper: She'll really be pleased to read that!

Shannon: Oh, yeah, yeah. I just adore Peggy. She's such a special person. I think she's so talented. I just—I love working with her, having her coach me. And I'm so proud of her movie. I thought it was just spectacular.

Cooper: Do you go back and forth between LA and New York?

Shannon: I do. I live in LA, but I do have to—I shoot *Divorce* in New York when I work. I just fly back and forth. It's not so bad because I just work a few days here and a few days there. It's a little bit hard for a short period of time I'm flying back and forth a lot, but we make it work as a family.

Cooper: How many children do you have?

Shannon: I have two kids, my daughter Stella who's 14 and a son Nolan who's 13.

Cooper: And what kind of work do the kids do?

Shannon: (laughs) They're little kids!

Cooper: Get 'em to work! (laughs) Do they have any inkling to go into ether comedy or acting?



Shannon: Yeah, my daughter loves theater. She does theater at school. My son as of now has no interest in that.

Cooper: Can you see working with your daughter at some point?

Shannon: Oh, my God, well, yes, if she decided to go into show business, sure!

Cooper: Any other things you are doing?

Shannon: This other show I have is called *The Other Two*. That'll be premiering on Comedy Central, I think it's in January. That'll be really good. I think I'm going to do another episode of *Will & Grace*, I'm really excited about that. And what else?

I have a movie coming out on Netflix called *Private Life*. It comes out in October. It's really good, so good. It's with Katheryn Hahn and Paul Giamatti. And I'm going to New York next week to do press for that. It's excellent. It's about a modern marriage and a couple struggling with infertility. And Comedy Central's *The Other Two*, I play the mother to an up-and-coming pop superstar, like a Midwestern mom who's son is becoming almost like the next Justin Bieber.

Cooper: And having to deal with instant fame?

Shannon: Exactly.

Cooper: Interesting. You've got a lot on your plate. You'll be traveling, doing press junkets on those things?

Shannon: Yes, I'll do a lot of talk shows. It's fun.

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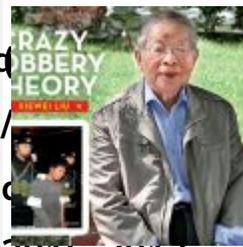
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