

Funny enough, Virginie's birthday is the day after Groundhog Day and mine is the day before this show opens. So, it seems fitting to talk too much about Groundhog Day.

PHIL

Did I just dream it?

Phil opens the door and runs into the hallway wearing only pyjama bottoms.

RITA

Phil? Phil!

Rita sits up in bed and waits. Suddenly, from somewhere else in the inn comes the sound of Phil at the piano expertly playing a difficult classical piece. He stops after a few bars.

PHIL (O.C.)

Yeah!!!!

Phil runs back into the room.

PHIL

It really happened! You're really here!

That's the ending to the 1993 movie Groundhog Day as it was written in the original screenplay. Phil ran to check if he could still play the piano, a skill he acquired while stuck in a time loop. That didn't make the final cut. Instead, he's just ecstatic to finally experience the next day, February 3rd. (I reluctantly agree that is likely the most realistic reaction.) I know it's a little thing, but at the same time, it makes a huge difference to his relationship with that experience. He wanted to know that he still 'had' everything he gained during that period. Everything from practical knowledge to his outlook on life. Some estimates have Phil repeating the same day a bit less than 9 years, while others estimate roughly 34 years. The latter takes into account the amount of time it takes to 'master' a new skill, such as learning the piano.

PHIL

What would you do if you were stuck in one place... and every day was exactly the same, and nothing you did mattered?

RALPH

That about sums it up for me.

Ralph's quip (while unaware of the loop) is a sentiment most of us can identify with. A lot of people seem unaware of the monotony of our days. "Tomorrow's another day, but so was

yesterday.”¹ It’s understandable given the seemingly infinite number of ‘bullshit jobs’ that exist everywhere today. We base our lives around work, not even necessarily productive work. At times, it’s hard to believe one isn’t the butt of some cosmic joke. After all, “repetition is among the most prominent comic techniques.”² It’s also inherently part of art. Artists have depicted the same allegory or event throughout generations. Even today, we reference historical works (whether we intend to or not.) Sure, they all have their own perspective, but we inherently remix the same material. We liked it so much we made appropriation art. Now we’re just casually living with ghosts.

While our days may not appear as overtly repetitive as Phil’s, we still seem to be stuck in the ‘past’ just the same as him. I’m not saying it’s a bad thing. It’s all what you make of it. So, somehow you have to accept the past or, as Louis Bourgeois said, “if you can’t accept it, then you have to do sculpture.”³ That’s probably why Phil picked up ice carving during his time in the loop.

Cassidy Toner

¹ Rene Ricard. Tomorrow’s Another Day...2011

² Alenka Zupančič. The Odd One In- On Comedy. 2008

³ Lewis Hyde. A Primer for Forgetting- Getting Past the Past. 2019