Intro to *Groundhog Day*

Today, our subject is the American comedy film, *Groundhog Day. Groundhog Day* was released in 1993 and directed by Harold Ramis. It stars Bill Murray, Andie MacDowell, and Chris Elliott. It was written by Ramis and Danny Rubin, and based on a story by Rubin.

The film is loaded with spiritual and religious innuendo and philosophical themes. Sometimes these themes are incohesive, but they do provoke a lot of good introspective questions--not to mention, laughs. In 2006, the film was added to the United States National Film Registry as being deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".

Groundhog Day has been said, by some, to be “one of the most spiritually important films of our time.” I cannot tell you if that was intentional on the part of the writers, but I think it is interesting to note that Harold Ramis, the director, co-producer, and co-writer, is an “agnostic raised Jewish and married to a Buddhist”… In an interview, Stephen Tobolowsky (who played Ned Ryerson) explained how this conflict of philosophies played out while shooting the final scene:

> “He [Bill Murray] said, "I refuse to shoot this scene until I know how I am dressed. Am I wearing the clothes I wore the night before? Am I wearing p.j.'s? Am I not wearing that?" That is, what happened that night between him and Andie [MacDowell]? So, he refused to shoot it. Harold Ramis, the director, had not thought of this question, and he didn't know. So he took a vote from the cast and crew as to what Bill was wearing. Is he wearing the clothes from the night before, or is he wearing pajamas? And it was a tie, a tie vote, so Bill still refused to shoot the scene.
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> Then one girl in the movie—it was her first film—she was assistant set director. She raised her hand and said, "He is absolutely wearing the clothes he wore the night before. If he is not wearing the clothes he wore the night before, it will ruin the movie. That's my vote." So Harold Ramis said, "Then that's what we are going to do." I've never told anybody that behind-the-scenes story, so keep that a secret now.”

Bill Murray, a Catholic, took that question seriously, it seems. As you watch the final scene, try to imagine the implications of that question… Clothes from the night before, or pajamas?