

Who Ya Gonna Call?

If a person wanted to know what the most popular movie during the summer of 1984 was, all he or she had to do was walk into a room full of people and announce, “Who ya gonna call?” The resulting answer, Ghostbusters, was a blend of science fiction and comedy that took the world by storm and left audiences begging for more.

Ghostbusters starred Dan Aykroyd, Bill Murray, Harold Ramis and Ernie Hudson as enterprising “ghost hunters” in New York City. Unknown to the Ghostbusters, the evil entity known as Gozer has moved into the city, causing a rise in paranormal activity. Gozer’s arrival eventually unleashes ancient spirits known as The Gatekeeper and The Keymaster, which possess Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) and her nerdy neighbor, Louis Tully (Rick Moranis). The film ends with a climactic battle between the Ghostbusters, Gozer, and the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man above the streets of New York.

According to the DVD’s commentary track, several major changes were made before Dan Aykroyd’s vision could be put to film. For example, did you know Dan Aykroyd originally wrote the script with Eddie Murphy, John Candy and John Belushi in mind? Unfortunately due to prior commitments, neither Murphy nor Candy could join the cast, and Belushi passed away in 1983 before filming began. Ernie Hudson ended up with the role intended for Murphy; Rick Moranis accepted John Candy’s role, and Bill Murray took over the character intended for John Belushi.

Ghostbusters was a blockbuster hit, earning approximately \$240 million dollars during its theatrical run. Lunchboxes adorned with either The Ghostbusters or Slimer (one of the ghosts featured in the film) were commonplace, and Ghostbusters outfits were a hit that Halloween. Part of the film’s success can be attributed to its catchy theme song. Written and recorded by Ray Parker, Jr., “Ghostbusters” (the song) hit #1 on the charts and stayed there for three weeks. The song’s music video received heavy rotation on MTV as well, thanks in part to cameos from the actors from the movie as well as a dozen other comedians including Chevy Chase, John Candy, and Danny DeVito.

In 1986, The Real Ghostbusters (an animated spin-off of the movie) was released. Several toys including action figures, play sets, and a scale model of ECTO-1, the Ghostbusters’ Cadillac Ambulance-turned Ghostmobile were also released. Also released around this time were several Ghostbusters videogames. Activision released their Ghostbusters game for several home computers as well as the Atari 2600, Sega Master System, and NES. There was also an arcade game, The Real Ghostbusters, which was based on the cartoon series. The popularity of the cartoon, toy line and videogames eventually led to a second Ghostbusters film.

Ghostbusters II saw the return of the entire original cast of the original film. In the sequel, we find the Ghostbusters have been sued out of business. The Ghostbusters have disbanded and returned to their day jobs, until the discovery of a mood-sensitive slime oozing beneath New York City reunites the group. The troupe discovers the slime’s foul

mood seems to be related to a painting of Vigo, an evil ruler from the 16th century. Once again, the Ghostbusters were forced to use their high-tech equipment and their quick wits to save New York City from evil spirits.

While reception to the second film wasn't as warm as the first, Ghostbusters merchandise and videogames continued to be released. A new Ghostbusters game was released for the Sega Genesis in 1990, and another game based on The Real Ghostbusters appeared on Nintendo's Game Boy in 1993. In 1997 a second animated series based on the franchise hit television. Extreme Ghostbusters featured a new wave of Ghostbusters continuing the ongoing battle against ghoulish ghosts. Several videogames based on the Extreme Ghostbusters television show have been released as well, including versions for the Game Boy Color and PlayStation.

Almost twenty five years after the release of the original Ghostbusters film, the franchise is still going strong. A third Ghostbusters film titled Ghostbusters III: Hellbent is currently being planned. Dan Aykroyd has announced that the movie will be CGI, and that some of the original Ghostbusters will be returning to lend their voices to the production. In addition to this film, a new Ghostbusters game rumored to be based on the as-of-yet unreleased third film is also in production. Recently video clips from the unreleased game hit YouTube, causing a wave of excitement in the gaming community. The new Ghostbusters game will appear on the Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, Wii, PlayStation 2, Nintendo DS and PC, according to the game's developer, ZootFly.