

# My brother and Vernon Dent

When we are reborn, it's highly likely we cross paths with others from our past incarnations.

From Walter Semkiw's website: **People appear to come into life in groups, based on shared karma and emotional attachments. Couples often come back together and entire family units can recur. When an individual reincarnates, other members of that person's karmic group will be present. Ian Stevenson did a very important twin study in which the past lives of 31 sets of twins (62 people) were factually validated. In 100 percent of these cases, the twins had significant past life relationships. The most common type of past life relationship was that of siblings, followed by friendships, other family relationships, then being spouses in the past incarnation.** <https://reincarnationresearch.com/principles-of-reincarnation/>

Vernon suffered from diabetes and its complications including blindness, the last 8 years of his life. Like Vernon, my brother developed Type 2 diabetes at 36. He died from liver failure in 2018, age 37. It's still a mystery as to what exactly caused his liver to fail. The doctors surmise it was a rare and lethal drug interaction. He was already on meds for high blood pressure, cholesterol, and just started taking Metformin (an oral diabetic med) then came down with pneumonia and was prescribed Amox-Clav, which is known for causing severe liver damage in some people. He needed a liver transplant but the hospital (Northwestern) refused, claiming his obesity made him "high risk" and he would likely die on the operating table. The day he died, one of the nurses tried to console me by saying that just before he lost consciousness he shouted out, "I'm doing this for my sister!". He was delirious and she didn't know what he meant but she felt moved to tell me his last words. I'm not sure what he meant either by "THIS". Maybe he's one of my angels encouraging me to create this website. I miss him so much but I know he's with me in spirit form, and we'll be crossing paths again someday in the flesh. In my mind, often times out of the blue, I see him doing his trademark comical bits and they crack me up or I recall a fond memory...usually his goal is to make me laugh, cheer me up. He'd do pantomime, hysterical impersonations and accents, he had a wonderful sense of humor and his antics would have me laughing so hard I couldn't breathe. He was a clown with everyone he met. Laughter is as powerful a uniting force as love, and

there were over 250 people at his wake--friends and former friends, even some former enemies, all races and religions, rich and poor. It was really touching to see.

I'm trying to be objective with this website by providing evidence that meets the criteria Walter Semkiw has presented in his Principles of Reincarnation. I like concrete evidence in the form of quotes, articles and photos. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find many commonalities between my brother, Brandon, and Vernon. They have SOME things in common and I'm going to supply scans here. I certainly have A LOT of evidence to support the fact that Harry and Vernon loved each other very much. Their relationship was extremely close, which explains why both may have desired to reincarnate as siblings. Vernon and Brandon seemed to have had generally similar personality traits, both very gregarious, outgoing, kind, generous, great sense of humor and always clowning. They BOTH LOVED SWEETS to the point that it negatively impacted their health. They both loved music and singing, though my brother loved modern hard rock and attended concerts regularly. Brandon was passionate about bowling but I haven't found evidence that Vernon shared a similar passion. Plus, my brother was a drinker and Vernon was not. Brandon does physically resemble Vernon. Despite the small number of commonalities I've found, think about this: what are the odds that I'd have so much in common with Harry PLUS have a brother who looks like and has some things in common with his best friend, Vernon Dent? I got news for ya's ....this isn't a bunch of random coincidences. THIS IS REAL. Photo comparisons first followed by evidence from books.



Same smile, eyes look similar including coloring (same blue as mine). My brother is heavier here than Vernon but you can see they both have a slight cleft in their chins and other similar facial features.



Vernon always preferred to have a moustache, so did my brother but with a goatee of some sort.



Photo of Vernon from Bill Cassara's book, VERNON DENT: STOOGE HEAVY



Vernon made an early talkie short in 1931 called THE FAINTING LOVER and in it, he's wearing a fake goatee and glasses. This is the closest I've seen Vernon resemble my brother as he looked in everyday life. It's a little unsettling watching this film. I feel that same tingly electric current run through my body that I sometimes feel when watching Harry in a film. It literally feels like I'm watching my brother. All I keep hearing in my mind is, "That's Brandon". Vernon's expressions, poses and mannerisms are so much like his. Link to THE FAINTING LOVER video on You Tube: <https://youtu.be/6OY1iBSYzYY>



## Evidence of Harry Langdon's friendship with Vernon Dent

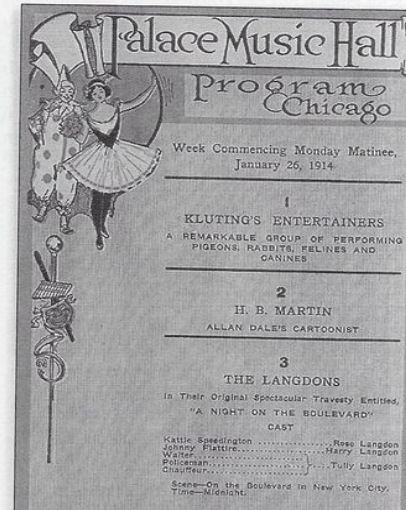
October 20th found them on the West Coast at Oakland's Orpheum Theater, sharing the bill with Ed Wynn, among others. Working as an usher was a high school senior who would one day loom large in Langdon's screen career *and* personal life: Vernon Dent. Dent had already been bitten by the show-biz bug; the day before Langdon's opening, he had performed for his school's 'Thespians' club. Dent

but The Langdons were still considered on the fringes of "The Big Time." They'd made inroads on the Keith and Orpheum circuits but had yet to headline anywhere. Harry had been in vaudeville long enough to know that, however spectacular, an act lasting eleven-to-fourteen minutes was unlikely to achieve headliner status. At the same time, he was reluctant to make any drastic changes beyond sharpening the dialogue and



biographer Bill Cassara speculates, "As an usher, Vernon had to catch that show for at least one of the performances. Knowing Vernon, he must have introduced himself to every act." A lifelong friendship may well have begun under these modest circumstances.

At the Pantages that same week, the Four Marx Brothers were also in Oakland headlining in *Mr. Green's Reception*, an expanded version of their earlier



Harry and Vernon may have crossed paths as early as 1913 when Harry was in vaudeville. Vern was 18, Harry was 29. (Hayde & Harter, *LITTLE ELF* Pg. 51)



A youthful Vernon Dent gives Harry Langdon "The Look" in their very first screen appearance together. *Picking Peaches* (Sennett, 1924). COURTESY OF EDWARD WATZ



Harry's last role in *Pistol Packin' Nitwits*, with El Brendel and Vernon Dent.

Vernon and Harry met up again in 1924 at Mack Sennett's studio. Vern appeared in Harry's very first Sennett film in 1924, *PICKING PEACHES* and also his last film in 1944, *PISTOL PACKIN' NITWITS*. Though Vernon's scenes were shot, they were edited from the final cut. In those 20 years, they made numerous films together. (photos from *STOOGES HEAVY & KING OF SILENT COMEDY*)



A candid shot of Harry Langdon and Vernon Dent on the set of *The Hollywood Kid* (Sennett, 1924). COURTESY OF HARRY LANGDON, JR.

ing between takes while the director and crew set up the next scene. The actors would have to stay in costume and be available at a moment's notice. Some folks amused themselves by talking, playing cards, gambling, or finding a shady spot. The musically inclined passed the time by singing or playing instruments.

During the making of *Hollywood Kid*, a still camera caught a candid shot off the set. There is Harry Langdon, playing his portable peddled piano, with Vernon, who is obviously singing. Vernon was in his costume for the next scene. Harry was not in the film *Hollywood Kid*; he was between takes for his own movie. Though Langdon and Dent would not be working together again for a period of months, a Brownie camera moment recorded the budding friendship and commonality of the two comedians.

Love this candid shot. They were making separate movies on the Sennett lot, yet chose to hang out between takes. Keep in mind, despite Harry's preference for solitude, he really loved Vern's company. (Cassara, *STOOGES HEAVY* pg. 94)

There was a conscious decision to have Vernon Dent play off the evolving characterization of Harry Langdon. Of the remaining 13 shorts Langdon made for Sennett, Vernon was in 12 of them. They were all shot late in the year 1924 and throughout 1925. Mack Sennett withheld some of the later titles for specially timed releases.

While the Langdon unit was in production, Vernon continued his stooge-heavy support to seven additional comedies, mostly in Ralph Graves and Alice Day vehicles. Despite Vernon's work with the other comedians, it became clear that he and Langdon had a special chemistry, even though they were not a comedy team in the traditional sense. Langdon was the star, and Vernon knew his responsibilities. He had done it before with Hank Mann; that is, *he let the star get the laughs*. No matter what role Vernon played (a rival, a lunatic, a rogue, a crook), it all helped to enhance Langdon as a major comic force.

As a body of work, it might be helpful if we examine some of the last appearances Langdon and Dent made at Sennett's. Their efforts together made screen magic and evolved into an enduring friendship.

(Cassara, *STOOGES HEAVY* pg. 97)





*Harry Langdon and Vernon Dent in Plain Clothes (Sennett, 1925). This was taken two years before Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy became a team.*

COURTESY OF EDWARD WATZ

They really would've made a wonderful comedy team if it was in the cards. (Cassara, *STOOGES HEAVY* pg. 103)

“Vernon dearly loved Harry. There was such a gentle camaraderie between them. They understood each other. It was really a touching association for both of them. I felt that as soon as I saw them together. Of course, Harry and Mabel’s life was not much different from ours.”

“Vernon and Harry were very close when working together, and he had a sympathetic audience in me, I simply let him talk knowing it was necessary,” Eunice explained. “Harry and Vernon both manufactured their gags. They had gag writers, of course, but they were pretty resourceful themselves because they knew what they could do together.”

It is no wonder that the Harry Langdon family shared the joy of the Dents’ new marriage. Vernon and Eunice not only met at their house, it appears that Harry and Vernon looked out for each other on a professional basis. And what greater honor is there than to be asked to be someone’s Best Man and Matron of Honor?

“Mabel and Harry came out with us when we were married in Santa Barbara,” Eunice recalled. “We had lunch at the El Facile Restaurant in Santa Barbara, which at that time was quite ‘posh,’ then we had dinner at Bob Murphy’s Nightclub at La Cienega Boulevard. The four of us were

Quotes from Vern's wife, Eunice. Harry was his Best Man at their wedding in 1938. (Cassara, *STOOGES HEAVY* pg. 155 & 159) Below is a photo of Harry and Mabel, on Eunice and Vern's wedding day. It's from my personal photo collection and signed by Mabel Langdon in 1989.



I were an old pro." Eunice Dent, who married Vernon in August 1938, reflects upon her late husband's love of people:

In the two-reelers, Vern was always cast as a nasty man because he was adept at projecting that kind of image onscreen; in actuality, he was quite the reverse. There wasn't a mean bone in his body. He got along with everyone. Very rarely did he meet someone whom he couldn't get along with.

Vernon was very gregarious; he had a great many friends, both in and out of the movie business. Of course, he and Harry Langdon were quite close. Of all the Three Stooges, Vern kept in closest contact with Moe. Shemp was also a good friend. Jules White used to be our neighbor;

inspired helped to fashion musical gems like *THE BIG TALK* (1934), *NIGHT DUTY* (1933) and *HOOKS AND JABS* (1933). Nell O'Day, who was cast as Harry's leading lady in a few of these two-reelers, recalls: "Vernon was a lovely man; he couldn't have been nicer. He and Harry were very fond of each other. They were wonderful to work with." In 1933 producer-director Arvid E. Gillstrom,

Quotes from Vern's wife, Eunice describing his personality which is similar to my brother, Brandon's. Followed by a quote from Nell O'Day who made a few sound shorts with Vern and Harry in the early 30's. (Okuda & Watz, COLUMBIA COMEDY SHORTS pg. 210)



Mabel Langdon confided to Edward Watz, "I know that Harry had discussed with me in the 1930s that it would be great if Vernon and he were more like a team. But then with Laurel & Hardy being so prominent, it wouldn't have worked out at that particular time. I know that Vernon would've liked it. And I know that Harry would have, too."

The time for such a partnership would never come. After a brief illness, Harry Langdon died at St. Vincent's Hospital, on December 22, 1944. A small notice in the *Los Angeles Times* listed the survivors as his wife, Mabel, and his ten-year-old son, Harry, Jr. The article announced funeral arrangements, which were handled by Vernon.

When Harry, Jr. was a teenager, Mabel Langdon explained, "It was Uncle Vernon who gave him fatherly counseling and took him to baseball games. I'll never forget that."

Mabel Langdon quotes (Cassara, *STOOGES HEAVY* pg. 163 & 164). Vern took care of Harry's funeral arrangements and, ironically, I did the same for my brother, Brandon, when he died in 2018. I was moved to tears when I first read of how Vern became a surrogate father to Harry's son, Harry Jr., after his dad passed away in 1944. Such a kind and compassionate soul. My brother loved baseball and so did Vernon, apparently.



One of the last photos of us together in 2017. We accidentally crossed paths in our old neighborhood this day. He saw me walking outside and gave me a lift (my phone flipped the photo, he's on the driver's side). Just as we drove passed Portage Park, I snapped the photo. We had lots of good times as kids in that park playing baseball and whatnot (our childhood home was right across the street on Dakin). Though not a glamour photo, it was a nostalgic moment and I wanted a memento of that day. I think he's giving me "The Look"...he wasn't too happy I took a picture without asking.