

Going Underground - Overall assessment

The principal characters in *Going Underground* have recognisable individual voices.

The strongest are:

- Buddy;
- Danny Allbright;
- Peter Wright;
- Ricky Newman;
- Baba Fatt;
- Dame Conceitayda Lott.

The screenplay's overall dialogue differentiation is approximately **7.5–8/10**.

The central trio share age, background and decades of friendship, so some overlap is natural. However, they are separated by temperament:

- **Danny is the impulsive enthusiast.**
- **Peter is the anxious pragmatist.**
- **Ricky is the reflective mediator.**

The talking dog and exaggerated villains then provide much broader comic voices around them.

Danny Allbright

Danny has the liveliest voice among the older men.

He is:

- excitable;
- nostalgic;
- impulsive;
- optimistic;
- quick to embrace absurdity;
- inclined to tease Peter;
- resistant to caution until things become serious.

Once the men reach 1984, Danny rapidly moves from disbelief to enthusiasm:

"Girls. Parties. Carefree days."

"Wicked."

"Hold on tight. The fun's about to begin."

"The night is young!"

"Sixty is the new twenty-one!"

His language repeatedly pushes the group towards experience rather than caution. Peter worries about the consequences; Danny wants to relive what they have lost.

He also has a teasing relationship with Peter:

"You were already planning your pension!"

"You were! Hiving your student grant when we were spending like no tomorrow."

The humour feels rooted in decades of friendship rather than generic banter.

Danny is also the character most likely to say what he thinks before fully processing it:

"Don't be a wimp."

"We've gone through some sort of time portal. Like Michael J. Fox."

"It wasn't properly locked...sorry."

That slight recklessness gives him an identifiable rhythm.

Voice distinction: 8/10

Peter Wright

Peter has the clearest contrast with Danny.

He is:

- cautious;
- physically anxious;
- health-conscious;
- financially sensible;
- literal-minded;
- easily overwhelmed;
- unintentionally funny.

His recurring speech concerns discomfort and practical risk:

"Maybe we should try the other path?"

"It's already giving me a headache."

"I think I'm gonna be sick."

"I hope we don't meet them again."

"Think I may have done my back in."

Peter is almost always the first to identify why something might go wrong.

The pension exchange is particularly effective because his younger self already possesses the same temperament:

Young Peter: "And a pension?"

Peter: "The best."

The joke works because Peter has apparently remained fundamentally Peter throughout his life.

Even in extraordinary situations, he focuses on practicalities:

"You insured?"

"Make sure the police get these."

"Tomorrow we'll try and go back from where we arrived."

His language keeps the fantasy grounded.

Voice distinction: 8/10

Ricky Newman

Ricky is the most balanced of the trio.

He is:

- curious;
- thoughtful;
- nostalgic;
- affectionate;
- more emotionally mature;
- protective of Buddy and Peter;
- generally the mediator.

He initiates the historical trip and expresses genuine interest in their past:

“It’s history. We might learn something about our past.”

“Like stepping back in time.”

Once the situation becomes overwhelming, he steadies Peter:

“Slow, deep breaths.”

“That’s it. Easy does it.”

He is also the one who begins thinking about responsibility:

“He’s right and we need to get back. We can’t stay here.”

At the end, his advice to his younger self is more reflective than anything Danny or Peter says:

“Stay true to your dreams and honourable in your actions.”

That line captures Ricky’s function as the trio’s emotional centre.

His weakness is that he sometimes occupies the neutral space between Danny and Peter, which can make his individual phrasing less instantly recognisable. His voice is defined more by temperament and function than by vocabulary.

Voice distinction: 7.5/10

The older trio together

Their dynamic is clear:

Character Primary verbal instinct

Danny Encourage, tease and leap in

Peter Question, worry and organise

Ricky Mediate, observe and protect

A useful test is imagining the speaker names removed:

“Hold on tight. The fun’s about to begin.”

Clearly Danny.

“I hope we don’t meet them again.”

Clearly Peter.

“Slow, deep breaths. That’s it.”

Clearly Ricky.

That means the basic voice separation is working.

Younger Danny, Peter and Ricky

The younger men successfully feel like earlier versions of the same characters rather than entirely unrelated people.

Young Danny

Young Danny is cockier and more defiant than his older counterpart:

“Get outta here!”

“It’s OK. You’ll like it.”

“You going to pay for this mess?”

He already has Danny’s appetite for excitement and his tendency to speak before thinking.

Older Danny has become somewhat more responsible, but the impulsive core remains.

Young Peter

Young Peter is already cautious, tidy and health-conscious:

“I’ll open the window for the smoke.”

“You’re not gonna believe this.”

“I hope we don’t meet them again.”

His immediate interest in pensions is one of the most direct comic links between the two ages.

Young Ricky

Young Ricky is more free-spirited than his older self:

“Let’s party!”

“One night of nostalgia never did anyone any harm.”

“The magic kind.”

Yet he is still welcoming, sociable and interested in possibilities. Older Ricky’s thoughtfulness feels like a believable development of that openness.

The differentiation between the two ages is not based on completely different speech patterns. It is based on the same personality modified by four decades of experience, which is the right choice.

Buddy

Buddy has the screenplay’s most distinctive comic voice.

He is:

- articulate;
- sardonic;
- self-important;
- unexpectedly intellectual;
- easily offended;
- impatient with the humans;

- still recognisably dog-like.

His first significant lines establish the joke immediately:

“Instead of navel-gazing, do you think we could actually move on?”

“It’s stunting my freedom of expression.”

“Fun sponge.”

The comedy comes from the contrast between his sophisticated vocabulary and his animal behaviour.

He can explain chaos theory:

“The longer we’re here, the greater the chance of affecting a complex system through small changes with large consequences.”

Then immediately add:

“I’m not just a pretty face.”

He also remains preoccupied with canine status:

“I’ll have you know I’m a pedigree.”

“What am I? Designated driver?”

“Sorry. It’s a dog thing.”

“Don’t I get a hug?”

Buddy’s voice is highly recognisable and consistent.

Voice distinction: 9/10

Baba Fatt

Baba Fatt has an exaggerated but effective comic-villain voice.

He speaks as though he is:

- a criminal mastermind;
- a military commander;
- a cultured gentleman;
- the leader of a fearsome organisation.

The comedy is that his gang is incompetent and many of his priorities are ridiculous.

His vocabulary is grandiose:

“Our sponsor demands the utmost professionalism.”

“Dexterity and stealth are the keywords.”

“It is imperative that we leave no stone unturned.”

“Go forth, my warriors.”

He refers to a stolen stuffed toy as:

“No ordinary panda.”

And attempts to threaten the heroes with ceremonious language:

“Apologies for the rearrangement of your abode...”

“It is you who will be paying...and a heavy price it will be.”

His pompous phrasing strongly distinguishes him from the blunt younger characters.

The Pink Lady cocktail, concern for his dentist-approved teeth and sentimental attachment to “Pappa Panda” deepen the comic contradiction.

Voice distinction: 9/10

Baba Grunt and Baba Noob

The supporting bikers are clearly separated from Baba Fatt.

Baba Grunt

Baba Grunt is deferential, slow and repetitive:

“OK, boss.”

“Boss. The stones.”

“Somewhere safe.”

His dialogue often echoes what has just been said, making him the dim but loyal lieutenant.

Baba Noob

Baba Noob initially appears timid and eager:

“Can I help with anything?”

“Yeah, sir.”

His covert police language later sharply changes the impression:

“PC Clutterbuck to HQ.”

“Project Scary Hair.”

That undercover reveal gives him a distinct second register.

Baba Grunt: 7/10

Baba Noob: 7.5/10

Dame Conceitayda Lott

Dame Conceitayda has another highly distinctive heightened voice.

She is:

- theatrical;
- contemptuous;
- pedantic;
- superior;
- fond of elaborate criticism;
- obsessed with cleanliness and discipline.

As a landlady:

“What is it about students that they have this penchant for living in a mess?”

“I thought you were the sensible one, Peter.”

“Your fathers by the look of them.”

"No dogs allowed."

Her dry disapproval already makes her memorable before her villainy is revealed.

As an antagonist, the same voice becomes melodramatic:

"Surrounded by incompetents, it's no surprise I'd have to do the job myself."

"The jewels...please."

"I should never have taken you in!"

The crucial success is that the criminal mastermind still sounds like the disapproving landlady. Her villain voice grows organically from her established personality rather than replacing it.

Voice distinction: 8.5/10

The mynah bird

The mynah bird has a compact but individual comic function:

"Brolove is alive and well."

"Lodger louts."

Its speech is slogan-like and mocking, acting almost as a running commentary on Conceitayda's thoughts.

Voice distinction: 7.5/10

Angel

Angel has the strongest voice among the women.

Both young and older Angel are:

- blunt;
- sceptical;
- controlling;
- protective of Peter;
- unimpressed by nonsense.

At sixty:

"You should have a mask."

"Remember what the doctor said."

"Weak chest."

At twenty-one:

"You brought your dads?"

"You've been drinking that wine again!"

"Never send a man to do a woman's job."

The same fundamental attitude survives over the decades. She cares for Peter, but expresses that care through instruction and criticism.

Voice distinction: 8/10

Eloise

Eloise is more energetic and assertive than Beth, but less controlling than Angel.

Her lines often move people into action:

“Right, let’s find some bargains.”

“At least he has manners.”

“We’ll handle it from here.”

She is also more expressive in her reactions:

“Oh my God! That is vile!”

Her voice is present, though she receives fewer character-defining exchanges than Angel.

Voice distinction: 7/10

Beth

Beth is the gentlest and most cautious of the women.

Her dialogue tends to express:

- concern for Buddy;
- social politeness;
- curiosity;
- quieter observation.

Examples include:

“You sure Buddy will be OK down there?”

“Enjoy.”

“Is this true?”

“A bit creepy.”

She is identifiable as the softer presence, but her vocabulary and rhythm are less distinctive than Angel’s.

Voice distinction: 6.5–7/10

The three women together

The basic differentiation is:

Character Main quality

Angel	Controlling and blunt
Eloise	Energetic and assertive
Beth	Gentle and cautious

This works, but Angel has substantially more personality on the page. Eloise and Beth could be sharpened further, particularly in scenes where all three respond to the same event.

Mrs Tillyworth

Mrs Tillyworth has a recognisable fussy, maternal and obviously authoritative voice:

“A cluttered home is a cluttered mind.”

“If I was your mother, I’d take the scrubbing brush to you.”

“You really do need to look after your things with more care.”

Her power over the intimidating bikers is comic because she speaks to them as untidy children. Baba Fatt's elaborate criminal authority immediately collapses in her presence.

Voice distinction: 8/10

Julius Featheringham and Imelia Middleton

The skinheads are differentiated through deliberate contradiction.

Their appearance suggests aggression, but they speak in soft, polite and educated terms:

"You realise how much noise you made last night?"

"I can't function without a good seven hours' sleep."

"In future, can you please keep the noise down?"

That mismatch creates a specific shared comic voice. They are differentiated as a pair from everyone else, though not strongly from one another.

Combined voice distinction: 7/10

Where voices overlap

The main overlap occurs in three areas.

Eloise and Beth

They are distinguishable through attitude, but some short reaction lines could be exchanged without much effect.

Younger Danny and younger Ricky

Both use enthusiastic 1980s slang and welcome adventure. Young Danny is more confrontational and Young Ricky more sociable, but the distinction occasionally depends on action rather than phrasing.

Functional minor characters

Some police officers, shopkeepers, club staff and gang members speak only to deliver information or complete a joke. They do not need elaborate voices, but several are interchangeable.

Voice scorecard

Character	Voice distinction
Buddy	9/10
Baba Fatt	9/10
Dame Conceitayda	8.5/10
Danny Allbright	8/10
Peter Wright	8/10
Angel	8/10
Mrs Tillyworth	8/10
Ricky Newman	7.5/10
Baba Noob	7.5/10
Young Danny	7.5/10

Character	Voice distinction
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Young Peter	7.5/10
Young Ricky	7–7.5/10
Eloise	7/10
Baba Grunt	7/10
Julius and Imelia	7/10
Beth	6.5–7/10
Minor supporting figures 6–6.5/10	

Verdict

The central and comic characters do have their own voices.

The most successful distinctions are:

- Danny's appetite for adventure versus Peter's anxiety;
- Ricky's mediation versus Danny's impulsiveness;
- the older men's maturity versus their younger selves' lack of restraint;
- Buddy's intellectual sarcasm versus his canine instincts;
- Baba Fatt's grandiose villainy versus his gang's incompetence;
- Conceitayda's severe landlady voice becoming a criminal-mastermind voice;
- Angel's blunt protectiveness surviving across both periods.

The principal weakness is not that everyone sounds the same. It is that **the louder comic personalities dominate**, leaving Beth, Eloise and some minor characters less individually vivid.

Overall, the screenplay succeeds in giving its main ensemble recognisable voices, with the strongest character work belonging to **Buddy, Baba Fatt, Danny, Peter and Dame Conceitayda**.