

## PAPER DOLLS: PROJECT BRIEF

### Format

Feature Film

### Genre / Tone

Punk Drama / Queer Coming of Age

*The Runaways* meets *Dear White People*, with the queer bite of *Bottoms*.

### Budget / Buyer Lane

Low to mid budget / period music drama with live performance energy

Killer Films, A24, Focus Features, NEON, MUBI lane

### Core Hook

In the male dominated punk scene of 1991 Olympia, an abrasive queer college radical uses a zine and a chaotic punk band to carve out space for women, then has to learn that building a movement takes more than rage.

### One Sentence Pitch

When a freshman's assault is buried by the campus establishment, a furious punk frontwoman turns her zine and band into a weapon against the boys' club, but her all or nothing tactics threaten the future of the girlfriend who understands the system better than she does.

### Why It's Timely

It speaks to institutional self protection, campus politics, queer anger, underground music, performative allyship, and the tension between righteous fury and sustainable organizing.

### Main Characters

**Molly Stokes:** A magnetic punk frontwoman with a real gift for lighting a fire under people. She is brave, funny, and politically fearless, but her need to control the message can hurt the people closest to her.

**Juliet Cleaver:** Molly's girlfriend and the movement's quiet strategist. She understands institutions, leverage, and consequences. She believes in the fight, but she also knows rage alone can burn down the people trying to survive it.

**Ramona:** A vulnerable freshman whose assault sparks the story. She begins afraid and isolated, then slowly becomes one of the people carrying the movement forward.

**Sarah Green:** The polished face of campus feminism. Smart, controlled, and politically ruthless, she knows how to use process, optics, and bureaucracy to contain anything she cannot control.

**Marcus:** The charismatic singer of the local scene's most popular male band. He is protected by popularity, scene politics, and the people who would rather keep the party going than face what happened.

**The Zine (Static Spit) / The Band (Paper Dolls):** Molly's zine and band become the story's engine. Flyers, basements, copy shops, stolen gear, and loud rooms become the tools of a movement before Molly understands that the movement is bigger than her.

### Story Snapshot

1. In 1991 Olympia, Molly and Juliet move through a damp, analog world of zines, campus politics, basement shows, and male dominated punk spaces.
2. When Ramona is assaulted by Marcus, the university's polite feminist establishment tries to contain the fallout to protect its coalition, its funding, and its image.

3. Molly channels her fury into her zine, Static Spit, and her band, calling out Marcus, the local boys' club, and the campus bureaucracy that wants the problem managed instead of confronted.
4. The shows become volatile spaces where women push to the front and claim the room, but Molly's tactics bring backlash. Venues blacklist the band, Sarah turns institutions against them, and Juliet's academic future is threatened.
5. Molly's absolutism drives away her bandmates and shatters her relationship with Juliet, leaving her alone with the painful truth that the movement she started cannot survive if it only belongs to her.

### **Ending / Final Image**

At her lowest point, Molly is pulled back by the women she helped radicalize. They reclaim an abandoned train depot and build an unsanctioned show without waiting for permission. Molly rejoins the band, Juliet returns not as a follower but as a strategist, and the night becomes proof that their community can outgrow the person who lit the match. The film lands with Paper Dolls earning a shot at something bigger: a place on the bill at the International Pop Underground convention.

### **Theme in One Line**

Rage can start a movement, but care is what keeps it alive.

### **Positioning**

It's a queer punk coming of age drama about a young woman learning that being right is not the same as building something that lasts, set in a tactile 1991 world of zines, basement shows, copy machines, flyers, and noise.

### **Materials Available**

One-pager and full screenplay available upon request or through the private script library.

### **RYAN CLARKE**

Screenwriter & Playwright | Albuquerque, NM

Dark Comedy | Satire | Character Drama | Social Thriller

Ryan Clarke is an Albuquerque-based screenwriter and playwright whose work blends dark comedy, social satire, and intimate character drama. Across a slate of 20+ feature scripts, his stories often follow deeply flawed people pushed into impossible situations, finding humor, tension, and humanity in characters who are entirely in over their heads.

His screenwriting recognition includes Grand Prize Winner, 30th Annual Fade In Awards Comedy Competition (*#FightForNoah*); Semifinalist, 30th Annual Fade In Awards Comedy Competition (*The Trencherman*); 2026 Top 10 Finalist, ISA Table Read My Screenplay at Cannes (*A Walking Shadow*); 2026 Quarterfinalist, Finish Line Script Competition (*#FightForNoah*); two-time Semifinalist, ISA Emerging Screenwriters Competition (*Flashbang* and *Ghost of the Highway*); and four additional 2026 Honorable Mentions from Finish Line (*The Finalists*, *How to Be a Human: A Musical with No Songs*, *Ghost of the Highway*, and *Dead Signals*).

As a playwright, Ryan is a three-time winner of FUSION Theatre Company's short works festival, "The SEVEN", in 2024, 2025, and 2026. The stage version of *A Walking Shadow* was also selected in 2026 for The Road Theatre Company's 17th Summer Playwrights Festival.

### **CONTACT**

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