

= Chuck Versus the Intersect =

" Chuck Versus the Intersect " is the pilot episode of the American action @-@ comedy television series Chuck . The episode was directed by McG and written by series co @-@ creators Josh Schwartz and Chris Fedak . It originally aired on September 24 , 2007 .

The series follows the adventures of Chuck Bartowski (Zachary Levi) , a computer geek and member of a Geek Squad @-@ type electronics retail chain (the Nerd Herd) , who downloads the Intersect , a top @-@ secret government database , into his brain . Chuck soon finds himself on a date with Sarah Walker (Yvonne Strahovski) , who is revealed to be a CIA agent assigned , along with veteran National Security Agency (NSA) agent Major John Casey (Adam Baldwin) , to capture Chuck . The episode also introduces series regulars Joshua Gomez and Sarah Lancaster as Chuck 's best friend and older sister , Morgan Grimes and Ellie Bartowski , respectively . Guest stars include Matthew Bomer as Bryce Larkin , Chuck 's college roommate @-@ turned @-@ nemesis and the CIA agent who emails him the Intersect , Wendy Makkena as the National Intelligence Director , Tony Todd as CIA Director Langston Graham , C.S. Lee as Harry Tang , Dale Dye as General Stanfield , and Nickolas Pajon as Vuc Andric .

" Chuck Versus the Intersect " received mixed reviews from critics , though most writers praised the casting of the series , or at least that of Zachary Levi . According to the Nielsen ratings system , the pilot drew 9 @. @ 21 million viewers , a series high .

= = Plot = =

In Echo Park , California , Chuck Bartowski (Zachary Levi) and his best friend Morgan Grimes (Joshua Gomez) make an unsuccessful attempt to escape Chuck 's birthday party hosted by his sister Ellie (Sarah Lancaster) . Despite the efforts of Ellie and her boyfriend , " Captain Awesome " (Ryan McPartlin) , for Chuck to socialize with the party 's female guests , Chuck dispels the women by explaining how years earlier his Stanford University roommate , Bryce Larkin (Matthew Bomer) , had him expelled and began a relationship with Chuck 's girlfriend , Jill Roberts .

Meanwhile , Bryce , a rogue CIA agent , is shown breaking into a top @-@ secret government computer center and downloading a vast amount of data to his PDA before destroying the computer . As Bryce attempts to escape , he is shot dead by NSA agent Major John Casey (Adam Baldwin) , but not before emailing the data to Chuck and self @-@ destructing his PDA . After viewing the rapid series of images , Chuck experiences a series of " flashes " of data , triggered by things he hears and sees , including a strange man (Nickolas Pajon) .

In Washington , D.C. , Casey is informed by the National Security Director (Wendy Makkena) and CIA Director Langston Graham (Tony Todd) that the computer Bryce destroyed was a government database called the Intersect , which the NSA and CIA used as a joint resource to identify threats to the government . Casey is ordered to track down the recipient of Bryce 's email in California .

At work at the Buy More , Chuck is approached at the Nerd Herd counter by Sarah Walker (Yvonne Strahovski) . After Chuck fixes Sarah 's phone , she leaves him her phone number , but he decides not to call her . He arrives home to find an intruder stealing his computer . After the computer is dropped and destroyed , the intruder escapes and is revealed to be Sarah , a CIA agent .

Sarah takes Chuck on a date to find out what he knows . Sarah spots and quickly dispatches an NSA team following but flees with Chuck when she spots Casey . Sarah leads Chuck up to the top floor of a skyscraper and attempts to call in an evacuation while Chuck explains what happened when he uploaded the Intersect . Sarah then aims her gun at Chuck when Casey arrives on the roof . Sarah warns Casey that Chuck uploaded the Intersect and tells Chuck that their mutual friend Bryce is dead . Chuck then flashes on the building where the visiting General Stanfield (Dale Dye) is giving an address and puts together all the pieces from the flashes he had been having : the stranger in the Large Mart is a demolitions expert and has set a bomb to destroy the conference . Chuck , Sarah , and Casey locate the bomb in the conference hall and Chuck defuses the bomb by deliberately infecting the machine with a computer virus .

Sarah reassures Chuck that he will remain at the Buy More , while she and Casey watch over him .

He is to work with them until they can discover a way for the Intersect to be removed from his brain . All she asks is that Chuck trust her .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception = = =

Chuck was conceived by Josh Schwartz and Chris Fedak . NBC initially gave the series a put pilot commitment before green lighting a pilot order in January 2007 . Schwartz and Fedak both attended the University of Southern California and the latter pitched the idea to Schwartz who agreed to develop the project with him . The hour @-@ long , high @-@ concept action @-@ comedy , described in press releases as being " in the vein of Grosse Pointe Blank " , would revolve around a man who downloads the entire CIA and NSA databases into his head . Schwartz signed a three @-@ year , seven @-@ figure overall deal with Warner Bros. Television to write and executive produce the series with Fedak .

Schwartz has stated that he set the series at an electronics store to compliment Chuck :

I think the big @-@ box culture is very much a way that we live our lives right now . And in trying to figure out what was sort of the best home for a character like Chuck , the Nerd Herd -- obviously inspired by such things as the Geek Squad [of the consumer electronics store Best Buy] -- felt like a really natural environment for him . I also liked that even in the uniforms that the Nerd Herd guys have to wear , they kind of resemble G @-@ men from 1950s FBI movies . So there 's a lot of components , both visually and in terms of his character , that were really appealing about setting it there .

= = = Casting = = =

Zachary Levi was the first actor to be cast in the series , before any other roles had been cast . Schwartz said that casting the role of Chuck was difficult , but Levi was perfect because you " could believe he was a social outcast , but still got the girl . " Adam Baldwin was cast as John Casey shortly thereafter on February 8 , 2007 . Fedak always had Baldwin in mind for the role and the producers found that the actor was a " perfect fit " for the character during the first casting session . On February 12 , 2007 , Australian actress Yvonne Strahovski was announced for what was then the role of Sarah Kent , joining Levi and Adam Baldwin . Prior to beginning of filming the character 's name was changed to Sarah Walker . Strahovski was unable to come to the United States for the audition , so the producers allowed her to audition via the internet .

In March , Sarah Lancaster , Joshua Gomez and Natalie Martinez were cast as Ellie Bartowski (Chuck 's older sister) , Morgan Pace (Chuck 's best friend) , and Kayla Hart (Chuck 's neighbor and love interest) , respectively . Gomez decided he wanted to be part of the pilot after reading there was a ninja in the script . Tony Todd and Wendy Makkena were cast as CIA Director Graham and the National Intelligence Director , General Mary Beckman . The casting for Beckman was narrowed to Makkena and Bonita Friedericy , with Mekenna ultimately being chosen . However , Mekenna only appeared in the pilot , and was replaced in the following episode by Friedericy as General Diane Beckman .

Morgan 's surname was changed to " Grimes " before filming , and Sarah 's to " Walker " . Despite Natalie Martinez appearing in promotional cast photographs , the character Kayla Hart was dropped before filming . Hart , the owner of the club where Sarah and Chuck first encounter Casey , was intended to be a rival for Chuck 's affections . However , Fedak and Schwartz found it too unlikely and too complicated to the storyline that two women would be pining over Chuck . Additionally , Captain Awesome was originally planned to be an enemy agent but his portrayal by Ryan McPartlin was so well received that this storyline was also abandoned .

= = = Filming = = =

McG , Schwartz 's fellow executive producer on The O.C. , directed the pilot and consequently became an executive producer (via his production company , Wonderland Sound and Vision) , along with Fedak , Peter Johnson , Scott Rosenbaum , Matthew Miller and Allison Adler . NBC gave the series an early pick @-@ up and a thirteen @-@ episode order on May 10 , 2007 .

McG said he felt the appeal of the series was its mix of an " Office style comedy " and an action series , and added that Chuck 's work place " is designed to be as dangerous as the spy world . " Although Chuck 's apartment is set in Echo Park , the pilot was shot in El Cabrillo in Hollywood . After the series was picked up , the apartment and the building 's courtyard were re @-@ created on a Warner Bros. soundstage . The exterior shots of the Burbank Buy More where Chuck and Morgan work are of a former Mervyn 's store in the Fallbrook Mall in Canoga Park . Chuck 's fingers are bandaged at one point due to injuries Zachary Levi sustained while playing Call of Duty .

= = Music and cultural references = = =

The music of Chuck has been described as " a blending of generic action soundtracks with Schwartz 's penchant for good , pretty obscure bands " such as Foreign Born and The Shins . Journey 's song " Any Way You Want It " is featured as Chuck 's ringtone . Other songs include " Cobrastyle " by Teddybears , " Cellphone 's Dead " by Beck , " Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is " by Jet , " See the World " by Gomez , " For A Fistful of Dollars " by Ennio Morricone , and " The Missionary " by Brothers Martin .

The pilot also establishes the series ' tendency to reference popular culture . Schwartz has revealed in interviews that the Buy More is based on consumer electronics stores such as Best Buy , while the Nerd Herd is inspired by the Best Buy subsidiary Geek Squad . When Sarah walks into the Buy More , Chuck and Morgan reference Prince 's song " Batdance " . Chuck and Morgan also continuously play Call of Duty . A North by Northwest poster is shown in Chuck 's room .

= = Reception = =

The series premiered on broadcast television at 8pm EST on September 24 , 2007 , after having been screened to overwhelmingly positive reception at the San Diego Comic @-@ Con International . According to the Nielsen ratings system , the pilot episode drew an estimated 9 @. @ 21 million viewers , a series high .

" Chuck Versus the Intersect " received mostly positive reviews from critics , with several praising the casting of the series , especially that of Zachary Levi . Eric Goldman of IGN gave the episode a rating of 9 out of 10 , writing , " Schwartz and Fedak 's script for the Chuck pilot is very strong , deftly mixing action and humor . Where Schwartz 's other new series , Gossip Girl , could use more of the humor he brought to The O.C. , Chuck does a great job capturing the wit and self @-@ awareness Schwartz 's previous series contained . " Varun Lella of AOL TV criticized the episode 's opening as being " a weak gag " , though writing that " the ensuing moments were hilarious enough to almost erase the poorly executed opening moments . " Stephen Lackey of Mania called the pilot better than he expected , as well as " energetic , cinematic , and quite funny . " Television Without Pity gave the episode an A- on a scale of A + to F.

The Columbus Dispatch called the pilot " delightful " , writing , " Chuck has good nerd jokes , a winning everyman who is easy to root for , a hot blonde , ninja fighting and a backward car chase . " The newspaper praised the performance by the main cast , especially Zachary Levi , who it wrote " should soon be a pleasant surprise to audiences . " The paper called the episode " deftly directed by " McG , who kept " things from becoming too silly or far @-@ fetched . " Robert Bianco of USA Today gave the episode an overwhelmingly positive review , writing , " Everyday superheroes are , of course , a recurring TV fantasy , but seldom has the genre shown as much pluck as Chuck , and seldom has it found a more agreeable hero than Zachary Levi ... Levi needs only a few minutes here to convince you of his wider range and lay claim on breakout stardom . "

Steven Hyden of The A.V. Club gave the episode a negative review , rating it as a C- . Hyden

criticized Levi as being " likeable but unconvincing playing a loser who hasn 't had a girlfriend in five years " and Levi and Gomez as " blandly recreating Judd Apatow 's loser heroes without any of the authentic details " , though calling Baldwin 's performance " one of the few bright spots " . Katey Rich of Television Blend wrote that the episode , like Chuck , was " gangly and awkward " and " a lot to swallow in a pilot episode , not to mention totally implausible . " However , Rich concluded that the series showed comedic promise and was loved by its audience , " while not necessarily being a slam dunk . "

For the pilot , editor Norman Buckley won the Award for Best Edited One @-@ Hour Series for Commercial Television at the 2007 American Cinema Editors Awards . " Chuck Versus the Intersect " was also nominated for Outstanding Main Title Design at the 60th Primetime Emmy Awards .