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TALES FROM THE CRYPT

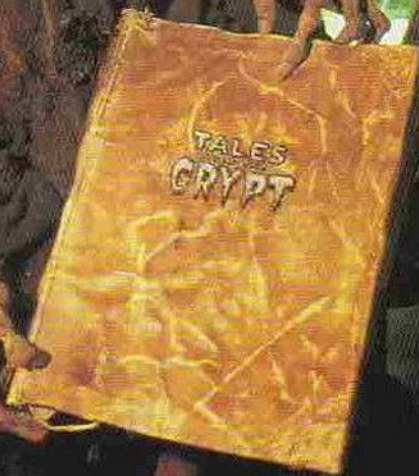
**HBO'S GROSS
HORROR COMICS
OF THE '50S**

STEPHEN KING
Horror's man of letters
looks askance at Hollywood

**BEAUTY AND
THE BEAST**
Beauty offed, Beast turns
Rambo in ratings retooling

ALWAYS
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haunting romantic fantasy

Heh, heh, heh,
kiddies! You
shouldn't even be
watching HBO's
Crypt-Keeper.



Makes TV's kid-vid cartoon series look good

GHOSTBUSTERS II

A Columbia Pictures Release. 6/89, 102 mins. In color & Dolby. Produced & directed by Ivan Reitman. Executive producers: Bernie Brillstein, Joe Medjuck, Michael C. Gross. Director of photography, Michael Chapman. Editors: Sheldon Kahn, Donn Cambern. Production designer, Bo Welch. Art director, Tom Duffield. Visual effects supervisor, Dennis Muren. Visual effects art director, Harley Jessup. Visual effects producer, Janet Mohler. Visual effects: ILM, Apogee, VCE Inc. Creature makeup designer, Tim Lawrence. Animation supervisor, Tom Bertino. Matte painting supervisor, Tom Sullivan. Set designers: Nick Navarro, Gregory Papalia, Rich Heinrichs. Costume designer, Gloria Gresham. Music, Randy Edelman. Sound, Gene Cantamessa. Assistant director, Peter Giuliano. Screenplay by Harold Ramis & Dan Aykroyd, based on their characters.

Dr. Peter Venkman Bill Murray
 Dr. Raymond Stantz Dan Aykroyd
 Dana Barrett Sigourney Weaver
 Dr. Egon Spengler Harold Ramis
 Louis Tully Rick Moranis
 Winston Zeddemore Ernie Hudson
 Janosz Poha Peter MacNicol
 Vigo Wilhelm Von Homburg

by Tim Vandehey

An open letter to Ivan Reitman, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis, and the rest of the GHOSTBUSTERS II production team, probably off sunning themselves on some isolated tropical island:

Gentlemen,

Hope you are well as you watch the profits roll in from your latest paranormal escapade. Since you couldn't have put out too much effort writing the script and plotting the action, you should be thoroughly decompressed by now and well on your way to savoring the sun, fun, and leisure afforded you by the unlimbered wallets of

the masses as they herded in to check out the flick, under the universal impression that they were getting something made with care and creative thought, like GHOSTBUSTERS.

I hope you all get good tans. By the way, don't hurry back; your Saturday morning cartoon likenesses are a lot more entertaining than you are, anyway.

Yours in slime,
 The Moviegoing Public

The cast and crew of GHOSTBUSTERS II are probably home by now, hard at work on other projects. But while they were vacationing, let's hope they had time to study one single, but very important word: verisimilitude. That's the appearance of reality in a book, a play, or a film. The ragged street people wandering out and fro in a downtown scene, the guttural East End London accent in a novel, the simple, logical progression of events that leads to a conclusion—that is verisimilitude, and it is vital to any good story. Certainly Reitman and Company realize this, but what they have done in GHOSTBUSTERS II is create a plot in which verisimilitude is sacrificed for the sake of moving the story along, where the plot devices go so far beyond the credible that the discerning filmgoer cocks one eyebrow and

sneers, "Oh, come on now." The film looks like a work in which the object was to get it in the can as soon as possible, so a script was thrown together in which all circumstances fit together with total convenience in order to move the plot along, no matter how that convenience may defy logic, sense, and good storytelling.

The film actually starts off with an inspired, intelligent supposition: that the team of paranormal investigators were sued by every New York authority over the damage caused by their adventure with Gozar the Gozarian, and a restraining order has been slapped on them to prevent them from acting as ghostbusters. So to make ends meet, Peter Venkman (Bill Murray) is hosting a hokey talk show on psychic phenomena, Ray Stantz (Aykroyd) is running an occult bookshop and teaming with Winston Zeddemore (Ernie Hudson) to entertain spoiled brats at parties, and Egon Spengler (Ramis) is back in a lab coat conducting research on emotions. All is proceeding normally until former cellist/Keymaster Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) nearly loses her child Oscar (adorably played by William and Henry Deutchendorf) to a baby carriage that steers itself better than most commuters. She contacts the guys to look into this rather odd event,



An ILM ghost disrupts the courtroom trial of the Ghostbusters. If only the script were as believable as the effects.

and they soon discover a ghostly plot to (all together now) ... take over the world.

Sadly, after this promising setup, the film chokes to propel its plot with ridiculously convenient devices. Despite having witnessed firsthand the Sta-Puft man and all the hauntings that took place during the last film, all of New York for some reason thinks the Ghostbusters are frauds. Convenient. All paranormal activity seems to

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The Frog Ghost, axed when the live-action subway footage didn't work.

Coaxing a performance from the spooks of GHOSTBUSTERS II

Makeup effects creator Rick Lazzarini and his Van Nuys-based company, The Creature Shop, supplied one of GHOSTBUSTERS II's most impressive monsters, the "Theatre Ghost." Occupying only five seconds of screen time, the six-eyed, four-armed, winged creature (complete with stinger)—which chased hordes of panic-stricken New Yorkers from a movie house and then zoomed hungrily toward the camera—required approximately 14 different articulated parts! Rather than use multiple operators, each working a couple of servo mechanisms, Lazzarini, who spent a year at Boss Film and was an apprentice to Stan Winston, eschewed standard practice and used his

self-taught mechanical know-how to develop a device which allows a single operator to control up to 16 channels of movement.

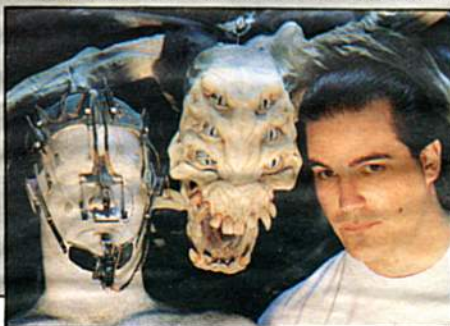
Dubbed the "Facial Waldo," Lazzarini's device consists of a cap-like rig which attaches to a puppeteer's head and face complete with a chin cup, plastic and Velcro tabs which serve as sensors. These sensors register

the puppeteer's facial movements and send an electrical signal that the servo interprets and duplicates on the creature's face. "If I moved one eyebrow, all six brows on the ghost's face would frown!" said Lazzarini. "At the same time, my hands were free to control the wings, while other puppeteers operated the arms and stinger." Lazzarini stood directly behind

the "Theatre Ghost," using the Waldo to control nine separate movements, while supporting the creature with his body. Draped in black velvet, Lazzarini was matted-out of the shot during postproduction.

Lazzarini also used his "Waldo" device for a second delightful demon titled the "Frog Ghost" (eventually edited out). □

Lazzarini (r) with the Facial Waldo and Theatre Ghost.





Peter MacNicol, once the swashbuckling hero of *DRAGONSLAYER*, steals the show in *GHOSTBUSTERS II* as the lecherous Janosz Poha, possessed by Vigo's painting.

GHOSTBUSTERS II

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have strangely ceased since they went out of business, making them easy targets for such accusations and setting them up for a triumphant comeback. Convenient. Spook villain Vigo needs an infant so he can be reborn; Dana has one on hand. Again, convenient. And wouldn't you know it, just as the guys are about to be sentenced as mischievous pains in the ass, resuming their ghostbusting practice, two vengeful ghosts show up enabling them to clear their names. All far too convenient, wouldn't you say? This film has the look of a movie its creators didn't want to make at all, so they rushed through the odious task and took the quickest route to the bank.

There are pleasurable parts to *GHOSTBUSTERS II*, and the cast is delightful: Murray is sarcastic and cynical, Aykroyd is full of childlike wonder, Ramis looks like Eraserhead and talks like Mr. Spock, and Hudson is solid and reassuring. Weaver is as charming as before, and Peter MacNicol as Janosz Poha, the bizarre, geographically untraceable art restorer who lusts after Dana and ends up the slave of Vigo, steals the film in much the same way that Bronson Pinchot's Serge stole *BEVERLY HILLS COP*. But the structure of film around them is flimsy and contrived.

Nearly all sequels, of course, suffer in comparison with the original. But this one falls so short of the brilliant originality of its parent that it might have been made by a different team. Its villain, Vigo, is hardly threatening enough to make us worry about the safety of baby Oscar, much less our

intrepid heroes. Much of the film is wasted on the relationship between Dana and Peter when frankly, who cares? If we wanted romance, we'd see *DANGEROUS LIASONS!* And the contrived fling between Janine Melnitz (Annie Potts) and Louis (Rick Moranis) provides a good opportunity to nit the snack bar.

This may be a film of the totally fantastical, but fantasy needs a strong base in reality to work, and *GHOSTBUSTERS II* plays too many games with reality to be effective. □

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