Review: The Boroughs is a smart, pitch-perfect creature feature

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The Duffer brothers wrapped up their blockbuster series *Stranger Things* earlier this year and also departed Netflix for a lucrative new production deal with Paramount. But a couple of their production projects remain with Netflix: the animated series *Stranger Things: Tales from '85*, which dropped in April to mixed reviews; and the newly released *The Boroughs*, a supernatural thriller set in a retirement community in the New Mexico desert. I'm happy to report that *The Boroughs* is a creative home run, with a smart, witty script, terrific ensemble cast, and engrossing central mystery.

(Some spoilers below but no major reveals.)

Sam Cooper (Alfred Molina) is a recently widowed, retired aeronautical engineer who (very) reluctantly moves into The Boroughs retirement community. It was his late wife's choice to move there, and the company refuses to let him out of the contract he co-signed when Lilly (Jane Kaczmarek) was still alive. So he's grumpy about the whole arrangement, snapping at his long-suffering daughter, Claire (Jena Malone) and pretty much anyone else who crosses his path.

Sam's attitude softens when he meets his neighbor Jack (Bill Pullman), whose relentless good humor and generosity has made him a favorite in the community (especially with the ladies). Jack introduces Sam to his inner circle: Art and Judy (Clarke

Peters and Alfre Woodard); retired doctor Wally (Denis O’Hare), who has terminal prostate cancer; and retired music manager Renee (Geena Davis). Sam decides to stay, despite the fact that he was attacked by one of the former occupants of his house, Edward (Ed Begley, Jr.), who suffers from advanced dementia and keeps insisting there is an “owl in the walls,” accusing Sam of being “one of them.”

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