



**Thrilling Combination**  
“It’s been such a joyous experience working with this group,” says Eugene Levy (top left, with Catherine O’Hara, son Dan Levy and Annie Murphy). “It was so much fun to come to work every day.”



How *Schitt’s Creek*, a little feel-good TV show, became a global sensation — and turned its cast into the toast of Tinseltown

By **GILLIAN TELLING**

# Schitt’s & Giggles

“If you told me last year what my schedule was going to be like these past few weeks, I never would’ve believed you,” says Annie Murphy, 33, who for six seasons has played the lovably vapid former wild child Alexis Rose on Pop TV’s hit show *Schitt’s Creek*. Recent events for Murphy and her castmates Catherine O’Hara, 65, Eugene Levy, 73, and the show’s co-creator (and Eugene’s son) Dan Levy, 36, include the Critics’ Choice Awards (where Nicole Kidman stopped them to gush) as well as appearances on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *Today*, *The Tonight Show* and at the SAG Awards, where they were nominated for Best Ensemble in a Comedy Series and O’Hara for Best Female Actor. “It’s been amazing to see how the philosophy, the joy of the show, has found people,” Dan says of its rising popularity. When *Schitt’s Creek*—the story of a rich fam-

PHOTOGRAPH BY COREY NICKOLS  
CONTOUR VIA GETTY IMAGES



ily who lost all their money and had to move to a small town they'd once bought as a joke—debuted in 2015, it had a small-but-steady fan base; when Netflix began streaming it in 2017, it became a worldwide sensation. Now the number of people tuning in to Pop TV each week to watch its sixth and final season continues to grow exponentially, and celebs like Elton John and Jennifer Lawrence openly rave about the comedy. Fans are so die-hard that Dan says they're already asking for a reboot. "It went from people finding it entertaining and saying, 'Yeah it's a funny show,' to saying, 'I need this show.'"

Below, the four stars open up about the history of *Schitt's*—and what it was like to be on a comedy series that proves humor, humanity and the love of family are more important than ever.

**When Dan and Eugene first shopped the idea for the show, everyone passed except CBC in Canada and Pop TV in America. For that they're grateful.** "Everything happens for a reason," says Dan, a former MTV Canada host turned screenwriter. "As someone creating television, you realize how important it is to find a network who will support your idea 100 percent. The reality is you never know if a show's going to be a hit. We certainly didn't know it about our show." "But once people got hooked onto the premise that the stories were about *who* people are,



↑ **Moira's Comeback**  
In the current season, former actress Moira (Catherine O'Hara) and her family attempt to watch the trailer for her big comeback in the horror film *The Crowning*.

not *what* they are, it mushroomed from there," says Eugene. Adds Murphy: "I always knew it was going to be a hit. With the names Catherine O'Hara and Eugene Levy attached to it? Come on!"

**They can't get used to their newfound attention.** "I used to mostly get people named Kevin who'd come up to me and ask me to yell 'Kevin!' in their faces," says O'Hara (who portrays the supremely stylish matriarch Moira, a former actress with a penchant for drama), referring to her famous line in *Home Alone*. "Now it's mostly about Moira and *Schitt's Creek*. I've never gotten this kind of attention in my life. It's crazy." Adds Eugene, who plays the stoic and protective father, Johnny: "The awareness of it is hitting an all-time high. You can feel it on the street, bumping into people who are telling you how much they love it. It started in season 4 and has been a nice uphill ride ever since." And it's not just North American audiences who are lapping it up either. "I was in Japan recently, and fans came up to me," says Dan. "And Italy. I remember thinking, 'This is absolutely insane.'"

**Though the show is about rich city people who move to a small town, the goal was never to mock the locals—it was to highlight their humanity.**

"Isn't it funny we would expect them [to be portrayed as yokels]?" says O'Hara, of the *Schitt's Creek* townsfolk who are welcoming and

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: POP TV/SHUTTERSTOCK



Johnny (Eugene Levy) and Moira (O'Hara), wearing one of her beloved wigs in season 5.

embracing of their new residents. "Small towns equal small minds?" No. That's not true." "It really is the four of us who are the butt of the joke," Murphy adds. And this was always Dan's intention when writing the show. "Somehow that has become the 'expected' thing to do—to have the small-town people be 'less than' the big-city folks. We wanted to flip that on its head and have the Roses be the people who had to change, to have to learn and grow," Dan says. "The town itself is so progressive in its thinking and its level of acceptance that the Roses can't help but become better people because of it."

**'It went from people saying, "It's a funny show" to saying, "I need this show"'**

—DAN LEVY

**The cast believe there's a link between their show's popularity and the current political climate.** Dan, who plays David Rose, a high-fashion former art-gallerist who finds true love for the very first time with his new business partner Patrick (played by Noah Reid; see sidebar), says he noticed the show becoming more popular as news around the world darkened. "When you can provide any kind of joy for people in a time where there is not a lot of joy to be found in the news... it was interesting to track that shift with the changing political landscape," he says. He adds that the town of *Schitt's Creek* is the type of world we should all strive to live in. "It's a pretty high-functioning place. It's shown that if you embrace people's differences and support people for their differences and ultimately empathize with people instead of turning on people, you're only going to be left with a positive experience, a really supportive place to develop and find yourself."



Patrick (Noah Reid) proposes to David (Dan Levy) in season 5.

## Why Dan Never Focused on His Character's Sexuality

Dan was honored with a GLAAD award in September for his work on *Schitt's Creek*, where one of the most buzzed-about story lines revolves around two characters who just happen to be male and in love. "I had no intention of showing homophobia or bigotry on the show," he says. "We try to show, by example, the transformational effects that loving openly and wholly, without any kind of deterrent or danger, can have on a person. If you're force-feeding someone a lesson, you're going to face resistance, but if you can just show people how life *should* be, then they can't help but open themselves up to it."

**The show ends for good on April 7—and future plans for the cast are already underway.**

"I personally wouldn't want to top this experience right away," says O'Hara, who admits she's insisting that whatever character she plays next wears stylish clothes like Moira. "I couldn't carry off a lot of Moira's wardrobe, but once you've worn well-built clothes that make you stand and feel so much better, it's hard to go back." Eugene says he's happy to just play some golf. "I have my golf foursome that I've been away from for a while. And I'll spend some more time with my wife, Deb, maybe do some traveling. It's nice to get up in the morning and just have 'Where do we go to lunch?' be the main thing on your plate." Dan, who created NBC's upcoming Fran Drescher comedy *Indebted* and recently signed a three-year deal with ABC to develop and produce scripted shows, is going to continue to act as well, as is Murphy, who is moving to Los Angeles from her native Canada. "I mean, I know I've already peaked, and it's all downhill from here, but I want to keep working," she says. "So if you have any friends in film school... I am here!" ●



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**Hollywood Darlings**  
"So this happened," Dan Levy said on Instagram of the cast's posing with their fan Nicole Kidman at the Critics' Choice Awards.



## Meet the Schitt's Creek Locals

**NOAH REID**  
as Patrick Brewer  
David's business partner and fiancé has a secret musical side.

**JENNIFER ROBERTSON**  
as Jocelyn Schitt  
The wife of Roland, Jocelyn always practices tolerance—even when Moira drives her crazy.

**SARAH LEVY**  
as Twyla Sands  
Yep, the Cafe Tropical waitress is Eugene's daughter and Dan's real-life sister.

**CHRIS ELLIOTT**  
as Roland Schitt  
The town's mayor has no filter and doesn't care if he insults you.

**EMILY HAMPSHIRE**  
as Stevie Budd  
David's best friend is sarcastic but inwardly sensitive.

**DUSTIN MILLIGAN**  
as Ted Mullens  
The veterinarian proves to Alexis it's better to be with a good man than a rich one.