

= Starved =

Starved is an FX television situation comedy that aired for one season of seven episodes in 2005 . The series was about four friends who each suffer from eating disorders , who met at a " shame @-@ based " support group called Belt Tighteners . Its characters included those with bulimia , anorexia , and binge eating disorder . Eric Schaeffer created the show as well as writing , starring in and directing it , based upon his own struggle with eating disorders . In addition to his own life experiences , Schaeffer also drew upon the experiences of the other members of the principal cast , each of whom coincidentally had struggled with food issues of their own .

Starved was the lead @-@ in of FX 's hour @-@ long " Other Side of Comedy " block with It 's Always Sunny in Philadelphia . FX executives wanted to use the two series to begin building comedy programming and broaden the network 's demographic . The series debuted on August 4 , 2005 to poor critical reviews and was cancelled in October 2005 , when FX picked Sunny over Starved for renewal .

= = Characters = =

Sam (Eric Schaeffer) is a commodities trader who suffers from anorexia and compulsive overeating . His interests quickly turn into obsessions . Despite being with several different women during the series , he is secretly in love with Billie .

Billie Frasier (Laura Benanti) is an anorexic and bulimic who also has issues with alcohol abuse . Billie is bisexual and was raised by two gay fathers . Formerly a ballerina , the original impetus for her eating disorders , she is now a moderately well @-@ known singer @-@ songwriter .

Dan Roundtree (Del Pentecost) is a novelist and compulsive overeater . The only married person among the main characters , he worries that his weight will lead his wife to leave him . He continually schedules and then cancels gastric bypass surgery .

Adam Williams (Sterling K. Brown) is a police officer with bulimia . He abuses his authority to extort food from restaurants and delivery people , which eventually costs him his job .

Belt Tighteners Group Leader (Jackie Hoffman) leads the support group that the friends attend . Sarcastic and abrasive , she constantly berates the four friends for their failed attempts at dealing with their food issues . Following her tirades , she leads the group in a chant of the support group 's slogan , " It 's not OK ! "

= = Production = =

Series star Eric Schaeffer created Starved . Schaeffer , who is in recovery for alcohol and drug addiction and describes himself as having " anorexic thinking , " drew on his own experiences with eating disorders and the experiences of other people he knew in creating scenarios for the series . Other cast members also struggled with food issues . Benanti spent three years fighting anorexia while she danced on Broadway . Pentecost , who weighed 310 pounds at the time of filming , contributed stories from his own life to the series , including a scene in which his character weighs himself on a postal scale because he is too heavy for a conventional bathroom scale . Brown was heavy as a child and describes himself as being " haunted by the ' heavysset kid mentality ' " . Producers only discovered that each of the principal cast members had food issues after the casting process was completed .

Starved and It 's Always Sunny in Philadelphia were developed for FX under the auspices of FX president John Landgraf , who sought to expand the network 's viewership by providing a wider variety of programming . The shows were the network 's first attempts at sitcoms following the short @-@ lived 2003 series Lucky . FX at the time was known primarily for its edgy dramatic series . Bruce Lefkowitz , then executive vice president of Fox Cable Entertainment , outlined the strategy : " We kind of staked out a unique space in dramas that are very different from everybody else 's , so the next natural evolution is to do something in the comedy space . " The network ordered seven episodes of each series .

Starved was shot in the spring of 2005 in New York City using a single @-@ camera setup and without a laugh track . It and Sunny were the first shows that FX produced inhouse .

= = Episodes = =

= = Reception = =

Starved generated controversy even before its premiere . A number of specialists in the treatment of eating disorders expressed concern that the program would either make light of or glamorize eating disorders . Others , however , felt that Starved might focus attention on eating disorders as a serious medical condition . The National Eating Disorders Association called for a boycott of the show and claimed that Diageo (makers of Tanqueray) and Nautilus agreed to pull their advertising . Schaeffer responded to the controversy , saying " there is some difficult stuff to watch . But I know my spirit and intention are good . "

Starved premiered to an audience of 1 @.@ 54 million viewers , scoring a Nielsen rating of 0 @.@ 8 and a 2 share among adults 18 @-@ 49 , the network 's target demographic . Reviews were unfavorable . Variety echoed the slogan of Belt Tighteners in dismissing the series as " not OK . " Noting the series ' edgy content , Variety allows that " Pushing the envelope in terms of standards is all well and good , assuming that series earn the right to do so . " Starved , it says , did not earn that right . The series ' " stabs at poignancy feel unconvincing and forced " and " from an emotional standpoint there 's seldom a truthful note . "

The Washington Post concurred in this assessment , describing the premise of the show as " Hey , what happens if you take the characters from Seinfeld and give them eating disorders ? " While crediting Starved for " a few inventive laughs , " the language and sexuality of the show are described as " exceptionally coarse " and " outrageous for cable television , even later at night . " Worse than these issues , the Post felt that Schaeffer neglected to develop the characters in favor of coming up with contrived situations for them . " [T] his failure to build understanding into the show dooms it to emptiness , with a sour aftertaste . As if you had just , you know , hurled . "

The New York Times credited the series for its bold premise and noted that the show provided some insight into eating disorders while offering " a few flashes of clever dialogue and satire . " Ultimately , however , the Times found that " Starved relies too heavily on sight gags and gross @-@ out farce . " The Los Angeles Times found the show " vexing " for being " at once assured and shallow , accomplished and unconvincing , well @-@ acted and empty . " The review singles out Schaeffer 's character Sam as " especially unappealing " and points to Schaeffer 's roles as creator , producer , writer and director as " an object lesson in the wisdom of a system of checks and balances . " Perhaps most damningly , in noting Schaeffer 's experiences with addiction , the reviewer writes that " just because you ? ve had an experience doesn ? t mean you have anything interesting to say about it or are able to articulate whatever interesting thing you have to say . "

New York Magazine called it the Best Show You Probably Never Watched . NBC used a clip from the second episode in " The Most Outrageous TV Moments " .

FX canceled Starved in October 2005 . FX president John Landgraf told Variety , " The show had a lot of fans , so it was tough to choose [between it and It 's Always Sunny in Philadelphia] . Ultimately , we felt that we 're just not in a position to spread our resources . We launched our dramas one at a time , and launching two [comedies] like we did this summer just didn 't work out as well . "