

Groundhog Day (film)

Groundhog Day is a 1993 American comedy film directed by Harold Ramis, starring Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell. It was written by Ramis and Danny Rubin, based on a story by Rubin.

Murray plays Phil Connors, an egocentric Pittsburgh TV weatherman who, during a hated assignment covering the annual Groundhog Day event in Punxsutawney, finds himself repeating the same day over and over again. After indulging in hedonism and numerous suicide attempts, he begins to reexamine his life and priorities.

In 2006, the film was added to the United States National Film Registry as being deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant." [2]

Plot

Self-centered and sour TV meteorologist Phil Connors (Bill Murray), news producer Rita (Andie MacDowell) and cameraman Larry (Chris Elliott) from fictional Pittsburgh television station WPBH-TV9 travel to Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, to cover the annual Groundhog Day festivities with Punxsutawney Phil. Having grown tired of this assignment, Phil grudgingly gives his report and attempts to return to Pittsburgh when a blizzard shuts down the roads. Phil and his team are forced to stay in town an extra day.

Phil wakes up to find that he is reliving February 2. The day plays out exactly as it did before, with no one else aware of the time loop, and only Phil aware of past events. At first he is confused, but, when the phenomenon continues on subsequent days, he decides to take advantage of the situation with no fear of long-term consequences: he learns secrets from the town's residents, seduces women, steals money, drives recklessly, and gets thrown in jail. However, his attempts to get closer to Rita repeatedly fail.

Eventually, Phil becomes despondent and tries more and more drastically to end the time loop; he gives ridiculous and offensive reports on the festival, abuses residents, and eventually kidnaps Punxsutawney Phil and, after a long police chase, drives into a quarry, appearing to kill both himself and the groundhog. However, Phil wakes up and finds that nothing has changed; further attempts at suicide are just as fruitless as he continues to find himself awaking on the morning of February 2.

When Phil explains the situation to Rita, she suggests that he should take advantage of it to improve himself. Inspired, Phil endeavors to try to learn more about Rita, building upon his knowledge of her and the town each day. He begins to use his by now vast experience of the day to help as many people around town as possible. He uses the time to learn, among other things, to play piano, ice sculpt and speak French.

Eventually, Phil is able to befriend almost everyone he meets during the day, using his experiences to save lives, help townspeople, and to get closer to Rita. He crafts a report on the Groundhog Day celebration so eloquent that all the other stations turn their microphones to him. After the evening dance, Rita and Phil retire together to Phil's room. He wakes the next morning and finds the time loop is broken; it is now February 3 and Rita is still with him. Phil is a different person than he was on February 1 and, after going outside, Phil and Rita talk about living in Punxsutawney together.

Legacy

Groundhog Day has been considered a tale of self-improvement which emphasizes the need to look inside oneself and realize that the only satisfaction in life comes from turning outward and concerning oneself with others rather than concentrating solely on one's own wants and desires. The phrase also has become a shorthand illustration for the concept of spiritual transcendence.[25][26] As such, the film has become a favorite of Buddhists[27][28] because they see its themes of selflessness and rebirth as a reflection of their own spiritual messages. It has also, in the Catholic tradition, been seen as a representation of Purgatory. It has even been dubbed by some religious leaders as the "most spiritual film of our time." [29]