

= Phil Hartman =

Philip Edward " Phil " Hartman (September 24 , 1948 ? May 28 , 1998 ; born Hartmann) was a Canadian @-@ American actor , voice actor , comedian , screenwriter , and graphic artist . Born in Brantford , Ontario , Hartman and his family moved to the United States in 1958 . After graduating from California State University , Northridge , with a degree in graphic arts , he designed album covers for bands like Poco and America . Feeling the need for a more creative outlet , Hartman joined the comedy group The Groundlings in 1975 and there helped comedian Paul Reubens develop his character Pee @-@ wee Herman . Hartman co @-@ wrote the screenplay for the film Pee @-@ wee 's Big Adventure and made recurring appearances on Reubens ' show Pee @-@ wee 's Playhouse .

Hartman garnered fame in 1986 when he joined the sketch comedy show Saturday Night Live . He won fame for his impressions , particularly of President Bill Clinton , and he stayed on the show for eight seasons . Given the moniker " The Glue " for his ability to hold the show together and help other cast members , Hartman won a Primetime Emmy Award for his SNL work in 1989 . In 1995 , after scrapping plans for his own variety show , he starred as Bill McNeal in the NBC sitcom NewsRadio . He had voice roles on The Simpsons , from seasons 2 ? 10 as Lionel Hutz , Troy McClure , and others , and appeared in the films Houseguest , Sgt. Bilko , Jingle All the Way , Small Soldiers and the English dub of Kiki 's Delivery Service .

Hartman had been divorced twice before he married Brynn Omdahl in 1987 ; the couple had two children together . However , their marriage was fractured , due in part to Brynn 's drug use . On May 28 , 1998 , Brynn shot and killed Hartman while he slept in their Encino , Los Angeles , home , then committed suicide several hours later . In the weeks following his death , Hartman was celebrated in a wave of tributes . Dan Snierson of Entertainment Weekly opined that Hartman was " the last person you 'd expect to read about in lurid headlines in your morning paper ... a decidedly regular guy , beloved by everyone he worked with " . Hartman was posthumously inducted into Canada 's Walk of Fame in 2012 and the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2014 .

= = Early life = =

Hartman was born Philip Edward Hartmann (later dropping one " n ") on September 24 , 1948 in Brantford , Ontario , Canada . He was the fourth of eight children of Doris Marguerite (Wardell) and Rupert Loebig Hartmann , a salesman specializing in building materials . His parents were Catholic and raised their children in that faith . As a middle child , Hartman found affection hard to earn and stated : " I suppose I didn 't get what I wanted out of my family life , so I started seeking love and attention elsewhere . "

He and his family moved to the United States in 1958 , gaining American citizenship in 1990 . The family first lived in Connecticut , and later moved to the West Coast . There , Hartman attended Westchester High School and frequently acted as the class clown .

After graduating , Hartman studied art at Santa Monica City College , dropping out in 1969 to become a roadie with a rock band . He returned to school in 1972 , this time studying graphic arts at California State University , Northridge . He developed his own graphic arts business , which he operated on his own , creating over 40 album covers for bands including Poco and America , as well as advertising and the logo for Crosby , Stills & Nash . In the late 1970s , Hartman made his first television appearance on an episode of The Dating Game ; he won but was stood up by his date .

= = Career = =

= = = Early career (1975 ? 1985) = = =

Working alone as a graphic artist , Hartman frequently amused himself with " flights of voice fantasies " . Eventually he felt he needed a more social outlet and in 1975 , aged 27 , developed this

talent by attending evening comedy classes run by the California @-@ based improvisational comedy group The Groundlings . While watching one of the troupe 's performances , Hartman impulsively decided to climb on stage and join the cast . After several years of training , paying his way by re @-@ designing the group 's logo and merchandise , Hartman formally joined the cast of The Groundlings ; by 1979 he had become one of the show 's stars .

Hartman met comedian Paul Reubens and the two became friends , often collaborating on writing and comedic material . Together they created the character Pee @-@ wee Herman and developed The Pee @-@ wee Herman Show , a stage performance which also aired on HBO in 1981 . Hartman played Captain Carl on The Pee @-@ wee Herman Show and returned in the role for the children 's show Pee @-@ wee 's Playhouse . Reubens and Hartman made cameos in the 1980 film Cheech & Chong 's Next Movie . Hartman co @-@ wrote the script of the 1985 feature film Pee @-@ wee 's Big Adventure and had a cameo role as a reporter in the film . Although he had considered quitting acting at the age of 36 due to limited opportunities , the success of Pee @-@ wee 's Big Adventure brought new possibilities and changed his mind . After a creative falling @-@ out with Reubens , Hartman left the Pee @-@ Wee Herman project to pursue other roles .

In addition to his work with Reubens , Hartman recorded a number of voice @-@ over roles . These included appearances on The Smurfs , Challenge of the GoBots , The 13 Ghosts of Scooby @-@ Doo , and voicing characters Henry Mitchell and George Wilson on Dennis the Menace . Additionally Hartman developed a strong persona providing voice @-@ overs for advertisements .

= = = Saturday Night Live (1986 ? 1994) = = =

After appearing in the 1986 films Jumpin ' Jack Flash and ; Three Amigos ! , Hartman successfully auditioned for NBC 's variety show Saturday Night Live (SNL) and joined the cast and writing staff . He told the Los Angeles Times , " I wanted to do [SNL] because I wanted to get the exposure that would give me box @-@ office credibility so I can write movies for myself . " In his eight seasons with the show Hartman became known for his impressions , and performed as over 70 different characters . Hartman 's original Saturday Night Live characters included Eugene , the Anal Retentive Chef and Unfrozen Caveman Lawyer . His impressions included Frank Sinatra , Ronald Reagan , Ed McMahon , Barbara Bush , Charlton Heston , Phil Donahue and Bill Clinton ; the last was often considered his best @-@ known impression .

Hartman first performed his Clinton impression on an episode of The Tonight Show . When he met Clinton in 1993 Hartman remarked , " I guess I owe you a few apologies " , adding later that he " sometimes [felt] a twinge of guilt about [his Clinton impression] " . Clinton showed good humor and sent Hartman a signed photo with the text : " You 're not the president , but you play one on TV . And you 're OK , mostly . " For his Clinton impression , Hartman copied the president 's " post @-@ nasal drip " and the " slight scratchiness " in his voice , as well as his open , " less intimidating " hand gestures . Hartman opted against wearing a larger prosthetic nose when portraying Clinton , as he felt it would be distracting . He instead wore a wig , dyed his eyebrows brighter and used makeup to highlight his nose . One of Hartman 's more famous sketches as Clinton saw the president visit a McDonald 's restaurant and explain his policies by eating other customers ' food . The writers told him that he was not eating enough during rehearsals for the sketch ? by the end of the live performance , Hartman had eaten so much he could barely speak .

Backstage at SNL , Hartman was called " the Glue " , a name coined by Adam Sandler , according to Jay Mohr 's book Gasping for Airtime . However , according to a biography on Hartman 's life entitled You Might Remember Me : The Life and Times of Phil Hartman written by Mike Thomas , author and staff writer for the Chicago Sun @-@ Times , the nickname was created by SNL cast member and Hartman 's frequent on @-@ screen collaborator Jan Hooks . Hartman often helped other cast members . For example , he aided Jan Hooks in overcoming her stage fright . SNL creator Lorne Michaels explained the reason for the name : " He kind of held the show together . He gave to everybody and demanded very little . He was very low @-@ maintenance . " Michaels also added that Hartman was " the least appreciated " cast member by commentators outside the show , and praised his ability " to do five or six parts in a show where you 're playing support or you 're

doing remarkable character work " . Hartman won the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing for a Variety , Music or Comedy Program for SNL in 1989 , sharing the award with the show 's other writers . He was nominated in the same category in 1987 , and individually in 1994 for Outstanding Individual Performance in a Variety or Music Program .

After his co @-@ stars Jon Lovitz , Dennis Miller , Jan Hooks and Dana Carvey had left , Hartman said he felt " like an athlete who 's watched all his World Series teammates get traded off into other directions ... It was hard to watch them leave because I sort of felt we were all part of the team that saved the show . " This cast turnover contributed to his leaving the show in 1994 . Hartman had originally planned to leave the show in 1991 , but Michaels convinced him to stay to raise his profile ; his portrayal of Clinton contributed to this goal . Jay Leno offered him the role of his sidekick on The Tonight Show but Hartman opted to stay on SNL . NBC persuaded him to stay on SNL by promising him his own comedy ? variety show entitled The Phil Show . He planned to " reinvent the variety form " with " a hybrid , very fast @-@ paced , high energy [show] with sketches , impersonations , pet acts , and performers showcasing their talents " . Hartman was to be the show 's executive producer and head writer . Before production began , however , the network decided that variety shows were too unpopular and scrapped the series . In a 1996 interview , Hartman noted he was glad the show had been scrapped , as he " would 've been sweatin ' blood each week trying to make it work " . In 1998 , he admitted he missed working on SNL , but had enjoyed the move from New York City to Southern California .

= = = NewsRadio (1995 ? 1998) = = =

Hartman became one of the stars of the NBC sitcom NewsRadio in 1995 , portraying radio news anchor Bill McNeal . He signed up after being attracted by the show 's writing and use of an ensemble cast , and joked that he based McNeal on himself with " any ethics and character " removed . Hartman made roughly \$ 50 @,@ 000 per episode of NewsRadio . Although the show was critically acclaimed , it was never a ratings hit and cancellation was a regular threat . After the completion of the fourth season , Hartman commented , " We seem to have limited appeal . We 're on the edge here , not sure we 're going to be picked up or not " , but added he was " 99 percent sure " the series would be renewed for a fifth season . Hartman had publicly lambasted NBC 's decision to repeatedly move NewsRadio into different timeslots , but later regretted his comments , saying , " this is a sitcom , for crying out loud , not brain surgery " . He also stated that if the sitcom were cancelled " it just will open up other opportunities for me " . Although the show was renewed for a fifth season , Hartman died before production began . Ken Tucker praised Hartman 's performance as McNeal : " A lesser performer ... would have played him as a variation on The Mary Tyler Moore Show 's Ted Baxter , because that 's what Bill was , on paper . But Hartman gave infinite variety to Bill 's self @-@ centeredness , turning him devious , cowardly , squeamish , and foolishly bold from week to week . " Hartman was posthumously nominated for the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series in 1998 for his work on NewsRadio , but lost to David Hyde Pierce .

= = = The Simpsons (1991 ? 1998) = = =

Hartman provided the voices for numerous characters on the Fox animated series The Simpsons , appearing in 52 episodes . He made his first appearance in the second season episode " Bart Gets Hit by a Car " . Although he was originally brought in for a one @-@ time appearance , Hartman enjoyed working on The Simpsons and the staff wrote additional parts for him . He voiced the recurring characters Lionel Hutz and Troy McClure , as well as several one @-@ time and background characters . His favorite part was that of McClure , and he often used this voice to entertain the audience between takes while taping episodes of NewsRadio . He remarked , " My favorite fans are Troy McClure fans . " He added " It 's the one thing that I do in my life that 's almost an avocation . I do it for the pure love of it . "

Hartman was popular among the staff of The Simpsons . Showrunners Bill Oakley and Josh

Weinstein stated that they enjoyed his work , and used Hartman as much as possible when working on the show . To give Hartman a larger role , they developed the episode " A Fish Called Selma " , which focuses on Troy McClure and expands the character 's backstory . The Simpsons creator Matt Groening said that he " took [Hartman] for granted because he nailed the joke every time " , and that his voice acting could produce " the maximum amount of humor " with any line he was given . Before his death , Hartman had expressed an interest in making a live action film about Troy McClure . Many of The Simpsons production staff expressed enthusiasm for the project and offered to help . Hartman said he was " looking forward to [McClure 's] live @-@ action movie , publicizing his Betty Ford appearances " , and " would love nothing more " than making a film and was prepared to buy the film rights himself in order to make it happen .

= = = Other work = = =

Hartman 's first starring film role came in 1995 's Houseguest , alongside Sinbad . Other films included Greedy , Coneheads , Sgt. Bilko , So I Married an Axe Murderer , CB4 , Jingle All the Way , Kiki 's Delivery Service , and Small Soldiers , the last of which was his final theatrically released film . At the same time , he preferred working on television . His other television roles included appearances on episodes of Seinfeld , The John Larroquette Show , The Dana Carvey Show , and the HBO TV film The Second Civil War as the President of the United States . He appeared as the kidnapper Randy in the third season cliffhanger finale of 3rd Rock from the Sun ? a role reportedly written especially for him , but he died before filming of the concluding episode could take place . Executive producer Terry Turner decided to recast the part , reshoot and air the finale again , noting : " I have far too much respect for [Hartman] to try to find some clever way of getting around this real tragedy . " Hartman made a considerable amount of money from television advertising , earning \$ 300 @,@ 000 for a series of four commercials for the soft drink Slice . He also appeared in advertisements for McDonalds (as Hugh McAttack) and 1 @-@ 800 @-@ Collect (as Max Jerome) .

Hartman wrote a number of screenplays that were never produced . In 1986 he began writing a screenplay for a film titled Mr. Fix @-@ It , and completed the final draft in 1991 . Robert Zemeckis was signed to produce the film , with Gil Bettman hired to direct . Hartman called it " a sort of a merger of horror and comedy , like Beetlejuice and Throw Momma From the Train " , adding , " It 's an American nightmare about a family torn asunder . They live next to a toxic dump site , their water supply is poisoned , the mother and son go insane and try to murder each other , the father 's face is torn off in a terrible disfiguring accident in the first act . It 's heavy stuff , but it 's got a good message and a positive , upbeat ending . " Zemeckis could not secure studio backing , however , and the project collapsed . Another movie idea involving Hartman 's Groundlings character Chick Hazard , Private Eye also fell through .

= = Style = =

In contrast to his real @-@ life personality , which was described as " a regular guy and , by all accounts , one of show business ' most low @-@ key , decent people " , Hartman often played seedy , vain or unpleasant characters as well as comedic villains . He noted that his standard character was a " jerky guy " , and described his usual roles as " the weasel parade " , citing Lionel Hutz , Bill McNeal , Troy McClure and Ted Maltin from Jingle All the Way as examples . Hartman enjoyed playing such roles because he " just want [ed] to be funny , and villains tend to be funny because their foibles are all there to see . "

He often played supporting roles , rather than the lead part . He said " throughout my career , I 've never been a huge star , but I 've made steady progress and that 's the way I like it , " and " It 's fun coming in as the second or third lead . If the movie or TV show bombs , you aren 't to blame . " Hartman was considered a " utility player " on SNL with a " kind of Everyman quality " which enabled him to appear in the majority of sketches , often in very distinct roles . Jan Hooks stated of his work on SNL : " Phil never had an ounce of competition . He was a team player . It was a privilege for him

, I believe , to play support and do it very well . He was never insulted , no matter how small the role may have been . " He was disciplined in his performances , studying the scripts beforehand . Hooks added : " Phil knew how to listen . And he knew how to look you in the eye , and he knew the power of being able to lay back and let somebody else be funny , and then do the reactions . I think Phil was more of an actor than a comedian . " Film critic Pauline Kael declared that " Phil Hartman and Jan Hooks on Saturday Night Live are two of the best comic actors I 've ever seen . "

Writer and acting coach Paul Ryan noted Hartman 's work ethic with his impressions . He assembled a collection of video footage of the figure he was preparing to impersonate and watched this continually until he " completely embodied the person " . Ryan concluded that " what made [Hartman 's impressions] so funny and spot on was Phil 's ability to add that perfect touch that only comes from trial and error and practicing in front of audiences and fellow actors . " Hartman described this process as " technical . " Journalist Lyle V. Harris said Hartman showed a " rare talent for morphing into ... anybody he wanted to be . "

Ken Tucker summarized Hartman 's comedic style : " He could momentarily fool audiences into thinking he was the straight man , but then he 'd cock an eyebrow and give his voice an ironic lilt that delivered a punchline like a fast slider ? you barely saw it coming until you started laughing . " Hartman claimed that he borrowed his style from actor Bill Murray : " He 's been a great influence on me ? when he did that smarmy thing in Ghostbusters , then the same sort of thing in Groundhog Day . I tried to imitate it . I couldn 't . I wasn 't good enough . But I discovered an element of something else , so in a sick kind of way I made myself a career by doing a bad imitation of another comic . "

= = Personal life = =

Hartman married Gretchen Lewis in 1970 and they divorced sometime before 1982 . He married real estate agent Lisa Strain in 1982 , and their marriage lasted three years . Strain told People that Hartman was reclusive off screen and " would disappear emotionally ... he 'd be in his own world . That passivity made you crazy . " Hartman married former model and aspiring actress Brynn Omdahl (born Vicki Jo Omdahl) in November 1987 , having met her on a blind date the previous year . Together they had two children , Sean and Birgen Hartman . The marriage had difficulties ? Brynn reportedly felt intimidated by her husband 's success and was frustrated she could not find any on her own , although neither party wanted a divorce . Hartman considered retiring to save the marriage . He tried to get Brynn acting roles but she became progressively more reliant on narcotics and alcohol , entering rehab several times . Because of his close friendship with SNL associate Jan Hooks , Brynn joked on occasion that Hooks and Hartman were married " on some other level " .

Stephen Root , Hartman 's NewsRadio co @-@ star , felt that few people knew " the real Phil Hartman " as he was " one of those people who never seemed to come out of character , " but he nevertheless gave the impression of a family man who cared deeply for his children . In his spare time , Hartman enjoyed driving , flying , sailing , marksmanship and playing the guitar .

= = Death = =

On the evening of May 27 , 1998 , Brynn Hartman visited the Italian restaurant Buca di Beppo in Encino , California , with producer and writer Christine Zander , who said she was " in a good frame of mind . " After returning to the couple 's nearby home , Brynn started a " heated " argument with her husband , who threatened to leave her if she started using drugs again , after which he then went to bed . While Hartman slept , Brynn entered his bedroom sometime before 3 : 00 a.m. local time on May 28 with a .38 caliber handgun and fatally shot him twice in the head once in his side . She was intoxicated and had recently taken cocaine .

Brynn drove to the home of her friend Ron Douglas and confessed to the killing , but he did not initially believe her . The pair drove back to the house in separate cars , after which Brynn called another friend and confessed a second time . Upon seeing Hartman 's body , Douglas called 911 at 6 : 20 a.m. Police subsequently arrived and escorted Douglas and the Hartmans ' two children from

the premises , by which time Brynn had locked herself in the bedroom and committed suicide by shooting herself in the mouth .

Los Angeles police stated Hartman 's death was caused by a " domestic discord " between the couple . A friend stated that Brynn allegedly " had trouble controlling her anger ... She got attention by losing her temper . " A neighbor of the Hartmans told a CNN reporter that the couple had been experiencing marital problems : " It 's been building , but I didn 't think it would lead to this " , and actor Steve Guttenberg said they had been " a very happy couple , and they always had the appearance of being well @-@ balanced . "

Other causes for the incident were later suggested . Before committing the act , Brynn was taking the antidepressant drug Zoloft . A wrongful @-@ death lawsuit was filed in 1999 by Brynn 's brother , Gregory Omdahl , against the drug 's manufacturer , Pfizer , and her child 's psychiatrist Arthur Sorosky , who provided samples of Zoloft to Brynn . Hartman 's friend and former SNL colleague Jon Lovitz has accused Hartman 's former NewsRadio co @-@ star Andy Dick of re @-@ introducing Brynn to cocaine , causing her to relapse and suffer a nervous breakdown . Dick claims to have known nothing of her condition . In 2006 , Lovitz claimed that Dick had approached him at a restaurant and said , " I put the Phil Hartman hex on you ; you 're the next one to die . " The following year at the Laugh Factory comedy club in Los Angeles , Lovitz and Dick had a further altercation over the issue . Dick asserts that he is not at fault in relation to Hartman 's death .

Brynn 's sister Katharine Omdahl and brother @-@ in @-@ law Mike Wright raised the two Hartman children . Hartman 's will stipulated that each child will receive their inheritance over several years after they turn 25 . The total value of Hartman 's estate was estimated at \$ 1 @. @ 23 million . In accordance with Hartman 's will , his body was cremated by Forest Lawn Memorial Park and Mortuary , Glendale , California , and his ashes were scattered over Santa Catalina Island 's Emerald Bay .

= = = Response and legacy = = =

Hartman was widely mourned in Hollywood . NBC executive Don Ohlmeyer stated that Hartman " was blessed with a tremendous gift for creating characters that made people laugh . Everyone who had the pleasure of working with Phil knows that he was a man of tremendous warmth , a true professional and a loyal friend . " Guttenberg expressed shock at Hartman 's death , and Steve Martin said he was " a deeply funny and very happy person . " Matt Groening called him " a master " , and director Joe Dante said , " He was one of those guys who was a dream to work with . I don 't know anybody who didn 't like him . " Dan Snierson of Entertainment Weekly concluded that Hartman was " the last person you 'd expect to read about in lurid headlines in your morning paper " and " a decidedly regular guy , beloved by everyone he worked with . " In 2007 , Entertainment Weekly ranked Hartman the 87th greatest television icon of all time , and Maxim named Hartman the top Saturday Night Live performer of all time .

Rehearsals for The Simpsons were canceled on the day of Hartman 's death , as was that night 's performance by The Groundlings . The season five premiere episode of NewsRadio , " Bill Moves On , " finds Hartman 's character , Bill McNeal , has died of a heart attack , while the other characters reminisce about his life . Lovitz joined the show in his place from the following episode . A special episode of Saturday Night Live commemorating Hartman 's work on the show aired on June 13 , 1998 . Rather than substituting another voice actor , the writers of The Simpsons retired Hartman 's characters , and the season ten episode " Bart the Mother " (his final appearance on the show) was dedicated to him , as was his final film , Small Soldiers .

At the time of his death , Hartman was preparing to voice Zapp Brannigan , a character written specifically for him on Groening 's second animated series Futurama . Even though the role was made for Hartman , he still insisted on auditioning and according to Groening , he ' nailed it ' . After Hartman 's death , Futurama 's lead character Philip J. Fry was named in his honor , and Billy West took over the role of Brannigan . Though executive producer David X. Cohen credits West with using his own take on the character , West later said that he purposely tweaked Zapp 's voice to better match Hartman 's intended portrayal . Hartman was also planning to appear with Lovitz in the indie

film *The Day of Swine and Roses* , scheduled to begin production in August 1998 .

Laugh.com and Hartman 's brother , John Hartmann , published the album *Flat TV* in 2002 . The album is a selection of comedy sketches recorded by Hartman in the 1970s that had been kept in storage until their release . Hartmann commented : " I 'm putting this out there because I 'm dedicating my life to fulfilling his dreams . This [album] is my brother doing what he loved . " In 2013 , *Flat TV* was optioned by Michael " Ffish " Hemschoot 's animation company Worker Studio for an animated adaptation . The deal came about after Michael T. Scott , a partner in the company , posted a hand @-@ written letter he had received from Hartman in 1997 on the internet , leading to a correspondence between Scott and Paul Hartmann .

In 2007 , a campaign was started on Facebook by Alex Stevens and endorsed by Hartman 's brother , Paul Hartmann , to have Hartman inducted to Canada 's Walk of Fame . Amongst the numerous events to publicize the campaign , Ben Miner , of the Sirius XM Radio channel *Laugh Attack* , dedicated the month of April 2012 to Hartman . The campaign ended in success and Hartman was inducted to the Walk of Fame on September 22 , 2012 , with Paul accepting the award on his late brother 's behalf . Hartman was also awarded the Cineplex Legends Award . In June 2013 , it was announced that Hartman would receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame , which was unveiled on August 26 , 2014 . Additionally , a special prize at the Canadian Comedy Awards was named for Hartman . Beginning with the 13th Canadian Comedy Awards in 2012 , the Phil Hartman Award was awarded to " an individual who helps to better the Canadian comedy community . " In 2015 , *Rolling Stone* magazine ranked Hartman as one of the top @-@ ten greatest *Saturday Night Live* cast members throughout the show 's forty @-@ year history , coming in seventh on their list of all one @-@ hundred @-@ and @-@ forty @-@ one players .

Hartman has been cited as an influence by Bill Hader and Mike Myers .

= = Filmography = =

= = = Film = = =

= = = Television = = =

= = = Video games = = =