



ISSUE 3

BUILD THE GHOSTBUSTERSTM ECTO-1



FANHOME

BUILD THE ICONIC ECTO-1 CAR FROM GHOSTBUSTERS.



BUILD THE GHOSTBUSTERSTM ECTO-1

CONTENTS

04

INSTRUCTIONS

STAGES 3 TO 6: Step-by-step guide.

24

HAROLD RAMIS

Memories of Egon.

18

THE STORY OF SLIMER

How the green ghoul was created.

30

ECTO-101

Saturday Night Live.



TM & © 2023 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc.
All Rights Reserved.
© 2023, DeAgostini Publishing, S.p.A.
All Rights Reserved.

Editor: Matt McAllister

Art Editor: Dan Rachael

Head of Development: Ben Robinson

Development Art Editor: Steve Scanlan

Contributors: Joe Hawkes, Simon Hugo,
Paul Southcombe

UNITED KINGDOM

Published by DeAgostini UK Ltd c/o
Royds Witherby King, 69 Carter Lane,
London EC4V 5EQ.

UNITED STATES

Published by DeAgostini UK Ltd c/o
Royds Witherby King, 69 Carter Lane,
London EC4V 5EQ.

DEUTSCHLAND

Published by DeAgostini Publishing S.p.A.
Via G. da Verrazano 15, 28100 Novara, Italy.

ISSN: 2516-7723

Printed in Italy/Czech Republic

CUSTOMER SERVICES

UK: Email customer.service@deagostini.co.uk

USA: Email support@usa.deagostini.com

DE: Email kunden.service@deagostini.de

The price of this issue includes the magazine
and the attached pieces for model assembly.

TO OUR READERS

The publisher reserves the right to modify any components as required during the course of the collection. Not suitable for children under the age of 14 (12 in the USA). This product is not a toy and is not designed or intended for use in play. The collection is complete in 37 issues. Items may vary from those shown.

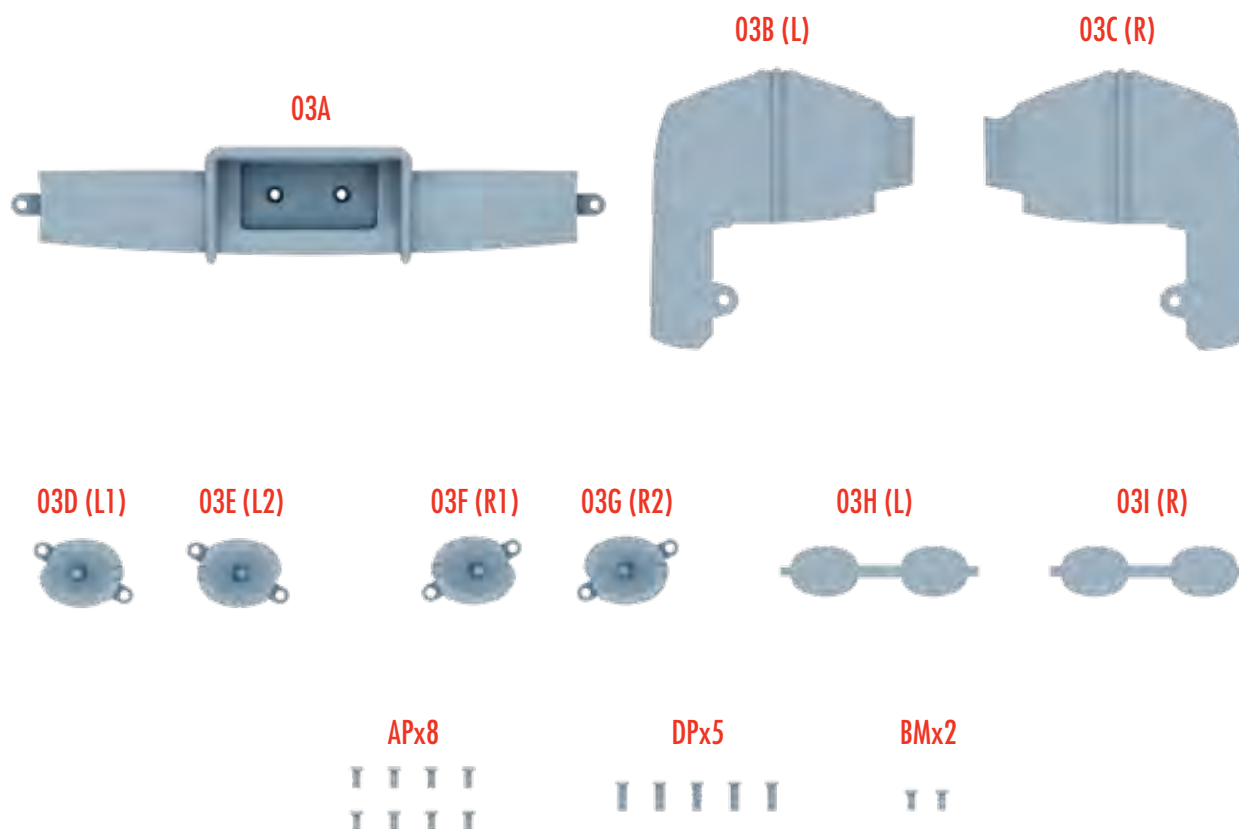
WARNING

Any reproduction, even partial, of the contents of the magazine is prohibited without permission from the Publisher. The model and the magazine that accompanies it are strictly for private use, and within the family, in accordance with Article L122 - 5 10 of the Code of Intellectual Property. Any reproduction other than that provided for in Article L122 - 5 20 of the Intellectual Property Code is prohibited. The magazine and/or elements of the collection may not be distributed, loaned, resold, rented or exploited for commercial purposes. All rights reserved.

More information at fanhome.com

CAR PARTS STAGE 3

The third components of your Ecto-1 are the chrome-effect front bumper parts and the frames and lenses for the fog lights.



PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
03A	FRONT BUMPER	1
03B	LEFT FOG LIGHT CASING	1
03C	RIGHT FOG LIGHT CASING	1
03D	LEFT OUTER FOG LIGHT FRAME	1
03E	LEFT INNER FOG LIGHT FRAME	1
03F	RIGHT OUTER FOG LIGHT FRAME	1
03G	RIGHT INNER FOG LIGHT FRAME	1
03H	LEFT FOG LIGHT LENSES	1
03I	RIGHT FOG LIGHT LENSES	1
AP	1.7x5mm	8 (+2 SPARES)
DP	2x6mm	5 (+2 SPARES)
BM	1.7x4mm	2 (+1 SPARE)

CAR PARTS STAGE 4

The fourth set of components for your Ecto-1 are the front left tire, along with the wheel parts and caps.

04A



04B



04C



04D



04E



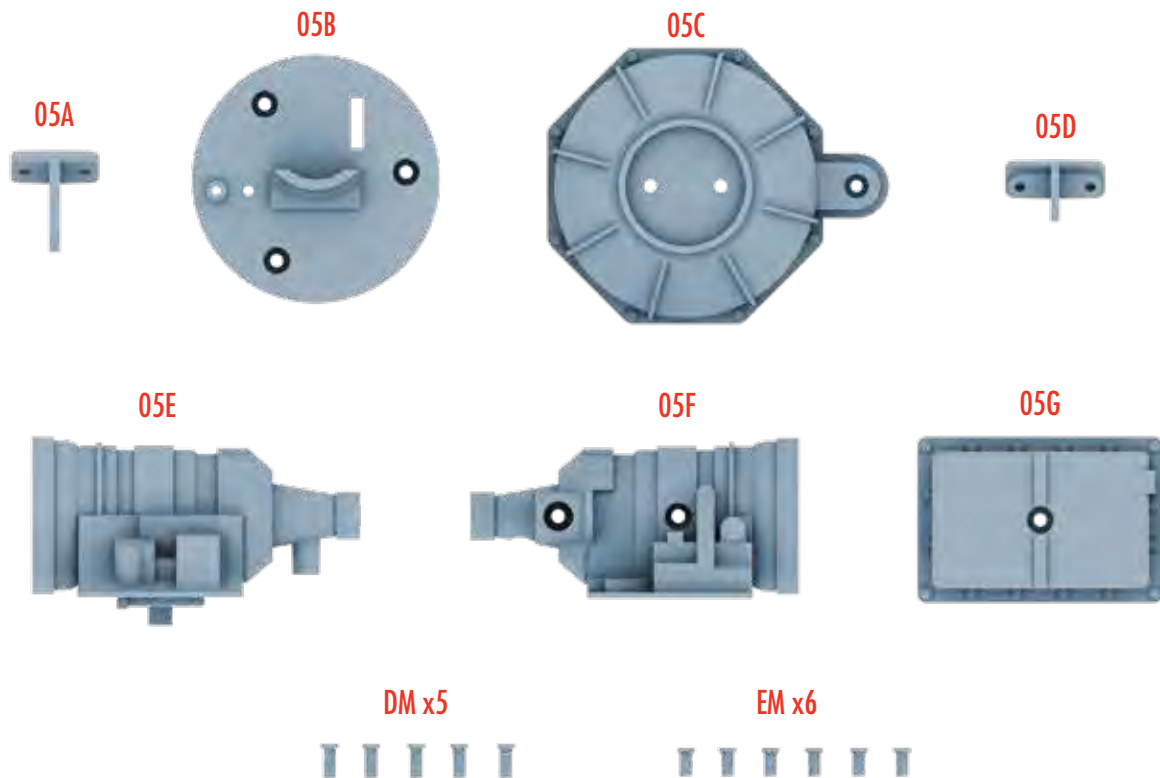
CMx3



PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
04A	LEFT FRONT TIRE	1
04B	HUB CAP	1
04C	CENTER CAP	1
04D	OUTER WHEEL	1
04E	INNER WHEEL	1
CM	2.3x4mm SCREWS	3 (+1 SPARE)

CAR PARTS STAGE 5

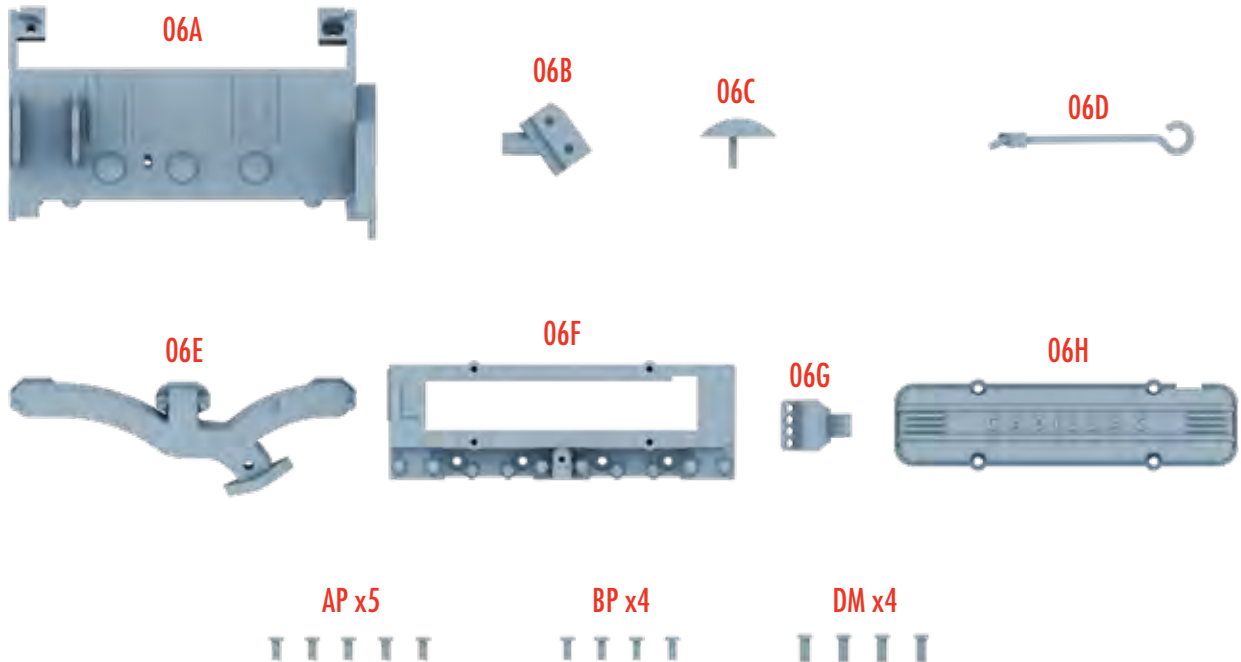
The fifth components are Ecto-1's transmission and engine as you assemble and fit the gearbox and bell housing.



PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
05A	BELL HOUSING CONNECTOR	1
05B	BELL HOUSING PLATE	1
05C	BELL HOUSING	1
05D	GEARBOX CONNECTOR	1
05E	GEARBOX HOUSING LEFT	1
05F	GEARBOX HOUSING RIGHT	1
05G	OIL PAN	1
DM	2x5mm SCREWS	5 (+2 SPARES)
EM	2x4mm SCREWS	6 (+2 SPARES)

CAR PARTS STAGE 6

The sixth components are parts of the engine, starting with the left engine block, cylinder head and exhaust manifold.



PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
06A	LEFT ENGINE BLOCK	1
06B	LEFT ENGINE SUPPORT	1
06C	ENGINE BLOCK LOWER PART	1
06D	DIPSTICK	1
06E	LEFT EXHAUST MANIFOLD	1
06F	LEFT CYLINDER HEAD	1
06G	IGNITION WIRE JUNCTION	1
06H	LEFT CYLINDER HEAD COVER	1
AP	1.7x5mm	5 (+2 SPARES)
BP	1.5x4mm	4 (+1 SPARE)
DM	2x5mm	4 (+1 SPARE)

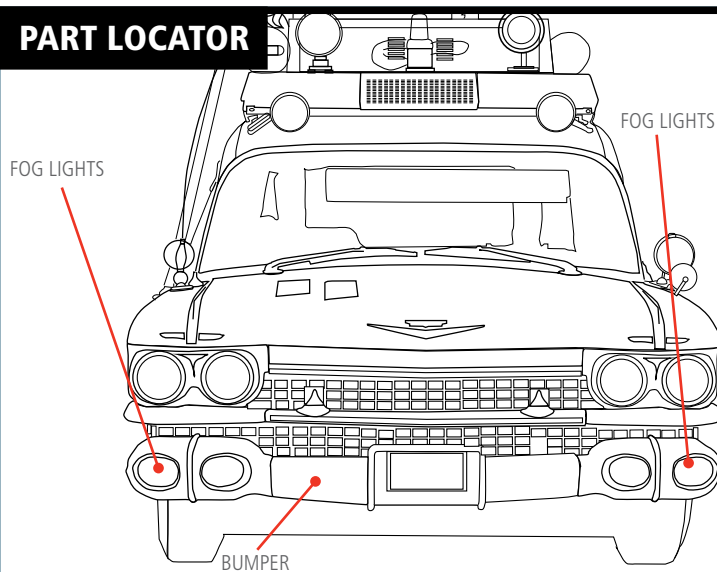


STAGE 3

BUMPER & FOG LIGHTS

In this phase, you will continue to build the front face of the Ecto-1, this time assembling and fitting the front bumper and fog lights.

PART LOCATOR



TIP: HANDLE CAREFULLY

Unpack all the parts carefully. To avoid losing any of the smaller pieces, work on a tray or keep the parts in a bowl until they are assembled.

KEY: The illustrations are color-coded to help you identify which parts are being assembled.

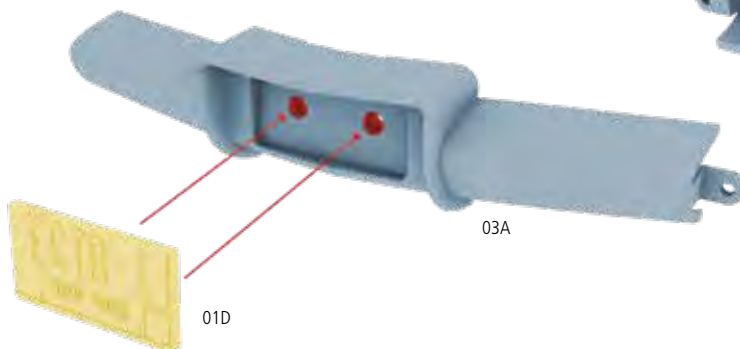
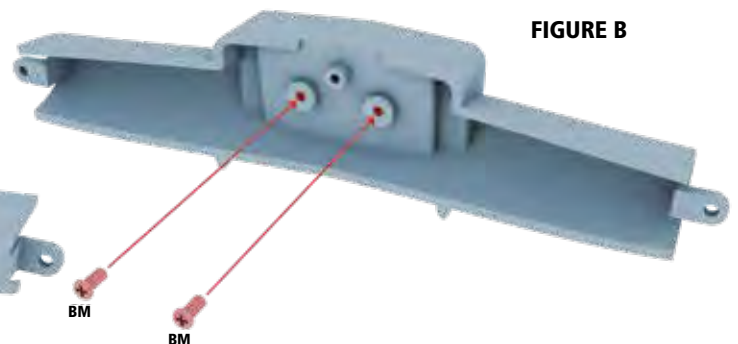
RED Highlights where the new part/s fit and screw in

YELLOW Identifies the new part/s

GREY-BLUE Indicates the previous assembly on to which the new part is fitted

01

FITTING THE LICENSE PLATE TO THE BUMPER: Using the part you have kept safe from issue 1, place the front license plate (01D) inside the frame of the front bumper (03A) (figure A). The plate should be fitted such that the protruding part of the frame is at the top of the license plate. Turn this around and secure the parts together using two BM screws (figure B).

FIGURE A**FIGURE B**



02 ASSEMBLING THE LEFT FOG LIGHT CASING: Take the left fog light lenses (03H) and push the part into place in the left fog light casing (03B) (figure A). Then place the left outer fog light frame (03D) behind the outermost lens, securing it in place with two AP screws (figure B). Finally, affix the left inner fog light frame (03E) behind the innermost lens using two further AP screws (figure C). The left outer frame is marked with an "L1", and the left inner frame is marked with an "L2".

FIGURE A

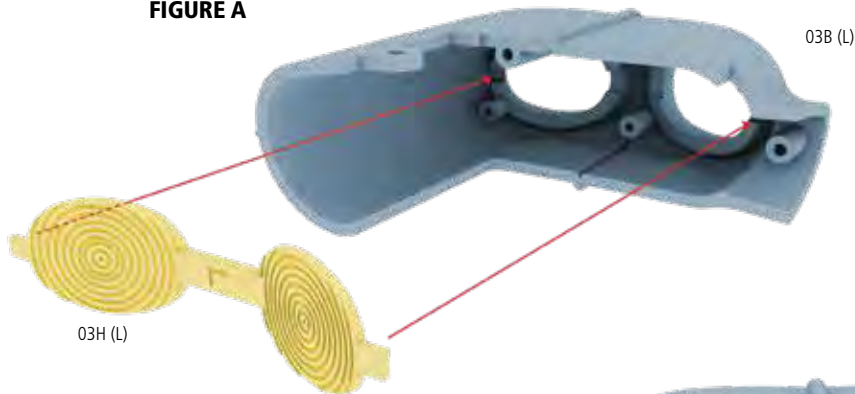


FIGURE B

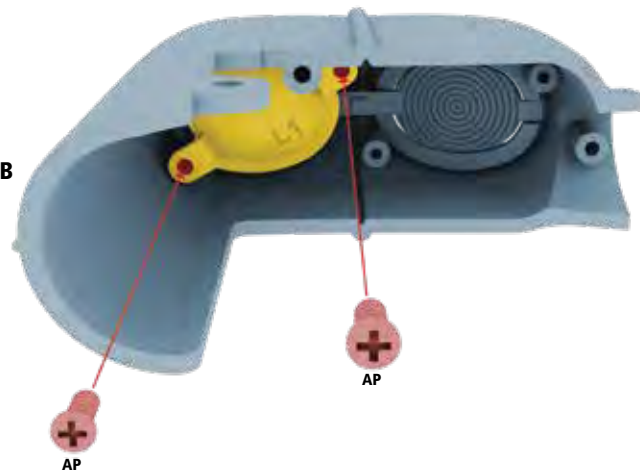
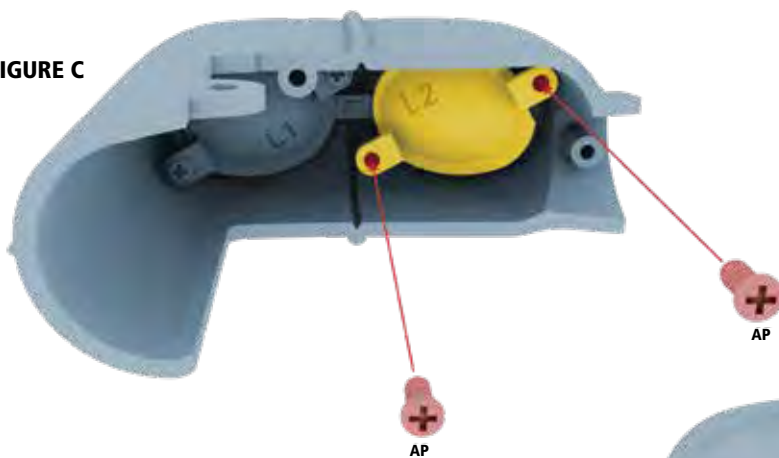


FIGURE C

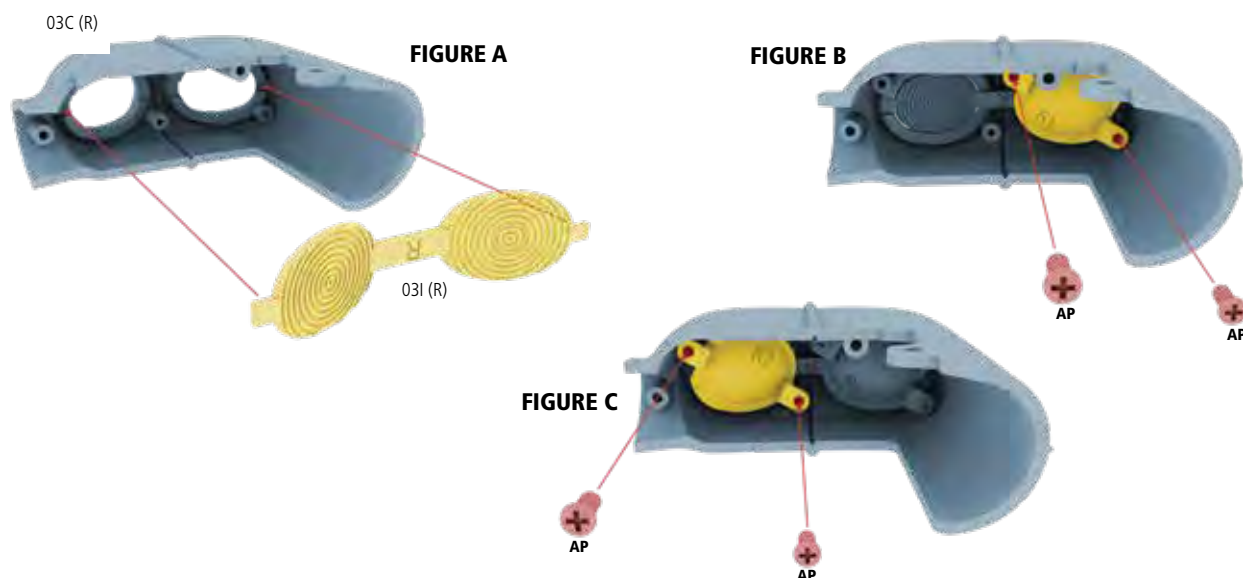


CLOSE-UP OF MARKINGS

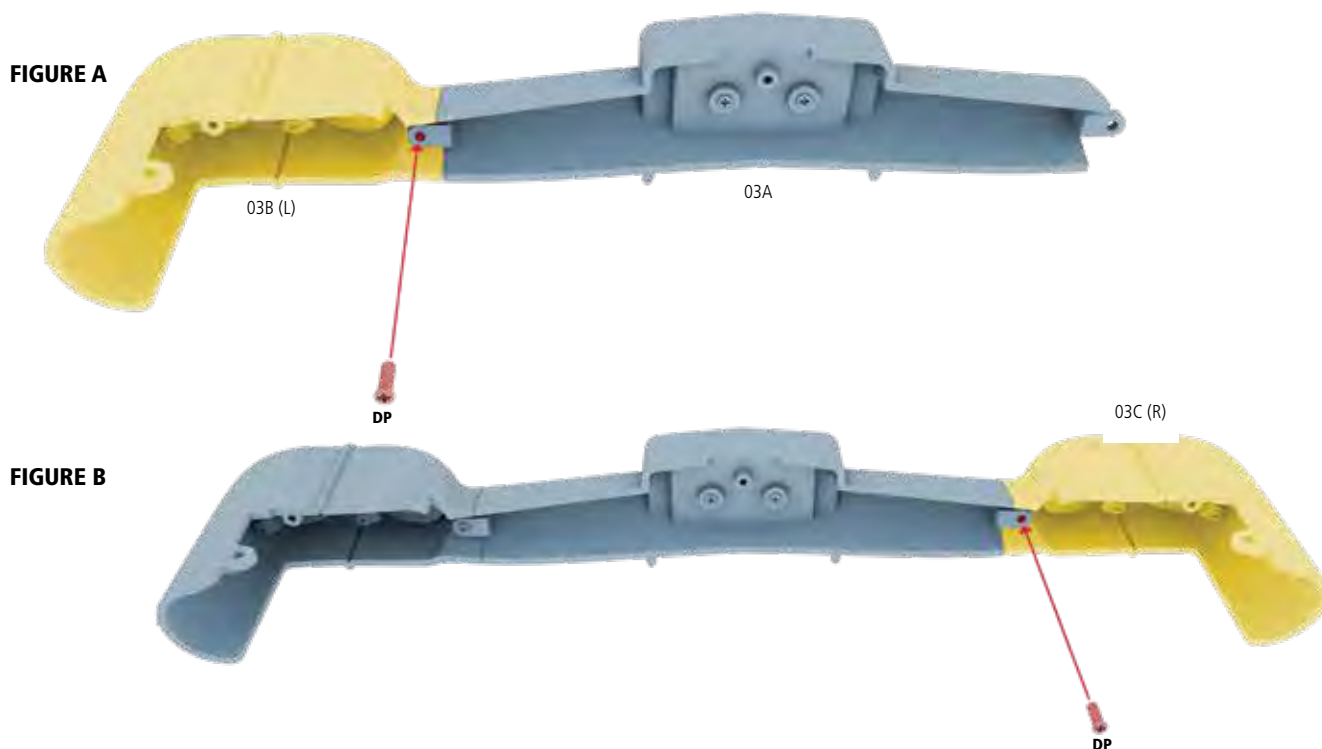




- 03 CONSTRUCTING THE RIGHT FOG LIGHT CASING:** Using the same method in the previous phase of assembly, insert the right fog light lenses (03I) into the right fog light casing (03C) (figure A). Then fix the right outer fog light frame (03F) into place behind the outermost lens using two AP screws (figure B). Finally, secure the inner fog light frame (03G) behind the innermost lens using another two AP screws (figure C). As with the left fog lights, the outer frame is marked with an "R1" and the inner frame is marked with an "R2".

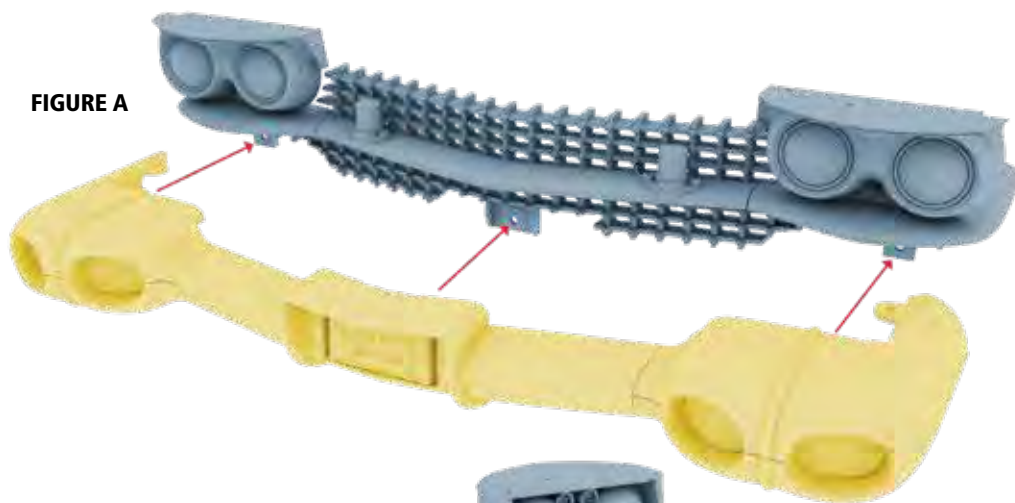
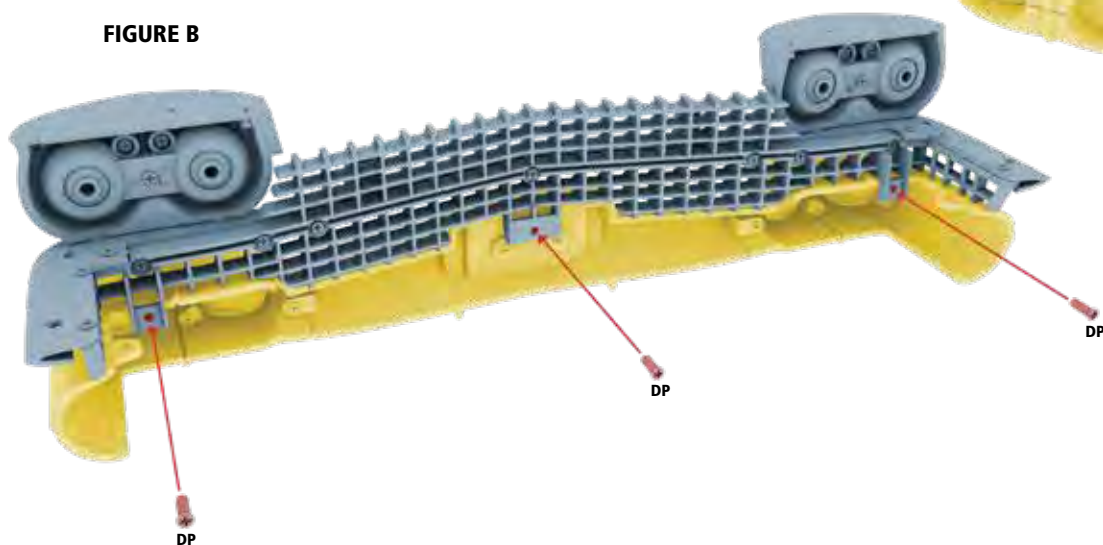


- 04 ASSEMBLING THE FRONT BUMPER:** Take the left fog light casing (03B) that you assembled earlier and secure it to the tab at the end of the front bumper (03A) using one DP screw (figure A). Then fix the right fog light casing (03C) to the other side of the front bumper (03A) using another DP screw (figure B). You can use the license plate as a guide for which end of the front bumper is left and which is right.



**05**

FIXING THE BUMPER TO THE GRILLE: Locate the front grille section that you assembled in issue 2. You will notice that it has three tabs at the bottom with screw holes drilled in. Line these up with the three screw holes found at the top of the two fog light casings and front bumper (figure A). Affix these parts together using three DP screws (figure B).

FIGURE A**FIGURE B****STAGE 3 BUILD**

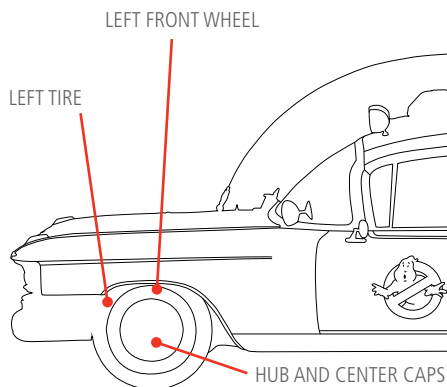
This is what the assembled piece should look like.



STAGE 4 LEFT FRONT WHEEL AND TIRE

In this stage, you will fix the tire to the left front wheel.
You will also have received the hub and center caps to be fitted later.

PART LOCATOR

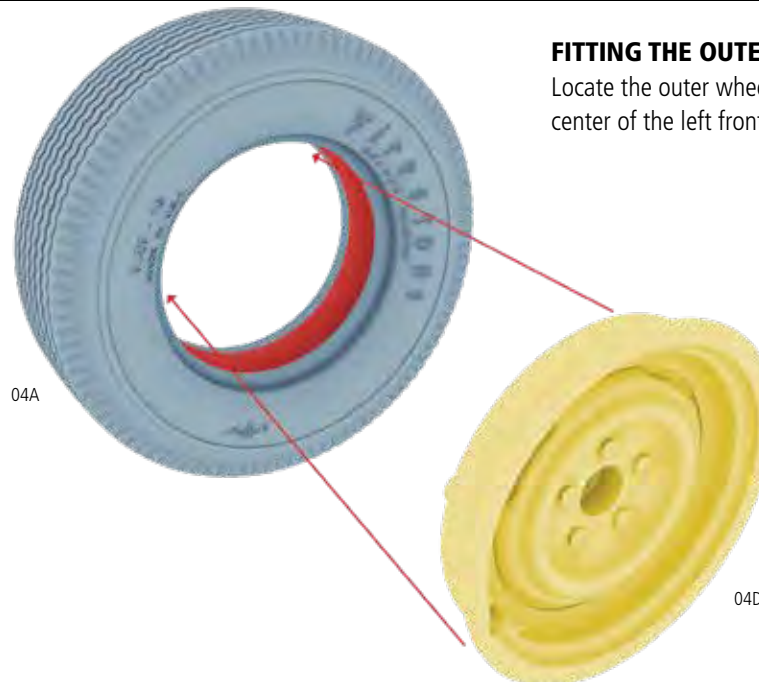


TIP: SPARE PARTS

Keep hold of the bags that the parts come in. You can use them to store any spare parts that need to be kept safe for use in a later part of the build sequence.

KEY: The illustrations are color-coded to help you identify which parts are being assembled. **RED** Highlights where the new part/s fit and screw in **YELLOW** Identifies the new part/s **GREY-BLUE** Indicates the previous assembly on to which the new part is fitted

01



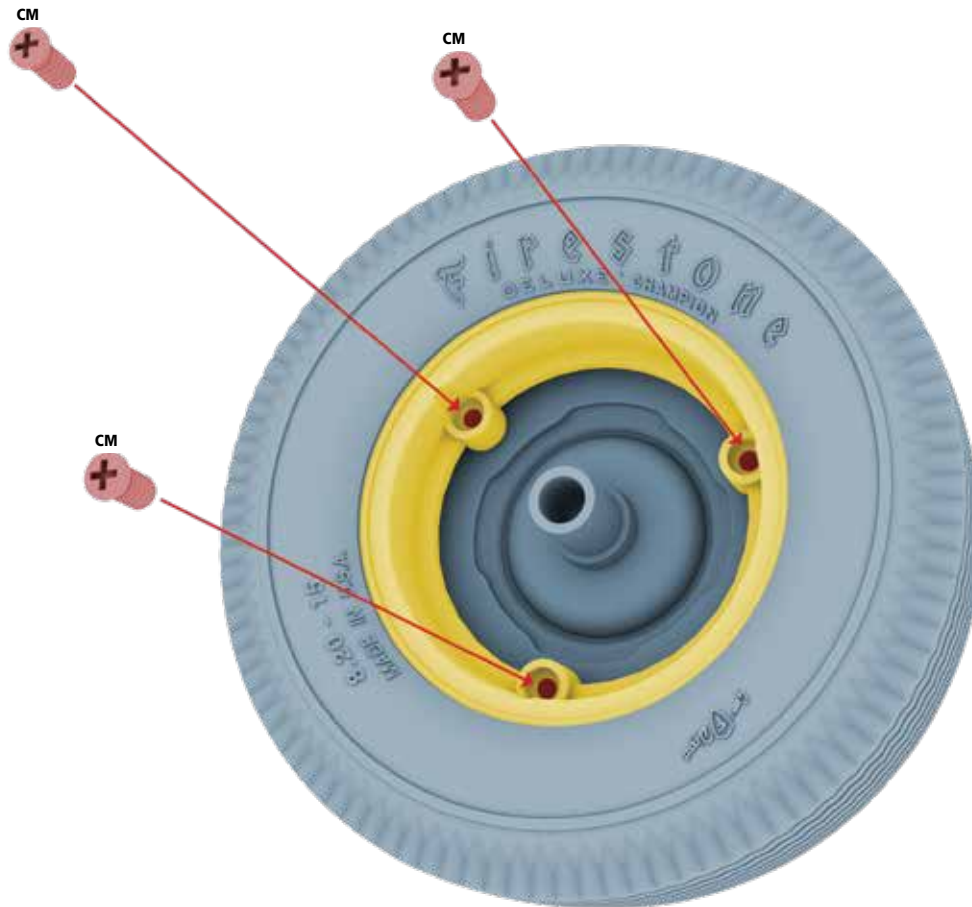
FITTING THE OUTER WHEEL TO THE TIRE:

Locate the outer wheel (04D) and fit it into the center of the left front tire (04A).

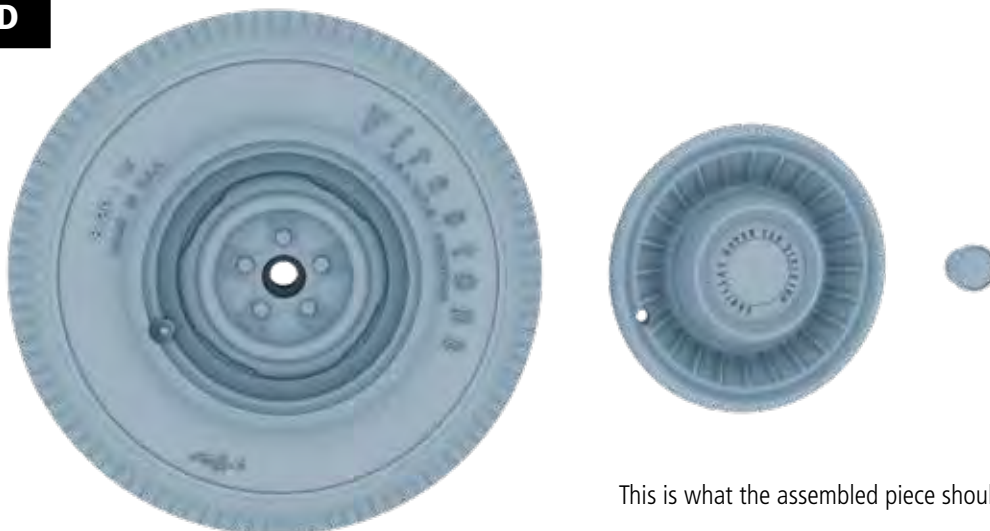


02 FITTING THE INNER WHEEL TO THE TIRE: Turn this over and place the inner wheel (04E) so that the three screw holes on the outer and inner wheels meet. Then secure them together with three CM screws.

Please keep the hub cap (04B) and center cap (04C) somewhere safe, as these will be fitted to the left front wheel assembly at a later stage.



STAGE 4 BUILD



This is what the assembled piece should look like.

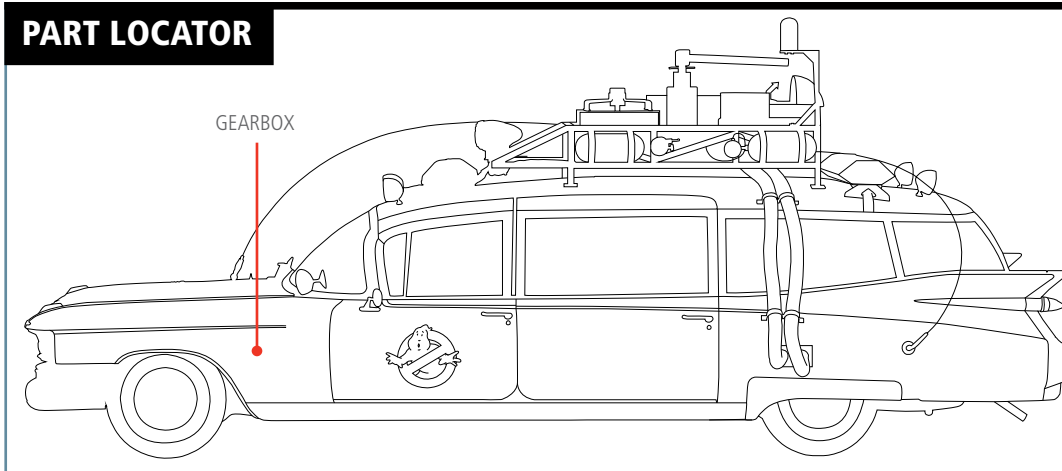


STAGE 5

THE GEARBOX

In this stage, you will assemble the gearbox housing, including oil pan, and fit it to the bell housing.

PART LOCATOR



TIP: PROTECT THE PAINTWORK

To ensure you do not scratch any of the pre-finished surfaces of Ecto-1, always work on a soft cloth. Keep small parts and screws in a saucer or small tray to ensure you do not lose any of them during the assembly.

KEY: The illustrations are color-coded to help you identify which parts are being assembled. **RED** Highlights where the new part/s fit and screw in **YELLOW** Identifies the new part/s **GREY-BLUE** Indicates the previous assembly on to which the new part is fitted

- 01** **FIXING THE GEARBOX CONNECTOR:** Take the gearbox connector (05D) and place it on the narrower end of the bell housing (05C) as shown (figure A). Secure from the underside using two DM screws (figure B).

FIGURE A

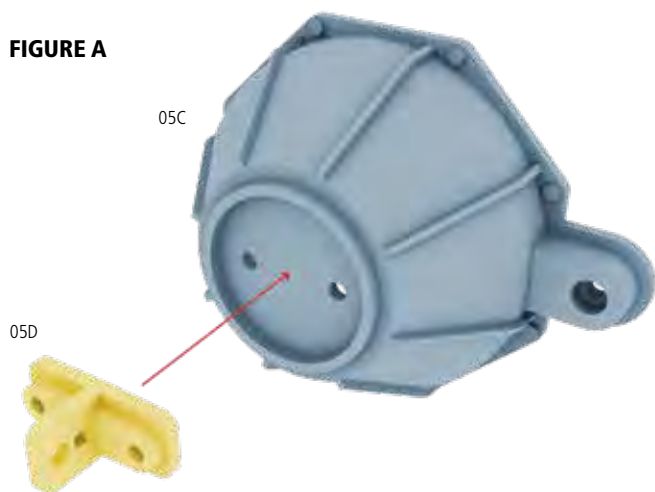
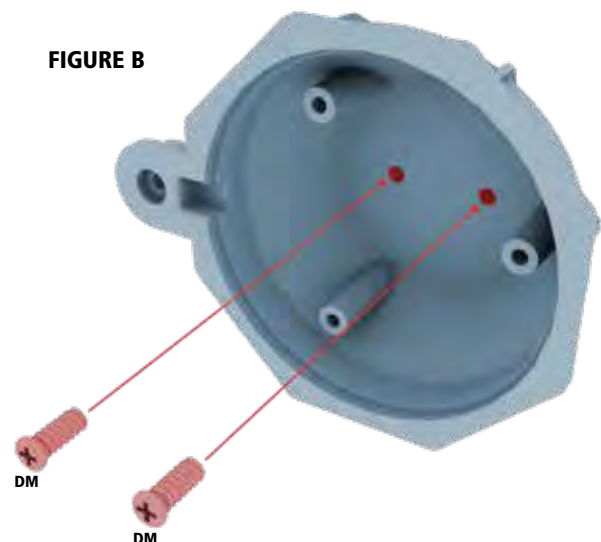


FIGURE B





- 02 ASSEMBLING THE BELL HOUSING:** Insert the long end of the bell housing connector (05A) through the slot in the bell housing plate (05B), affixing with two DM screws (figure A and B). Push the plate into the circular frame in the bottom of the bell housing (05C) so the screw holes are aligned. Fasten using three EM screws (figure C).

FIGURE A

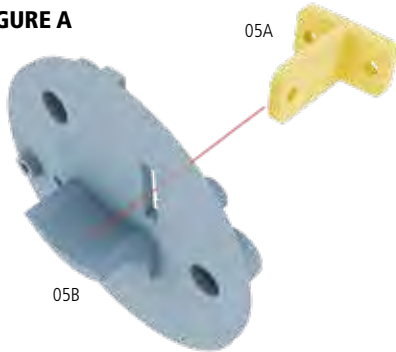


FIGURE B

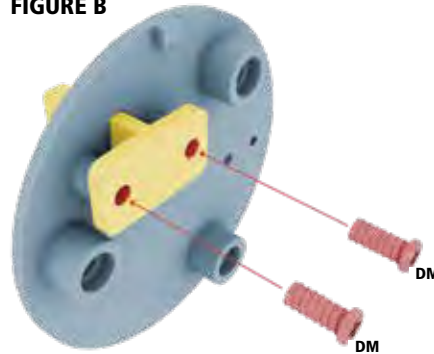
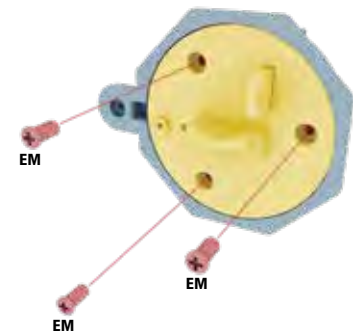


FIGURE C



- 03 BUILDING THE GEARBOX:** Locate the notch at the wider end of the gearbox housing left (05E) and align the screw hole with that of the gearbox connector (05D), fixing with a DM screw (figure A). Place the gearbox housing right (05F) on the other side of the gearbox housing left (05E), securing with two EM screws (figure B). Finally, affix the oil pan (05G) to the bottom of the assembly with one EM screw (figure C).

FIGURE A

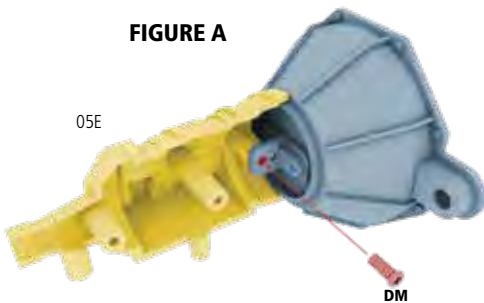


FIGURE B

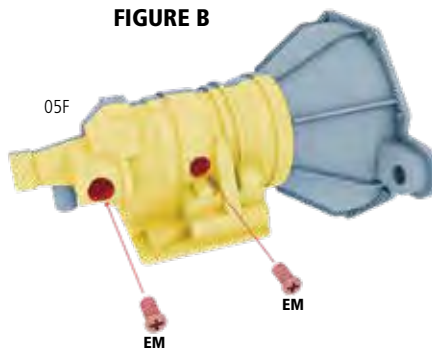
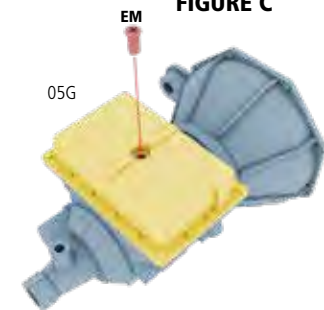
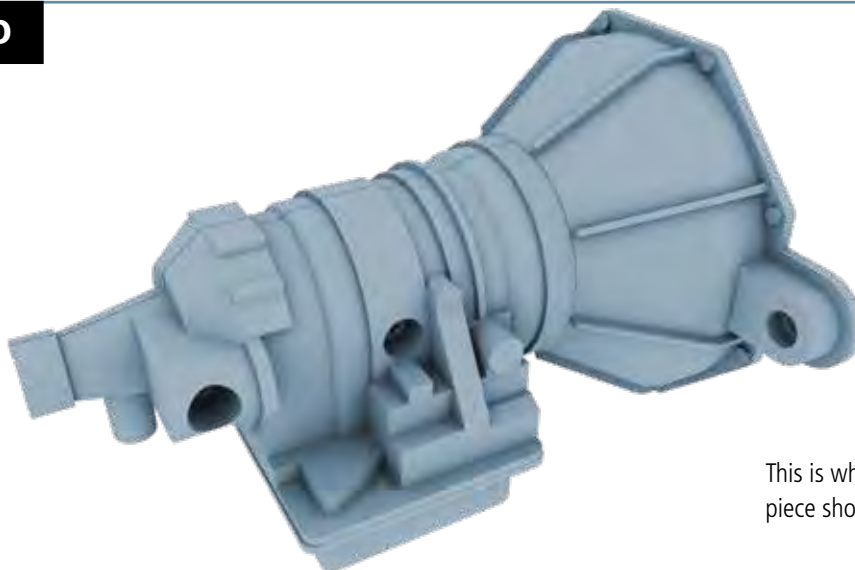


FIGURE C



STAGE 5 BUILD



This is what the assembled piece should look like.

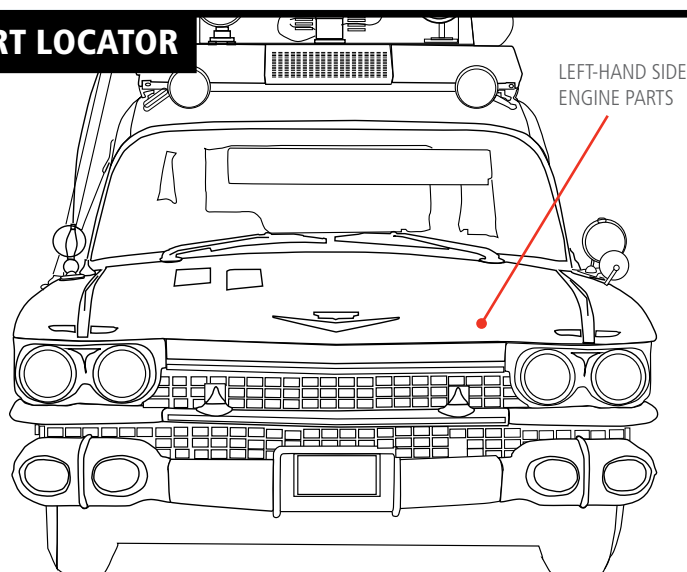


STAGE 6

LEFT ENGINE BLOCK, DIPSTICK & IGNITION WIRE JUNCTION

In this stage, you assemble parts of the left-hand side of the engine, as well as fitting the dipstick and ignition wire junction.

PART LOCATOR



TIP: TIGHTENING THE SCREWS

Screws with codes ending in the letter M (such as BM and CM) drive into metal; those ending in the letter P (such as BP and CP) drive into plastic.

Self-tapping screws for metal cut their own thread in the pre-drilled socket. To prevent the screw from jamming before it is fully tightened, drive the screw only halfway in at first. Then unscrew it to release the shavings (swarf) created as the screw cuts its thread. Finally, drive the screw fully into the socket.

Do not over-tighten screws into plastic. For screws into metal, ensure that they are tightened securely so that the head makes firm contact with the fixing surface.

KEY: The illustrations are color-coded to help you identify which parts are being assembled. **RED** Highlights where the new part/s fit and screw in **YELLOW** Identifies the new part/s **GREY-BLUE** Indicates the previous assembly on to which the new part is fitted

01 FITTING THE SUPPORT AND DIPSTICK: Take the left engine support (06B) and insert it into the bracket on the outside of the left engine block (06A), securing with two DM screws (figure A). Then take the engine block lower part (06C) and affix it to the bottom of the left engine block using a DM screw (figure B).

Finally, push the dipstick (06D) into the pinhole in the side of the left engine block (figure C).

FIGURE A

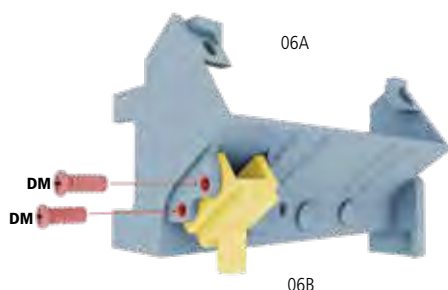


FIGURE B

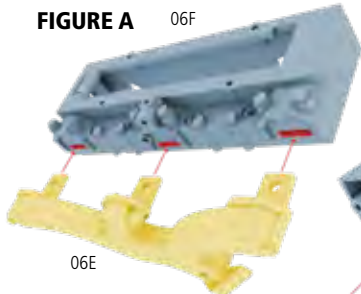
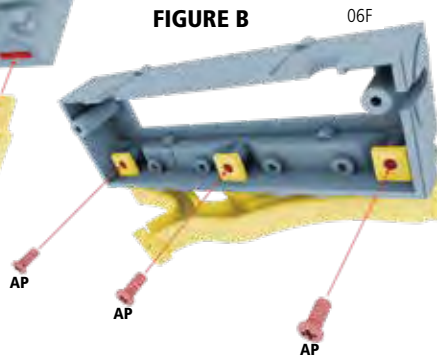
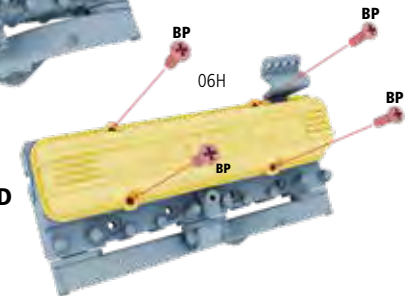


FIGURE C



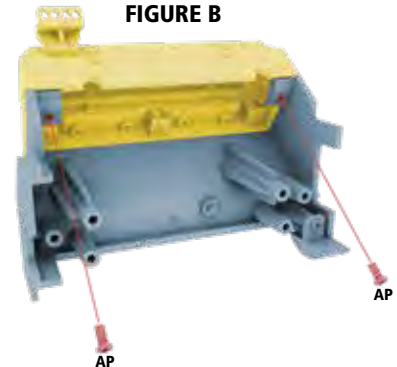


- 02 ASSEMBLING THE CYLINDER HEAD:** Locate the left exhaust manifold (06E) and place it on the side of the left cylinder head (06F), securing from behind with three AP screws (figures A & B). Then rest the ignition wire junction (06G) so that the tab sits over the edge, into the middle of the left cylinder head (figure C). Finally, screw the left cylinder head cover (06H) to the top of the left cylinder head using four BP screws (figure D). This will keep the ignition wire junction in place as well.

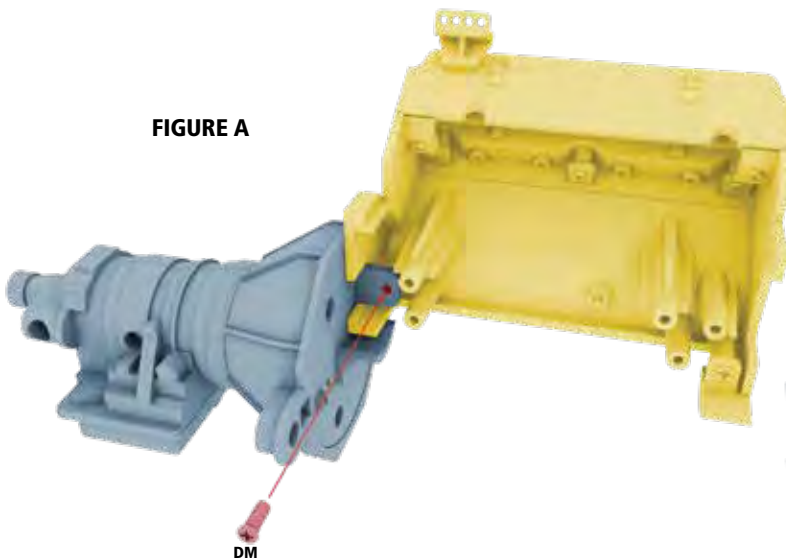
FIGURE A 06F**FIGURE B** 06F**FIGURE C****FIGURE D**

03 FITTING THE CYLINDER HEAD:

Place the left cylinder head assembly from the previous step and place it on top of the left engine block assembly from step 1 so the two screw holes on the parts line up. Fix the two parts together with two AP screws (figures A & B).

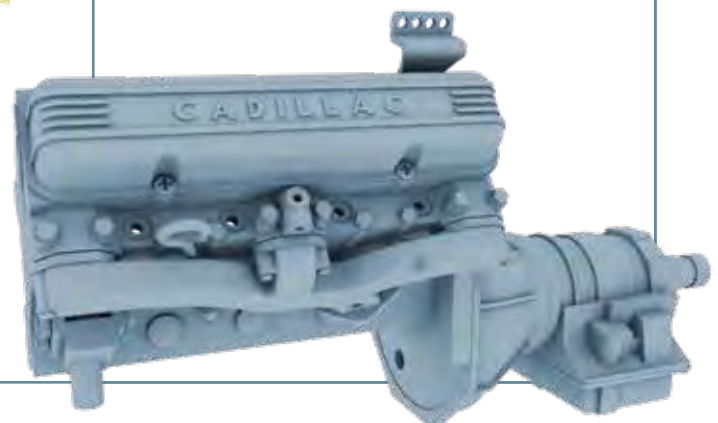
FIGURE A**FIGURE B**

- 04 FITTING THE BLOCK TO THE GEARBOX:** Using the parts that you built with issue 5, line the screw hole at the end of the bell housing connector (05A) with the screw hole at the rear of the left engine block (06A). Secure the parts together with one DM screw (figure A).

FIGURE A

STAGE 6 BUILD

This is what the assembled piece should look like.





ABOVE Special effects artist Steve Johnson designed and sculpted Slimer. He created up to 12 versions over three months, eventually devising the iconic final design.



THE STORY OF SLIMER



Effects artists Steve Johnson, John Bruno, and Mark Bryan Wilson reveal how the ghost formerly known as Onionhead was brought to the screen.

G**HOSTBUSTERS IS PACKED WITH**

memorable ghosts, but one remains the film's signature spook. Slimer may not have had a huge amount of screen time, but he made quite an impression. He swiftly became one of the movie's most popular characters, securing a prominent role in *The Real Ghostbusters* and returning in both the sequel and 2016 update. He even gained his own 1988 spin-off animated series, not to mention having his face plastered over mountains of merchandise.

Few working on the film predicted the gluttonous apparition's longevity. "I had no idea," says Steve Johnson, veteran special effects artist and the man who designed and sculpted Slimer. "You never do when you're working on something. And now, over 30 years later, it's still the most famous thing I've worked on. He's become a Christmas decoration, a refrigerator magnet, a fruit drink, a toothpaste... I mean, talk about iconic!"

The entity that became Slimer was present in Dan Aykroyd's early drafts of the script but was a nameless "vaporous phantasm" at that point. On set the character earned the name 'Onionhead' thanks to his fetid aroma (something more apparent in a cut scene in which his stench freaks out a couple of squabbling newlyweds). He

only gained the moniker 'Slimer' in *The Real Ghostbusters* two years later, though everyone refers to him by that name today.

The first-unit footage of the actors and sets was filmed first, with Slimer added in post-production at Boss Film Studios. While scenes in the Sedgewick Hotel ballroom were shot in the real ballroom of the Biltmore Hotel, the hallway sequences were shot separately on a soundstage set. Visual effects art director John Bruno was on set prior to and during principal shooting to ensure these scenes would blend into what Boss Film had planned. "We figured out the color of the beams and how [the effects] would best read with the paint of the hallway," he remembers. "[Production designer] John DeCuir would then design the hallway in a color that would work best for the visual effects."

Once principal photography was over, it was up to Boss Film to blend the slimy star in with the footage.

SCULPTING SLIMER

While concept artist Thom Enriquez created initial designs for Slimer, it fell to Steve Johnson to make him a reality. It was Johnson's job to create the full-size clay sculpt that the foam rubber Slimer costume would be cast from. This



ABOVE Johnson and Onionhead. After the puppet was finished, it was filmed against a black screen and composited into the shot.

costume would then be worn by performer Mark Bryan Wilson, with additional puppeteers operating Slimer's expressions.

Johnson was only 22 at the time but, having proven his creature-sculpting abilities working for Rob Bottin on *The Howling* and Rick Baker on *An American Werewolf in London*, he was hired to co-supervise the department. Keen to prove his talents, Johnson's sculpts evolved significantly from the original concept designs during the process. "I was young and cocksure and wanted to make history," he recalls. "This was my first opportunity to do something without working underneath another special effects artist. Enriquez's design looks like Slimer's cousin. It has the same general anatomy but doesn't look a whole lot like Slimer in the film."

After creating a series of maquettes, Johnson set to work creating a full-size clay sculpt for design

approval. Fabricator Wilson, who shared a design room with Johnson and had studied puppetry and mime, was tasked with wearing the suit, both in test fittings and during filming. For Wilson it was an exciting development. "I always wanted to be a living cartoon character!" he enthuses.

The full-size sculpt was created on a plaster life-cast of Wilson's torso, arms and head so it would closely fit his shape and size. Wilson also wore a custom-fit fiberglass helmet that was affixed to a fiberglass shell for Slimer's skull, while mechanics that operated the eyebrows and eyeballs were attached to the skull. Most of the lower section was reinforced by Wilson with thin spring steel strapping, bits of foam, and fabric. Wilson says this lower section resembled a Victorian hoop skirt. "That way his body could be pulled, or compressed, to create usual shapes, but it would maintain the basic form,"



he explains. "This would also keep his bulges from buckling, or creasing in the wrong place."

Once Johnson received comments back from the studio on his initial full-size design, he incorporated them into another full-size sculpt. However, approval was not forthcoming. In fact, Johnson recalls how he ended up sculpting up to 12 versions over a 12-week period, each design failing to meet with everyone's satisfaction. "I just about lost my mind!" he remembers. "Everyone wanted input. 'Make the eyes bigger.' So I made the eyes bigger – and they're too big. 'Put ears on him. Take the ears off. The nose is too small. The nose is too big. Give him more pathos. Give him more humor. Make him wilder. Make him calmer. Make him crazier. Make him more intelligent...' It was insane!"

**“WORD CAME DOWN
THAT THEY WANTED IT
TO LOOK MORE LIKE
JOHN BELUSHI ...”**



The ever-increasing design sculpts varied wildly. "I tried everything. Different expressions, different looks. I tried long puppet arms, really skinny with long fingers. I started sculpting smaller and smaller versions as we weren't close to approval. Twelve-inch versions, four-inch versions... If it had been going on any longer, I'd have sculpted one-inch versions!"

The night before what was supposed to be the final big approval meeting, there was a new twist. "Word came down from the studio that they wanted it to be like John Belushi. I was like, 'Why didn't anyone mention this three months ago when I started the process?' But Ramis and Aykroyd wanted it to be a homage to their deceased friend, based on Belushi's character Bluto from *Animal House*. So I stayed up all night to meet the deadline and make it look more like John Belushi."

Johnson's all-nighter paid off. The next day, word came through that Onionhead was finally approved.

BICYCLE CABLES AND TONGUE SLEEVES

Aside from securing approval, another challenge Johnson faced was how to imbue Slimer with his

larger-than-life attributes. "What I'd learnt from Rob Bottin and Greg Cannom was to use what was basically a bicycle cable [to puppeteer it], but that doesn't give you a whole lot of movement and we needed him to deform and change shape," says Johnson. "I wanted the movement to be very cartoony, very Tex Avery. The way I came up with to solve that was shooting him against a black screen and compositing it with double exposure, so he'd be transparent. I also realised that I could have puppeteers in black leotards who'd stick their hands inside the puppet and muscle it into different positions. They would strongarm the expressions by hand and make it change shape in really broad ways. We basically used old-school green screen – everything black, including the performers' legs, went away instead of everything green." Other shots, according to John Bruno, were filmed against a blue screen and the blue was later removed in a similar way.

In addition to Wilson inside the suit, other puppeteers were in charge of manipulating Slimer's expressions using a mixture of "umbilical bicycle cables" that were attached to the character's facial mechanisms and operated by joystick, and hand-puppeteering. In fact it was Johnson's arms that were inserted into the puppet's cheeks to make Slimer chew. "Even the tongue was someone standing behind him with a tongue-sleeve on, who would reach in and lick his chops!" adds Bruno.

BELOW While Mark Bryan Wilson was inside the suit, additional puppeteers manipulated Slimer's facial expressions using cables and joysticks.





ABOVE Steve Johnson and his team in Boss Film Studio's creature shop created multiple Onionhead models with different expressions.

In a pre-digital age, as much as possible had to be done in-camera. This included, says Bruno, using oversized props to make the hefty Slimer suit feel smaller than the people he interacts with. During certain sequences, the camera was locked off and the Slimer puppeteers were moved towards it – not the simplest maneuver. “The creature had to move in from a wall on our left and stop facing us,” says Bruno. “So we would move all these puppeteers on this cart, and then that would be optically composited.” For other sequences, adds Wilson, it was the camera that moved rather than Slimer and the puppeteers would have to generate the illusion of moving forward while staying in one place.

The puppeteers worked closely from the storyboards, and Wilson says part of the challenge was figuring out how big Slimer was in frame at any moment and how much to exaggerate their movements in order to be funny. “A lot of times a plate shot from the first unit would be stuck into the camera,” he explains. “It helped us see that, ‘OK, when we put it together Slimer’s going to be about this big, he’s going to move down the hall there.’”

The role gave Wilson ample opportunities to draw on his love of mime and physical comedy. “For me

a lot of the role was imagining in space – ‘hey I’m moving, I’m flying, I’m digging in the air, I’m pulling myself forward...’ There was a lot of counting and timing. Like, ‘We’ll start on 1, then the eyes will blink on 2, then the eyebrows will go up on 3, then I’ll begin to move on 4, then I’ll be flying.’ Watching cartoons as a kid definitely helped.”

Wilson says that the experience was a lot fun – but not always easy. Aside from enduring food sliding down his neck and shirt after it was hurled into Slimer’s mouth, the puppeteering was physically exhausting. “Working inside a rubber suit is hard work. It’s like taking all of your limbs and rubber-banding them to your body. Then you’re pulling against that tension to make the suit move and stretch. But we would only work for an hour, maybe a couple of hours so I could rest. And I was 26 – still young and fit!”

Aside from puppeteering, another technique used to give Slimer his ghostly appearance was altering the frame rate. “We shot him between four and six frames a second,” says Bruno. “All the actions were a little bit deliberately overdone, over-animated and over-quick. And we shot a lot of different experiments.” The dailies were shown each day at



Boss Film's screening room for the visual effects team to give their input.

"Everyone chipped in and gave suggestions, giving us a much better chance of getting it right when we redid a shot," says Wilson.

As well as the full-size Slimer, a miniature 'speeding bullet' version sculpted by Mark Siegel was used for the moment Slimer shoots down the corridor ("It looked like a screaming egg with a face on one end," says Wilson), while another miniature was used for the sequence in which Slimer spins around the chandelier. Once the effects had been finished, it was just left to add Slimer's burbling vocals, courtesy of Ivan Reitman. The months of hard work paid off – the team had created a riotously funny, visually incredible character that everyone was happy with.

SLIMER'S LEGACY

Unfortunately the principal Slimer suit isn't today housed in a museum – or anywhere. While Wilson has kept hold of the dental acrylic fingercaps from the original arms ("the latex is still clinging to a few of them"), the suit itself has long turned to dust. "We went back to the storage room when we were working on *Fright Night*," Wilson recalls. "He should have been crated up and protected to the nth degree, but instead he was put on a stand and stuck in a storage room. Other crates were pushed against the original costume and squashed it out of shape. Within a year it was unserviceable. That was an amazing suit. When you figure out the hours it took to get the foam work right, to get him painted, get him assembled, get him shot... It would be so great to see that in person now. Sadly it's long gone."

Still, even if the suit didn't have a long post-movie afterlife, the character most definitely did, and the team who brought him to screen remain proud of their achievements. "He's such a great, funny character," Wilson says. "And I got to be the first Slimer!"

MARK BRYAN WILSON

The man in the Slimer costume, and the lead fabricator on the character, Mark Bryan Wilson remembers how thrilled he was to be working on his first big Hollywood movie. "I'd worked on *Monster in the Closet* and *One Dark Night*, and we'd done some cool stuff on a low budget. But now, all of a sudden, there was this large crew and really cool designs."

Wilson remembers he got the job after meeting Steve Johnson a few months earlier and showing him his portfolio as Boss Film Studios started building their effects shop. "To go from those low budget films to be working with Steve Johnson and Randy Cook in one of the highest-grossing movies within a couple of years was pretty phenomenal."

In addition to working on Slimer, Wilson helped build and puppeteer the Librarian Ghost and the Terror Dogs, the latter filmed on the Gozer's Temple set. "After I saw the storyboards I saw what we were going to be bringing to life and knew we would have a chance to do some really great stuff."

Since then, Wilson has worked as fabricator and puppeteer on dozens of genre movies, including *Big Trouble in Little China*, *Beetlejuice*, *Species*, and *Team America: World Police*. But Slimer remains close to his heart. "I actually collect Slimer merchandise," he says. "Anything where Slimer has been a spokesperson for the product."





HAROLD RAMIS

HAROLD RAMIS





MEMORIES OF EGON



Photo: Verta Maloney

Harold Ramis's daughter Violet Ramis Stiel discusses her father's comic legacy and reveals what he had in common with Egon Spengler.

IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT SO MANY comedians, from Seth Rogen to Adam Sandler, cite Harold Ramis as a massive influence. The list of movies that Ramis wrote or directed (or both) is a roll-call of classic comedies – *National Lampoon's Animal House*, *Meatballs*, *Caddyshack*, *Stripes*, *National Lampoon's Vacation*, *Groundhog Day*, *Analyze This* – and his gift for comedy was equally apparent in front of the camera in the likes of *Stripes* and *Knocked Up*. But it is as the gadget-loving, socially awkward brainbox Egon Spengler in *Ghostbusters* for which Ramis is best remembered, and as the movie's co-writer he was responsible for helping shape the character.

For Violet Ramis Stiel, her father was a talented performer and filmmaker for as long as she can remember. But when *Ghostbusters* was released in 1984, her dad became even more well known, not least by her classmates. "He'd already had a lot of success by that point, but this was the first film he was so recognizable

for," says Ramis Stiel, author of *Ghostbuster's Daughter*, a heartfelt account of her father's life and career. "And it was the first one of his movies that anyone my age was allowed to see. The kids at my school were just going crazy!"

Ramis was brought on board by Ivan Reitman and Dan Aykroyd to help rewrite Aykroyd's wildly ambitious but (to quote Ivan Reitman) "unfilmable" first draft that centered around a team of futuristic, intergalactic spook-hunters. As Aykroyd told *The New Yorker* in 2004, Ramis "added the irony, the heart, the romance with Sigourney Weaver, and all the adult writing as well as the structure. And he knew which passes to throw to Bill [Murray], so Bill would look funny throughout." Although Ramis didn't share Aykroyd's belief in the paranormal, he had been an avid devourer of ghost stories in his childhood, and the duo shared comic sensibilities. With input from Ivan Reitman, their ideas swiftly coalesced into a workable and very funny script.



“MY DAD WAS THE STRAIGHT MAN TO BILL'S MANIC PERSONALITY!”



Once Bill Murray signed on to play Peter Venkman, Ramis, Reitman and Aykroyd's belief in the film only increased. "They were very confident at the time because they had all had a lot of success with everything," says Ramis Stiel. "They could do no wrong. And they had this great, very original idea that everyone got behind immediately, so I think they just thought, 'We've got to make this good – and if we do it's going to be incredible.'"

It helped that Ramis, Reitman and Murray were no strangers to one another, ensuring they had a close working relationship right from the get-go. "My father met Bill through Bill's older brother, Brian," remembers Ramis Stiel. "My dad and Brian were in [the sketch troupe] Second City together. I think he first met Ivan through *The National Lampoon Radio Hour*, which he did in New York for a year when Ivan was also just starting out. And then my dad, Ivan and

BELOW Ramis carried the most gadgets as Egon – meaning he had a greater chance of dropping props.



ABOVE Egon tinkers with the Ghostbusters' containment unit. According to Violet Ramis Stiel, Harold Ramis shared Egon's love of gadgets.

Bill did *Meatballs* and *Stripes* together. They were this amazing group of people who came up together. So they were old friends by the time of *Ghostbusters*. Even though they were different personalities, they knew each other well and knew that they worked well together. My dad and Bill complemented each other, because my dad was the straight man to Bill's manic personality. And then there was Dan, who is such a good-hearted guy with big ideas. My dad and Ivan would sort of rein him in!"





As Ramis refined the script with Aykroyd (the two writing separately and then rewriting each other's pages, according to Ramis Stiel), it became increasingly clear that Ramis was perfectly suited to playing Egon Spengler – a character named after Egon Donsbach, a former classmate of Ramis, and the historian Oswald Spengler. Ramis Stiel says that her father and Egon shared at least some personality traits. “He was definitely the guy who, like Egon, would say ‘This is not a good plan, let’s rethink it!’” she laughs. “He was also just as well read and well studied as Egon, and he was the guy with the gadgets. What separates them is that my dad was very warm and laughed a lot. He really liked connecting and engaging with people, so in that way they weren’t similar.”

HIGH ENERGY

Once location filming began, Ramis Stiel joined her father in New York City to watch history being made. At six years old, she was already a veteran of movie sets and had played the tongue-less Daisy Mabel in *National Lampoon’s Vacation*. However, *Ghostbusters* was unlike anything she’d seen before. “It was a whole other level. It was a big special effects movie, and it was in New York! There was this high frequency of energy coming from the city



“**[HAROLD] WAS JUST AS WELL READ AND WELL STUDIED AS EGON**”

itself. And people were really focused and feeling good about what they were doing.”

That’s not to say that filming always went perfectly on the first take. Ramis Stiel recalls how she worried that her dad had landed in trouble with Ivan Reitman while shooting the sequence in which the *Ghostbusters* flee from the library, as Reitman became increasingly frustrated that Ramis kept dropping props. “I was very protective of my dad. I wouldn’t define Ivan as a screamer, but when you’re a captain of a big ship like that you do need to keep everyone on track. Different gadgets would fall off as the *Ghostbusters* ran down their stairs and of course, as Egon, my dad had the most gadgets – and the most potential for screwing it up. But in the end they glued everything on, locked everything down and finally got the shot. Everyone cheered!”

SCHOOLYARD SENSATION

Unsurprisingly, there are perks to having a father in the movie business, and Ramis Stiel recalls that one of the earliest screenings of *Ghostbusters* was at her

LEFT TO RIGHT Egon and Janine (Annie Potts) share a hug in a rubble-strewn New York City; Harold Ramis and Bill Murray joke around on set; publicity still with Ramis, Potts and Rick Moranis.





school in Santa Monica in 1984. "My dad arranged the screening as a benefit for the school. All the parents and all the kids came to see it, and everyone was going crazy. It was a nice little test for them [the creators] and such a gift for us."

While the movie raised the profile of Harold Ramis – schoolboys would flock around him requesting autographs when he picked up his daughter from school – the pre-teen Ramis Stiel didn't quite feel that her father received all the kudos he deserved. "Again, I was protective of him, and I always felt like Bill and Dan got all the attention and my dad was sort of like the quiet guy, the nerd guy. I didn't

realize at the time that nerds everywhere were going nuts for this character who really spoke to them."

By the time *Ghostbusters II* had been greenlit, Ramis was very aware that the franchise was as popular with kids as it was with adults. Naturally 12-year-old Violet was recruited by her father as an on-hand script-reader. "They had so many wild ideas. He'd have me read something and stand over my shoulder waiting for a laugh," she recalls. "Every time I breathed he would be like, 'What part are you reading now?' He wanted my opinion because I was a teenager, I was their demographic. Although, I wasn't necessarily the average viewer!"

HAROLD RAMIS: THE EARLY YEARS

Ramis's movie career took off when he scripted 1978's *National Lampoon's Animal House*, but by then he'd already had many years honing his comic talents.

In the mid-1960s he wrote and performed for Washington University's college theater, before going on to join the Second City improvisational comedy troupe in his home city of Chicago and editing jokes for *Playboy* magazine. During a second stint at Second City, he met John Belushi, who eventually brought him to New York to write and perform for the seminal *The National Lampoon Radio Hour* and its Lemmings touring company. It was there he met the likes of Murray and Chevy Chase. Ramis went on to become head writer on the Second City spin-off *SCTV*, at one point turning down an offer to work for *Saturday Night Live*. He eventually left *SCTV* to write *Animal House* with *National Lampoon Magazine's* Douglas Kennedy. Following its success, the movie hits kept on coming – often starring alumni from his earlier sketch-show ventures.





LASTING LEGACY

That wasn't quite the end of Harold Ramis's involvement in the franchise, as he voiced Egon in 2009's *Ghostbusters: The Video Game*. But the remainder of his career was mostly spent focusing on other projects, reaching an apex with 1993's *Groundhog Day*, which he co-wrote, directed and briefly appeared in. His final film, before his death in 2014 from complications to autoimmune inflammatory vasculitis, was 2009's caveman comedy *Year One*.

Despite her father's diverse career, Ramis Stiel insists that he never minded that *Ghostbusters* remained his most famous role three decades later. "He was always happy to talk about it and go into this effect or that effect, and he did a lot of Make-A-Wish appearances [in character]. He really loved the work that he did, so I don't think he was ever frustrated. It's great if you can contribute to pop culture in a way that leaves this legacy that lasts for so long and that really takes on a life of its own. He was proud to be part of that."

MAGICAL MEMORIES



As well as watching the location filming in New York, the six-year-old Violet Ramis Stiel also got to witness the soundstage sequences being shot in L.A., where the Ramis family lived. "I got to see the crystal staircase of Gozer and the rig that spun Dana around above the bed. As a kid you're so curious – how does it work? How do they do that? My favorite movie at the time was *The Exorcist*. So the most fascinating thing to me was that they used the same rig for Dana that they used in *The Exorcist*!"

BELOW Teamwork: Harold Ramis, Dan Aykroyd and Bill Murray. Ramis was integral to honing the script's character development.





ECTO-101

A MONTHLY LIST OF ALL THE THINGS THAT
MAKE GHOSTBUSTERS GREAT



#3 SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE



Years before launching their successful movie careers, Dan Aykroyd and Bill Murray first made names for themselves on NBC's influential variety show *Saturday Night Live* (or *SNL*). Here they refined their improvisational comic skills and chemistry that would carry through to *Ghostbusters*.

SNL was launched in 1975, originally under the title *Saturday Night*.

Created by producer Lorne Michaels and developed with Dick Ebersol, the show mainly consisted of satirical sketches, with a musical guest and a revolving celebrity host. Aykroyd was part of the 'Not Ready For Prime Time' cast from the very first season, alongside fellow comedians from his Second City troupe Gilda Radner and John Belushi, and National Lampoon's Chevy Chase. By the second season, the show had become hugely popular and made its talented stars household names.

Murray joined *SNL* in 1977 after the departure of Chase. He remained for three seasons, becoming a star in the process. Both Aykroyd and Murray eventually left to pursue film careers (*The Blues Brothers* was based on an *SNL* sketch), though they continued to make sporadic guest appearances on the show. The series changed the landscape of American sketch and variety shows, and cemented the careers of many other comedians, including Tina Fey, Kristen Wiig and Will Ferrell.

“

Comedy is not effortless. The key is to get in a good humor – to have fun. That's not as easy as you might think. Obviously, if you're going to work for eight to 12 hours, you're not going to be in a good mood all day. So it takes a lot of tricks.

”



Bill Murray reveals one of his secrets to creating comedy magic in a 1984 interview with *Stills* magazine.

“

I love to come in and play with a wig or glasses or clothes. I love using props. I'm from the Peter Sellers school of trying to prepare for the character.

”



Dan Aykroyd tells the website *Dark Horizons* about his love of dressing up.

“

The thing about comedy is that the audience points you toward what works: they laugh or they don't.

”

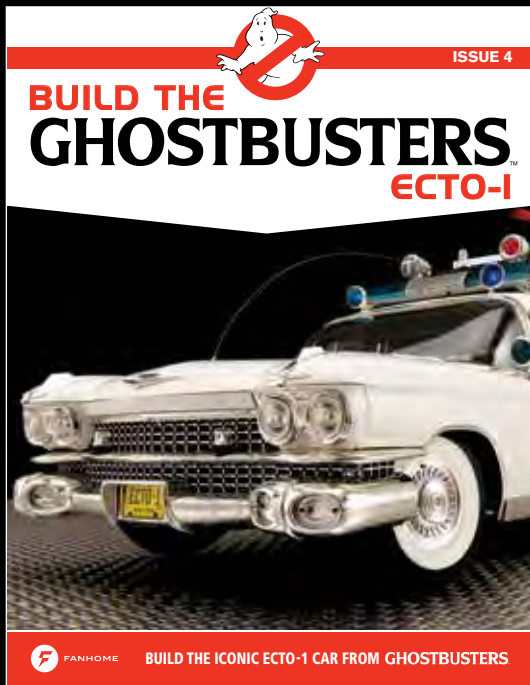


Harold Ramis talks to *GQ* magazine about his comedy career in a 2009 interview.



COMING IN ISSUE 4

YOUR PARTS



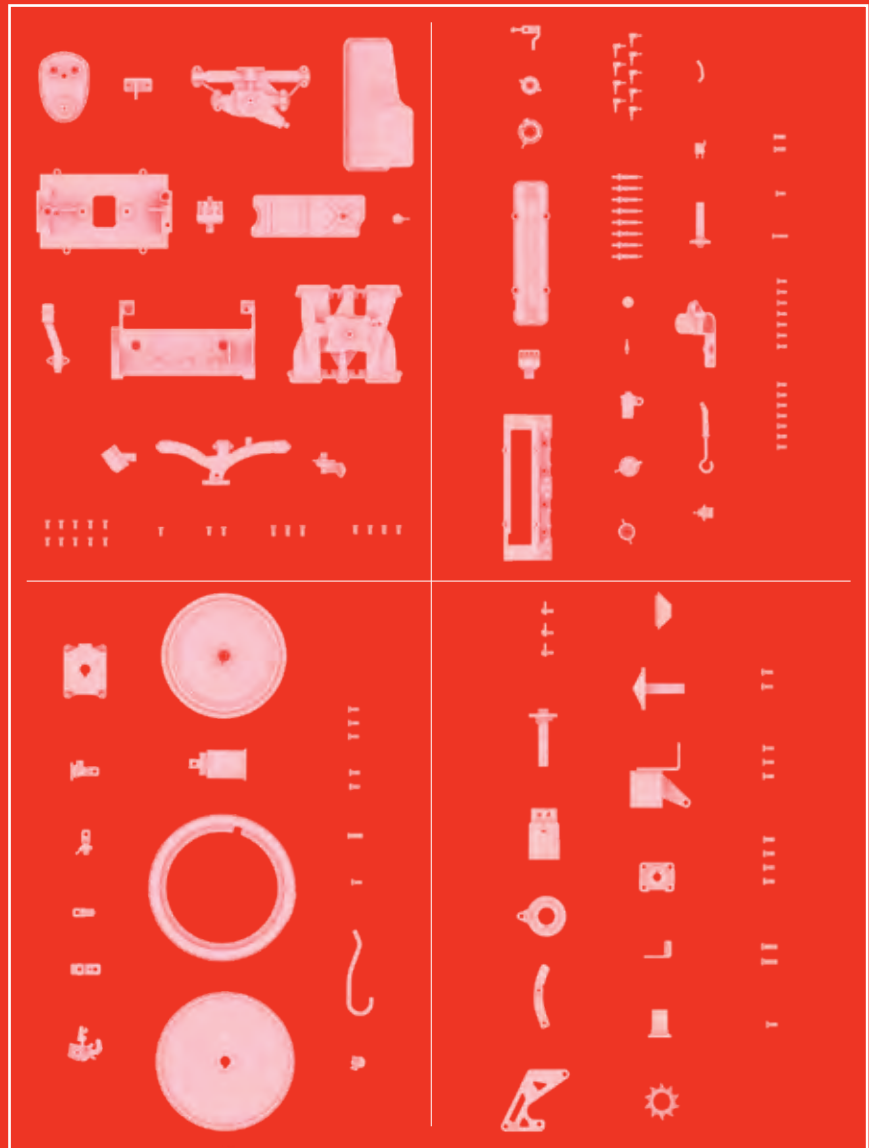
ANNIE POTTS

The actress looks back on playing Janine.



OPTICAL ILLUSIONS

The pioneering optical department.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE
FANHOM.COM

