



Christopher Meloni returns as Elliot Stabler in "Law & Order: Organized Crime," premiering Thursday on NBC.

Christopher Meloni returns to the 'Law & Order' beat with 'Organized Crime'

After years of suggestions and rumors, it's finally official: Elliot Stabler is back.

Following a decade away from the police-detective role he originated on "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit," Christopher Meloni reprises the part in the latest addition to the NBC franchise from executive producer Dick Wolf with the Thursday, April 1, premiere of "Law & Order: Organized Crime." Reintroduced in the "SVU" episode immediately preceding the new show's debut, Stabler now heads a New York task force targeting the title criminal activity; cast members also include Dylan McDermott, Tamara Taylor and Charlotte Sullivan ("Rookie Blue").

"When you say 'Yes' to something like this," the amiable Meloni reflects, "you can have all the fantasies you want about what it's going to be like, how it will turn out, etc. I must say the reality has been very comfortable, though I wouldn't say 'effortless,' since getting back into being the lead of a one-hour show takes effort. But it feels right and good, OK in all ways."

Many viewers are familiar with the Stabler character – who has remained very evident in frequent "SVU" repeats on such cable outlets as USA Network and ION Television – but Meloni attests there are new differences to him, too. "I think what plays into it is the environment that he finds himself in," the actor notes. "Policing in society is a big topic now, and certain

aspects of the show will reflect where we're at with that. We hopefully find Stabler a little older and wiser, but also with the heroic qualities that I think he possessed before."

While he maintains his reason for agreeing to play Stabler again is a story for "years down the road," reappearing on "Special Victims Unit" means Meloni has a much-anticipated reunion with Mariska Hargitay, who has played Olivia Benson since that show started 22 years ago. She's the real-life godmother to Meloni's daughter, indicating their closeness, but Meloni admits to having had butterflies over reteaming with her on camera.

"Prepping for it was nerve-wracking," he says. "I had no doubt that the chemistry would find its familiar place, and that's how it played out ... but I did have the thought, 'How is this going to work?'"

Though "Law & Order: Organized Crime" hit a couple of speed bumps on the way to premiering – a change in showrunners (it's now "Empire" and "The L Word" veteran Ilene Chaiken) and a production shutdown over a positive COVID-19 test – Meloni considers it "a hall pass" to be back filming on the streets of New York. "We're doing it under very strict guidelines, and everybody has to follow the protocols, but we're getting things done."

ADVERTISE Call for the Best Deal
With us

541-963-3161 or 541-523-3673

Home & Auto go together. Like you & a good neighbor.

Some things in life just go together. Like home and auto insurance from State Farm®. And you with a good neighbor to help life go right. Save time and money. **CALL ME TODAY.**

State Farm®

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, State Farm Indemnity Company, Bloomington, IL
State Farm County Mutual Insurance Company of Texas, Dallas, TX
State Farm Fire and Casualty Company, State Farm General Insurance Company, Bloomington, IL
State Farm Florida Insurance Company, Winter Haven, FL
1601976
State Farm Lloyds, Richardson, TX

BAKER COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

#KICKINIT #SCHOOLGOALS

tutor.com The Princeton Review

Online homework help, tutoring & test prep
tutor.com
A Service of The Princeton Review

AVAILABLE DAILY Noon to midnight

Unlimited # of sessions at NO CHARGE!
It's PRE-PAID with your taxes.

Access with your Baker County Library Card from www.bakerlib.org/kids-teens

Explore the **ONLINE LIBRARY** at www.bakerlib.org 541.523.6419 info@bakerlib.org

Aching Feet?
Riverrdance right into our office.

New Name. Same Great Team. Same Exceptional Service.

Travis T. Hampton, D.P.M.
Foot and Ankle Surgeon

We specialize in quality medical and surgical care for all types of foot and ankle problems.

GRANITE VIEW Foot Ankle

541-963-0265
888-843-9090
www.GVfoot.com

La Grande 1408 N Hall Street
Enterprise 601 Medical Parkway
Baker 3175 Pocahontas Rd.