

PLUS! DAN AYKROYD ON THE '84 CLASSIC

JUNE 2016  
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# EMPIRE



# GHOSTBUSTERS

We ain't afraid of no ghost

Back in business



# ED'S LETTER

THERE ARE CERTAIN FILMS THAT SHOULD BE LEFT alone. We don't want a remake of *Jaws*. We don't need a fourth *Back To The Future*. We have no desire to discover Rick and Ilsa secretly rekindled their relationship after the War, or find out if Andy and Red's boat-refurbishing business was a success. These films are best left untouched. Timeless. Classic. But then, there are others that have been crying out for new instalments. And every time one of the original players has been interviewed over the decades, they're asked: "When are you doing another one?"

*Ghostbusters* was one such film and, after years of rumours and multiple false starts, a third movie is almost upon us. New cast. New director. But not that different – as with the original it has a group of comedic actors at the top of their game, a clear lineage to *Saturday Night Live* and a certain green ghost with a huge appetite. And it's received the blessing of the team behind the '84 classic. Not that it's been an easy journey to get to this point, as we were told in great detail by Paul Feig and the members of the latest spook-hunting quartet, starting on p.56. But that's not all. We also have original writer and star Dan Aykroyd recounting his life as a Ghostbuster, from his childhood fascination with the supernatural to the latest film, in which he appears as a brand-new character. (See... told you it had his blessing.)

There are many triumphant returns in this month's issue. Shane Black is directing again with *The Nice Guys*, and he talks us through his varied career. Twenty-five years on from *The Silence Of The Lambs*, Jodie Foster speaks up about why Clarice Starling is such an important and enduring character. And, perhaps most excitingly of all, Captain America is back in MCU dust-up *Civil War* – event cinema at its very best. SPOILER, but... we loved it. You can read just how much on p.40.

Is there a better feeling than when a film you really, really want to be good completely delivers on its promise? If there is, I can't think what it might be.

*Terr*

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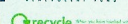
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"It does taste like sick. If sick is really tasty."



## Features

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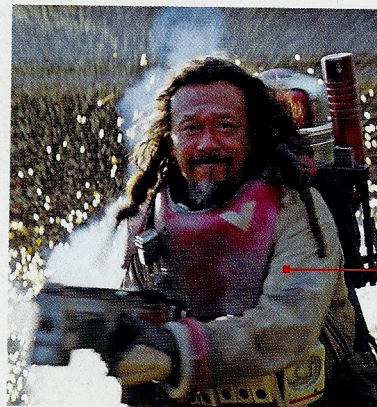
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Clockwise from above: *Ghostbusters*' token male Dan Aykroyd, on the Ecto-2; Uh-oh, *The Hateful Eight*' Jennifer Jason Leigh's been at the ketchup again; James McAvoy gets rebellious in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*.



## Regulars

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GHOSTBUSTERS  
SPECIAL

# The Ghost Writer

Dan Aykroyd looks back on  
his life as a Ghostbuster









*Ghostbusters* was something I grew up with. Besides being a dentist, my great-grandfather Sam was a spiritualist and a researcher. He would visit all the psychic acts that came to Kingston, Ontario, and decide whether something was for real or a hoax. He had a live-in medium, named Walter Ashurst, to channel spirits in the old farmhouse where I still live in Canada. One time Ashurst crawled up on the chair, hunched over, gnarled his hands and began to speak in a German accent about physics and fission and atomic energy. A little research was done afterwards, and it was discovered that Dr. Charles Steinmetz, the famous inventor, used to crawl up on his chair like that when he worked.

It became a family business. My grandfather, a Bell telephone engineer, commissioned a sketch of a high-vibrating crystal that, if you built it, was theorised to be able to cut through to the fifth, sixth and seventh dimensions, wherever these spirits roam and come from. We'd visit my grandparents' house every summer while I was growing up, and instead of old *Life* and *Look* magazines lying around, there would be *American Society For Psychical Research* journals or essays by Albert Durrant Watson or Arthur Conan Doyle. So as an eight year-old kid, I'm reading all this. The impressive thing was that all these people were serious inquirers, scientists going, "There's something here. There's a reason why you can look at 85 cards and someone's going to guess what 30 of them are."

My father, Peter, continued the tradition by writing the book *A History Of Ghosts*. And I am a firm believer, too. I've attended many séances — we had a great one the other night, with a medium who brought back names that meant something to my father, who is 94 now and with us in the house. She brought back the name of his cat, and I never even knew he had a cat! Another time, on one stormy evening, I ran out of the farmhouse because I saw three or four big, green, glowing S's, like snakes, at the top of the stairs. They were ectoplasmic tubes, maybe, marching across the stairs in the lightning. I just turned around and fled.



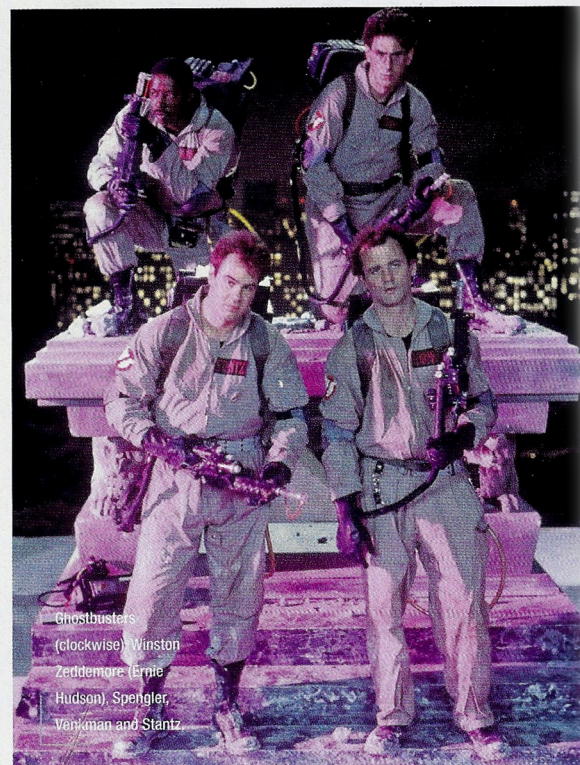
They weren't afraid of no ghost: Dr. Peter Venkman (Bill Murray), Dr. Raymond Stantz (Dan Aykroyd) and Dr. Egon Spengler (Harold Ramis).

## One day, shortly after

I'd left *Saturday Night Live* in 1979, I was reading about quantum physics and parapsychology. I started thinking about all those old ghost comedies by the Bowery Boys, Bob Hope, Abbott and Costello. Then it occurred to me: "If you marry up these two things, what would happen?"

The first draft of *Ghostbusters* was pretty wild. I went to a quarry and got a big hunk of granite, if you know what I mean. I threw it all in there, with full knowledge that I was writing something that was not going to be made in that form, but I was able to lay in so much of what became the first and second movies. Back then, it was going to be Eddie Murphy, myself, Belushi and Murray. The tone was much darker. Slimer wasn't so cute. One of the concepts I had was for the Ghostbusters to have an inter-dimensional interceptor, so they could go back and forth between dimensions. I have that idea in a working draft, and maybe it'll get made. We'll see...

Michael Ovitz, the agent, read it in the raw granite form and said, "This is going to be amazing. Let's get Ivan." Ivan (Reitman) read it, brought in Harold



*Ghostbusters* (clockwise) Winston Zeddemore (Ernie Hudson), Spengler, Venkman and Stantz





**GHOSTBUSTERS  
SPECIAL**

later, Coca-Cola stocks were rocketing on the basis of the box-office returns for Columbia. The movie just *worked*.

### I know Bill's said some

negative things about the sequel, but there are some tremendous sequences. The river of slime, Vigo, the whole baby thing, the possessed Ghostbusters... I'd say it holds up to the first movie about 75 per cent. If there's a deficiency, it's the ending — it's hard to follow up Mr. Stay Puft. But I consider it a great companion to the first movie. And it was a hit.

I wrote a third one, *Hellbent*, which oddly enough in the fog of the future is under consideration again — or parts of it. The villain was based on Donald Trump. I wanted Alec Baldwin to play him, the devil in a thousand-foot black onyx tower overlooking the hell-pit mine of Central Park. There's great stuff in it, but Bill wanted to move on to other things.

A while later, we did a few drafts based on the old Ghostbusters handing over the torch to a new group. It was fine, but the studio thought it lacked freshness. So the thing lay dormant for a while. To be honest, we were dead in the water. I had completely given up on it. And then along came Paul Feig.

I'm so happy it's worked out and that suddenly there are all kinds of new ideas for *Ghostbusters* movies bubbling up. It just took someone to reinvigorate it. And we thank Paul Feig for doing that. I'm going to work with Ivan to develop anything that comes along. I will act as a writer, a producer — that's how I'll keep my hand in. Ivan and I are in collaboration now in a new phase of our careers that frankly we did not anticipate.

*Ghostbusters* has never left my life. What I love is pulling up for signings at liquor stores for my Newfoundland-made, no-additive Crystal Head vodka, and seeing an Ectomobile or two. Or sometimes as many as 30 people kitted out as Ghostbusters, wearing everything from the slime pack to the dark jumpsuits — refinements you wouldn't believe. I always have them come up first, because the packs weigh about 100 lb. And many have children with them, also dressed as Ghostbusters. There are three generations of fans now. It's become a perennial, like how I loved *Abbott And Costello Meet The Invisible Man* or *Ghost Chasers*. And with DVD, digital and streaming, the legacy will be there forever. ■

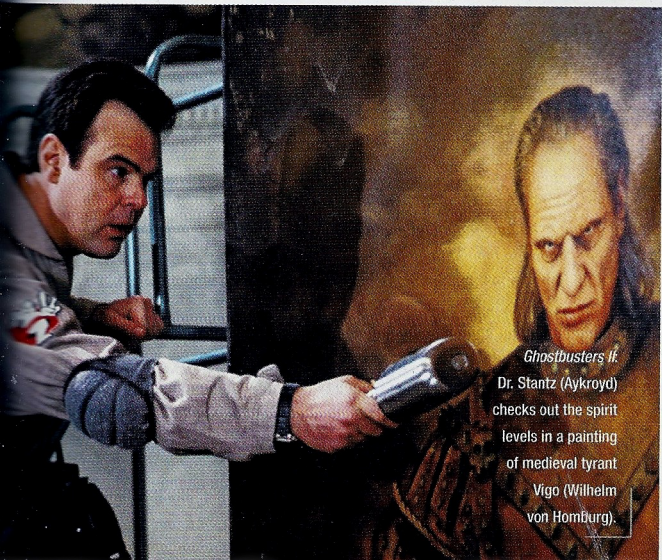
**GHOSTBUSTERS IS OUT ON JULY 15 AND WILL BE REVIEWED IN A FUTURE ISSUE.**



Sigourney Weaver as Dana Barrett on set, getting roughed up by the 'hands' of demonic spirit Zuul.



Mr. Stay Puft gets ready for his close-up.



*Ghostbusters II*: Dr. Stantz (Aykroyd) checks out the spirit levels in a painting of medieval tyrant Vigo (Wilhelm von Homburg).

(*Ramis*) and within two or three weeks, the rewrite was underway.

You don't put the hunk of granite on the executive's desk. So away we went to sculpt. The three of us hammered out the script in Canada, in LA, in New York, all over. We spent two fun weeks at my place in the Vineyard. That house, which my daughters own now, is up on a hill with a beautiful, 272-degree view of the ocean. But we buried ourselves in the basement for eight hours a day, coming out blinking like moles.

We were writing the part of Venkman for Murray, but we knew the bigger challenge was getting Bill to a) read the material, and b) show up to work. On the first day we really had no idea if he was going to appear. But he did, and the shoot was pure pleasure. The biggest joy was taking over New York, just watching the people in the city react when we were driving about in the Ecto-1 and walking about with the packs, coming out of public places... I loved stealing footage — Ivan would just set up a camera and we'd walk down Fifth Avenue. There we were, the four of us, Harold, Ernie and me and Billy, going to work. It was a great time. I owned Chicago once, with *The Blues Brothers*, and on the *Ghostbusters* movies I owned New York.

I knew we were making something people would come to see, like they came to *Animal House* and *Stripes*. I knew it would open. But I didn't know it would stay at the US box-office number-one slot for 13 weeks. It was like we'd hit a gusher in the oil business. Roberto Goizueta, the brilliant Cuban entrepreneur who was CEO of Coke and took over Columbia Pictures, saw the movie and hated it. He said, "Why did we buy this?" Three weeks





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