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Seventh Period

Bill Murray Reflection

I’m not typically one to bother with celebrities. In fact, I find the whole idea of a celebrity culture to be an icky by-product of our society’s apparently endless need to be constantly entertained. It’s a tired, sad, and all-too-common story of how a reality T.V. half-wit, auto-tuned pop artist, or a comedy icon whose best one-liner is a fart joke can rake in millions hand over fist while the rest of us struggle to make a buck doing honest, hard work. That said, as much of a hypocrite as it makes me and as embarrassing as it is to sometimes admit, I can’t help but love Bill Murray.

Perhaps this is due solely to the fact that he is the lead actor in my favorite film, *Groundhog Day*, which I randomly saw in theaters with my family when I was 11 years old. Since then, I’ve seen the movie perhaps a hundred times and I could probably rattle off just about every line verbatim. Even by the standards of quirky romantic-comedies of 1994 when it was released, the film is hardly perfect and isn’t even Bill Murray’s finest role. For me, though, those flaws only make me like the movie *and* Bill Murray himself all the more.

My personal fandom of Bill Murray extends beyond his movies, however; his dry wit and dripping sarcasm have infected my own sense of humor for decades since I was 11. For instance, I’m not someone who’s remotely inclined to celebrate family holidays like Christmas or play dress-up at Halloween like most people I know. Instead, I celebrate every February 2nd (the actual Groundhog Day) with unusual fervor. I’ve thrown parties, sent mass texts and posted Facebook wishes to anyone who’ll listen, and even dressed my impressionable toddler son in a Groundhog Day t-shirt. Side note: My son’s original due date for being born was, wait for it, February 2nd. I try not to hold it against him that he was four days late. Oddly enough, I’ve no desire to attend the Groundhog festival in Pennsylvania where the venerable prognosticator marmot himself, Punxatawney Phil, is said to see or not see his shadow every year. It seems silly to me. I’d rather go to the beach or hike the Smokies. I’d rather, as it turns out, make it an annual tradition to watch the movie in my warm home with some friends and keep it low-key.

Now, being a Bill Murray fan has its drawbacks. Don’t even get me started on *what on Earth* Bill was thinking when he signed on to voice over the *Garfield* movies. Have you seen “A Very Murray Christmas” on Netflix? It’s absolutely horrible. Two words you’ll never see in my DVD/Blu-ray collection: *Space Jam*. The list could go on and on, actually, but for every unsightly film Bill makes, he also makes one that’s hilarious or staggeringly soulful. For every *Osmosis Jones*, there’s a *Royal Tenenbaums*; on the heels of a *Monuments Men* is a *St. Vincent*. If you don’t know the latter titles, look one up some time. Who knows? Maybe you’ll catch a laugh or two.