

Poppy the Groundhog: Fact Sheet:

To ensure the animal's safety, the commercial was filmed using a real groundhog, stuffed animal groundhog and had an animatronic groundhog on set at all times. Additionally, some CGI techniques were used in post-production. All scenes where Poppy the live groundhog appears are close-up scenes, either being held closely and safely by actors, and with proper restraints (soft harness) if held outdoors.

Poppy is registered as a State and USDA licensed educational animal who is currently in the care of a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in Pennsylvania. Poppy was under the constant care, supervision and oversight of her handler/caretaker (licensed wildlife rehabilitator) at all times. Poppy fed on banana chips and nestled on her caretaker's shoulders between takes. It was clear to those on set that Poppy considers her caretaker as a safe handler and caregiver.

Poppy and her handler were represented by a professional animal agency which has a zoologist, naturalists and wildlife rehabilitator specialists on staff. In addition, there was a Humane Animal Treatment representative on set who oversaw all filming of Poppy.

Poppy was found at approximately 4-weeks old at the end of a resident's driveway; possibly the result of her mother being hit by a car, killed, or potentially abandoned for a variety of different reasons. While under the care of a wildlife rehabilitator, the goal is always to return the animal to their natural habitat if they can thrive and survive.

It was the initial goal to nurse Poppy back to health and return her to the wild. It was determined by a team of veterinarians that she had a birth/tooth defect called a Malocclusion. This prevented her from both eating and surviving in nature as Groundhogs need their sharp incisors to eat, forage and build their dens. This alone rendered her incapable of returning and living in the wild.

Therefore, there were three options: 1) euthanize her, 2) humanely extract her teeth or 3) submit her to continual painful dental procedures throughout her life, which was not in her best interest from a humane standpoint.

Given Poppy's age and strong healthy condition (other than her mouth/teeth) the team (the veterinarians, licensed wildlife rehabilitator and wildlife sanctuary) jointly decided to have Poppy's teeth humanely extracted and register her as a "State and USDA licensed educational animal." This has enabled Poppy to thrive, eat and grow as well as be an educational "ambassador" for all wildlife.

Poppy is very calm, amenable and generally friendly. January is often when groundhogs hibernate, so she is especially calm this time of the year. Poppy is given ample exercise both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting) at her cozy home in Pennsylvania.

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