



"It's an honor to work and hang out with him," says McHale of Chase. "He's a really good guy."

With a fall-down-funny role in NBC's freshman sitcom **COMMUNITY**, *SNL* alum Chevy Chase is finally...

READY FOR

Chevy Chase, 66, hasn't been a regular on network TV since his mid-70's glory days on *Saturday Night Live* (we won't count his disastrous 1993 late-night talk show). But after a well-received guest shot last season on *Chuck*, he's joined the cast of NBC's fall sitcom *Community*, playing the oldest (and possibly creepiest) guy in a college study group led by *The Soup*'s Joel McHale. We recently caught up with Chase in L.A.

You've had plenty of opportunities to do prime-time series over the years. Why did you choose this one? Frankly, I never thought I would be doing a sitcom. But I read the script and it made me laugh

PRIME TIME

By Joe Rhodes

out loud. I thought it was intelligent and funny writing. And had a little acid in it, you know? And it's funny because doing a TV series really was the last thing on my mind. I was enjoying my retirement, sort of, in the Northeast with my daughters and my wife, making a picture here and there. But this struck me as something that might really have legs. So I just thought, hell, get in there.

Anything in particular about the character,

Pierce Hawthorne, that made you want to play him? When I read the first line, which is him introducing himself to the study group. It was, "Pierce Hawthorne, good to meet you and, yes, that is Hawthorne as in Hawthorne Wipes, the award-winning moist towelette." And I thought, what a strange line. And what a funny character who could care about that and be filled with some sort of braggadocio about something so silly. I could see how this character could develop into something a little broader than any character I've played before. But not in a Clark Griswoldian way.

Do you and Joel ever talk about the similarities between what he does on *The Soup* and what you did on "Weekend Update"? I've seen Joel's show maybe once. It's not a show I watch, only because I don't know many of the reference points. I don't watch much TV. But in a sense, you're right, because both involve addressing the audience directly through the camera.

Has he tried to get you to appear on *The Soup*? No, he hasn't. But every time he goes off to tape an episode, I say to him, "Don't forget to mention my name."

As the wise old veteran in the cast, do the other actors ever ask for stories from *SNL* or "Fletch"? None of them were alive when I was doing *SNL*. They do insist on calling me Mr. Chase, which is already offensive. So I just turn my back to them. I'm joking, of course. But, no, it doesn't come up very often. Although it does appear that Joel knows every single line from "Fletch." If I were them, I wouldn't want to spend my time sycophantically

talking to the old guy. I'd want to spend my time worrying about my lines.

You seemed more relaxed about all of this than you used to be. I am. I have a very happy family and home life. I could never work again and be fine with it. But when something like this comes along that I think is gonna be good and also fun, I want to latch on.

COMMUNITY Premieres September 24, 9:30/8:30c, NBC and will be online at hulu.com and nbc.com