

## Who Ya Gonna Call in 'Ghostbusters: Afterlife'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 19, 2021 - 10:19am

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – This latest attempt to revive the beloved 1980's franchise is a curious rumination on nostalgia. It's so heavily indebted to the original, references are treated as holy relics to be revered and worshiped. But it also makes the compelling case – to begin with – for the futility of trying to turn the film into a franchise.

A third Ghostbusters film has seemingly been in the pipeline for decades. I once asked Harold Ramis what he thought about getting the Ghostbusters back together again. He seemed dubious about the prospects and brought up "Ghostbusters 2," and how well that turned out. Watching "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" I was struck by the notion that the original "Ghostbusters" would have been better off being one of those one-off all time classics. The transferable elements of the franchise (proton packs, PKE Meters and goo) simply aren't the reasons why the Ghostbusters were so beloved in the first place.



Ghostbusters: Afterlife

Photo credit: Columbia Pictures

Transferring the action from New York City to small town Oklahoma, the film follows the grandchildren of original Ghostbuster Egon Spengler. Financially strapped single mom Callie Spengler (Carrie Coon) packs up her two kids played by Phoebe (Mckenna Grace) and Trevor ("Stranger Things" Finn Wolfhard) and heads to the Spengler dirt farm where her Dad was working on some kind of strange experiment



before his sudden passing. Carrie and her kids take up residence in the crumbling farm house and attempt to blend in, Phoebe is the Spengler's scientific minded offspring and Trevor mostly gets marooned in a teen romance subplot. Phoebe also pals around with a pint sized paranormal expert from school named Podcast (Logan Kim) while she begins to uncover her grandfather's Ghostbusting legacy.

Chad (Paul Rudd) helps her along as the summer school teacher and manages to squeeze the most chuckles out of the overly reverential script. He's the kind of goofball who puts on '80's horror classics like "Cujo" to pass the hours in class, while also taking a real scientific interest in seismology and helping educate the younger generation on the Ghostbusters. And before you know it our old ghostly pals Zeul and Gozer are coming back to destroy the world.

There's almost nothing new this time around that we haven't seen before. That seems to be the point, but it's also the film's greatest weakness ... but credit goes to the team for giving the Stay-Puft marshmallow man a dose of Gremlins-style anarchy, and frankly the rest of the film could have used more of that feeling.



Mckenna Grace is the New Buster in 'Ghostbusters: Afterlife'

Photo credit: Columbia Pictures

Mckenna Grace is fine in her role, but it's a half remembered copy of a copy at this point. Logan Kim acquits himself better adding his own spin to the sidekick role and stealing every scene he's in. The film only really comes alive during its somewhat predictable conclusion, however that is marred by a choice that was a bit too ghoulish and creepy for my taste.

For what it's worth, "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" is a perfectly pleasant waste of time even if it never gets the kind of belly laughs or golden warm fuzzies of emotion that it so desperately craves. But the film does bolster my case that "Ghostbusters 2" is much better than its reputation would suggest. It's no match for the original of course, but it's still better than any of the warmed over rehashes that have continued to materialize on our screens for the past four decades.

*"Ghostbusters: Afterlife" is in theaters beginning November 19th. Featuring Carrie Coon, Mckenna Grace, Finn Wolfhard, Logan Kim, Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Ernie Hudson, Annie Potts and Sigourney Weaver. Screenplay by Jason Reitman and Gil Kenan. Directed by Jason Reitman. Rated "PG-13"*



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