

## TV Review: ‘It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia’ Returns For Darker Days

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 15, 2011 - 12:29pm

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CHICAGO – The most gleefully misanthropic show on the air returns tonight, Thursday, September 15th, 2011 at 9pm CST with the seventh-season premiere of “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia” on FX. Not much has changed for the gang at Paddy’s Pub but there is a darker edge to the humor for the start of this season, as hard as that may be to believe. It’s still one of the ten funniest shows on television, but the initial quartet of episodes sent for review hint at a series that could be pushing the envelope for the sake of buzz instead of humor.



Television Rating: **4.0/5.0**

How could “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia” actually get more potentially offensive? Fans of the show will know that they’ve never shied away from any subject matter, pushing the boundaries of not just what’s in good taste but what can be done on cable television. As the program has become increasingly popular over the years, it’s felt like FX has given the team behind it more and more freedom. Hell, if the masturbation episode of “Louie” (which was brilliant, by the way) can be on the air, how far can the “Sunny” team go?



L-R: Kaitlin Olson and Charlie Day in the season premiere of IT’S ALWAYS SUNNY IN PHILADELPHIA airing Thursday, September 15 at 10pm e/p.  
Photo credit: Patrick McElhenney/FX

Pretty damn far. A dead crack whore, infected needles, pedophilia, and a fake funeral for a baby — that’s the first four episodes of the new season, one that almost seems to not just be trying to top previous installments of the series but itself from episode to episode. By the time the gang is holding a memorial service for the baby that Dee (Kaitlin Olsen) pretended to have for the tax write-off, even they can’t help but comment on how they’ve gone too far.



Clockwise From Top: Glenn Howerton, Rob McElhenney, Kaitlin Olson, Danny Devito and Charlie Day.

Photo credit: FX

But have they as more than just characters? I will admit that there seems to be a bit of desperation in the envelope-pushing this year. "Frank's Little Beauties," which takes aim at the "Toddlers & Tiaras" phenomenon with a heavy emphasis on pedophilia jokes, feels more attention-getting than clever. One offensive joke here and there is funny; a string of them starts to wear on the viewer. "Louie" strikes the perfect balance of offensive humor and humanity. Perhaps the comparisons to its incredible network-mate will hurt "Sunny."

Having said that, this is still one of the funniest shows on TV. The second episode, in which the gang goes to the Jersey Shore and learns "*There are far worse people at the Jersey shore than the cast of "Jersey Shore"*" is truly inspired. Instead of party people, they find stray dogs, criminals, and go on the most disturbing thrill ride in the history of television. Watching Danny Devito sit on a beach infested by stray dogs and eating ham soaked in rum is only topped by the disturbing event that poor Charlie (Charlie Day), Dennis (Glenn Howerton), and Dee witness under a bridge. A rip on the Tea Party in the fourth episode is also pretty damn clever.

If the writing feels down a notch, the cast haven't lost a step. Rob McElhenney (Mac) even gained a significant amount of weight during the off-season...purely for the comedic potential inherent in the gang calling him a fat-ass every episode. That's commitment to your craft. All five of the principal players on "It's Always Sunny" are incredibly talented and their comic timing has improved with every year. Charlie Day had his breakthrough year with the success of "Horrible Bosses" and he's stellar, but one hopes the rest of the gang at Paddy's Pub find similar success soon. At least before they get so offensive that even FX pulls the plug.

*'It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia,' which airs on FX, stars Charlie Day, Rob McElhenney, Glenn Howerton, Kaitlin Olson, and Danny Devito. The show was created by McElhenney. The seventh season premieres on Thursday, September 15th, 2011 at 9PM CST.*



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