



Happy Place

Glencoe native David Caspe doesn't take himself too seriously, which is hilarious.

| By Jessica Radloff |

Happy endings? More like happy beginnings. New Trier grad David Caspe, 34, has had a very successful run in the five years since he moved to Los Angeles, but don't expect him to brag about it. Appreciative of his "rapid" success, Caspe's third season of the set-in-Chicago *Happy Endings* (he's creator, co-executive producer and writer of the ABC sitcom) premieres this month, and he's hard at work on a *Hangover*-esque woman-centric film, starring Charlize Theron. We sit down to chat...

ACTING OUT

David Caspe on the set of *Happy Endings*

You started out as a painter. Obviously you have the creative gene, but how did you go from painting to writing and producing? When I went to grad school, I started getting away from painting and getting more into video art. Then I started writing stories and eventually moved to L.A., where I sold a couple of scripts. *Happy Endings* was my first foray into television. I'm so thankful.

What was your dream job growing up, and how does it compare to now? My dream job was to be Bruce Springsteen, but my music just wasn't as good! I sort of find music and writing and TV to be all in the same world. I just wanted to make a living making stuff.

Being Jewish, and having already worked with Adam Sandler and Andy Samberg, what do you think about writing a Hanukkah comedy? I think it's way overdue. A Hanukkah movie! That's a pretty good point. I will look into it. We're a [small demographic], although Sandler did the animated *Eight Crazy Nights*, which was great. But I'm into it! [laughs]

You once said that Chicago for a 30-year-old is more relatable to viewers than a 30-year-old in New York or L.A. How so? It seemed to me, just from a storytelling standpoint, that the big life occasions tend to happen in

Chicago at closer to the age as the rest of the country versus New York and L.A. I also just tend to place everything in Chicago because I love Chicago!

Steve Levitan, who co-created *Modern Family*, is also from Chicago. Did you ever reach out to him for advice? He was kind enough to take me out for drinks and give me advice on how to run a show and what to go for in the second season. That was so great of him.

What's your biggest pinch-me moment so far? All of it, although definitely working with Adam Sandler on [this summer's *That's My Boy*]. He was hilarious, gracious, hard-working and loyal.

Knowing what you know now, what advice do you wish you could give your younger self? Although I wish I could have figured it out at 22, I think the stuff that I tried to do in my early 20s finally led me to where I am now. It contributed to my ability to do this job in the first place. Not to mention, I had a great time doing a lot of that other stuff. Some of the best three years I've ever had were being a painter in New York, just like being in a band in Chicago. As much as there were moments where it was like, 'What the f--- am I doing?' and that's very stressful, I wouldn't trade any of it. It all led to everything.

CASPE'S NORTH SHORE FAVORITES

I love Sarkis Café in Evanston for breakfast, as well as a cheeseburger place called Michael's in Highland Park. Ravinia is a very cool outdoor venue.