



First Read

COVERAGE REPORT

SCRIPT: GHOSTBUSTERS - NETHERVERSE
WRITER: BOYAN BLOCKA
PRODUCER:
DIRECTOR:
GENRE: COMEDY / ADVENTURE
LOGLINE: Ousted by hostile takeover, the Ghostbusters reluctantly regroup to battle their former company and an undead army of Chinese Terracotta warriors.

SYNOPSIS: (By Boyan Blocka)

18 years after the defeat of Vigo, the original Ghostbusters are no more. Guns slung. Proton packs silent. Only museum dummies wear their uniforms now. A new generation has supplanted the old. Better equipped, better trained and better funded, Ghostbusters International (GBI) led by mogul MAX DRECK is now a publicly traded behemoth, more concerned with diversification and market share than paranormal elimination. Real Estate, Weapon Systems, Diet Beverages - their evil knows no bounds.

And so, ousted by takeover, the old Ghostbusters struggle to adapt to new lives:

- PETER VENKMAN the team's shoot first think later leader, is a Springer-esque talk show host who capitalizes on the confrontation between dead and live guests. For his show he's sacrificed everything - unfortunately he's about to lose it all again.
- EGON SPENGLER, the team's super-genius, once content with research, now finds spores, molds and fungi strangely unsatisfying.
- RAY STANTZ, the heart of the Ghostbusters lives a secluded life curating his own immensely unpopular Ghostbusters museum.
- WINSTON ZEDDEMORE, the team's former muscle is now Mayor of New York. Blinded by the desire to do some good, it was his first election bid that led to the dissolution of the original Ghostbusters - a mistake he's had to live with ever since.

- LOUIS and JANINE TULLY, the former attorney and receptionist of the Ghostbusters have challenges like all families, but unlike other families - Louis is a ghost.

Then from the bowels of China's Mount Lishan valley, comes a ghostly adversary so strong, a spectral army so vast that even the formidable resources of GBI are no match. Hesitant to help or even heed Ray and Egon's concern, Dreck rebuffs their pleas leaving them one uncomfortable option - come out of retirement, mount a last ditch mission and use the only equipment available to them ... their own 1980's museum relics.

Initially jubilant at the thought of one last mission, things take a turn for the worse when the Ghostbusters discover their adversary is the omnipotent First Emperor of China - a being so powerful he has literally manifested his own universe, a Netherverse. It gets even worse when they realize that the Emperor's 8000 strong terracotta army is impervious to their proton thrower technology and actually feeds on energy of any type.

Just when it's most bleak, GBI arrives fresh from a corporate mutiny led by Winston, and Ghostbusters of past lead Ghostbusters of present in an all out battle for the future.

Part Archaeology, part high tech extravaganza, and all comedy, the movie takes the Ghostbusters far from their familiar New York setting with an epic battle and a surprise resolution that will memorably bookend the franchise and revitalize the myth.

GENERAL NOTES:

This is a well-written, funny and clever spec sequel to the franchise. It lives up to the charms and sensibilities of the previous two films.

Because it is a spec script for a franchise, ultimately its greatest problem is the fact that the principal owners of the franchise are the only ones who can approve the script's viability, dramatically reducing its prospects in the marketplace.

Only by approaching the principals of the franchise, can this script ever see any future.

SPECIFICS:

Netherverse falls into a unique category as it cannot be critiqued without being compared and connected to the previous two films. As such it must be looked at in the context of the franchise. The two basic issues in this are continuing the existing characters and their specific personalities and finding a new story that allows them to grow and play off each other in the same satisfying way that we've become accustomed to.

The writer has accomplished these two tasks admirably which now allows for an assessment that falls back into the basic notion of coverage.

STRUCTURE:

The structure of Netherverse is solid overall, save for one issue. The majority of the script takes place in New York until the last act which brings the Ghostbusters to mainland China to defeat an army of Terracotta Warriors and their Emperor leader.

The decision to move the action to China serves the logic of the situation, but the Ghostbusters presence there is not fully exploited. It feels like a wasted opportunity as the exotic setting for the finale never takes advantage of the cultural and social differences from New York.

Also in the last act, comedy takes a back seat to some vast and complex action sequences. Looking back on the previous films, there seems to have been a conscious effort to maintain the same level of laughter in the climax as during the rest of the film. I think this could readily be addressed in the current draft without sacrificing too much of the spectacular.

CHARACTERS:

All the original GB characters are here and drawn with the same vibrant idiosyncrasies as the previous films.

The writer has done an excellent job transmuting the personalities of the heroes fully intact.

The main antagonist of the film is the re-constituted Emperor who has an immense arsenal of psychic weaponry at his disposal. He is fresh and colorful and seems justifiably motivated by his cause.

The love interest is a Chinese Archaeologist named Michelle who allows for some good competitive fun with the Ghostbusters. She could benefit from a less cliché approach at times.

IN CLOSING:

Although a risky venture, this gamble seems to have paid off as it satisfies many of the epic beats we expect from this franchise. Hopefully the principals feel the same way.

Even without any sequel deals, the script shows a writer who knows how to deliver punchy dialogue, snappy action and has all the hallmarks for some future rewrite assignments.

RECOMMEND: YES

Simon Barry and Jacquie Gould



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