

The McNeal Perspective: *NewsRadio's* Most Lovable Egomaniac

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May 7, 2009

Abstract

NewsRadio's Bill McNeal is a pompous, overpaid, coddled and self-absorbed radio anchor who manipulates his co-workers into doing what he wants them to do. He has little work ethic compared with other members of the station's staff, but receives the highest salary. He is also inept at writing stories and editorials and relies on others to do that for him. The few times he tries to write his own editorials, they are in poor taste, ill informed or just downright idiotic. In short, he lives up to what *NewsRadio's* viewers might expect from a fictional news anchor. McNeal is a radio host, but his behavior is best explained by looking at fictional television anchors because he displays many of the same characteristics. McNeal differs from other anchors in film and television because his raging egomania is an obvious mask for many latent psychological wounds inflicted during his traumatic upbringing.

Introduction

Bill McNeal, played by Phil Hartman, is more than just the host of the fictional WNYX-AM 580 on the NBC sitcom *NewsRadio*. He's also a stereotype of the pompous broadcast journalist who cares more about himself than anything else in the world. Although he is a radio anchor, McNeal is modeled on other fictional television news anchors in that he receives the station's highest salary, does the least amount of work and has an ego twice the size of the New York City skyscraper where the station is located. But where other fictional news anchors are somewhat one-dimensional, McNeal has a hidden side shredded with emotional scars from his painful upbringing. Throughout the four seasons he serves as host, it becomes obvious that McNeal's overblown exterior is his way of covering up his traumatic past. Not that anyone is expected to feel sorry for him--the extremes of McNeal's raging egomania combined with his damaged psyche actually counter each other. Once viewers start to feel sorry for him, he goes into a self-serving tirade that blocks any pity that might be coming his way. Still, he is very likable, and even the staff he torments for years still care about him. After Hartman was killed in real life between the fourth and fifth seasons, McNeal dies suddenly of a heart attack and is mourned by the staff during the first show of the fifth and final season.¹

Bill McNeal

McNeal was born on March 1, 1950.² McNeal, whose real name is Evelyn and pronounced Eve-elyn, had a complicated childhood that left him with crippling emotional disorders he hides under his bloated ego.³ Regardless, McNeal still recounts these painful moments as though they were treasured family memories, full of "love and nurture" and "good-natured ribbing."⁴

"I remember one time," reminisces McNeal, "my father came home from a night on the town, which of course had turned into a week, and my mother said, 'John, is there anything you won't drink?' And my father shot back, 'Poison! I'm saving it for you!'"⁵ McNeal often concludes such disturbing stories by laughing nervously and slowly exhaling the phrase, "Ah, good times."

His mother was equally distant. McNeal says he likes to eat the old sandwiches in the station's vending machine because they remind him of the ones his mother used to make. "She'd make a month's worth at a time and leave them for me in a box on the porch. She was quite a woman."⁶

When McNeal's mother was around, she wasn't very supportive. McNeal was cut from the high school football team, which prompted his mother to announce in front of his peers that "Central's lost a fullback, but the McNeals have gained a daughter."⁷

McNeal also had trouble growing up with his now-alcoholic brother. Despite the fond manner in which McNeal talks about his brother's sadistic behavior, the stories he tells are shockingly, yet laughingly, disturbing. One time he was mouthing off to his brother, who then punched him so hard he was knocked out for a half hour. "When I woke up I was on the bus, completely nude, of course."⁸ During one family Christmas, his brother again stripped McNeal naked and locked him outside just as carolers were arriving. "Talk about a Merry Christmas!" laughs Bill, followed by "Ah, good times."⁹

McNeal got his first taste of radio when he hosted a rock-music show from midnight to 6 a.m. at the University of Cincinnati, where he was the self-described "bad boy of WFIB."¹⁰ McNeal reveals that spent most of his college days and nights drunk and goofing off.

After justifying why hazing is a good thing, McNeal pours coffee and hot sauce on an intern's head as he remembers a story from his fraternity days. McNeal laughs about the time he and his frat brothers got a pledge drunk, locked him in a car trunk and left him at a junkyard. When McNeal's boss asks him how the pledge got out of the trunk, McNeal says he has to leave.¹¹

While trying to write his autobiography, McNeal laments that Dan Rather was the youngest AP photographer at age 19. McNeal's news director, Dave Nelson, asks what he was doing at 19. "Drinking," retorts McNeal.¹² Later in the same episode, McNeal recounts his memories of the riots at the 1968 Democratic Convention. He would have been about 18. He says he witnessed the riots from his dorm-room TV while drinking.¹³

In fact, McNeal owes his professional career to his alcohol abuse. He actually says radio is boring and that he only got a job in the business because his aunt owned a radio station. "She only hired me to try to get me to stop drinking," he says.¹⁴

In his professional life, McNeal is best known, or at least he thinks he is, as the golden-voiced anchor of New York City's second-ranked news radio station. He loves smoking cigarettes almost more than anything, and often says he's most relaxed while not wearing pants. He's even done both at the same time while in the office.¹⁵

Despite a review that once called him "adequate," McNeal has an excellent voice.¹⁶ That's probably why he is allowed to keep his job despite being otherwise inept as a journalist. He sounds and acts like a television news anchor, but he could never make the switch because he looks terrible on camera.¹⁷ While McNeal mostly reads what's handed to him, he occasionally writes his own editorials in such segments as "The McNeal Perspective" and "The Real Deal With Bill McNeal." McNeal never writes a decent editorial, as his segments are often poorly constructed and lead to unintended consequences. During one "McNeal Perspective," the host chides another radio station for using the word *penis* because he says it is offensive. He even suggests whoever says the word *penis* on the air should be punished regardless of the context, not realizing that he is saying the word repeatedly on the air.¹⁸

During one of his later "Real Deal With Bill McNeal" segments, he says that foreign diplomats who don't have to pay parking tickets "should be dragged from their cars and beaten." After that actually happens, he pens another editorial saying that the only person who should be beaten is "Joe Vigilante," who, as it turns out, is a real person who ends up in the hospital.¹⁹

McNeal often tells strangers that they probably recognize his voice from the show, but they never do. Not even the security guards in the lobby of the station's building know who he is, despite the fact they know everyone else in the office.²⁰ That doesn't mean McNeal doesn't have his share of admirers. In one episode, he fears for his life because he thinks he is being stalked. It turns out to be a worker from the coffee shop across the street who merely wants McNeal's autograph.²¹ A few months later, a psychotic Santa Claus tells McNeal he's going to kill him, but later says it was just a ruse to get the anchor's attention because the Santa is actually an audition-tape-wielding journalism student. As it turns out, his tape contains a threatening message to McNeal after all.²² Co-worker and reporter Matthew Brock also has a long-running infatuation with McNeal, who returns Brock's admiration with nothing but insults.

McNeal likes to think of himself as a smooth-talking ladies man. But he's seen dating only one woman, and she thinks he's British because he spoke in a fake accent when she met him at a party. He's afraid she won't like him if she finds out he's really not British, so he keeps it up, even when she comes to visit the office and meets the staff.²³

McNeal's biggest brush with fame comes when he repeatedly impersonates President Bill Clinton on the air. The fake interviews become such a hit that McNeal is greeted in the street by strangers wanting to shake his hand. McNeal's impersonation brings in the highest ratings the station has seen since 1987. He also appears before a televised Senate committee, defending his right to hold fake interviews and not be censored.²⁴ But this fame is inexplicably short-lived, as his national popularity is non-existent in subsequent episodes.

The WNYX Staff

Catherine Duke

At WNYX, McNeal co-hosts the daytime news broadcasts with Catherine Duke, played by Khandi Alexander, a sassy and strong-headed woman with whom McNeal once had a brief affair.²⁵ Since then, the two spend most of their time trying to one-up each other, most often through insults and pranks. McNeal starts doing ads for a malt liquor brand called "Rocket Fuel" and tries to speak in a "frank street patois," while doing so, but just sounds like an idiot trying to talk street. Strangely enough, McNeal actually loves rap music—"it speaks to me in places I didn't know I had ears"—but only until he gets his stereo fixed and finds out the genre has words. After that, he hates rap music.²⁶ That attitude could explain his inability to accurately mimic the lingo.

Duke, who is black, is annoyed and offended by McNeal's pathetic and exploitive attempts to sound street. She gets back at him by offering to update him on all the new slang words. McNeal writes them down feverishly and comes up with the following ad spot he reads on the air: "Giziza dilznoofuses, Bill McNeal saying get with the crizappy taste of Rocket Fuel malt liquor. Rocket Fuel's got the upstate prison flava that keeps you

ugly all night long. So you wanna get sick, remember—nothing makes your feet stank like Rocket Fuel malt liquor. Damn, it's crizappy!" The malt liquor's advertising director shows up at the station immediately afterward and promptly stops McNeal from promoting the drink.²⁷

Despite their feuds, McNeal is still attracted to Duke, who herself is disgusted with the thought of sleeping with her co-host again. McNeal thinks he has another shot with Duke when she leaves WNYX for a job in London because she invites him to her apartment before she leaves for the airport. But Duke never shows. Instead, McNeal is greeted by a nude Joe Garrelli, played by Joe Rogan, the station's electrician who also yearns for Duke, whom she also tricked into meeting her before she leaves.²⁸

Duke returns after McNeal's funeral. In a note he had given to his lawyer in the event of his death, McNeal writes, "I'm sorry we only slept together that one time. I found your lovemaking technique delicious."²⁹

Dave Nelson

McNeal spends a great deal of his time ribbing his boss, Nelson, played by Dave Foley. The host often says the news director looks like a 14-year-old. In turn, Nelson has a difficult time keeping a lid on McNeal's frequent outbursts and self-serving uprisings. When Nelson and billionaire station owner Jimmy James, played by Stephen Root, eliminate the free snacks in the kitchen to cut budget expenses, McNeal galvanizes the hungry staff, who have resorted to digging in the freezer to find old gum. "We should be working and enjoying free snacks," he says, "not foraging for frozen morsels like an ice-bound Brazilian soccer team." He then compares Nelson to Genghis Khan and calls him a

pharaoh. The rest of the staff says they'll support Bill in his fight to get the snacks back. Instead, Bill twists the situation to his own favor by demanding the station buy him a massage chair.³⁰

Nelson is understandably shocked when McNeal doesn't protest another set of budget cuts that forces the station to get rid of nearly all its furniture. In fact, McNeal says everybody should stand behind Nelson and tough it out. Nelson says he remembers McNeal once said he'd rather drink water from a toilet than have to pay for soda. His suspicion aroused, Nelson discovers the station is making the cuts to help pay for McNeal's raise that will pay him 16 times more than the station's lowest paid employee.³¹

Although Nelson says he respects McNeal as a host, he doesn't have nice things to say about him as a person. That makes it tough for Nelson when McNeal tells him that the news director will be introducing him at a reception. Understandably, Nelson doesn't know what he'll say or how he'll say it, but McNeal happily steps in to coach Nelson to be sure he has nothing but the most glowing things to say. Nelson becomes frustrated when McNeal berates him while he's practicing the speech, prompting Nelson to say that McNeal is the "most selfish, egotistical person I've ever had to work with." Seconds later, Nelson introduces McNeal at the reception with nothing but flowery praise.³²

But Nelson also takes shots back at McNeal. One day, McNeal struts back into the office from lunch sporting a fancy wooden cane topped with a brass knob. "Great cane weather," he tells Nelson, who says this is just a sad cry for attention. When McNeal refuses to get rid of the cane, it mysteriously disappears. McNeal later finds that Nelson stole it and taped it to the building outside a window. McNeal is happy to find it, but then

Nelson breaks the cane over his knee. Not to be outdone, McNeal has already bought dozens more canes and has the secretary toss them to him through Nelson's office door.³³

Lisa Miller

McNeal constantly hits on Lisa Miller, WNYX's overachieving star reporter played by Maura Tierney. While this is highly inappropriate, Miller's multi-season affair with Nelson is also very unprofessional, as well as a constant source of gossip for McNeal. But the relationship between Miller and Nelson never stops McNeal from trying to move in on the reporter.

McNeal asks to see her naked on several occasions, although that's no anomaly for the anchor. McNeal hits on nearly every woman in sight. After his death, the staff discovers that on the back of every card in McNeal's Rolodex is a sketch of what he thinks that person looks like naked.³⁴ He is especially persistent with Miller. He calls her at home several times after digging through the dumpster in the building's loading dock.³⁵ In his personal note to Miller that she reads after his death, McNeal writes, "I'm sorry I was so obsessed with what you looked like naked. I'm much more sorry I never actually got the chance to see you naked. Please think of me the next time you're naked because if it is at all possible to become a ghost, I will be there appreciating you in all of your naked splendor."³⁶

Miller, of course, is disgusted with McNeal's feeble attempts to get her into bed. One day, when McNeal is especially persistent with her, Miller tells him she wouldn't sleep with him if they were the last two people on earth. She says she would rather kill herself than spread his genes.³⁷

Matthew Brock

McNeal's love of the station's female staff could probably never be matched by reporter Matthew Brock's love of McNeal. Brock, played by Andy Dick, is an innocently dim-witted reporter that is constantly falling down, slipping or breaking office equipment. Brock often sings nonsensical songs about elves and unicorns and owns two cats named Chew Chew and Mit Mit. He is also infatuated with McNeal. When the staff is giving one another their performance evaluations, Brock tells Beth, the station's secretary whose last name is never revealed, that McNeal is great and that she should focus on dressing like the host. Nelson cuts in to tell Brock that McNeal isn't a god. "Time will tell," responds Brock.³⁸ McNeal is always mean back to Brock, often calling him "spaz" and making fun of him. One day during a staff meeting, McNeal is especially vicious with Brock, prompting the reporter to run into Nelson's office and cry. There, Nelson tells Brock that McNeal might respect him more if he stood up for himself. Brock responds by punching McNeal in the face, which actually wins him McNeal's temporary respect.³⁹

Beth

Although McNeal lusts after all three female members of the staff, he probably spends the least amount of time hitting on Beth, the station's wardrobe-daring secretary and self-described spunky redhead, played by Vicki Lewis.⁴⁰ In fact, she kisses him after he takes her to a broadcaster's lunch in a limousine, and he doesn't kiss her back, saying that he's afraid to be alone with her now.⁴¹ Instead, he spends most of his time

commenting on how little money she makes. After he gets a huge raise that nearly bankrupts the station because it pays him 16 times more than Beth earns, he says that 16 times “next to nothing” is practically nothing.⁴² When he is stuck at an airport in St. Louis with Dave, McNeal put Beth in charge of watering the plants in his apartment. She arrives with Brock, only to discover that the apartment is a sex den, complete with furry, rotating bed, clap-on music and a fully stocked hideaway bar that disappears behind a sliding wall. Brock doesn't understand why the apartment is set up the way it is but finds himself strangely attracted to Beth. She must explain to the dimwitted reporter that McNeal needs his apartment set up like this because he needs people to love him "only for short periods of time." McNeal later leaves a message on the apartment's answering machine, asking the real tenant, Barry, who is a busy gigolo, to water his plants because he knows Beth will go to the wrong apartment. Beth and Brock hear this and walk out.⁴³

Joe Garrelli

Garrelli is the station's electrician who uses duct tape to fix everything and never buys electrical devices, instead unsuccessfully rigging them up himself. His jury-rigged wiring often shorts. He is paranoid, he often shares with the staff several of his conspiracy theories and he's also a tough guy with lot of muscles. But Garrelli is smart. McNeal often underestimates the blue-collar electrician's intelligence. When Duke is out sick one day, McNeal brings Garrelli into the booth as a fill-in to make both him and Duke look better. To McNeal's surprise, Garrelli is a superb host and McNeal runs to Nelson to say he no longer thinks Garrelli is any good. McNeal then quizzes Garrelli on the air about the minor details of elements from the day's stories, but Garrelli gives

thoughtful, detailed answers. McNeal then snatches away a page of the script from Garrelli, who then recites the story by memory.⁴⁴

McNeal often secretly comes to Garrelli when he needs help finding a specific electronic device. When McNeal thinks he has a stalker, he asks Garrelli where he can buy a taser. Garrelli tells McNeal he shouldn't waste his money. The electrician builds a taser out of a garage door opener. McNeal doesn't believe the contraption works, but electrocutes himself while testing it out, rendering himself immobile. That's when the so-called stalker walks in, and turns out to be just a fan looking for an autograph.⁴⁵

When McNeal wants to get a voice modulator in the broadcast booth to give his delivery more resonance, he asks Garrelli where he can buy a piece of equipment to do that. On cue, Garrelli says he can just make one himself. Garrelli's homemade "Voice-Mo-Tron 3000" doesn't work right and also shorts out. It turns out that McNeal doesn't need a modulator to give his voice a booming echo because he can do it without the aid of a modulator. "I don't pretend to know the physics of it," says McNeal. But he also says that if he does it for too long he gets intense headaches and blackouts.⁴⁶

Jimmy James

McNeal has a generally positive relationship with the station's owner, billionaire eccentric Jimmy James. The owner often tells stories that go nowhere or anecdotes that don't make any sense. But he truly cares about McNeal and the rest of his staff, once declining to sell the station for a huge sum because he says the people who worked there meant the world to him.⁴⁷

James lets McNeal get away with pretty much anything, so long as the host delivers good ratings. James sees how valuable McNeal, or at least his voice, is to the station. It's revealed in one episode that McNeal consistently receives a \$4,000 bonus every year while the rest of the staff gets about \$400 each.⁴⁸ James also is willing to nearly bankrupt the station by giving McNeal a monstrous secret bonus. But after Nelson protests, James solves the problem by assigning McNeal an additional position in another one of his companies to split his salary. But it's more than a paper title--he makes McNeal clean his pool and serve him snacks while the rest of the staff enjoy the pool party.⁴⁹

Conclusion: The 'Real' Deal With Bill McNeal

Real-life critics look past McNeal's ineptitude as a journalist, often citing him as the driving force behind *NewsRadio*. *Slate's* Jessica Winter said Phil Hartman was "unsurpassed," and that McNeal was "*The Mary Tyler Moore Show's* Ted Baxter all the way: brashly incompetent, operatically pompous, missing a superego and slightly befuddled for the lack of it."⁵⁰

Although Baxter portrayed a television news anchorman, many of his characteristics fit McNeal's: pompous, self-obsessed, coddled, clueless and lacking any real journalism skills. News anchors are commonly portrayed this way in pop culture, whether that's a justified portrait or not. Characters like Baxter and McNeal, as well as the film *Anchorman's* Ron Burgundy, *The Simpsons's* Kent Brockman and countless bit parts in movies and television throughout the past four decades have splashed the role of an anchorman with an indelible stain of egomania, arrogance and occasional

incompetence.⁵¹ In fact, McNeal, Burgundy and Brockman all derive much of their character traits from Baxter.^{52,53} All of these newsmen fit the "mold for the cheesy, vain, intellectually vacant, superficially self-confident but ultimately insecure newscaster."⁵⁴

Viewers have seen so many portrayals of these types of buffoon anchors that "larger than life fictional characters" like McNeal "overwhelm their less vivid real life contemporaries."⁵⁵ In other words, viewers expect a character like McNeal to be arrogant because that's what they've been used to seeing in other movies or television shows.⁵⁶

At the same time, broadcast journalists are much more visible than print journalists, and so are their mistakes. If a finely coiffed and news anchor donning makeup flubs a line or misses a cue, he might be caught staring into the camera for a little too long and do a good enough job of parodying himself.⁵⁷ So while viewers are bombarded with images of fictional news anchors acting like idiots, they are also exposed to images of real anchors that somewhat validate viewers' preconceptions.

McNeal's pompous act is also a blatant attempt to cover up his utter lack of self-confidence stemming from his traumatic childhood. McNeal's painful memories are so over-the-top, they are often funny. Other fictional anchors have demonstrated that their egos are covering up inner feelings, such as Brockman's jealousy over his sister being a big-shot CNN correspondent or Burgundy's secret longing for someone to love. But none seems as traumatized, or as hilarious, as McNeal. "There's a good deal of flamboyant rage pent up inside Bill McNeal," wrote *Edmonton Journal* TV critic Richard Helm. "But rage is funny."⁵⁸

Regardless, McNeal works as a singular character because he fills two distinct categories at once--the blowhard egomaniacal news anchor that viewers love to hate, and

the emotionally crippled man-child hiding underneath a blustery exterior whom viewers feel sorry for. By straddling this fine line, McNeal pays homage to the negative image of the pompous news anchor while also adding a new twist to the stereotype.

Endnotes

¹ Episode 76: "Bill Moves On," *NewsRadio*. First aired September 23, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Paul Simms.

² Episode 33: "Halloween," *News Radio*. First aired October 30, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil.

³ Episode 11: "The Breakup," *NewsRadio*. First aired October 31, 1995. Directed by Peter Bonerz. Written by Paul Simms.

⁴ Episode 41: "Led Zeppelin Boxed Set," *NewsRadio*. First aired January 15, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Brian Kelley, Lewis Morton, Joe Furey and Josh Lieb.

⁵ Episode 41: "Led Zeppelin Boxed Set," *NewsRadio*.

⁶ Episode 32: "Arcade," *NewsRadio*. First aired October 23, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Brian Kelley.

⁷ Episode 41: "Led Zeppelin Boxed Set," *NewsRadio*.

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ Episode 49: "Sleeping," *NewsRadio*. First aired May 7, 1997. Directed by Judi Elterman. Written by Alan J. Higgins, Paul Simms and Brian Kelley.

¹¹ Episode 72: "Monster Rancher," *NewsRadio*. First aired April 15, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Teleplay by Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil. Story by Brian Kelley and Lewis Morton.

¹² Episode 14: "Bill's Autobiography," *NewsRadio*. First aired November 21, 1995. Directed by Michael Lembeck. Written by Joe Furey.

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ Episode 12: "The Shrink," *NewsRadio*. First aired November 7, 1995. Directed by Michael Lembeck. Written by Andrew Gordon and Eileen Conn.

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- ¹⁶ Episode 30: "Review," *NewsRadio*. First aired September 25, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Josh Lieb.
- ¹⁷ Episode 55: "Planbee," *NewsRadio*. First aired September 30, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Brian Kelley.
- ¹⁸ Episode 53: "The Injury," *NewsRadio*. First aired June 5, 1997. Directed by Rich Beren. Written by Paul Simms.
- ¹⁹ Episode 58: "French Diplomacy," *NewsRadio*. First aired November 11, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Drake Sather.
- ²⁰ Episode 13: "Friends," *NewsRadio*. First aired November 14, 1995. Directed by Michael Lembeck. Written by Brian Kelley and Josh Lieb.
- ²¹ Episode 9: "Goofy Ball," *NewsRadio*. First aired September 26, 1995. Directed by Alan Myerson. Written by Paul Simms.
- ²² Episode 17: "Xmas Story," *NewsRadio*. First aired December 19, 1995. Directed by Leonard Garner. Written by Lewis Morton.
- ²³ Episode 22: "Zoso," *NewsRadio*. First aired February 25, 1996. Directed by James Burrows. Written by Josh Lieb, Lewis Morton, Joe Furey, and Paul Simms.
- ²⁴ Episode 59: "Pure Evil," *NewsRadio*. First aired November 18, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Teleplay by Paul Simms, story by Brian Kelley and Lewis Morton.
- ²⁵ Episode 2: "Inappropriate," *NewsRadio*. First aired March 28, 1995. Directed by James Burrows. Written by Paul Simms.
- ²⁶ Episode 40: "Rap," *NewsRadio*. First aired January 8, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Alan J. Higgins, Brian Kelley, Drake Sather, and Paul Simms.
- ²⁷ Episode 47: "Office Feud," *NewsRadio*. First aired March 19, 1997. Directed by Leonard R. Garner Jr. Written by Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil.
- ²⁸ Episode 60: "Catherine Moves On," *NewsRadio*. First aired November 25, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Josh Lieb and Paul Simms.
- ²⁹ Episode 76: "Bill Moves On," *NewsRadio*. First aired September 23, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Paul Simms.
- ³⁰ Episode 31: "Massage Chair," *NewsRadio*. First aired October 2, 1996. Directed by Drake Sather. Written by Lewis Morton.
- ³¹ Episode 46: "Twins," *NewsRadio*. First aired March 12, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Lewis Morton.
- ³² Episode 20: "In Through the Out Door," *NewsRadio*. First aired February 4, 1996. Directed by Patrick Maloney. Written by Leslie Caveny, Joe Furey, Alan J. Higgins, Josh Lieb, Drake Sather, and Paul Simms.
- ³³ Episode 16: "The Cane," *NewsRadio*. First aired December 12, 1995. Directed by Alan Myerson. Written by Brad Isaacs.
- ³⁴ Episode 76: "Bill Moves On," *NewsRadio*.

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- ³⁵ Episode 73: "4:20," *NewsRadio*. First aired April 28, 1998. Directed by Judi Elterman. Written by Paul Simms.
- ³⁶ Episode 76: "Bill Moves On," *NewsRadio*.
- ³⁷ Episode 69: "Beep, Beep," *NewsRadio*. First aired March 18, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Alan J. Higgins.
- ³⁸ Episode 43: "Rose Bowl," *NewsRadio*. First aired February 5, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Alan J. Higgins, Josh Lieb, Lewis Morton and Paul Simms.
- ³⁹ Episode 41: "Led Zeppelin Boxed Set," *NewsRadio*.
- ⁴⁰ Episode 47: "Office Feud," *NewsRadio*. First aired March 19, 1997. Directed by Leonard R. Garner Jr. Written by Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil.
- ⁴¹ Episode 6: "Luncheon at the Waldorf," *NewsRadio*. First aired May 2, 1995. Directed by Peter Baldwin. Written by Brad Isaacs.
- ⁴² Episode 46: "Twins," *NewsRadio*.
- ⁴³ Episode 45: "Airport," *NewsRadio*. First aired February 19, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Drake Sather.
- ⁴⁴ Episode 23: "Houses of the Holy," *NewsRadio*. First aired March 10, 1996. Directed by Gregg Hescong. Written by Dawn DeKeyser, Brian Kelley, Joe Furey, and Paul Simms.
- ⁴⁵ Episode 9: "Goofy Ball," *NewsRadio*. First aired September 26, 1995. Directed by Alan Myerson. Written by Paul Simms.
- ⁴⁶ Episode 19: "Bitch Session," *NewsRadio*. First aired January 14, 1996. Directed by James Burrows. Written by Brian Kelley.
- ⁴⁷ Episode 18: "Station Sale," *NewsRadio*. First aired January 7, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Leslie Caveny, Brian Kelley, Lewis Morton, Joe Furey, Josh Lieb, and Paul Simms.
- ⁴⁸ Episode 5: "Big Day," *NewsRadio*. First aired April 18, 1995. Directed by Alan Myerson. Written by Joe Furey, Brad Isaacs, Josh Lieb, and Paul Simms.
- ⁴⁹ Episode 46: "Twins," *NewsRadio*.
- ⁵⁰ Winter, Jessica, "It Was 30 Rock Meets WKRP in Cincinnati: The awkward charm of NBC's NewsRadio"(Slate.com, December 23, 2008, <http://www.slate.com/id/2204924/>).
- ⁵¹ Ghiglione, Loren, Joe Saltzman. 2005. Fact or Fiction: Hollywood Looks at the News. *Image of the Journalist in Pop Culture*. <http://ijpc.org/hollywoodlooksathenews2.pdf> (accessed March 30, 2009).
- ⁵² Stephanie Woo. *The Scoop on the Simpsons: Journalism in U.S. Television's Longest Running Prime-Time Animated Series*. p. 5.
- ⁵³ Emily Nerland. *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*. p. 14.
- ⁵⁴ McCullough, Michael. "Decoding an anchorman: The vain, vacant (think Ted Baxter) TV news reader disappeared years ago, replaced by the intelligent, informed journalists

we see on the screen today. But the caricature persists.” *The Vancouver Sun* 10 July 2004: C1.

⁵⁵ Joe Saltzman. 2005. *Analyzing the Images of the Journalist in Pop Culture*. p. 11-12. <http://ijpc.org/Resources%20%20Recommended%20Books%20and%20Web%20Sites.htm> (accessed March 30, 2009).

⁵⁶ *ibid*, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Todd Leopold, "And Now, the News" (*CNN.com*, July 9, 2004). <http://www.cnn.com/2004/SHOWBIZ/07/07/eye.ent.anchorman/index.html> (accessed May 6, 2009).

⁵⁸ Helm, Richard, "Rage becomes new rage for comedian" (*The Ottawa Citizen*, August 31, 1995).

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Bill meets the station's new news director, Dave.

Episode 2: "Inappropriate," NewsRadio. First aired March 28, 1995. Directed by James Burrows. Written by Paul Simms.

Bill throws Catherine an unwanted birthday party.

Episode 3: "Smoking," NewsRadio. First aired April 4, 1995. Directed by James Burrows. Written by Josh Lieb, Brad Isaacs and Paul Simms.

Bill discovers smoking's no longer allowed in the office.

Episode 4: "Crisis," NewsRadio. First aired April 11, 1995. Directed by James Burrows. Written by Josh Lieb.

Bill tells Dave how to cover a subway accident.

Episode 5: "Big Day," NewsRadio. First aired April 18, 1995. Directed by Alan Myerson. Written by Joe Furey, Brad Isaacs, Josh Lieb, and Paul Simms.

Bill guns for the office's big bonus.

Episode 6: "Luncheon at the Waldorf," NewsRadio. First aired May 2, 1995. Directed by Peter Baldwin. Written by Brad Isaacs.

Bill takes Beth to a journalist's luncheon where she kisses him.

Episode 7: "Sweeps Week," NewsRadio. First aired May 9, 1995. Directed by Peter Bonerz. Written by Joe Furey and Paul Simms.

Bill meets Dave's ex-girlfriend, who is crazy.

Episode 8: "No, this is not based entirely on Julie's life," NewsRadio. First aired September 19, 1995.

Bill peeks at naked photos that Beth took of herself.

Episode 9: "Goofy Ball," NewsRadio. First aired September 26, 1995. Directed by Alan Myerson. Written by Paul Simms.

Bill thinks someone is stalking him.

Episode 10: "Rat Funeral," NewsRadio. First aired October 10, 1995. Directed by Alan Myerson. Written by Paul Simms and Lewis Morton.
Bill eulogizes the office rat.

Episode 11: "The Breakup," NewsRadio. First aired October 31, 1995. Directed by Peter Bonerz. Written by Paul Simms.
Bill teases Catherine on her birthday but won't tell her when he was born.

Episode 12: "The Shrink," NewsRadio. First aired November 7, 1995. Directed by Michael Lembeck. Written by Andrew Gordon and Eileen Conn.
Bill buys his own cubicle so he can smoke and take his pants off at work.

Episode 13: "Friends," NewsRadio. First aired November 14, 1995. Directed by Michael Lembeck. Written by Brian Kelley and Josh Lieb.
Bill lost his building ID and the guards won't let him in.

Episode 14: "Bill's Autobiography," NewsRadio. First aired November 21, 1995.
Directed by Michael Lembeck. Written by Joe Furey.
Bill tries to write his autobiography.

Episode 15: "Negotiation," NewsRadio. First aired November 28, 1995. Directed by Leonard R. Garner, Jr. Written by Dawn DeKeyser.
Bill torments Matthew after the reporter is promoted.

Episode 16: "The Cane," NewsRadio. First aired December 12, 1995. Directed by Alan Myerson. Written by Brad Isaacs.
Bill gets a new cane, which annoys Dave.

Episode 17: "Xmas Story," NewsRadio. First aired December 19, 1995. Directed by Leonard Garner. Written by Lewis Morton.
Bill thinks the lobby Santa Claus is stalking him.

Episode 18: "Station Sale," NewsRadio. First aired January 7, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Leslie Caveny, Brian Kelley, Lewis Morton, Joe Furey, Josh Lieb, and Paul Simms.
Bill protests a station sale.

Episode 19: "Bitch Session," NewsRadio. First aired January 14, 1996. Directed by James Burrows. Written by Brian Kelley.
Bill makes fun of Dave when he thinks he's out for the day.

Episode 20: "In Through the Out Door," News Radio. First aired February 4, 1996.
Directed by Patrick Maloney. Written by Leslie Caveny, Joe Furey, Alan J. Higgins, Josh Lieb, Drake Sather, and Paul Simms.
Bill coaches Dave on how to introduce the host at a dinner in his honor.

Episode 21: "The Song Remains the Same," NewsRadio. First aired February 18, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Sam Johnson, Chris Marcil, Joe Furey and Lewis Morton.

Episode 22: "Zoso," NewsRadio. First aired February 25, 1996. Directed by James Burrows. Written by Josh Lieb, Lewis Morton, Joe Furey, and Paul Simms. Bill has been lying to his girlfriend, who thinks he's British.

Episode 23: "Houses of the Holy," NewsRadio. First aired March 10, 1996. Directed by Gregg Hescong. Written by Dawn DeKeyser, Brian Kelley, Joe Furey, and Paul Simms. Bill tries to find a bad fill-in host.

Episode 24: "Physical Graffiti," NewsRadio. First aired March 24, 1996. Directed by Patrick Mahoney. Written by Josh Lieb and Paul Simms. Bill wages a prank war on Catherine.

Episode 25: "Led Zeppelin," NewsRadio. First aired March 31, 1996. Directed by Patrick Maloney. Written by Leslie Caveny. Bill helps Dave through his breakup with Lisa.

Episode 26: "Presence," NewsRadio. First aired April 14, 1996. Directed by Lee Shallat Chemel. Written by Alan J. Higgins and Josh Lieb. Jimmy wages Bill in a poker game and loses him.

Episode 27: "Coda," NewsRadio. First aired April 21, 1996. Directed by Lee Shallat Chemel. Written by Brian Kelley, Lewis Morton, Josh Lieb and Paul Simms. Bill works on a baseball promo that goes wrong.

Episode 28: "Led Zeppelin II," NewsRadio. First aired April 28, 1996. Directed by James Burrows. Written by Drake Sather. Bill tries to escape the burning building.

Episode 29: "President," NewsRadio. First aired September 18, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Paul Simms. Bill interviews Jimmy after the owner says he's running for president.

Episode 30: "Review," NewsRadio. First aired September 25, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Josh Lieb. Bill is called "adequate" in a review of the station in a magazine.

Episode 31: "Massage Chair," NewsRadio. First aired October 2, 1996. Directed by Drake Sather. Written by Lewis Morton. Bill buys a massage chair for the office.

Episode 32: "Arcade," NewsRadio. First aired October 23, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Brian Kelley.

Bill mourns the loss of the sandwich vending machine.

Episode 33: "Halloween," News Radio. First aired October 30, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil.

Bill contemplates his mortality when a psychic says he will die soon.

Episode 34: "Awards Show," NewsRadio. First aired November 6, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Drake Sather.

Bill wins an award.

Episode 35: "Daydream," NewsRadio. First aired November 13, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Paul Simms.

Bill daydreams about affairs with the office women.

Episode 36: "Movie Star," NewsRadio. First aired November 20, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Lewis Morton.

Bill says James Caan is his friend and invites him into the office.

Episode 37: "Stocks," NewsRadio. First aired December 11, 1996. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Alan J. Higgins.

Bill wants Jimmy to give him stock tips.

Episode 38: "Christmas," NewsRadio. First aired December 18, 1996. Directed by Patrick Maloney. Written by Drake Sather.

Bill leaves work early for the holidays.

Episode 39: "The Trainer," NewsRadio. First aired December 18, 1996. Directed by Gregg Hescong. Written by Joe Furey.

Bill joins a gym.

Episode 40: "Rap," NewsRadio. First aired January 8, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Alan J. Higgins, Brian Kelley, Drake Sather, and Paul Simms.

Bill is turned off by rap music's lyrics.

Episode 41: "Led Zeppelin Boxed Set," NewsRadio. First aired January 15, 1997.

Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Brian Kelley, Lewis Morton, Joe Furey and Josh Lieb.

Bill reveals his painful past after Matthew punches him in the face.

Episode 42: "Complaint Box," NewsRadio. First aired January 29, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Brian Kelley, Lewis Morton, Joe Furey and Josh Lieb.

Bill submits fake complaints into the new complaint box.

Episode 43: "Rose Bowl," NewsRadio. First aired February 5, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Alan J. Higgins, Josh Lieb, Lewis Morton and Paul Simms. Bill reviews a staff member before Dave reviews him.

Episode 44: "Kids," NewsRadio. First aired February 12, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Sam Johnson, Chris Marcil, Joe Furey and Drake Sather. Bill takes a schoolchild under his wing when a class visits the station.

Episode 45: "Airport," NewsRadio. First aired February 19, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Drake Sather. Bill is unhappily stuck in an airport with Dave.

Episode 46: "Twins," NewsRadio. First aired March 12, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Lewis Morton. Bill's secret raise nearly bankrupts the station.

Episode 47: "Office Feud," NewsRadio. First aired March 19, 1997. Directed by Leonard R. Garner Jr. Written by Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil. Bill promotes Rocket Fuel malt liquor.

Episode 48: "Our Fiftieth Episode," NewsRadio. First aired April 2, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Joe Furey, Paul Simms and Josh Lieb. Bill is committed to a mental hospital.

Episode 49: "Sleeping," NewsRadio. First aired May 7, 1997. Directed by Judi Elterman. Written by Alan J. Higgins, Paul Simms and Brian Kelley. Bill reverts back to his college DJ days when Jimmy's in a coma.

Episode 50: "The Real Deal," NewsRadio. First aired May 7, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Josh Lieb and Lewis Morton. Bill interviews Jerry Seinfeld.

Episode 51: "Mistake," NewsRadio. First aired May 14, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Joe Furey and Paul Simms. Bill doesn't like what Dave said about him in a magazine interview.

Episode 52: "Space," NewsRadio. First aired May 21, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Brian Kelley and Lewis Morton. Bill and the staff are on a space station.

Episode 53: "The Injury," NewsRadio. First aired June 5, 1997. Directed by Rich Beren. Written by Paul Simms. Bill rants against another station saying penis on the air.

Episode 54: "Jumper," NewsRadio. First aired September 23, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Paul Simms.

Bill interviews a jumper on the office's ledge.

Episode 55: "Planbee," NewsRadio. First aired September 30, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Brian Kelley.

Bill auditions for a TV news job.

Episode 56: "The Public Domain," NewsRadio. First aired October 29, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Joe Furey.

Bill starts playing piano in the office.

Episode 57: "Super Karate Monkey Death Car," NewsRadio. First aired November 4, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Josh Lieb.

Bill fears for his job after an efficiency expert is brought in.

Episode 58: "French Diplomacy," NewsRadio. First aired November 11, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Drake Sather.

Bill's editorials incite violence.

Episode 59: "Pure Evil," NewsRadio. First aired November 18, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Teleplay by Paul Simms, story by Brian Kelley and Lewis Morton.

Bill does fake interviews with Bill Clinton on the air.

Episode 60: "Catherine Moves On," NewsRadio. First aired November 25, 1997.

Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Josh Lieb and Paul Simms.

Bill tries to get in bed with Catherine before she moves away.

Episode 61: "Stupid Holiday Charity Talent Show," NewsRadio. First aired December 16, 1997. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Alan J. Higgins.

Bill tries to coach Beth in singing.

Episode 62: "The Secret of Management," NewsRadio. First aired January 1, 1998.

Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Lewis Morton.

Bill hires a butler.

Episode 63: "Look Who's Talking," NewsRadio. First aired January 6, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Joe Furey.

Bill wants to adopt a child.

Episode 64: "Chock," NewsRadio. First aired January 13, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil.

Bill makes fun of Dave for his college a cappella group.

Episode 65: "Who's the Boss," NewsRadio. First aired January 20, 1998. Directed by Gregg Hirschong. Written by Josh Lieb.

Bill becomes boss.

Episode 66: "Who's the Boss (2)," NewsRadio. First aired February 3, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Brian Kelley.

Bill is demoted back to his normal position.

Episode 67: "Security Door," NewsRadio. First aired February 24, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil.

Bill avoids using the station's new security door.

Episode 68: "Big Brother," NewsRadio. First aired March 3, 1998. Directed by Judi Elterman. Written by Lewis Morton.

Bill tells Dave Lisa is dating other men.

Episode 69: "Beep, Beep," NewsRadio. First aired March 18, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Alan J. Higgins.

Bill tries to get Lisa and Dave back together.

Episode 70: "Balloon," NewsRadio. First aired March 25, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Joe Furey and Paul Simms.

Bill doesn't know Jimmy is faking an around-the-world balloon trip.

Episode 71: "Copy Machine," NewsRadio. First aired April 8, 1998. Directed by Joe Furey. Written by Drake Sather.

Bill pretends to know a worker who committed suicide in the office.

Episode 72: "Monster Rancher," NewsRadio. First aired April 15, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Teleplay by Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil. Story by Brian Kelley and Lewis Morton.

Bill is jealous of the new intern.

Episode 73: "4:20," NewsRadio. First aired April 28, 1998. Directed by Judi Elterman. Written by Paul Simms.

Bill becomes increasingly obsessed with Lisa.

Episode 74: "Jackass Junior High," NewsRadio. First aired May 6, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Joe Furey and Alan J. Higgins.

Bill thinks people don't see him as funny.

Episode 75: "Sinking Ship," NewsRadio. First aired May 12, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheronos. Written by Joe Furey, Brian Kelley, Josh Lieb and Sam Johnson.

Bill plays a throwback character in this homage to the movie "Titanic."

Episode 76: "Bill Moves On," NewsRadio. First aired September 23, 1998. Directed by Tom Cheron. Written by Paul Simms.

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