

"GHOSTBUSTERS 3"
by the Delusional N.C. Jones

Tagline: Something something afterlife.

Open at CARNEGIE HALL. GHOSTS have staged their own supernatural rendition of a WARGNERIAN VIKING OPERA and the GHOSTBUSTERS are on the job. They operate like a Detroit Diesel V8 (*vintage*, but serviceable), until VENKMAN is horrifically killed by a piano-dropping spook. The boys are devastated. There's a funeral:

WINSTON

Nice of Guiliani to say a few words. Couple even fit to print.

RAY

I think he wanted to make sure Pete was actually dead. Remember the time he re-zoned the city taxes and Venkman blasted his honor's Lexus?

EGON

You assured me there was a free-repeating vaporous phantasm.

RAY

Well, we were getting screwed by the rezoning.

With Pete gone, work piling up, and the guys not being as slim or spry as they used to be, it's obvious they need fresh meat. Unsurprisingly, lots of WEIRDOS turn out for the job. One by one they clear out, disgusted or horror-stricken, unable to pass the practical of keeping SLIMER from a box of jelly donuts. At the end of the day three recruits remain: Ray's saturnine niece, DARBY GELLER (Aubrey Plaza); a genius ex-student of Egon's, KAVIRAJ "KAV" GUPTA (Danny Pudi); and a blue-collar buddy of Winston, FRANK ROOSEVELT (Bruce Campbell). These three, through their unique cunning, weirdness and charm manage to pass the test saving the pastries, but not without deep emotional scars and having been thoroughly slimed.

Before they're proper Ghostbusters though, each recruit must complete a probationary bust and nightfall means peak hours. As calls roll in, the senior Busters break into pairs with the newbs: Darby and Winston take on a Prohibition/Jazz Era Big Band dancehall Gangster haunting; Egon and Frank butt heads at the Tootsie Candy Factory where the spirit of aggrieved Confectioner Leo Hirshfeld brings molten chocolate to life; and Ray takes Kav to tackle the ghost of Topsy the elephant rampaging @ Coney Island. The calls are pretty typical class II-IV entities, but each gets out of hand quickly and the senior Busters have to step in and bring things under control. At each of the busts a MENACING

APPARITION observes events from the shadows.

Back at the Firehouse, Ray, Winston and Egon dump the traps in the containment unit and share doubts about the new recruits. The newbie trio stows gear and bond over tales of their first bust disasters. Kav meticulously records data from the equipment, nerd that he is, and finds a common reading on all the PKEs. After comparing notes, Darby and Frank discover a pattern: each incident is significant to one of our original Ghostbusters. Ray's maternal grandmother was Clara "Tootsie" Hirshfeld; Winston had a great Uncle who ran booze through Harlem; Egon's ancestor worked with Edison and helped fry Topsy. Combined with the PKE readings, Kav suggests there may be some greater significance behind the ghost infestations.

The recruits try to bring this to the attention of the guys, but are shot down with criticism for their tactics and the sub-standard performances. Disappointed, Ray lays into them, explaining the job is dangerous, "One stray proton beam and ZRK, your cerebrum is applesauce!" The recruits must figure out how to follow orders, or they're out.

Needing to blow off some steam, the rookies hit a bar. Darby is crushed but hiding it well under deadpan stoicism. Frank is pissed he isn't getting a fair shake due to a lack of credentials. But Kav is academic, "Teamwork means they have to compromise as well, they're just having a hard time letting go of the old days."

After last call the trio staggers home and Kav voices his main concern: The mysterious force behind the increase in ghost activity may be specifically targeting the Ghostbusters. After all, he goes on, this sort of pattern isn't unheard of and it's never signaled anything good. As they navigate the streets of New York, the MENACING APPARITION stalks them.

On the roof of the Firehouse Ray and Winston indulge in cigars, reflecting on the New York skyline and how much things have changed since they started. Peter's death has left Ray feeling vulnerable and all too mortal. His smartphone/twitter/whatever alerts then suddenly blow up. In the distance, the night sky glows faintly from the east.

In the lab, Egon examines the remnants of the possessed chocolate, which JANINE promptly confiscates for her midnight snack despite protest. He then flips through Kav's notebook, passing curious schematics to discover Kav's notes about the probie busts. Egon registers the coincidences with growing concern (a severely arched eyebrow in his case) when his computer sounds an alert: 382 new emails. London, Cairo, Stuttgart, Taipei, Rome, etc, etc...

Still drunk, Frank, Darby and Kav arrive at the Firehouse. The ALARM promptly goes off and Winston and Ray come screaming down the brass pole with the call: The flaming specter of the PS General Slocum is sailing up the East River. Egon brings worse

news; reports of major ghost activity world-wide are flooding in.

ECTO-1 screams down the expressway while the drunken rookies struggle to suit up in the back. Egon informs Ray and Winston he's detected a pattern in the oddly personal nature of many of their recent cases, not just the probie busts.

NYFD and police have the waterfront cordoned off, but inform the Ghostbusters they're too late. The Slocum is gone and someone has poached their bust! The competition has left a business card for PHANTASM VITILITIGATION INTERNATIONAL. Between the sniggering drunk rookies, "the out-dated equipment" and the late arrival, the cops and firemen aren't impressed. Our Ghostbusters head home embarrassed and worried.

The next morning the kids nurse hangovers, while Ray and Egon try to look up PVI online. It takes Kav's geek mastery to get past the anonymous domain and track the company's SEC filings, which are only a few weeks old and somehow missing names. Winston notes cancellations have cleared the schedule and the phones are quiet.

Silent worry brews into full-blown bad moods. Ray drills the recruits with packs and traps, but they always do something wrong. Egon holes up in the lab, obsessing over archived PKE data, and tinkering with secret new prototypes, not to be disturbed. Winston tries to reassure the new guys that slow stretches come and go, but after over a week of no calls even he's idly surfing for info on Florida retirement homes. Cheap Florida retirement homes.

Another day passes. The rookies suit up for training, but Ray gives them the day off. He heads to the basement, morosely checking the containment unit. He pauses to watch a LCD view screen of the residents. He then contemplates the power supply. Bypass a safeguard or two, flip a switch and they'd have plenty of work... The phone finally rings.

And rings. The rookies are raring to go, but none of the senior Busters spring into action. Frank finally grabs the phone and excitedly takes down the details. Ray emerges from the basement, surprised to find the new guys suiting up like pros. Darby pulls an Addams Family/puppy-dog pout and Ray relents, she hits the alarm. Egon and Winston emerge and everyone piles into Ecto-1. Frank takes the wheel and relays that something big is going down at COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

When they arrive, there's a familiar-looking (but distinctively more badass) ectoplasm shell over LOW MEMORIAL LIBRARY. As the Ghostbusters approach, the bronze ALMA MATER statue comes to life and beckons them inside. The original trio trade worried glances as they follow the newbs up the stairs and through the door.

Inside, Kav announces "Class VII. Neutralization is usually problematical at best. Most standard procedures are futile. The most realistic plan is to take measures to prevent these beings

from entering the sphere of influence in the first place. Unfortunately, this one is already here." Frank and Darby worry about the collection of living statuary that watch like hawks. Egon pulls Ray and Winston aside to confess he has a theory about what's happening. He admits to recognizing Kav's PKE readings, but he didn't want to believe it. A candy bar slides across the floor into Egon's boot. "Of course you did, Spengz." The MENACING APPARITION steps from the shadows revealing Venkman.

Looking sharp and rocking luciferian silk & velvet, Peter reveals that since death he's been working in what is essentially the Christian version of Hell. He explains there are all sorts of planes of existence out there, and he was a hot prospect after he died, so he signed on with "the big S". That way he'd have close ties to the Human world, and better yet, New York City, where he could keep his fingers in the business.

And now he's got big plans-- A Worldwide Franchise where he controls supply and demand.

The boys are understandably shocked. Ray takes it the worst, denying the possibility this could be Venkman and angry an imposter would exploit their old friend's image.

VENKMAN

Ray, bubbe, knock it off. You're looking at the real deal, pal.

RAY

No, Venkman was a good man, and... *mostly* honest. He would never exploit his friends like this-

VENKMAN

That sounds nothing like me.

EGON

Ray, he's right. Venkman was a jerk.

WINSTON

A lovable jerk, though.

Frank hates to break up the reunion, but they're still here to bust a ghost. Egon makes the connection to PVI and Peter confesses, yep, all him. Ray gives the order to light him up and Peter just laughs, "You can't bust me, Ray, I know all tricks." Peter easily deflects the first round attacks. He goes for each of his buddies' weak spots: Ray's bad knee, Egon's glasses, Winston's whatever. He then dodges the rookies' streams and hits 'em with one of the classics: paralysis wave ala' Vigo. Peter's pretty damn powerful it turns out. He notes that they really should look into upgrading the equipment and points out that it's doubtful that a round of Kumbayah is gonna save them this time.

Never say die, Ray, Egon and Winston pull together for a 'High Noon' against Peter. Three against one is a little unfair Peter says, and with a wave of the hand their proton packs unbuckle and fly away. "If you wanna stop me, you're gonna have to get your hands dirty."

Without warning Egon charges him, throwing a punch that somehow connects! Winston and Ray dive in and fisticuffs ensue. It's humorous but kinda sad and pathetic, as Peter cheats by phasing through blows. He's toying with them.

Frank, Darby and Kav watch the Stooges routine. Kav suggests the only option now may be total protonic reversal. Peter overhears and elevator-phases through the floor leaving Ray, Egon and Winston in an exhausted, bruised heap. Venkman rises through the floor in front of the rookies and tuts that the new class looks even more pathetic than the old. Darby trades insults and Frank promises to wipe the smirk off Peter's face. Kav recites the astronomical odds that Venkman can survive total protonic reversal. Peter scoffs and says if they want to play, he's happy to oblige. He releases the paralysis to give them "a free shot".

The rookies find their feet and power up the proton packs. Peter hovers patiently, picking imaginary lint from his suit and warning the last time anyone tried total protonic reversal there was a lot of soft, fluffy, marshmallow to cushion the explosion. As he has no plans to turn into a giant marshmallow like a chucklehead, this time probably won't go so well.

"Some good old fashion science will have to do!" Egon tosses one of Kav's designs at Pete, a Boson disrupter grenade. "Oh, science, my one weakness," he mocks. It unleashes a wail and Peter falls to the floor, stunned. Egon and Winston pin his arms and Ray locks him in a nelson.

Ray orders the recruits to shoot now! The proton streams hit Venkman and send Winston and Egon flying, but Ray holds on like pitbull. Kav throws a trap, warning him to get clear, but Ray holds on. "This isn't you, Pete, I know it. Why would you do this?" "Guess I had some unfinished business." "What?" "You, stupid. Everyone dies, Ray. Let it go." Ray does.

With a terrific blast, the trap closes. Everyone stares at the blinking indicator. A deluge of SLIME falls from the ceiling, coating all. "That son of a bitch slimed us." "Comes with job."

At the Firehouse, the guys have a small ceremony as they put Venkman in the containment unit. As they emerge from the basement, Frank, Kav and Darby present them with a crisp, new ledger they've found. The guys open it, "Corporate holdings yadda yadda, PVI merger, what the-? Ghostbusters... *International?*"

THE END.

((N.B.: To be filed under 'Things I never had a shot in hell at writing anyway').

Lots of hokey dialogue here, get over it.

The sexy, fun & games sequences have been glossed over in an attempt to instead focus on the pathos of a team of lovable guys, once down to the *last* of the petty cash, after years of life, loss, friendship, etc. The specific changes-- bad eyes, knees, divorces, whatever-- aren't as important as a story of growth & coming to terms with moving on. So this is really a thumbnail sketch of what I needed for closure before seeing a new crew take over. The fresh meat can't really command a story without carving a new world, so the OGs need arcs into new roles in a new world.

The Boson grenade is totally deus ex machina, I know, but fuck it, no one is gonna beat the supernatural entity formerly known as Dr. Peter Venkman unless he wills it.

Other bits and pieces I wanted to work into the mix: The ghosts clearly knowing the trio's secrets, and weaknesses; Ray having a love interest; a very pregnant JANINE plans for a baby shower & an unusual amount of secrecy around the father of the kid, probably Egon, but Ray would be a funny angle; Donald Glover; anyone from Community really; if Bruce Campbell is too gimmicky, someone grounded and not carded for beer for Frank; Peter's afterlife harem consisting of Queen Nefertiti, Marilyn Monroe, & Marie Curie, What? He digs the French chicks; Spores, molds and funguses; Hostage Dean Yeager now President @ Columbia; Dana and Oscar, if absolutely necessary but keep the kid way off-screen.

Things I'd like to see the filmmakers avoid: Trying to carbon copy the original four, as it was lightning in a bottle; Trying to recreate Venkman; Updating the proton packs, traps, Ecto-1 just for the sake of new and shininess, 'datedness' and age should diffuse the nostalgia; Giving Slimer more than a generous cameo, he's better short and sweet; Forcing the Egon/Janine Ship, vague is better, weird is better; Too much, dare I say it, fanservice- just tell a good story; Cameron, Bay or Abrams- I'm just sayin'.

Here's hoping that the final product crushes this sad little pipe dream. At least we're not getting a reboot. Now if the brain could just stop writing dialogue for this, I'd feel almost sane. Special thanks to NWA - "Express Yourself". Peace out.))