

"CADDYSHACK"

LIVE -- FROM HOLLYWOOD --

IT'S "CADDYSHACK"

The suave fall guy from "Saturday Night Live," the same series' misfit movie critic, the anchor man from "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and the self-styled star of "stage, screen and beer commercials" are together again -- for the first time -- in "Caddyshack."

Chevy Chase, Bill Murray, Ted Knight and Rodney Dangerfield tee off in the wacky salute to golf mania, an Orion Pictures release through Warner Bros. And while the quartet's comic styles are wildly divergent, they do owe a common allegiance.

To television.

As charter members of the "Not Ready For Prime Time Players," both Chase and Murray come out of the Saturday Night showcase that mined more fresh comedy talent than any series in the medium's history...a program Chase once called "an insomniac's dream."

His departure to star in "Foul Play," he admits, was more like a nightmare.

"I took a lot of flak for leaving the show at its peak,"

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he recalls. "But I think we all anticipated that if 'Saturday Night' caught on, we would have some difficult career choices to make.

"I was lucky because my name came up on every show," he continues, alluding to the catch phrase which opened the weekly news segment -- "Hello, I'm Chevy Chase -- and you're not."

"Once the public knew who John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd, Gilda Radner and Bill Murray were, they were inundated with movie offers."

And screen comedy became rapidly richer.

In "Caddyshack," Chase portrays playboy Ty Webb, a young man with the easy elegance of old money. He is a consummate golfer, who practice uncanny trick shots from daybreak till dark. His well-tailored wardrobe never reveals a wrinkle. Beautiful girls lure him to bed, rather than vice versa.

But when circumstance slips a banana peel in his path -- in the form of a challenge match with more than mere money at stake -- he stumbles the way Chase used to, every week, on NBC.

"What I love about the role is that Ty Webb is a note of sanity ... in an otherwise insane comedy," he says.

That madness is personfied by Bill Murray as the assistant greenskeeper of "Caddyshack's" mythical locale, the Bushwood Country Club. Like such "Saturday Night" stalwarts as his leering lounge entertainer and his starry-eyed movie

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critic, Murray's greenskeeper is willing but weird.

Dressed in a battered old hat, soiled tee shirt and filthy fatigues from some long-ago war, he wanders around the Bushwood fairways, ogling girls, distracting duffers and attempting to carry out his "mission."

"I'm around to kill the gophers who've burrowed under the course," says Murray. "At first, I think they mean kill the 'golfers,' but that's okay, too. A man has to do his job, right?"

Once he learns that it's gophers he's after, Murray pursues them with a growing arsenal of insane weapons -- a fire hose, a sniper scope and finally a cache of high explosives which destroys the course.

Murray's favorite scene comes when Chase slices a drive through his bedroom window, asks to play through, then gets high on "grass" that the greenskeeper grows himself on the fifteenth fairway.

"We took this crazy conversation as a departure point and winged it," he recalls. "It was like the old days."

There was a touch of the "old days" in Ted Knight's performance, as well. Judge Smails, the arrogant, egocentric, pompous and petty-minded golf nut he portrays, could easily be a second cousin to Ted Baxter, the nitwit newsman from "The Mary Tyler Moore Show."

Knight says that he will be eternally grateful to Ted Baxter for showing the world -- and especially its casting directors -- that he could play comedy.

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"Until then, I'd done mostly villains -- including a lot of Nazis," he recalls. "I patterned Ted Baxter on a Los Angeles newsman, who will have to remain nameless because otherwise he would sue me. He had this golden voice, with which he made the silliest stories sound like earth-shaking events.

"He also regarded himself as a super patriot. After every newscast, he would stand up and salute the flag."

While Ted Knight was never actually a TV commentator he still receives letters from people who recall that he anchored the nightly news in their own communities.

"I guess there are a lot of 'Ted Baxters' around," he points out.

Having made the transition to movies, he insists that he has no intention of doing another TV series. "Unless, of course, they offer me the studio, a beautiful home in Malibu, a private Lear jet and pay to have my children's teeth capped," he adds, dropping his voice two resonant octaves.

For Rodney Dangerfield, co-starring in "Caddyshack" is a new peak in a lifelong search for respect. While he has never done a TV series, his hangdog expression has become familiar to most viewers via the talk-show circuit -- including multiple Johnny Carson appearances -- and beer commercials.

His "Caddyshack" role, as a diamond-in-the-rough property developer who intrudes on the peace and quiet of

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the upper crust country club, fits him like the checked jackets and plaid plus-fours he wears throughout.

"I did one picture before this," he notes. "It was so bad they showed it on an airplane and people walked out of the theatre."

Otherwise, he has concentrated on the Las Vegas-Tahoe night-club circuit, his own saloon in Manhattan, frequent television appearances and "gigs" like the 1978 Harvard commencement ceremonies where he offered these words of wisdom to the graduating class:

"I don't know the first thing about extentialism, but it sounds like it could be my bag."

His reason for agreeing to co-star in "Caddyshack," he insists, was "because I wanted to hang around with some class guys, for a change. Take Chevy Chase, for instance.

He's got couth he hasn't even used yet."

There was also a promise from Dangerfield's agent. "He told me if I did good in this picture, I could break into radio."

"Caddyshack," a Jon Peters production for Orion Pictures release through Warner Bros., stars Chevy Chase, Rodney Dangerfield, Ted Knight, Michael O'Keefe and Bill Murray as Carl. Produced by Douglas Kenney with Jon Peters serving as executive producer, the film was directed by Harold Ramis and written by Brian Doyle-Murray & Harold Ramis & Douglas Kenney. Original songs are by Kenny Loggins, with music composed by Johnny Mandel.

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