



# Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire

***Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire*** is a 2024 American supernatural comedy horror fantasy film directed by Gil Kenan from a screenplay he co-wrote with Jason Reitman. It is the sequel to *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* (2021), the fourth mainline installment, and the fifth film overall in the *Ghostbusters* franchise. The film stars Paul Rudd, Carrie Coon, Finn Wolfhard, Mckenna Grace, Celeste O'Connor, and Logan Kim reprising their roles from *Afterlife*, alongside Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Ernie Hudson, Annie Potts, and William Atherton reprising their characters from the earlier films. Kumail Nanjiani, Patton Oswalt, Emily Alyn Lind, and James Acaster also join the cast. Set three years after the events of *Afterlife*, the veteran Ghostbusters must join forces with their successors to save the world from a death-chilling god in New York City who seeks to build a spectral army.<sup>[9]</sup>

Following the success of *Afterlife*, Sony Pictures announced the sequel in April 2022, with Reitman returning as director. Co-writer and executive producer Kenan later took over as director that December, with Reitman staying on as a co-writer and co-producer. That same month, Rudd, Coon, Grace, Wolfhard, O'Connor, Kim, Murray, Aykroyd, Hudson, Potts and Atherton were all confirmed to reprise their roles. New cast members including Nanjiani, Oswalt, Lind, and Acaster were announced in March 2023, with principal photography commencing that month and wrapping in June. Dario Marianelli was hired to compose the film's score, replacing *Afterlife* composer Rob Simonsen. As the first film in the *Ghostbusters* franchise to be released following the death of the franchise's co-creator and Jason Reitman's father Ivan Reitman, who posthumously receives credit as a producer alongside his son and Jason Blumenfeld, the film is dedicated to his memory and celebrates the 40th anniversary of the first film.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<u>Gil Kenan</u>
Written by	<u>Gil Kenan</u> <u>Jason Reitman</u>
Based on	<i><u>Ghostbusters</u></i> by <u>Dan Aykroyd</u> <u>Harold Ramis</u>
Produced by	<u>Ivan Reitman</u> <sup>[a]</sup> <u>Jason Reitman</u> <u>Jason Blumenfeld</u>
Starring	<u>Paul Rudd</u> <u>Carrie Coon</u> <u>Finn Wolfhard</u> <u>Mckenna Grace</u> <u>Kumail Nanjiani</u> <u>Patton Oswalt</u> <u>Celeste O'Connor</u>

*Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* had its world premiere at the AMC 13 Theater at Lincoln Square in New York City on March 14, 2024,<sup>[10]</sup> and was released in the United States on March 22, by Sony Pictures Releasing under its Columbia Pictures label. The film received mixed reviews from critics and grossed \$201 million worldwide. A sequel is in development.<sup>[11]</sup>

Plot

Three years after the events in Summerville, Oklahoma,<sup>[b]</sup> Callie Spengler, her partner Gary Grooberson, her children Trevor and Phoebe, and their friends Lucky Domingo and Podcast, relocate to New York City to aid Winston Zeddemore and Ray Stantz in re-establishing the Ghostbusters. After the group captures a ghost, Walter Peck, the Ghostbusters' long-time opponent and now the city's mayor, threatens to close them down. To appease Peck, Callie removes the underage Phoebe from the team. Upset, Phoebe plays chess in a nearby park. She encounters and befriends Melody, the ghost of a teenage girl killed in a fire.

Ray and Podcast collect cursed objects for examination. Nadeem Razmaadi sells them a strange brass orb with ritual markings written in Mesopotamian Arabic. Ray determines it is an apotropaic trap due to copper alloys typically being used in rituals against the supernatural since the Bronze Age.

When Ray evaluates its psychokinetic energy levels, the orb emits broad-spectrum psionic energy. A cold wave travels from the orb to the Ghostbusters' firehouse headquarters and damages the ecto-containment unit, which is at near capacity. Winston takes the orb to his company's paranormal research and development center, run by Dr. Lars Pinfield. Using an experimental extraction device, he is unable to extract any orenda from it. The orb's captive psychically sabotages one of the center's ecto-confinements, allowing a ghost to escape and hide in Podcast's equipment. To learn more, Lars joins Trevor and Lucky to see Nadeem, who reveals that his grandmother kept the orb hidden within a brass-lined chamber. Peter Venkman, brought in to help, discovers Nadeem has latent pyrokinetic powers.

Ray, accompanied by Phoebe and Podcast, visits Dr. Hubert Wartzki, a New York Public Library research librarian and anthropologist. Wartzki explains the orb was built over 4,000 years ago in Southwest Asia by four sorcerers called the Firemasters to imprison Garraka, a phantom god who sought to conquer humanity with endowment of "Kusharit Umoti" ("The Death Chill") – "the power to kill by fear itself." Nadeem's grandmother was of the lineage of the Firemasters, who

	<u>James Acaster</u>
	<u>Logan Kim</u>
<b>Special appearances:</b>	
	<u>Bill Murray</u>
	<u>Dan Aykroyd</u>
	<u>Ernie Hudson</u>
	<u>Annie Potts</u>
	<u>William Atherton</u>
<b>Cinematography</b>	<u>Eric Steelberg</u>
<b>Edited by</b>	<u>Nathan Orloff</u>
	<u>Shane Reid</u>
<b>Music by</b>	<u>Dario Marianelli</u>
<b>Production companies</b>	<u>Columbia Pictures</u>
	<u>Ghost Corps</u> <sup>[3][4]</sup>
	<u>Right of Way Films</u>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Sony Pictures Releasing</u>
<b>Release dates</b>	<u>March 14, 2024</u> ( <u>New York City</u> )
	<u>March 22, 2024</u> ( <u>United States</u> )
<b>Running time</b>	115 minutes <sup>[5]</sup>
<b>Country</b>	<u>United States</u>
<b>Language</b>	<u>English</u>
<b>Budget</b>	<u>\$100 million</u> <sup>[6][7]</sup>
<b>Box office</b>	<u>\$201.9 million</u> <sup>[7][8]</sup>

prevented Garraka from escaping the orb in 1904 during a mock ritual conducted by members of the Manhattan Adventurers' Society, whom he froze to death. Garraka was confined in the orb due to being vulnerable to brass. This, combined with fire, and the removal of his horns trapped him within the orb.

When the trio attempts to stop the escaped ghost from stealing a phonographic recording of the club's ritual, Peck exploits Phoebe's involvement to shut down the Ghostbusters. After an argument with Gary and her mother, Phoebe runs away and takes Melody to Winston's research center. She uses his extraction equipment to project herself as a ghost for two minutes so the pair can physically interact.

Melody reveals she had been secretly working with Garraka, who has offered her passage to the afterlife. By controlling Phoebe's disembodied spirit, Garraka forces her physical body to recite the ritual chant. He then escapes, locates his horns of power in Nadeem's grandmother's secret brass-lined room, and begins freezing the city. Realizing Garraka will free the ghosts in the containment unit after freeing ones at the center, the Ghostbusters gather to defend their headquarters. They are aided by Nadeem, who dons the Firemaster brass armor kept by his grandmother and attempts to master his powers.

Garraka overpowers them and breaches the containment unit. Phoebe electroplates Egon Spengler's proton pack with brass to strengthen it; Melody, betrayed by Garraka, atones by helping Nadeem utilize his powers to weaken Garraka. Ray, with help from his fellow veteran Ghostbusters (including Janine Melnitz), captures Garraka by turning the ruptured containment unit into a giant ghost trap. Melody reconciles with Phoebe before departing for the afterlife to reunite with her family. As the city thaws, the Ghostbusters are hailed as heroes again, with Peck forced to support the team and reinstate Phoebe. The Ghostbusters begin pursuing escaped ghosts across New York City.

In a mid-credits scene, a trucker gets out of his Stay Puft Marshmallows branded truck to make a purchase from a vending machine. The Mini-Pufts steal the vehicle in his absence.

## Cast

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- Paul Rudd as Gary Grooberson
- Carrie Coon as Callie Spengler
- Finn Wolfhard as Trevor Spengler
- Mckenna Grace as Phoebe Spengler
- Kumail Nanjiani as Nadeem Razmaadi<sup>[12]</sup>
- Patton Oswalt as Dr. Hubert Wartzki<sup>[12]</sup>
- Celeste O'Connor as Lucky Domingo
- Logan Kim as Podcast<sup>[13]</sup>
- Emily Alyn Lind as Melody
- James Acaster as Dr. Lars Pinfield<sup>[12]</sup>
- Bill Murray as Dr. Peter Venkman<sup>[14]</sup>
- Dan Aykroyd as Dr. Raymond "Ray" Stantz<sup>[15]</sup>
- Ernie Hudson as Dr. Winston Zeddemore<sup>[16]</sup>
- Annie Potts as Janine Melnitz<sup>[17]</sup>

- William Atherton as Mayor Walter Peck<sup>[18]</sup>

Additionally, Kevin Mangold and Ian Whyte serve as the puppeteers for Slimmer and Garra, respectively, though the latter's voice performers were uncredited. Shelby Young and Ryan Bartley also appear uncredited as the voices of the Mini-Pufts, tiny versions and replicated forms of the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man, with Young returning from *Afterlife*.<sup>[19]</sup> John Rothman cameos as New York Public Library administrator Roger Delacorte, reprising his role from the first film.<sup>[20]</sup>

## Production

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### Development

Following the release of *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* in November 2021, Dan Aykroyd expressed interest in having the surviving cast of the original *Ghostbusters* team reprise their roles in up to three sequels.<sup>[21]</sup> In April 2022, it was announced that a sequel to *Afterlife* was in early development at Sony Pictures.<sup>[22][23]</sup>

In June 2022, the film was confirmed by director Jason Reitman under the working title *Firehouse*.<sup>[24]</sup> That same month, it was announced that the sequel would take place in New York City.<sup>[25]</sup> On October 5, 2022, Mckenna Grace announced that she would reprise her role.<sup>[26]</sup> The following month, Ernie Hudson revealed he had read a script for the film.<sup>[27]</sup>

In December 2022, it was announced that Gil Kenan would take over as director from Reitman, who remained as a writer and producer. It was also announced that Paul Rudd, Finn Wolfhard and Carrie Coon would return.<sup>[28]</sup> In March 2023, it was announced that Kumail Nanjiani, Patton Oswalt, James Acaster and Emily Alyn Lind had been cast in the film.<sup>[29]</sup> Lind's role was established in secrecy during pre-production. She met Reitman, Kenan, and casting director John Papsidera, and was not aware that she had the role until shortly before filming.<sup>[30]</sup>

According to Nanjiani, the filmmakers drew inspiration from the animated series *The Real Ghostbusters* (1986–1991), noting they "wanted to make a long episode of the animated series".<sup>[31]</sup>

Instead of a Motorola MT-500 as seen in previous iterations, the controversial Baofeng UV-5R ham radio was used as a prop.<sup>[32]</sup>

### Filming

Principal photography began on March 20, 2023, in London,<sup>[33]</sup> under the working title *Firehouse*, with Eric Steelberg serving as the cinematographer.<sup>[16][34]</sup> On April 25, 2023, Hudson indicated that Aykroyd, Murray and Potts would reprise their roles from previous *Ghostbusters* movies in the film,<sup>[35]</sup> Aykroyd confirmed he would return for the sequel in June 2023.<sup>[36]</sup>

Filming was spotted in New York City, where Casey Neistat was caught filming a stunt scene in a video posted on June 7, 2023, while documenting the effects of the 2023 Canadian wildfires in New York City.<sup>[37]</sup> Filming wrapped on June 23.<sup>[38]</sup>

## Music

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On January 18, 2024, Dario Marianelli was confirmed to compose the film's score, replacing *Afterlife* composer Rob Simonsen. This marked Marianelli's second collaboration with Kenan after *A Boy Called Christmas* (2021). He recorded his score on the Barbra Streisand Scoring Stage in the John Williams Music Building on the Sony Pictures Studios lot in Culver City.<sup>[39]</sup> The original film's composer Elmer Bernstein's son, Peter Bernstein, returned as score consultant, after doing so for *Afterlife*.<sup>[40]</sup> In addition to using some of the elder Bernstein's original scores on some of the film's scenes, the song "Ghostbusters", which was performed by Ray Parker Jr., is heard during the film's end credits. Other songs "Home on the Range", arranged by Kenan and Reitman, "Melano" by Caino x Jun R.O.T., and "Love Is Strange" by Mickey & Sylvia are used in the film.

On March 7, 2024, Japanese girl group Atarashii Gakko! released a track called "Ghostbusters: Frozen Summer" as a collaboration with Sony Pictures Entertainment Japan.<sup>[41]</sup>

## Release

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### Theatrical

*Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* was scheduled to be released on December 20, 2023,<sup>[42][43]</sup> but was delayed due to the SAG-AFTRA strike and rescheduled for March 29, 2024 (taking over the original release date of Sony Pictures Animation's *Spider-Man: Beyond the Spider-Verse*).<sup>[44]</sup> The film had its world premiere in New York City on March 14, 2024,<sup>[45]</sup> and was released by Sony Pictures Releasing on March 22, 2024.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Home media

In April 2021, Sony signed deals with Netflix and Disney for the rights to their 2022 to 2026 film slate, following the film's theatrical and home media windows. Netflix signed for exclusive "pay 1 window" streaming rights, which is typically an 18-month window, and included *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* and past *Ghostbusters* films. Disney signed for "pay 2 windows" rights for the films, which would be streamed on Disney+ and/or Hulu as well as broadcast on Disney's linear television networks.<sup>[46]</sup>

*Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* was released digitally on May 7, 2024,<sup>[47]</sup> and on 4K Blu-ray, Blu-ray, and DVD on June 25, 2024.<sup>[48]</sup>

*Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* was released on Netflix in the US on July 22, 2024.<sup>[49]</sup> The film debuted at No. 2 on Netflix's Global Top 10 chart for the week of July 22–28. The streamer noted that the movie had 10.2 million views, which equates to 19.6 million hours viewed.<sup>[50]</sup> In that week, the film racked up 1.4B minutes viewed on Netflix, according with Nielsen numbers.<sup>[51]</sup>

## Reception

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### Box office

*Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* grossed \$113.4 million in the United States and Canada and \$88.5 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$201.9 million.<sup>[8][7]</sup>

In the United States and Canada, *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* was released alongside *Immaculate* and *Late Night with the Devil*, and was projected to gross \$43–45 million from 4,345 theaters in its opening weekend.<sup>[6]</sup> The film made \$16 million on its first day, including \$4.7 million from Thursday night previews, slightly topping *Afterlife*'s \$4.5 million. It went on to debut at \$45 million, landing between the opening weekends of *Ghostbusters* (\$46 million in 2016) and *Afterlife* (\$44 million in 2021), topping the box office, and pushing the *Ghostbusters* franchise past the \$1 billion mark. *Deadline Hollywood* credited Sony's marketing efforts for boosting the opening weekend, but suggested that the franchise would perform better if it returned to the original movie's focus on "wall-to-wall humor" and "big comedy stars."<sup>[52]</sup> In its second weekend the film made \$15.7 million (a drop of 65%), finishing second behind newcomer *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*.<sup>[53]</sup>

Critical response

On the review aggregator website *Rotten Tomatoes*, 42% of 302 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 5.2/10. The website's consensus reads: "*Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* offers a certain amount of nostalgia-fueled fun for fans of the original, but a crowded cast and surprisingly serious tone prevent this sequel from truly sparking."<sup>[54]</sup> It is the lowest-rated installment in the franchise on the site.<sup>[55]</sup> *Metacritic*, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 46 out of 100, based on 50 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.<sup>[56]</sup> Audiences surveyed by *CinemaScore* gave the film an average grade of "B+" on an A+ to F scale, while those polled by *PostTrak* gave it an 80% overall positive score, with 64% saying they would recommend the film.<sup>[52]</sup>

Jake Wilson of *The Age* gave it 2.5 out of 5 stars, writing: "Aykroyd and Grace are the soul of the thing, to whatever degree a soul exists. At this point, Aykroyd has shed any pretense of ironic distance, emerging as the mournful weirdo he surely always was."<sup>[57]</sup> *CNN*'s Brian Lowry called it "a very busy movie that lacks the emotional hook of its predecessor while spending too much time on the wrong characters in a way that yields a rather lifeless, chilly affair."<sup>[58]</sup>

Richard Roeper of the *Chicago Sun-Times* gave the film three out of four stars, writing that it "carries the same endearingly goofy, science-nerd spirit of the first film and delivers a delightful balance of slimy ghost stuff, sharp one-liners, terrific VFX and a steady stream of callbacks to various characters, human and otherwise, from the 1984 movie."<sup>[59]</sup> Jake Coyle of the *Associated Press* gave it 2.5 out of 4 stars, saying that it was "A significant upgrade from *Afterlife*" and "a breezier, more serviceable sequel that has a modest charm as an '80-tinged family adventure."<sup>[60]</sup>

Accolades

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Recipient(s)	Result	Ref.
Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards	July 13, 2024	<u>Favorite Movie</u>	<i>Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire</i>	Nominated	[61]
		<u>Favorite Movie Actor</u>	Paul Rudd	Nominated	

Future

In February 2024, Kenan revealed that ideas for multiple future films in the *Ghostbusters* franchise had been discussed.<sup>[62][63]</sup> Kenan specifically mentioned the Mini-Pufts storyline as something he and Reitman would like to expand upon. The Mini-Pufts are featured in the film's post-credits scene.<sup>[64]</sup>

In October 2024, Kenan confirmed that a sequel to *Frozen Empire* was in the works.<sup>[65]</sup>

## Notes

- Although Reitman died in 2022, he received a posthumous producer credit on the film.<sup>[1][2]</sup>
- As depicted in *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* (2021)

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