



Tracy Morgan portrays gym teacher Freddie Crawford, who gets caught up in the hype around a rumble between two of his colleagues in *Fist Fight*.

Despite his initial doubts, Hollywood has not forgotten about Morgan. From his hilarious appearances on the '90s TV show *Martin* to his side-splitting skits on the series *Saturday Night Live* to his Emmy-nominated work on the satirical sitcom *30 Rock*, the Bronx-bred entertainer is still in high demand and funny as ever.

"I have faith that God didn't leave me, and he didn't take my sense of humor from me. But I've been reassured," he says.

In *Fist Fight*, Morgan plays a controlling gym teacher with a passion for health, wellness and his students. When one of his colleagues, a mild-mannered teacher (Charlie Day), gets an intimidating instructor (Ice Cube) fired, the teacher is challenged to a brawl after the final school bell rings.

The news of the upcoming battle sparks a social media frenzy, and the hashtag #TeacherFight starts trending like crazy. What was initially a lax day for Morgan's character and the students suddenly turns into the most anticipated school event of the year.

"You know how many fights I had at 3 o'clock after school? You know how many fights you watch at 3 o'clock after school? With teachers? Oh, I thought that was comedic genius," Morgan raves.

The script wasn't the only aspect of the project he was thrilled about. He was also excited to share the screen again with Ice Cube, whom he'd worked with in the 2008 film *First Sunday*.

"It felt really great to come back and do another movie and on top of that with Ice Cube and Charlie Day," the 48-year-old says. "We had a good time. People asked how I was doing all the time and really took care of me. If I said 'ouch' on the set, people were concerned."

These days, Morgan takes it one day at a time. While his purpose to bring laughter to the world has always been crystal clear to him, he doesn't take it for granted anymore. He's even more focused, and his faith is even greater now. That's his new approach.

And that fear he had about returning to the spotlight? It has dissipated. He exudes confidence.

"It really feels good to be back, but after the general response, you have to be funny. I'm just glad that my magic is still there."

***Fist Fight* hits theaters Feb. 17.**

# FIRST LOOK: *FIST FIGHT*

TRACY MORGAN IS BACK AND BRINGING THE FUNNY IN HIS FIRST BIG-SCREEN APPEARANCE SINCE HIS CAR ACCIDENT

By **NAJJA PARKER**

**T**racy Morgan didn't know if he still had it. It was fall of 2015, about one year after the comedian had been involved in the six-car collision that left him comatose for more than a week and his friend and fellow comedian James McNair dead. He was on the set of a movie for the first time since the tragedy, and he was nervous.

"I didn't know if my comedic instinct was there. I didn't know if my timing was there," he admits. "You never know if you're ready to jump back into anything again after an accident like that, after a loss like that."

But the creators of the new film *Fist Fight*, a flick about two high school teachers preparing to duke it out at the end of the day, weren't worried. In fact, they scouted Morgan specifically.

"They wanted me to be a part of it," he says. "I broke down in tears, because I didn't think anybody was going to mess with me again in that capacity. To see that people still believed in me after an accident like that, I was overwhelmed. I was really happy," he says.