

= Kenny McCormick =

Kenneth " Kenny " McCormick (sometimes spelled as McKormick) is a main character in the animated adult television series South Park , along with his friends Stan Marsh , Kyle Broflovski , and Eric Cartman . His oft @-@ muffled and indiscernible speech ? the result of his parka hood covering his mouth ? is provided by co @-@ creator Matt Stone . He debuted on television when South Park first aired on August 13 , 1997 , after having first appeared in The Spirit of Christmas shorts created by Stone and long @-@ time collaborator Trey Parker in 1992 (Jesus vs. Frosty) and 1995 (Jesus vs. Santa) .

Kenny is a third , later fourth @-@ grade student who commonly has extraordinary experiences not typical of conventional small @-@ town life in his hometown of South Park , Colorado , where he lives with his impoverished family . Kenny is animated by computer to look as he did in the show 's original method of cutout animation . He also appears in the 1999 full @-@ length feature film South Park : Bigger , Longer & Uncut , in which his true appearance and voice was first revealed , and various South Park merchandise .

In a running gag most prevalent during the first five seasons of the series , Kenny would suffer an excruciating death before returning alive and well in the next episode with little or no definitive explanation given . Stan would frequently use the catchphrase " Oh my God ! They killed Kenny ! " Followed by Kyle exclaiming " ... You bastards ! " . Media commentators have published their interpretations of the many aspects of the running gag from philosophical and societal viewpoints . Since the show began its sixth season in 2002 , the practice of killing Kenny has been seldom used by the show 's creators . Various episodes have set up the gag , sometimes presenting a number of explanations for Kenny 's unacknowledged reappearances .

= = Role in South Park = =

Kenny attends South Park Elementary as part of Mr. Garrison 's fourth grade class . During the first 58 episodes , Kenny and the other main child characters were in the third grade . Kenny comes from a poor household , presided over by his violent , alcoholic and unemployed Irish / Scottish father , Stuart McCormick . His mother Carol McCormick has a job washing dishes at the Olive Garden . Kenny has an older brother named Kevin . He also has a younger sister , shown with his family in the season nine episode " Best Friends Forever " , but does not make another appearance until the 15th season episode " The Poor Kid " , in which her name is revealed to be Karen , whom he loves unconditionally . Kenny is friends with Stan and Kyle , and has indicated that he maintains a friendship with Eric Cartman solely out of pity . Kenny is regularly teased for living in poverty , particularly by Cartman .

Kenny 's superhero alter ego , Mysterion , first appeared in the Season 13 episode " The Coon " , as a rival to Eric Cartman 's eponymous superhero alter ego . He unmask himself at the end of the episode , but his identity is left intentionally ambiguous . He is not revealed to be Kenny until the Season 14 episode " Mysterion Rises " , the character 's third appearance as part of a story arc .

= = Deaths = =

Prior to season six , Kenny died in almost every episode . The nature of the deaths were often gruesome and portrayed in a comically absurd fashion , and usually followed by Stan and Kyle respectively yelling " Oh my God ! They killed Kenny ! " and " You bastard (s) ! " . Shortly afterward , rats would commonly appear and begin picking at his corpse . In a following episode , Kenny would reappear alive and well , usually without any explanation . Most characters appear oblivious or indifferent to the phenomenon , although occasionally one will acknowledge an awareness of it . In " Cherokee Hair Tampons " , Kenny gets irritated and offended when Stan laments Kyle 's critical condition while utterly ignoring Kenny 's past demises . Eric Cartman commented on Kenny 's deaths in the episode " Cartmanland " , when he is being sued for unsafe rides insisting to attorneys representing his family that " Kenny dies all the time ! " .

Near the end of the production run of the show 's fifth season , Parker and Stone contemplated having an episode in which Kenny was killed off permanently . The reasoning behind the idea was to genuinely surprise fans , and to allow an opportunity to provide a major role for Butters Stotch , a breakout character whose popularity was growing with the viewers and creators of the show . In the episode " Kenny Dies " , Kenny dies after developing terminal muscular dystrophy , while Parker and Stone claimed that Kenny would not be returning in subsequent episodes . The duo insisted they grew tired of upholding the tradition of having Kenny die in each episode . Stone stated that thinking of humorous ways to kill the character was initially fun , but became more mundane as the series progressed . When they determined that it would be too difficult to develop the character because he was too much of a " prop " , Parker and Stone finally decided to kill off Kenny permanently .

[" Kenny Dies "] was the one episode where [all the characters] cared [he was dying] for once . After that , we said , ' Why doesn 't he just stay dead ? ' And it was like , ' Okay , let 's just do that . ' It was that easy of a decision . I think a lot of people probably haven 't noticed . I couldn 't care less . I am so sick of that character .

? Matt Stone , from a 2002 article in the Knoxville News @-@ Sentinel

For much of season six , Kenny remained dead , though both Stone and Parker entertained the idea of eventually bringing the character back . According to Stone , only a small minority of fans were significantly angered by Kenny 's absence to threaten a boycott of the cable channel Comedy Central , on which South Park is aired . For most of the season , Stan , Kyle , and Cartman fill the void left by Kenny by allowing the characters Butters Stotch and Tweek Tweak into their group , paving the way for those characters to receive more focus on the show . Nevertheless , Kenny returned from the year @-@ long absence in the season six finale " Red Sleigh Down " , and has remained a main character since , and has been given larger roles in episodes . His character no longer dies each week , and has only been killed occasionally in episodes following his return .

The first explanation given for Kenny 's deaths and reappearances was given in " Cartman Joins NAMBLA " , wherein the McCormicks have a baby exactly like Kenny , including the characteristic orange parka , shortly after the former Kenny dies . Mr. McCormick exclaims , " God , this must be the fiftieth time this has happened " , to which Mrs. McCormick quickly replies , " Fifty @-@ second " . This explanation is expanded upon in the Season 14 episodes " Coon 2 : Hindsight " , " Mysterion Rises " and " Coon vs. Coon and Friends " , in which Kenny , while playing superheroes with his friends , claims his " super power " is immortality . He actually dies several times during these episodes ? even committing suicide more than once ? reawakening in his bed each time . He is annoyed and angry that no one can remember him dying every time he regenerates , and longs to know the source of his power . Unbeknownst to him , his parents were previously connected to a Cthulhu @-@ worshipping death cult . After Kenny shoots himself the second time , Mrs. McCormick awakes with a scream , shrieks " It 's happening again ! " , and minutes later , is shown gently placing a newborn Kenny in his bed . " We should never have gone to that stupid cult meeting , " she grouches as she and her husband return to bed .

= = Character = =

= = = Creation and design = = =

When developing the character , the show 's creators had observed that most groups of childhood friends in small middle @-@ class towns always included " the one poor kid " and decided to portray Kenny in this light .

An unnamed precursor to Kenny first appeared in the first The Spirit of Christmas short , dubbed Jesus vs. Frosty , created by Parker and Stone in 1992 while they were students at the University of Colorado . The character was composed of construction paper cutouts and animated through the use of stop motion . When tasked three years later by friend Brian Graden to create another short as a video Christmas card that he could send to friends , Parker and Stone created another similarly @-@ animated The Spirit of Christmas short , dubbed Jesus vs. Santa . In this short , Kenny is

given his first name , and first appears as he does in the series . Kenny next appeared on August 13 , 1997 , when South Park debuted on Comedy Central with the episode " Cartman Gets an Anal Probe " .

In tradition with the show 's animation style , Kenny is composed of simple geometrical shapes and primary colors . He is not offered the same free range of motion associated with hand @-@ drawn characters ; his character is mostly shown from only one angle , and his movements are animated in an intentionally jerky fashion . Ever since the show 's second episode , " Weight Gain 4000 " (season one , 1997) , Kenny , like all other characters on the show , has been animated with computer software , though he is portrayed to give the impression that the show still utilizes its original technique .

The effect of Kenny 's speech is achieved by Stone mumbling into his own hand as he provides Kenny 's lines , while the recorded audio is then edited with Pro Tools , and the pitch is altered to make the voice sound more like that of a fourth grader . As the technique of Kenny 's muzzled enunciation frequently implies , many of his lines are indeed profane and sexually explicit , the lengthier of which are mostly improvised by Stone .

He first appeared unobscured by his hood in South Park : Bigger , Longer & Uncut , where it was revealed that he had messy golden hair . In a cameo appearance during this moment in the film , Mike Judge provided the voice for Kenny 's one line of uninsulated dialogue : " Goodbye , you guys . " On a few occasions during episodes that have originally aired since the film 's release , he has been seen without the parka ; however , unlike in Bigger , Longer & Uncut his entire face has been only seen once in the television series without being partially obscured or otherwise altered , this being in The Losing Edge . He also speaks unmuffled during some of these instances , in which case co @-@ producer Eric Stough provides Kenny 's voice . During " The Coon " episodes of seasons 13 and 14 , Kenny has his first major speaking role as the character Mysterion .

== Personality and traits ==

While most child characters on the show are foul @-@ mouthed , Kenny is often even more risqué with his dialogue . Parker and Stone state that they depict Kenny and his friends in this manner in order to display how young boys really talk when they are alone . While Kenny is often cynical and profane , Parker notes that there nonetheless is an " underlying sweetness " aspect to the character , and Time magazine described Kenny and his friends as " sometimes cruel but with a core of innocence " . He is amused by toilet humor and bodily functions , and his favorite television personalities are Terrance and Phillip , a Canadian duo whose comedy routines on their show @-@ within @-@ the @-@ show revolve substantially around fart jokes . Kenny is shown to desire intercourse in the episode " The Ring " , when Kenny gets a girlfriend and is overjoyed to find out that she has a reputation as a slut . Kenny is also lecherous , and often portrayed as being eager to do and say disgusting things in an attempt to impress others or earn money . Conversely , his alter @-@ ego Mysterion is seemingly mature , principled , and serious @-@ minded , the only exception being one instance in " Mysterion Rises " in which he takes delight in irritating Cartman . As Mysterion he convinces his parents to take better care of themselves and their children , as seen by their reaction when he questions them about the cult of Cthulhu . He also uses his disguise to protect his sister Karen (who refers to Mysterion as her " guardian angel ") , as revealed in " The Poor Kid . " Despite his character flaws in all of his guises Kenny is usually depicted as being uncommonly selfless , even dying for the sake of others .

When role @-@ playing , Kenny has been shown to prefer playing as the female hero . This was first discovered in the episode " Black Friday " and continued through the next two sequel episodes called " A Song of Ass and Fire " and its follow @-@ up , " Titties and Dragons " . Throughout the three episodes , Kenny cross @-@ dresses as a fantasy @-@ style princess with a wig and dress similar to the video game character Princess Zelda , and becomes a Japanese @-@ speaking moe anime character at one point . When Cartman complains , " You 're never going to be a real princess " , Princess Kenny responds (via her translator , Stan) angrily to Cartman , calling him a " ball @-@ licking lesbian " . This portrayal continues in the video game South Park : The Stick of Truth where

Cartman notes that playing a " chick " is " just how [Kenny] seems to be rolling right now " . Kenny 's sister also refers to Kenny by female pronouns if you talk to her in the McCormick house . Throughout the game , Kenny posts ' status updates ' referring to him / herself as " the cutest of them all " and refers to him / herself with female pronouns .

= = Cultural impact = =

Kenny 's deaths are well known in popular culture , and was one of the things viewers most commonly associated with South Park during its earlier seasons . The exclamation of " Oh my God ! They killed Kenny ! " quickly became a popular catchphrase , while both Kenny and the phrase have appeared on some of the more popular pieces of South Park merchandise , including shirts , bumper stickers , calendars and baseball caps , and inspired the rap song " Kenny 's Dead " by Master P , which was featured on Chef Aid : The South Park Album .

The running gag of Kenny 's deaths in earlier seasons was incorporated into the season 9 (2005) episode " Best Friends Forever " when Kenny , in a vegetative state , is kept alive by a feeding tube while a media circus erupted over whether the tube should be removed and allow Kenny to die . The episode received much attention as it served to provide commentary on the Terri Schiavo case , originally airing just one day before Schiavo died . The episode earned South Park its first Emmy Award for Outstanding Animated Program .

Kenny 's deaths have been subject to much critical analysis in the media and literary world . In the book South Park and Philosophy : Bigger , Longer , and More Penetrating , an essay by Southern Illinois University philosophy professor Dr. Randall Auxier , entitled " Killing Kenny : Our Daily Dose of Death " , suggests that the fashion of the recurring gag serves to help the viewer become more comfortable with the inevitability of their own death . In the book South Park and Philosophy : You Know , I Learned Something Today , University of Wisconsin ? Stevens Point professor Karin Fry wrote an essay concerning the parallels between Kenny 's role in the show and the different concepts of existentialism .

When Sophie Rutschmann of the University of Strasbourg discovered a mutated gene that causes an adult fruit fly to die within two days after it is infected with certain bacteria , she named the gene " Kenny " in honor of the character .

= = In other media = =

Kenny had a major role in South Park : Bigger , Longer & Uncut , the full @-@ length film based on the series , and appeared on the film 's soundtrack singing (albeit muffled) several lines of the song " Mountain Town " from the film . As a tribute to the Dead Parrot sketch , a short that features Kenny as a " dead friend " being returned by Cartman to a shop run by Kyle aired during a 1999 BBC television special commemorating the 30th anniversary of Monty Python 's Flying Circus . Kenny was also featured in the documentary film The Aristocrats , listening to Cartman tell his version of the film 's titular joke , and in the " The Gauntlet " , a short spoofing both Gladiator and Battlefield Earth that aired during the 2000 MTV Movie Awards .

Kenny also appears in five South Park @-@ related video games : In South Park , Kenny is controlled by the player through the first person shooter mode who attempts to ward off enemies from terrorizing the town of South Park . In South Park : Chef 's Luv Shack , a user has the option of playing as Kenny when participating in the game 's several " minigames " based on other popular arcade games . In the racing game South Park Rally , a user can race as Kenny against other users playing as other characters , while choosing to place him in any of a variety of vehicles . In South Park Let 's Go Tower Defense Play ! , Kenny can be selected as a playable character used to establish a tower defense against the game 's antagonists . In South Park : The Stick of Truth , Kenny can be selected as a companion over the course of much of the game .