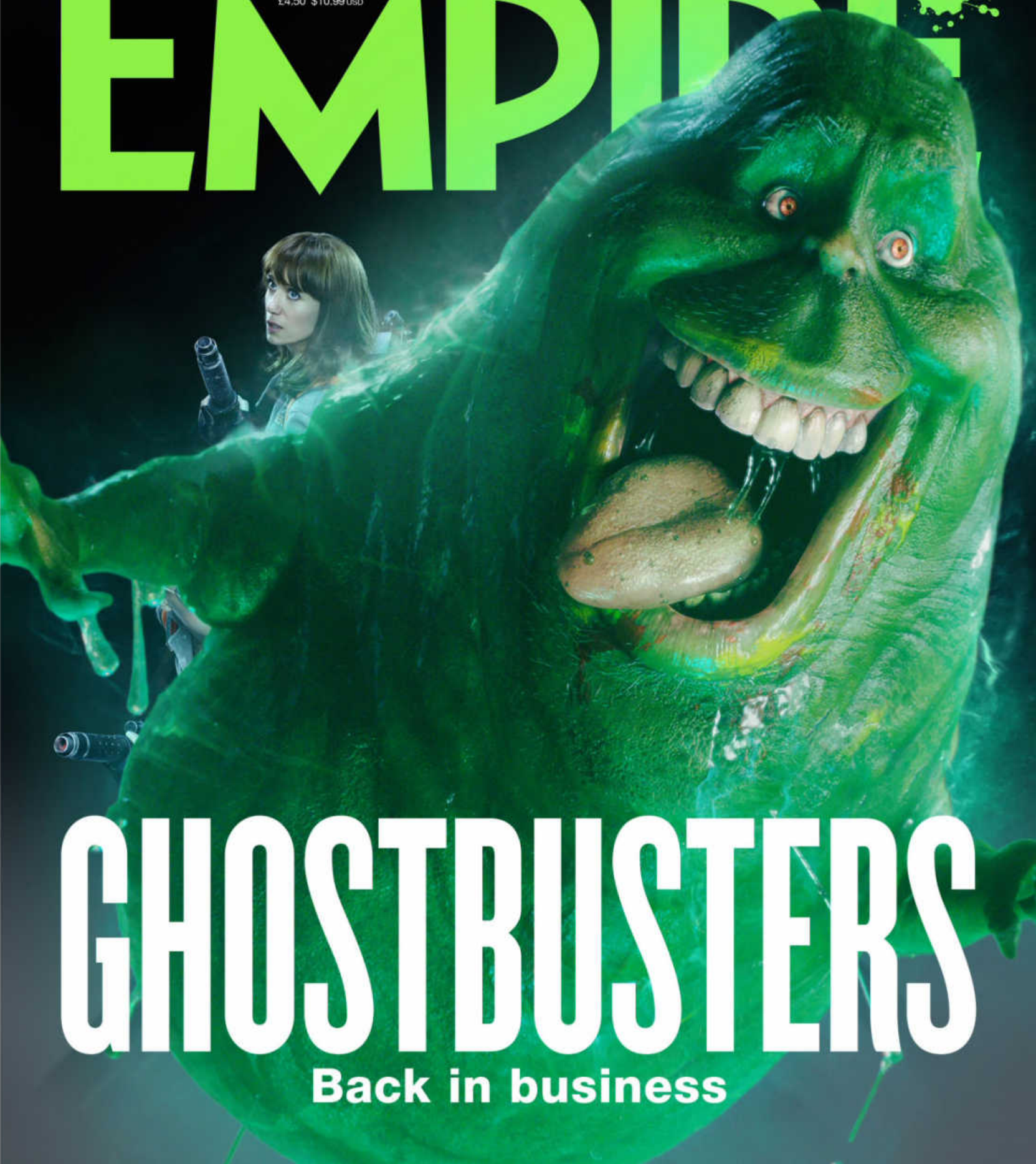


PLUS! DAN AYKROYD ON THE '84 CLASSIC

JUNE 2016
£4.50 \$10.99 USD

EMPIRE



GHOSTBUSTERS

Back in business

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We ain't afraid of no ghost

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 Ilia 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.

Terri

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

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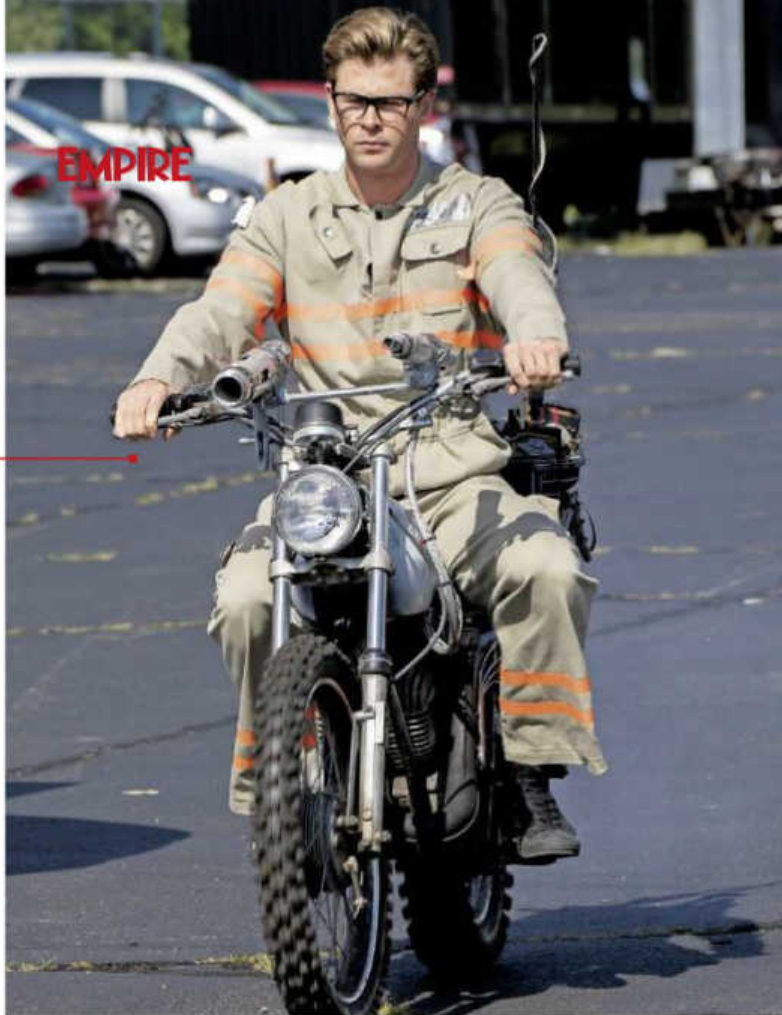
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The Oz-born star may not have appeared in *Neighbours*, but she's more than made up for that by doing two *Bad Neighbours* movies. As, er, opposed to doing two bad *Neighbours* movies.



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



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• SPINE LINE ANSWERS ISSUE 323: STORM/ANGEL: "What's the matter, scared of a little lightning?" is from *The Ten Commandments*; PROFESSOR X: "Well I may be bald, but at least I'm not chickenshit like you!" is from *Slapshot*; JEAN GREY: "Well... I'm kinda psychic. I have a fifth sense" is from *Mean Girls*; NIGHTCRAWLER: "You go, before my fangs find you" is from *Princess Mononoke*; CYCLOPS/BEAST: "I can see that that one has red eyes" is from *Carry On Up The Khyber*; PSYLOCKE/MOIRA: "Your aura is really fantastic, it's this beautiful purple colour!" is from *Almost Famous*; MYSTIQUE/QUICKSILVER: "I have disguised my true form, which would be considered... hideous and revolting, here" is from *Howard The Duck*; Subscribers/ Four Horsemen: "Here they are, 'The Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse'! Did you happen to see that movie, Joe? It's a good movie" is from *Once Upon A Time In America*.



You called?

After 27 years, the Ghostbusters are *finally* back...
With a completely new line-up. Director Paul Feig and his cast explain
why this all-new origin story is the ideal franchise resurrection

WORDS: NICK DE SEMLYEN



Above: Spirited away: Ghostbusters Patty Tolan (Leslie Jones), Abby Yates (Melissa McCarthy) and Jillian Holtzmann (Kate McKinnon) head to a ghost emergency.

he Ghostbusters are back in business. *Empire* can testify to this, since we're standing outside the supernatural exterminators' iconic Hook & Ladder 8 firehouse HQ, next to not one but two parked Ectomobiles. Walking in, we clock gleaming white surfaces, a Terror Dog head mounted on the wall like a hunting trophy, and a receptionist behind a vast desk. Although she doesn't yell, "We got one!", it's enough to make us wonder if we've accidentally stepped through a portal to the seventh dimension.

This, though, is not on a New York street but the Sony lot in Culver City, Los Angeles. There's no sign of Ray sliding down the firepole or Egon inspecting spores, moulds and fungi. Instead, we're greeted by Ivan Reitman, director of the first two *Ghostbusters* movies. "Welcome to Ghost Corps," he smiles. "Sorry about the mess. We're still moving in."

Open only since October and overseen by Reitman and Dan Aykroyd,

this is mission control for all things *Ghostbusters*. When not decorating their offices — Reitman's has an unopened LEGO firehouse set on the floor; Aykroyd's has portraits of famous supernaturalists on the wall, plus a Bill Murray mug on his desk — the pair devote their time to plotting the course of the *Ghostbusters* Cinematic Universe, a slimier version of what Marvel has achieved. It's an astonishing turnaround for the duo, who since the 1989 sequel had strived to pull off another film, but until recently had all but given up the ghost.

"It was partially our fault," Reitman explains. "We made this very complicated deal when we did *Ghostbusters II* which gave each of us (Reitman, Aykroyd, Bill Murray and Harold Ramis) equal power. That froze everything, because any one of us could block something from happening. Finally, a few things came to a head. We couldn't get any traction



Right: Director Paul Feig inspects the new Proton Packs.

from Bill in terms of doing another one, because his brain was elsewhere. And when Harold (*Ramis*) died (in February 2014) I was kinda depressed, and decided I wasn't going to direct the next film myself. But everybody seemed to agree it's not fair of us just to leave the thing fallow. So finally we made a deal with Sony: they were free to expand what the series could be."

Here at Ghost Corps, then, is where an array of ectoplasmic projects are in development. There's what Reitman calls the "futuristic" film, to which the Russo Brothers were briefly attached and in which, rumours have swirled, Channing Tatum and Chris Pratt will star. ("A lot of stuff leaked out of here," Reitman frowns. "It involved different teams of Ghostbusters. It's on hold; we'll see what happens with that.") There's another, yet-to-be-announced live-action film, which is "coming along really well". There's an animated feature, which Reitman will co-direct. And a TV show is in the works, which may have a more global flavour: "There's remarkable ghost lore in every tradition. It's totally different in China and Japan and Korea, and there's extraordinary opportunity in that."

But before any of that can happen, a different project has to become a sizeable

hit. Rarely has there been so much pressure on one movie — or one team.

Paul Feig strides across

the cavernous building where much of *Ghostbusters* 2016 is being shot, a former Reebok warehouse not far from Boston. The director clearly has no need of a walking stick, but he's holding one anyway: a remarkable thing with a skull atop it. "It's a medical student's cane, over 100 years old," he explains. "I collect antique walking sticks — I've got about 60 of them. When we moved here my wife discovered an antique store, run by a woman whose father has an astonishing collection. We arranged a meet and it was like one of those movies where guys show up to do a gun deal in a hotel. He opened up these suitcases, and this was one he had in there."

The relentlessly well-dressed filmmaker behind *Spy*, *Bridesmaids* and *The Heat*, Feig feels like a natural choice to shoot the first new *Ghostbusters* movie in 27 years — and not just because he likes skulls. He grew up obsessed with Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd's *Saturday Night Live* skits. He loves improvisation (Murray, famously, made up most of Peter Venkman's lines on the 1984 film). He's so into hardware he once built his own robot ("It was this weird thing with a bowl for a head... I think he's out in

some landfill somewhere") and is made as giddy by the Ghostbusters' tech, their ecto-insulated encapsulators and P. K. E. valances, as their jokes.

Still, he initially turned it down. "I was in Budapest making *Spy*," he recalls, "when I was contacted by Ivan, who at that point had another script." Written by Gene Stupnitsky and Lee Eisenberg, it involved the original Ghostbusters (minus Ramis) passing their slime-jars to a new team. "I was flattered, but I'm always so leery of reunion shows. I prefer an origin story."

Then, in July 2014, midway through his morning walk and still mulling over the possibilities, Feig was hit by an idea. "I thought, 'What if you knocked it sideways and cast it with all the funny women I love working with? That I know how to do.'" For him, the idea of replacing Murray, Aykroyd, Ramis and Ernie Hudson with four female comedians was not a cute gimmick, but an organic twist on the formula. After all, Feig has done more than anyone to put "funny women" in the spotlight, from giving his muse Melissa McCarthy her breakout opportunity in *Bridesmaids* to writing juicy roles for Kristen Wiig, Sandra Bullock, Rose Byrne and more.

He mentioned this thought to his agent, and within minutes had an

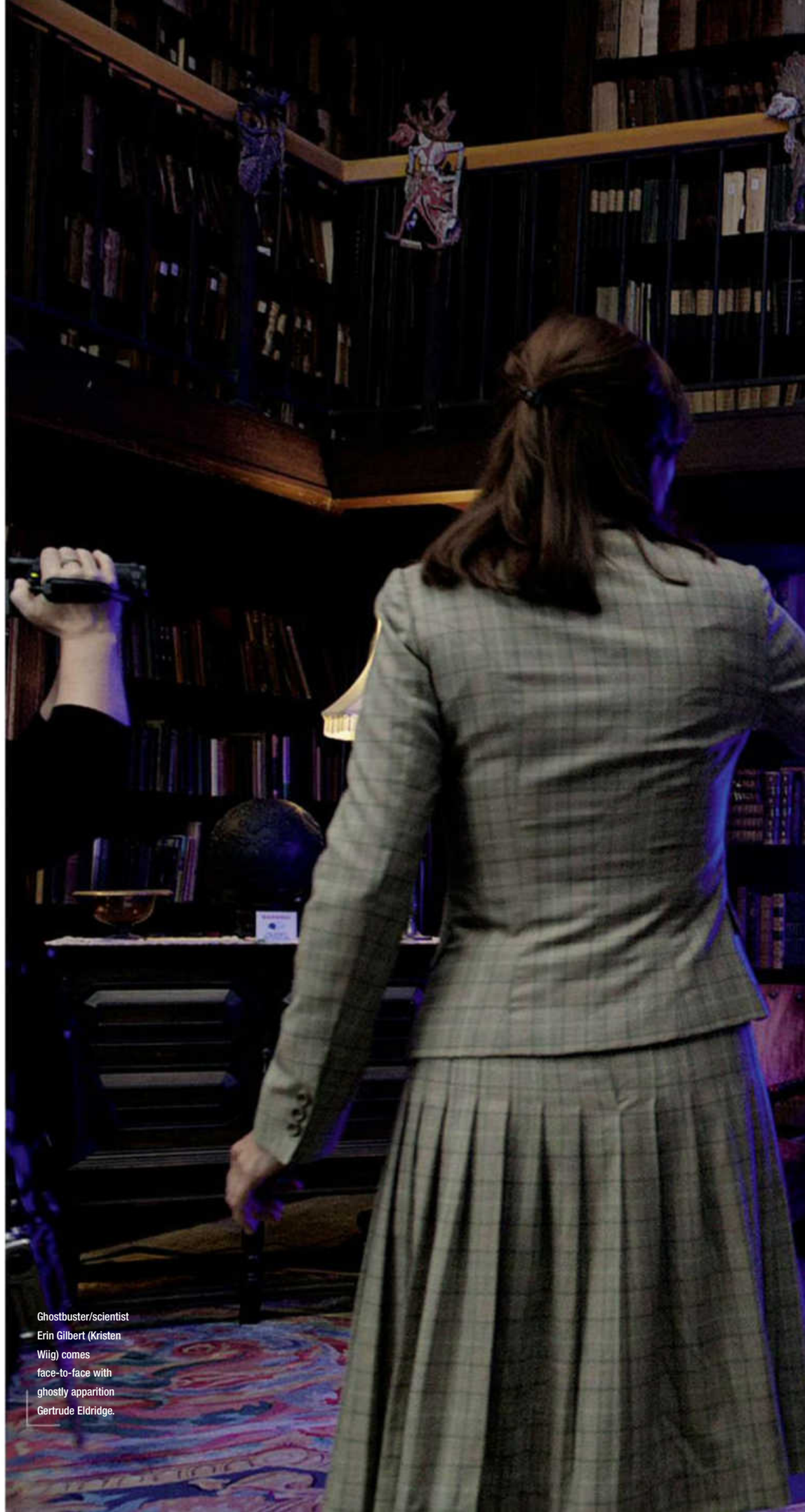
excited Amy Pascal, then the head of Sony, on the phone. Feig called his writing partner Katie Dippold and arranged to meet with her on the convention floor at Comic-Con. Next to a *Guardians Of The Galaxy* space-pod in the Marvel section, to be precise. “I have to laugh,” he says, “because whatever haters we have, this was hatched right in the middle of their enclave.”

Haters, it's fair to say, they do have. Since the minute it was announced, online comment sections have festered with rage about the project. Infuriated a *Ghostbusters* movie is being made without Bill Murray at its centre, and pushed to apoplexy by the fact its stars are female, enough people have derided Feig's film, sight unseen, to agitate a river of pink slime. (“In July we will see if women really can do anything as good as men. If their purpose was to make a shitty film, I guess we can already say they did it way better,” reads a measured response on YouTube from ‘Dr. Hatespeech’). “As soon as it was announced, someone on Twitter said he hoped I got a mild flu,” remembers the director. “There was another guy who wanted Katie and me to die under a truck and taste our own blood.”

Responding to those who say, “It's *Venkman*, not *Venkwoman*,” Pascal tells *Empire*, “I know people are talking about this being the ‘girl version’, but this is no more a chick flick than *Gravity*. They're scientists, they're Ghostbusters, and I just want that to be a normal thing.”

Having disconnected their internet, Feig and Dippold began the script in October 2014, keeping Halloween decorations up at Dippold's house throughout the writing process to enhance the mood. “We had a skeleton watching over us until Christmas,” she laughs. “I'm a huge horror fan, so for me the most fun part was the scary-ghost stuff, finding insane situations into which to drop these four funny people.”

Feig already had his stars in mind, all with *Saturday Night Live* experience: Wiig as everyscientist Erin Gilbert, McCarthy as her ghost-enthusiast best friend Abby Yates, Kate McKinnon as zany nuclear engineer Jillian Holtzmann, and relative newcomer (albeit, at 48, the oldest of the group) Leslie Jones as subway employee Patty Tolan. Continuing the gender-flipping, Chris Hemsworth would play dim-witted but enthusiastic secretary Kevin. The story being crafted around these heroes was a reboot, not a sequel — “I wanted to start with a clean slate... In this world, ➤



Ghostbuster/scientist Erin Gilbert (Kristen Wiig) comes face-to-face with ghostly apparition Gertrude Eldridge.



GHOSTBUSTERS
SPECIAL





Above left: Paul Feig directs on-set at Ghostbusters HQ.

there's not yet proof of ghosts," says Feig — with a combination of nostalgic beats (Slimer's back, as is Mr. Stay Puft, though not in the form you might expect) and fresh material.

As they typed, the co-writers felt enormous pressure on their shoulders. Then one morning a FedEx delivery arrived. "I was particularly stressed that day," Dippold recalls. "I opened up the package and inside was a copy of a book about ghosts Dan Aykroyd's dad had written. Attached was a note from Dan: 'Dear Katie, I'm here if you need any help, but most of all just enjoy yourself.' That was an important reminder: first and foremost, *Ghostbusters* is meant to be fun."

Empire soon gets to

witness the fun for ourselves. Among the sets spread across the Norwood building are an authentically grubby New York subway tunnel and an even grubbier

abandoned Chinese restaurant ("Zhu's Authentic Hong Kong Food") that doubles as our heroes' HQ. But most impressive is a two-storey Art Deco lobby, which today is bathed in an eerie Slimer-green glow. This is the Mercado Hotel, in which two of the new Ghostbusters — Kristen Wiig and Melissa McCarthy — are currently on patrol, brandishing charged-up proton guns for their pursuit of an entity named "Rowan". A class-5 free-roaming vapor? An electrokinetic spectre? An octopus that can predict football results? It's anyone's guess.

Feig, who in his three-piece suit looks like he could be reprising the '84 film's snooty concierge, signals for the cameras to roll. Wiig and McCarthy say their scripted lines. Then they start to throw in their own variations. Before long, Feig and Dippold are scribbling lines on Post-It notes, which are whizzed across to the actors. The result is a

lengthy succession of takes that feature, among many others, the following "alts":

"Eat my stream, a-hole!"

"Eat my proton!"

"Show yourself, you little troll..."

"Come out, Rowan. There's a toilet that needs unclogging."

"Rowan, collect your virginity from the lost and found."

"I can do this all day, Rowan. Busting makes me feel good."

"I actually feel kind of terrible. My knees are clicking, my biceps are on fire and my hands are cramping up..."

Eventually, a chandelier crashes down and the pair let loose their proton streams. It turns out there are a few perils when it comes to shooting a *Ghostbusters* action sequence. One is obvious: don't cross the streams. "Oops, I just killed you!" beams McCarthy, having accidentally sliced through Wiig's



Above: Chris Hemsworth aka dim-witted Kevin, given the once-over by Erin, Abby and Jillian for the job of secretary.

legs. Another concern: not looking like a complete berk. "I've had some trouble with my proton face," says Wiig. "I found I was making a face that was not anything I'd want to see really large on the screen, so I had to find a new one for myself. I just could not go with the original."

As for the final alt line quoted above, there's some fact mixed in with the fiction. "At one point I had to tell Paul, 'Hey, I'm a comedian. I'm not a fucking stunt person! What the fuck, yo?'" laughs Leslie Jones, who says she lost around 50lb during the shoot. "He'd always be like, 'You can do it, Jones. Come on.' We've been doing some Van Damme shit on this one."

In this *Ghostbusters* film, the slimings are more vigorous ("Water actually activates it, so if you think you have it all off and then you get wet, the slime comes back," says Wiig ruefully). There are possession scenes. There will even be a bout of hand-to-ghost-hand

combat in Times Square, thanks to new tech dreamed up by Holtzmann (and approved off-screen by an MIT professor of engineering). "I mostly drew details from my own little bank vault of weirdness," says McKinnon of her bizarre-looking, fingerless gloves-wearing character, who is fast becoming an internet favourite. "In my youth, all I did was take apart electronics and pretend each circuit board was its own world."

At Feig's insistence, wherever possible the ghosts have been played by actors on set, sometimes performers on stilts. "In the original they were kinda cartoony, which I like," he says, "but I want everything in this movie to be as real as a movie based on fake stuff can be." According to the cast, it worked. "The first ghost we saw, we were all legitimately scared," says McCarthy. "With the make-up and the costumes and the light, they looked pretty darn terrifying. One ghost chased me down

BEST IN SHOW

WE PICK OUR FAVOURITE *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE* SKETCHES FOR EACH OF THE NEW *GHOSTBUSTERS*



Kristen Wiig: Surprise Party

Wiig's best characters are completely deranged. Here, Sue can't cope with the prospect of an impending surprise party she's helping to throw, and mentally collapses at the promise of balloons and clowns.



Melissa McCarthy: Women's Group

McCarthy's roster of *SNL* sketches is short, but she makes her characters count. Take troubled, combat trouser-wearing PJ, who derails a gentle women's group's discussion with her plans to avenge her father's bloody death.



Leslie Jones: Crazy Bitches

Jones' *SNL* persona is frequently furious. Sliding in as a "relationship expert", she explains exactly what about men makes women crazy. "Every girl grew up with some uncle staring at them at Thanksgiving, saying how much you've grown..."



Kate McKinnon: Cecilia Giménez

One of *SNL*'s great chameleons — her Justin Bieber is spot on — McKinnon's best moment sees her becoming a crazed version of Cecilia Giménez, the Spanish woman who became famous for 'repairing', i.e. ruining, an ancient portrait of Jesus. **OLLY RICHARDS**

SLIME AND SLIME AGAIN

PREPARE TO MEET SLIMER 2.0

→ “If I saw a *Ghostbusters* reboot, there are a bunch of things I’d be really bummed about if they didn’t show up,” says Paul Feig. “So we’ve put them in, but we’ve given them our own spin.” Hence the new Ecto-1: not the famous Miller Meteor 1959 Cadillac, but a ’93 Caddy Fleetwood hearse. The proton packs are jazzed up (check out that psychokinetic energy sink!). The jumpsuits now have hot-orange piping. And most excitingly of all, cinema’s greediest ghost is now even uglier.

“We have six effects houses working on the movie, and the thing all of them wanted to do was Slimer,” says VFX supervisor Peter Travers. In the end the coveted job went to Sony Pictures Imageworks and MPC. “When we started research we realised that he’s amorphous — even within the first movie there are multiple puppets that look radically different — which gave us free rein to make him a little grosser. We’ve added random bits of hair in weird places, like he’s an old person. And we’ve added a bunch of goopy slime to him, just pouring off his arms. I mean, he *is* called Slimer.”

Originally inspired by John Belushi, for the first two films the toothy, gibbering, potato-shaped blob was achieved largely with puppets. The new movie combines old technology (a fully articulated Slimer was built and operated by *Ghostbusters* veteran Rick Lazzarini) with new (CG augmentation) to create the most disgusting and deranged version yet.

“The guy is a loose cannon,” says Travers. “I think that’s where we’ve pushed the performance: he’s just not mentally there, he’s crazy, he’s completely unpredictable. You can stuff five emotions into a two-second shot.”



a subway tunnel; only afterwards did I realise it was a guy called Dave who I’ve known for 15 years.”

Another way Feig has shaken up the formula: for the first time, the primary villain of a *Ghostbusters* film is a human. Yes, that “Rowan” the team are hunting in the Mercado turns out to be a regular bloke, albeit a super-smart and better-equipped scientist (played by Neil Casey) bent on paranormal mischief. “Rowan is the ultimate loner,” says the director. “A regular New Yorker whose goal is to bring some things back to this world. He wants to trap ghosts, but for a different purpose...” And that’s all Feig will reveal about this still very much locked-down plot point.

Overseeing the mayhem with his walking stick and carnation, he looks the picture of unflappability. “The man’s ridiculous. It’s sweltering hot and I’ve never seen one drop of sweat,” marvels Amy Pascal, who resigned from Sony amid

the 2014 hacking scandal, and is here today in a producer capacity. But under the surface, Feig reveals in a quiet moment, he’s paddling like a desperate duck.

“Each day I wake up thinking, ‘Don’t let this be the day I screw it up. Make sure you get enough stuff! Shoot it right! Get the right performances!’ It’s just the fear of, ‘Is this the day it’s not going to happen?’”

Six months later, Feig’s

still got the fear. It’s March 2016 and, with *Ghostbusters* well into post-production, he’s at his office in Burbank, LA. Like its resident, Feigco is a mix of quirkiness and sophistication: there is an enormous print of a £20 note by artist Paul Rousso (“I change it to a \$20 [bill] when I’m meeting an American,” jokes Feig, an Anglophile) and a nameplate on the desk that reads “Chief Business Gentleman.”

Top: Secretary Kevin proves to Erin and Patty that he’s not just a pretty face — he can order in takeaway too.

Above: Director Feig has a shot at brandishing a Proton Gun.



Above: Erin, Abby, Jillian and Patty discuss bustin' tactics.

Well into mixing the film's sound and approving its 1,600 or so visual-effects shots, the director looks relaxed enough. But he admits to still having jitters, no doubt increased by the pushback against the film, which has only intensified since marketing began. And in disturbing ways: "I had this guy send me a picture of a Nazi shooting a black woman in the head," reveals Leslie Jones. "I can't believe some of this stuff. It's just a movie. It's literally just a movie. We're not writing a true story about people killing ghosts, you know? *Minions* ain't real either!"

Feig is stoic. "As much as I've been confronted with really terrible stuff, I've had encouragement too," he insists. "It all comes from a place of passion. I'm just trying to stay vigilant and make the right decision about a million things. The minute you relax, the chances of it going in the toilet are very high."

Only time will tell now whether *Ghostbusters* will be a hit that launches a thousand spin-offs, or whether a mob of misogynists is about to have a great summer. But nobody can accuse Feig of not giving it his all. Among his achievements — redesigning the Proton Packs (they're now synchrotron, not cyclotron, as we're sure you surmised from the photos); making Boston look like New York; directing *Slimer* — was obtaining the blessings of the original cast and crew. Reitman and Aykroyd, obviously, with the latter even contributing some lines of technical dialogue. Harold Ramis' wife and children, says Pascal, dropped by the set on two "super-emotional" days. And Aykroyd, Bill Murray, Sigourney Weaver and Ernie Hudson all agreed to do cameos, albeit not as their original characters.

"You just try not to vomit. I mostly succeeded in that," says McKinnon of shooting scenes with her comedy heroes.

"It was crazy, crazy, crazy." Even Chris Hemsworth, the mighty Thor, was thunderstruck: "I hadn't met Bill before. It was so cool to see it through his eyes and listen to him talk about how the outfits were similar or the packs were different."

It being Bill Murray, naturally, it nearly didn't happen. "My wife used to manage his brother Joel way back when," says Feig, "but we never actually crossed paths until the 40th anniversary party for *Saturday Night Live*. I mustered up the courage to go over to say hello, but when I mentioned the film he sort of said, 'Oh yeah,' and darted off. I was like, 'Oh no, I just blew my chance with Bill Murray.' We were hearing on the grapevine that he might show up, but until the day before we had no idea whether he would. He did. And it was really special." Feig may have intended this to be an origin story, but he's managed to make it a reunion show, too. A supernatural feat. ■



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



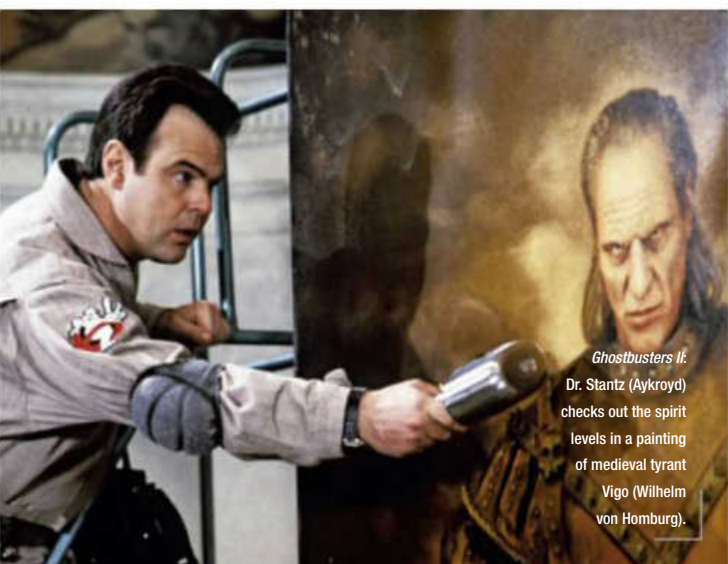
Ghostbusters (clockwise) Winston Zeddemore (Ernie Hudson), Spengler, Venkman and Stantz



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).

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.

(*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