

What is Dennis Reynolds? A character analysis from “it’s always sunny in Philadelphia”

George Pritchard [p150165]

user

[COMPANY NAME] [Company address]

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Introduction

Dennis Reynolds [figure. 1.] is one of five main characters in the television situational comedy called “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia”. The show follows Dennis’s friends; Mac and Charlie, Dennis’s twin sister Dee and their father Frank as they manage a bar in Philadelphia called “Paddy’s Pub”. Baessler, (2018) once said *It’s Always Sunny* “is a beautiful show about horrible people. As much as we love the gang, it’s hard to actually like them.” Dennis’s character is the leader of the group, having the ideas for schemes and genuinely manipulating every other member of the “gang”. Dennis is often written as a psychopath, sociopath, rapist and many other awful things. In this dissertation I wish to take a closer examination into the character to attempt to uncover if indeed Dennis is all of these things mentioned or is he just the butt of a joke. I also wish to understand where his tendencies came from, whether they be from his life as a child growing up or developed as an adult independently. The aim of this dissertation is to have the reader better understand the character of Dennis Reynolds.



Fig. 1: McElhenney 2017. It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia

Chapter one titled “The Reynolds Family” will explore how Dennis was raised. Dennis grew up in a high socialite household with his mother “Barbara Reynolds”, his father “Frank Reynolds” (who would later be revealed to be his step father) and his twin sister “Deandre “Dee” Reynolds”. He also has several memories with his grandfather “Pop-Pop”. This section will explore how each of these characters could have impacted on Dennis’s character in his later life.

Chapter two titled “The Golden God” will discuss Dennis’s behaviour as an adult. This will explore all of Dennis’s manipulation systems and the dialogue he has with everyone in his life. Through analysis of these techniques, the reader can distinguish if these systems are due to Dennis’s childhood situation or if he made these independently. The title of this section has been selected and named in reference to Dennis’ self-given persona, used in

several episodes. One of the most notable occasions is in the episode titled “The High School Reunion Part 2: The Gang's Revenge” where Dennis believes that he is the most popular person in school and when no one pays attention to him, he freaks out. “I reign over everyone in this school! I am the golden god! I... I...” (It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, 2011)

The final chapter titled “The Turtle’s Dream”. This chapter will explore the writing process of the show and the choices that went into building Dennis’s character. It will also look into the repeated jokes and story threads that have a direct input into the character. Also, the choices that writers Rob McElhenney, Charlie Day and the actor who plays Dennis, Glenn Howerton choices in developing Dennis’s back story and character will be analysed in comparison with known writing techniques.

The Reynolds Family

Dennis is a very complicated character with a very mysterious past. The show very rarely visits each character’s past but rather implies that events have taken place through conversation. Flashbacks to the characters past are very rare so when the show does unveil these to the audience, it can give the viewer a very interesting viewpoint on each of the gang’s past experiences making each characterisation richer and more insightful. Taking a deeper examination into Dennis’s “origin story” may prove to be the key to unveiling how he became the way he is today.

In the shows second season, *It’s always sunny in Philadelphia’s* producers offered the show runner the opportunity to bring in Danny De Vito as a new main character. This was done to save the show from being taken off the air. (TheFIGclan, 2013) Danny De Vito [figure 2] was brought in as the character Frank Reynolds, Dennis and Dee’s father, however, it is revealed at the end of Season Two that this is not the case. Frank before becoming a member of the ‘gang’ was a successful business man who ran a billion-dollar company.

However, Frank’s methods in doing this were shady. In the episode *A very sunny Christmas*, Frank’s old business partner ‘Eugene’ returns and it is revealed that the way Frank earned



Fig. 2: McElhenney 2009. *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*

his fortune was by stealing all of Eugene's money and shares in the company leaving Eugene with nothing. Also in Frank's first appearance in *Charlie gets crippled*, Sweet Dee confirms that Frank ran a sweat shop in Vietnam in the early nineties which is later expanded on in the programme, due to these events, Frank was not often present in Dennis's childhood. Shown in *A very sunny Christmas*, Frank used to learn what both Dennis and Dee wanted as presents and then would buy said presents for himself and continued said "tradition" with them as adults. This type of treatment from a parent to a child can cause immense emotional damage to said child, which is why both Dennis and Dee hold so much resentment toward Frank in later life.

The resentment does not end there seeming as Frank holds a lot of resentment to the point of possible hatred toward Dennis and Dee's deceased mother Barbara Reynolds [figure 3]. The feeling was mutual as in the episode *Dennis and Dee's Mom is dead*, the character referred to as "The Jew Lawyer" states that in Barbara's will she left both Frank and Dee nothing after she had passed, and instead gave all of her money to Dennis and Dee's real father "Bruce Mathis" and gives "her darling son" Dennis the family home, on the condition that Frank may never enter, which Dennis replies with saying "I would never let him in." (It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia. 2007). This scene reveals two topics to discuss. One, it shows that Dennis cares so little about his now known step-father that he would accept a house over him. Secondly and more importantly, it shows that Dennis was the mother's favourite child which placed him above his twin sister within the family hierarchy, which most likely was the beginning of Dennis's well established authority complex. However, Barbara was no saint. She was a heavy alcoholic and had many affairs over the course of their marriage. Due to this, Dennis and Dee with the product of an extramarital affair which was not revealed to anyone other than Barbara until the season 2 episode titled *Dennis and Dee get a new dad*. In the scene where all is revealed, Barbara is empathetic toward the other family member's feelings, showing signs of possible antisocial personality disorder, a condition that can cause "a person to have a complete disregard for the rights of others and the rules of society"



Fig. 3: McElhenney 2006. It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia

Ferro (2015), a trait that she passed onto her son. Due to his mother's alcohol abuse and abrasiveness and his father's lacking in affection and outright lunacy as shown in the show, Dennis's lack of parental guidance throughout his childhood has caused him to become the emotionless, vain, self-involved, sociopath he is today.

Barbara's father referred to as Pop-pop was an army general in World War Two, however as is revealed in season one *The Gang Finds a Dead Guy*, Pop-pop served as an SS officer under the Nazi party and was rumoured to be a consultant to Adolf Hitler himself. In another episode titled *Pop-Pop: The Final Solution*, it is discovered that Pop-pop took Dennis and Dee to a summer camp where they were taught the teaching behind the Nazi party. Dennis and Dee had no recollection that the camp was teaching them these values. Barbara (when she was alive) was shown to have some of these similar traits where she would look down upon people she would think are 'lesser' than herself as does Dennis. Dennis's grandiose delusional disorder is a primary part of his character and will be discussed later in full, but it is clear that this outlook he has of himself could come from these experiences due to them being compatible with the teaching Dennis received from his Grandfather at this impressionable age.

Dee Reynolds [figure 4] is the twin sister of Dennis. Dee and Dennis have been together their entire lives and still see each other every day due to working together at Paddy's pub. Dennis is Dee's boss and takes a hierarchical position both in the business and on a social level. Dennis being above Dee is a characteristic the viewer experiences throughout Dennis and Dee's childhood. Dennis has maintained this dominance over Dee to keep her under his control. He does this by constantly putting her down and telling her she is ugly and worthless, tending to refer to her as a 'Bird', something that the other members of the gang have noticed and mimic to keep the same level of authority. In the episode titled *The Gang Breaks Sweet Dee*, Dee is in deep depression and does not care what happens to her anymore. Dennis sees this as an opportunity and tries to set up Dee with a socially and academically lacking man to solidify her position as someone inferior to himself. However,



Fig. 4: McElhenney 2013. It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia

due to support from the other members of the gang, Dee begins to build a successful career as a stand-up comedian, this action displeases Dennis as Dee begins to rise above him in authority within the gang attaining success. A scene that shows this dynamic is where Dee has just finished her set and the gang including Dennis go back stage to speak to her, although Frank, Mac and Charlie congratulate her success for once in her life, on having a good set, Dennis demands that they be alone where he goes onto tell her that “your set tonight was terrible, it was atrocious. Every single thing that came out of your mouth was trash, it was disgusting, that’s what really happened!” (It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, 2013). This entire statement is purposely meant to make Dee feel awful about herself and to erode her confidence so Dennis feels that she knows her place. Later in the same episode where Dee is offered the opportunity to appear on live television, Dennis realises that Dee is beyond his reach and begs her to take him with her. This is Dennis grasping for his last chance to at least be on the same level as his sister. Dennis is portrayed as a disgusting character through the way he treats women and his rape allegations. However, where the script insinuates that Dennis is a potential molester, Dee actually follows through and is often referenced throughout the show. In the episode *Dee Gives Birth* the character titled ‘Ben the Solider’ admits to Frank, Mac and Charlie that Dee took advantage of him. On a second occasion in the episode *Time’s Up for the Gang*, Charlie admits that Dee raped him. Dee is shocked at this allegation which shows a complete disregard for her actions and a lack of empathy. Whenever Dennis gets accused of his sexual exploits, he exhibits similar signs of deniability. As both twins show these traits, it is assumed that the cause of such behaviour would be due to their childhood experiences. According to Radwan (2018)

“[i]f a child was raised by an over protective family then he will develop fears and insecurities because of believing that the world is unsafe. Now when that child becomes an adult he will still have his fears and insecurities but he will display them in a different way”

This example can also relate to a different character called Charlie. He was raised by a very over protective and superstitious mother which has caused him in his later life to be terrified of leaving Philadelphia and also has immense social anxiety issues. However, if one applies the same logic to Dennis and Dee’s childhood upbringing, the Nazi teachings they receive from their grandfather Pop-pop as impressionable children has also affected them in

later life. Frank and Barbara as parents argued constantly and cheated on each other on more than one occasion, furthermore, as a response Barbara became an alcoholic and Frank a corrupt disengaged business man. Due to their own upbringing Dennis and Dee's childhood guidance was far from ideal. "Freud believed that events in our childhood have a great influence on our adult lives, shaping our personality." As written by McLeod (2018). However, according to *Directions of Effects between Adolescent Psychopathic Traits and Parental Behavior* study this reveals a different perspective in that "[t]hese findings suggest that parental behaviour is more a reaction than a predictor of psychopathic traits in adolescence." (Salihovic, 2012, pp.957–969). This essentially describes how Frank and Barbara's treatment of their children could be due to Dennis and Dee's behaviour and mannerisms growing up.

The Golden God

Though Dennis and his family life was far from stable, his family cannot be entirely to blame for his behaviour. *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* has had 13 seasons to develop his character, Dennis has grown and developed from a seemingly normal lead character into a terrifying person that no individual would take pleasure in of the association.

In *It's Always Sunny's* fifth season, Dennis introduced the gang to his 'D.E.N.N.I.S. system' [figure 5]. According to Dennis, this system is "a comprehensive approach to seduction that I have perfected over the years". (*It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, 2009) Dennis has seduced so many women into sleeping with him that he has been able to build a "careful and systematic" form for every sexual encounter he will have in the future.

The aim of Dennis's system is to gain a woman's undivided love so he can, if he wanted 're-D.E.N.N.I.S.'

said woman whenever he wanted. The system that Dennis has appropriately named after himself, acts further to demonstrate the level of inflated ego and consists of six stages each represented by a letter. The first step is to 'Demonstrate value' where one shows the intended target the level of regard they have to gain from you. After this first stage one

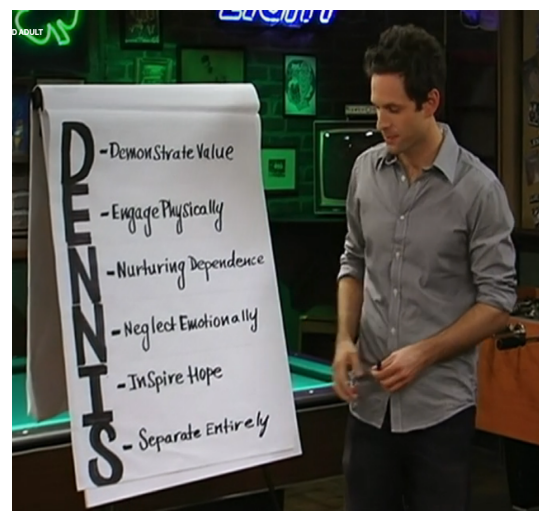


Fig. 5: McElhenney 2009. *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*

should ask the target out on a date, the next stage is to 'Engage physically' where the user would sleep with the intended target quickly followed by the first N 'Nurture dependence'. Dennis believes that after a woman has slept with anyone, they naturally start to depend on them, he creates scenarios such as angry neighbours, slashing tyres, etc. to manipulate the woman to depend on and take care of her so she gets used to him being around. After this he 'Neglects emotionally', by the use of not answering calls and cancelling plans so she misses his presence. The last two stage are titled 'Inspire hope' where one returns to the target giving an emotional speech about deep seeded insecurities in order to have sex with them one last time, and then 'Separate entirely' with the target leaving the women to deal with what has happened. This entire system points out a massive problem, as pointed out by Willis (2015)

“[a]n indication of an oversized ID, Dennis’ gluttonous impulses always seem to get the best of him regardless of any financial or legal consequences he may run into on the path of desire.”

Dennis has expressed several times throughout the programme that he struggles with emotions or feelings. In the episode *Charlie’s Mom Has Cancer*, Dennis does everything he can in order to cry and fails until he is forced by Frank to dig up his mother’s grave. Another occasion in *Mac fights Gay Marriage*, Dennis, just after getting married says to Mac ‘I’m having feelings again, like some 14-year-old kid. You remember feelings right?’ (It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia, 2010) This struggle to feel emotion can be related to sociopathic tendencies even going so far as using an onion to manipulate the other members of the gang into believing that he does empathise with them. Dennis’s inability to emotionally connect with people within his social circle is the reason why he feels that this form of seduction is acceptable. This is also part of his ‘grandiose delusion’ of himself and further supports his inflated ego. He feels that a female’s sexual encounter with him, is an honour.

Though Dennis believes that the D.E.N.N.I.S. system is fool proof, it has failed several times throughout the sitcom. When this occurs Dennis tends to have a psychotic event. The best example of this is in the episode *The Gang Group Dates*, Dennis, Charlie and Mac go on a ‘buncher’ which is essentially a triple date. Dennis attempts to use the system on a group of three girls but gets foiled by a new app which allows women to rate the men on their dating ability. Due to Dennis’s first date going horribly wrong, his rating on the app goes down to a one. As this is public information, Dennis can no longer demonstrate his value,

therefore nullifying his system. This causes Dennis to become unbalanced in his advances toward women throughout the episode, shown when he is constantly yelling 'I'm a five-star man!' (It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, 2015) at women he is on dates with, even going as far to get 'the waitress' a promise ring, a character that Dennis has admitted to find disgusting. This script structure is used so he can manipulate her into giving him a good rating. When Dennis discovers that she does not have access to the app he reciprocates in the only way he knows how, by shouting zero into every woman's face he can see. In this scenario, Dennis is no longer in control. His system allows him to keep a firm grasp of the power with these encounters with women but without this power, he becomes distraught and desperate. By shouting and being aggressive he wants everyone to be brought down to below his level. This inflated sense of self shows symptoms of being related to *Narcissistic personality disorder and supported by Timothy and Legg (2018) who state that "Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is closely associated with egocentrism, a personality characteristic in which people see themselves and their interests and opinions as the only ones that really matter."*

The D.E.N.N.I.S. system may be Dennis's prime seduction technique; it is not the only promiscuous technique that Dennis is known for. In the episode titled *The Gang Buys a Boat*, Dennis and Mac go to buy some supplies for their new ocean cruiser. Dennis mentions to Mac that he wants to get a mattress for the boat. Dennis goes on to explain that he wants to have somewhere on the boat to sleep with women. The quote from Dennis is "to get the ladies nice and tipsy topside so we can take them to a nice comfortable place below deck and, you know they can't refuse, because of the implication". Dennis's implication is that if him and the girl are alone at sea, in his mind, the woman will think that Dennis will hurt her if she denies his sexual advancements. Therefore, she would not say no in fear of being hurt. The point of the title *implication* is that Dennis would never hurt the woman involved but he uses the threat of harm to have the sexual partner always say yes. After Mac hears this, he accuses Dennis of possibly hurting these women which Dennis outright refuses to believe, thinking that there is nothing sinister about the 'implication' what so ever. The joke of this scenario is not that Dennis is going to manipulate the situation for his own benefit, but rather that Dennis is so lacking in empathy and ignorant to the implied suggestions behind his actions. This is supported by Hayward (2005) who states that

“[a]s this idea of empathy entered the psychotherapeutic mainstream, it was transformed into a natural category—a human attribute—whose absence (according to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV) could be seen as indicative of an underlying personality disorder.” (Hayward, 2005, p.1071)

a trait that Dennis clearly exhibits in this scene. Even when he attempts the said *implication* in *The Gang Goes to Hell* he is surprised when the young girl runs away in terror when his advances fail to work. In the same episode after assuming that Dee would not understand the implication, the same method is echoed by Dee where she tells Dennis about when she is with a man, and if he is not wanting to have sex with her, she would insinuate that she would tell others that the man sexually abused her so the man would have no choice but to sleep with her. This supports the argument in the first chapter of Dennis and Dee’s upbringing and the effect on their behaviour as adults.

Dennis may be presented as a sex offender on several occasions due to his inherent lustful nature. However, Dennis has also shown signs of being a possible murderer. Across many episodes Dennis has given subtle hints that he may be a serial killer. In the season 6 episode *The Gang Gets Stranded in the Woods*, Charlie refers to Dennis’ meticulous scheming as being similar to a psychopathic serial killer, Dennis replies by saying “Serial killer, I like that” (It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia, 2010). There is no denying Dennis does have an aspect of physical attraction and confidence, but that confidence and his need for sexual appreciation dominates his character leading to entire episodes being taken over by his lust over his own appearance, shown in *The Aluminum Monster vs. Fatty Magoo*. Dennis has a distorted vision of his image and physique and believes he is a figure worth worshipping, going as far as declaring himself as a god on more than one occasion. This vision of himself among others is a lead driving force behind his character and when people question him, he unleashes intense anger and rage toward them, even striking out physically on occasion. “Many Greek heroes even aspire, like Dennis, to godhood.” As written by Hunt and Arp (2015). This is evident in *Charlie rules the world*, where after having used a sensory deprivation chamber, Dennis declares himself as God and then decides to take control of the gang back from Charlie with the statement “you see, the only thing bigger than a king, is a god.” (It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia, 2012) It seems that Dennis gets enjoyment out of this control, in the episode *The Gang Gets Analysed*, Dennis states via monologue that he finds it

thrilling being in complete control and goes onto giving an example of “its like the thrill of being near the executioner’s switch, knowing at any moment you could throw it” (It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia, 2012). Dennis is cunning and intelligent, believing even that because he minored in psychology that he has the right to intrude into other people’s lives. An example of this is the pills that Dennis gives mac to make him loose weight simply due to Dennis’s disgust of those who are overweight. He goes to the lengths of writing documents for people to sign so there is no plausible deniability of his control over them. The anger that Dennis displays toward two ladies who refuse his advances in *The Storm of the Century* cause him to draw up a contract for women to sign. Dennis declares “once something is in writing, that means it’s set in stone. Then no one can do anything to stop me” (It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia, 2013). This demonstrates a need for control from the lead character and is supported by the DSM-5 which “states that the essential feature is their willingness to disregard [or violate] the rights of others.” As said by psychologist, Billy Eddy (2018). the DSM-5 or The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders “is the handbook used by health care professionals in the United States and much of the world as the authoritative guide to the diagnosis of mental disorders.” According to Psychiatry.org. (2018). The evidence previously mentioned shows that Dennis is a sociopath. This lack of emotion is why Dennis is unable to form emotional attachments with women. In fact, any attachment he does form with a female is based on sexual dependence and may possibly be a cause of a condition titled *Erotomania* which according to Timothy and Legg (2018) is, “an uncommon form of paranoid delusion. The affected person strongly believes that another individual is in love with him or her.”

In February 1978, serial killer Theodore Robert Bundy otherwise known as Ted Bundy was arrested in Florida. Bundy was arrested for the murder of 3 women, one of which was a twelve-year-old girl. Later it was discovered that Bundy had killed over 30 women, each of which he sexually assaulted either in life or after death. The relevance of this individual case is that Bundy did not fit the perceived stereotypical image of serial killer. He was raised in a good home by loving parents, he had a good job and was a confident and handsome man. This was Bundy’s biggest advantage, he blended into normal society. Many modern psychologists believe that Bundy suffered from *Narcissistic personality disorder*, with similar character traits to Dennis. In fact, Dennis’s behaviour throughout *It’s Always Sunny in*

Philadelphia is similar to the actions of Ted Bundy. In the documentary *Ted Bundy documentary - In his own words* Bundy recounts the evening where he murdered *Georgeann Hawkins*. He tells the interviewer he was walking down an alley on crutches, faking an injury, struggling with a briefcase. The woman was walking toward him down the same alley and when they encountered each other, Bundy asked her to help him with his briefcase, due to the situation she agreed. Eventually they got to his car and Bundy knocked her out with a crowbar, later Bundy decapitated her and buried her head in a forest. In order to get this woman's attention, Bundy manipulated the woman into a situation where she felt obliged to help someone he need. This draws similarities with the first part of the D.E.N.N.I.S system. Bundy *demonstrated his value* as someone who needed saving. This was not the only woman that Bundy decapitated, in fact many of Bundy's victims suffered this fate. In the episode *Mac is a Serial Killer*, after breaking into the real killer's apartment, *the Gang* find several heads in the fridge. This then corresponds with the episode *Chardee Macdennis 2: Electric Bugaloo* where Dennis misrepresents the concept of love in a sculpture of a woman's head in a freezer.

The Turtles Dream

It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia was originally a short film written by the show runner and actor who plays *Mac*, *Rob McElhenney* about a man who needs to borrow sugar from a friend and when the man is around his friend's house, the friend tells him he has cancer. [4] this short film was submitted to many different channels and was eventually turned into an episode in season one called *Charlie Gets Cancer*. The pitch for the show was already based around a very dark theme, paving the way for the following 13 seasons. The show is often referenced as an *Anti-Sitcom*, due to its subversive nature and works in direct contrast when dealing with stereotypical genre tropes unlike other American sitcoms such as *Friends*, *How I Met Your Mother* and *Cheers*.

Dennis is played by the actor Glenn Howerton III. This is interesting due to the characters *Mac* and *Charlie*, who are named after the actors that play them, *Charlie Day* and *Rob McElhenney*, in contrast *Dennis* clearly does not reference the actors name. *Men's Health Magazine* (2011) once asked Glenn Howerton, why he named his character *Dennis* instead

of after himself, in a similar way to how Rob and Charlie named their characters. Glen responded by saying “Dennis is just really an expression of my worst impulses as a human being. It’s me expelling my own demons and trying to find humour in my worst impulses.” For the actor to admit this himself proves how much of a deep connection Glenn has with his character.

As an extension to this *It’s Always Sunny* applies character arcs differently as opposed to other sitcoms as there is a lack of positive character development and attributes. Standard sitcoms tend to take broken characters and let them grow into civilised and pleasant adults. A good example of this is from *How I Met Your Mother* with the character *Barney* where the audience see him grow from a sociopathic playboy into a loving father who treats women with respect. With Dennis however almost the opposite happens. In the first couple of seasons, Dennis seems like a typical lead character but as the show progressed, Dennis’s character digressed and became the narcissistic sociopath he is currently. These two characters are very similar but a clear distinction can be found through a similar event both characters went through. In the last episode of *How I Met Your Mother*, it is revealed that Barney has impregnated a woman. Before the birth of the child, Barney could not care less about the child. However, when the baby is born, Barney immediately changes and gives the child a speech that he had previously used sarcastically in the episode to diminish the ideals behind love, furthermore, when he says this speech to his daughter on their first encounter in the hospital, he truly means every word. “you are the love of my life, everything I have and everything I am is yours. Forever.” (How I Met Your Mother, 2014) However, when Dee fell into labour in *Dee gives birth*, Dennis, in his own way, for the first time, shows compassion for his sister. “if you do not get my sister her story’s and a new room as soon as possible, I will come down on this hospital like the Hammer of Thor!” (It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia, 2010). But when Dee has the baby and Dennis along with the other members of the *gang* discover that she was being a surrogate, they immediately loose interest. This flipped character development shows the difference not only in the characters, but the shows. This speech I previously mentioned is one of many Dennis gives throughout the programme. The use of language with these monologues can be related back to old Shakespearian scripts where the abnormal use of an intelligent vocabulary is used in normal convocation.

Conclusion

This dissertation as explored several aspects of Dennis character. His sociopathic, lustful and narcissistic behaviour and his mishandled upbringing have built a character with a rich lour behind him. However, what needs to be realised is that though Dennis may be accused of being a potential sex offender and a murder but he is not either of these. If the writers and show runners of *Its Always Sunny in Philadelphia* made Dennis half of what the show accuses him of, it would take the joke away from his character. Dennis acts as a sexually obsessed serial killer because he genuinely believes that women find that attractive about him and he lacks the vision or the empathy to realise that this is not the case. Dennis oversize ego is only to compensate for his deep seeded insecurities, not making him a monster but instead making him vulnerable, evident in his outbursts of rage in *The Gang Group Dates*. By removing the essential property of humour, the underline message becomes sinister.

Through the analysis of Dennis, the reader and myself can find a thorough understanding of his characterisation, backstory and actions. I can now apply my findings into my final production piece in the character of Pete. This character has insecurities that he compensates for similarly to Dennis. I needed to understand where Dennis came from and the psychology of his being in order to create a truly believable character. I now understand which aspects of Dennis I should emulate within Pete in order to make his oversized sense of self understandable and also keep the character psychotically stable, unlike the character of Dennis Reynolds.

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