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Is the movie the secret life of walter mitty based on a true story

Displaced people make camp in Goma after fleeing fighting in Karuba and Mushake villages in Congo. This photo played a significant part in the new film The Secret Life of Walter Mitty. (Photograph by Marcus Bleasdale)In the newly released film The Secret Life of Walter Mitty, Ben Stiller plays Walter, an introverted photo editor at a magazine who frequently daydreams of being somewhere else or someone else entirely. When he can't find an important photo negative taken by an acclaimed photographer (played by Sean Penn) for the magazine, he decides to take a leap of faith (quite literally, at certain points) and travels around the world just to find that missing photo.I won't spoil the movie for you, but one critic has said that the country-hopping scenes feel like "flicking through an old copy of National Geographic." And as it turns out, there's a good reason for that.In a defining moment in the film (which you can see in the trailer), Sean Penn's character suddenly comes to life in a photograph and gestures for Walter Mitty to come toward him. The original photo (without Sean Penn, of course) was taken by National Geographic photographer Marcus Bleasdale. We talked to Bleasdale about his photo's big screen debut.How did you initially get involved with the film?They contacted my agency and asked if there were photographers who have covered conflict situations and humanitarian crises that would like to be involved in the film. The main image they featured is of a displaced camp in eastern Congo. I think they have about four or five of my images in the film, and most of what they chose is from a series I did in Congo and some images from Kashmir.Had your photos in the film been published elsewhere before?Yes, they were published in 2009 in a book called The Rape of a Nation. That project looked at the impact of natural resource extraction on the Congolese population. Some different images from that series were also published in the October 2013 anniversary issue of National Geographic.Were you surprised when they contacted you?Most of the process went through my agent so actually, I only found out when my photo editor at National Geographic contacted me to say she'd seen a preview of the film and she thought that they were using some images of mine. That was the only notification that I had, really. I didn't know that my photo was going to be the one that entices Walter Mitty to do what he does, which is very cool.Marcus Bleasdale's photo as seen in the trailer for The Secret Life of Walter Mitty. (Screenshot courtesy the official movie trailer.)Have you seen the film yet?I haven't. I'm currently in a very remote part of the UK with my family so I'm sure I'll be able to see it once I get back to civilization.Did you get to see the trailer, at least?Yes, and it's nice to see the images there and kind of see how they're used, but it will be interesting to see exactly how they're featured in the film.What is your photography process like? Do you work with photo negatives?I do, and I switched to digital very late in 2007. But sometimes I still shoot film, and most of the Rape of a Nation project was shot on film.Have you ever lost a negative?I have not lost one, but I've had them confiscated in eastern Congo by the authorities. Four rolls of film. I still remember it and I have nightmares closing my eyes, thinking of the images that are on those rolls of film.Tell me more about your assignments for National Geographic magazine.The most recent assignment was was about natural resource extraction and this war in eastern Congo. We were documenting the gold mines and looking at the source of electronic products that is creating that conflict and the need for the natural resources that are used in the electronic products that we use every day.I also did a story about the dying whaling communities in northern Norway, because I live in there. Norway is the last country in the world that commercially hunts whales. I was working on those whale boats with the whalers to document what they're still doing.What inspired you to become a photographer?Humanitarian issues and human rights brought me to photography. I was an investment banker for many years before I became a photographer, and I left investment banking during the conflict in the Balkans so I could go there and try to understand the Balkans a little bit more. I took a camera with me and the rest really is history, as they say. 1939 short story by James Thurber This article is about the original short story. For the 1947 film, see The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (1947 film). For the 2013 film, see The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013 film). "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"AuthorJames ThurberCountryUnited StatesLanguageEnglishGenre(s)short storyPublished inThe New YorkerPublication typeMagazinePublisherHarcourt, Brace and CompanyMedia typePrint (Periodical, Hardback and Paperback)Publication date1939 (magazine), 1942 (book)Preceded by"Death in the Zoo"Followed by"Interview with a Lemming" The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (1939) is a short story by James Thurber. The most famous of Thurber's stories,[1] it first appeared in The New Yorker on March 18, 1939, and was first collected in his book My World and Welcome to It (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942).[2] It has since been reprinted in James Thurber: Writings and Drawings (The Library of America, 1996, ISBN 1-883011-22-1), is available on-line on the New Yorker website,[3] and is one of the most anthologized short stories in American literature.[4] The story is considered one of Thurber's "acknowledged masterpieces".[5] It was made into a 1947 movie of the same name, with Danny Kaye in the title role, though the movie is very different from the original story. It was also adapted into a 2013 film, which is again very different from the original. The name Walter Mitty and the derivative word "Mittyesque"[6] have entered the English language, denoting an ineffectual person who spends more time in heroic daydreams than paying attention to the real world, or more seriously, one who intentionally attempts to mislead or convince others that he is something that he is not. In the United Kingdom a further derived word "Walt" is used to describe a military impostor or similar fantasist, invariably in derogatory terms.[citation needed] Warner Brothers studio head Jack L. Warner in his autobiography My First Hundred Years in Hollywood, described the actor Errol Flynn in the following way: "To the Walter Mittys of the world he was all the heroes in one magnificent, sexy, animal package." Plot The short story deals with a vague and mild-mannered man who drives into Waterbury, Connecticut, with his wife for their regular weekly shopping and his wife's visit to the beauty parlor. During this time he has five heroic daydream episodes. The first is as a pilot of a U.S. Navy flying boat in a storm, then he is a magnificent surgeon performing a one-of-a-kind surgery, then as a deadly assassin testifying in a courtroom, and then as a Royal Air Force pilot volunteering for a daring, secret suicide mission to bomb an ammunition dump. As the story ends, Mitty imagines himself facing a firing squad, "inscrutable to the last." Each of the fantasies is inspired by some detail of Mitty's mundane surroundings: The powering up of the "Navy hydroplane" in the opening scene is followed by Mrs. Mitty's complaint that Mitty is "driving too fast". Mitty's turn as a brilliant surgeon immediately follows his taking off and putting on his gloves as a surgeon dons surgical gloves, and driving past a hospital. The courtroom drama cliché "Perhaps this will refresh your memory", which begins the third fantasy, follows Mitty's attempt to remember what his wife told him to buy, when he hears a newsboy shouting about "the Waterbury Trial" Mitty's fourth daydream comes as he waits for his wife and picks up an old copy of Liberty, reading "Can Germany Conquer the World Through the Air?", and envisions himself fighting Germany while volunteering to pilot a plane normally piloted by two people. The closing firing-squad scene comes when Mitty is standing against a wall, smoking. Analysis Mitty is very much a Thurber protagonist, so much so that he has been called "the archetype for dreamy, hapless, Thurber Man".[4] Like many of his male characters, such as the husband in "The Unicorn in the Garden" and the physically unimposing men Thurber often paired with larger women in his cartoons, Mitty is dominated and put upon by his wife. Like the man who saw the unicorn, he escapes via fantasies. A similar dynamic is found in the Thurber story "The Curb in the Sky", in which a man starts recounting his own dreams as anecdotes as an attempt to stop his wife from constantly correcting him on the details. In his 2001 book The Man Who Was Walter Mitty: The Life and Work of James Thurber (ISBN 0-930751-13-2), author Thomas Fensch suggests that the character was largely based on Thurber himself. This is consistent with Thurber's self-described imaginative interpretations of shapes seen with his "two-fifths vision" in his essay "The Admiral on the Wheel". Neurologist V.S. Ramachandran suggests that Thurber may have had Charles Bonnet syndrome, a neurological condition that causes vivid and bizarre hallucinations in blind people.[7] Thurber's love of wordplay can be seen in his coining of several nonsense terms in the story, including the pseudo-medical jargon "obstreosis of the ductal tract", "streptothricosis", and the recurring onomatopoeia of "ta-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa." The medical nonsense that "coreopsis has set in" uses the name of a flower which sounds vaguely like a horrible medical condition. 1947 film Main article: The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (1947 film) The story was made into a 1947 movie starring Danny Kaye as a young daydreaming editor of pulp magazines. The film was adapted for the screen by Ken Englund, Everett Freeman, and Philip Rapp, and directed by Norman Z. McLeod. It was filmed in Technicolor. Thurber was repeatedly consulted about the film's script, but his suggestions were largely ignored by producer Samuel Goldwyn, who had the writers alter the original story to showcase Kaye's talents.[8] In a letter to Life magazine, Thurber expressed his considerable dissatisfaction with the script, even as Goldwyn insisted in another letter that Thurber approved of it.[9] A 1947 radio adaptation of the movie, with Danny Kaye and Virginia Mayo reprising their roles, was performed on The Screen Guild Theater.[10][failed verification] Because the show was a half hour, including commercials, Kaye's extraneous routines are minimized, making it more like the original story. Even closer to the original story is a 1944 radio adaptation from This Is My Best, with Robert Benchley as the daydreaming Mitty.[10] 2013 film Main article: The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013 film) 20th Century Fox produced and Ben Stiller directed another film adaptation in 2013, which also differs widely from the book. Stiller stars as Mitty, with Kristen Wiig, Shirley MacLaine, Patton Oswalt, Adam Scott, Kathryn Hahn, and Sean Penn[11] also appearing in the film. The film was released on December 25, 2013 in the US and in other countries and had a production budget of $90 million.[12] Stage adaptations "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" was adapted for the stage by Thurber as part of the 1960 Broadway theater revue A Thurber Carnival. The sketch, which closed the show except for "Word Dance Part II", was nearly identical to the short story, except that at the end he cleverly avoids being shot.[13] The original cast for the sketch was as follows:[14] Peggy Cass as Mrs. Mitty Tom Ewell as Walter Mitty Paul Ford as Mr. Pritchard-Mitford and The Leader John McGiver as Dr. Renshaw Wynne Miller as Nurse Peter Turgeon as Narrator, Lt. Berg, and Dr. Remington Charles Braswell as Dr. Benbow The story was again adapted for the stage in 1964, this time by Joe Manchester. This musical version of The Secret Life of Walter Mitty depicts Mitty at age 40, tempted by "would-be chanteuse" Willa De Wisp to leave his wife Agnes and really live "the Secret Life". It features 17 songs, with lyrics by Earl Shuman and music by Leon Carr.[15] The musical opened off-Broadway at the Players Theatre on October 26, 1964, and ran for 96 performances.[16] Time magazine referred to the musical's plot as having been "boldly extrapolated" from the short story, and called the result "a thoroughly pleasant musical evening".[17] Columbia Records issued an original cast recording on LP, also dated 1964.[citation needed] See also The Secret Lives of Waldo Kitty References ^ Napierkowski, Marie Rose, ed. (January 2006). "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty: Introduction". Short Stories for Students, Vol. 1. eNotes.com. Retrieved 2008-07-14. ^ "Note on the Texts", James Thurber: Writings and Drawings (The Library of America, 1996, ISBN 1-883011-22-1) ^ James Thurber (18 March 1939). "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty". The New Yorker. ^ a b "Thurber: Mitty and Dangerous". Today in Literature. todayinliterature.com. 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