

GOLDEN YEARS - PROJECT BRIEF

Format

Feature Film

Genre / Tone

Senior Heist Comedy / Social Satire

Going in Style meets The Big Short, with the gala-heist polish of Ocean's Eleven.

Recognition

Newly completed spec screenplay

Budget / Buyer Lane

Mid-budget commercial ensemble comedy

Streamer, theatrical, and hybrid release potential

Netflix, Amazon MGM, Apple, Searchlight, Focus, Lionsgate, Sony comedy lane

Core Hook

A group of elderly residents in a predatory corporate retirement home decide that federal prison offers better healthcare, food, heat, and dignity than the facility bleeding them dry.

One-Sentence Pitch

When a predatory corporate retirement home slashes medicine, heat, and dignity to boost profits, a retired actuary and six elderly residents plan to rob the CEO's charity gala to secure the only retirement package still guaranteed by law: federal prison.

Why It's Timely

It satirizes private-equity elder care, healthcare costs, retirement insecurity, fixed-income survival, corporate "optimization" language, ageism, family guilt, and the brutal absurdity of a system where incarceration can look more humane than paid senior living.

Main Characters

Steve Monroe - A retired actuary who once helped make cruelty look reasonable on paper. When Sundown turns its residents into liabilities, Steve uses the math against the system and becomes the unlikely mastermind of the heist.

Bill Morgan - A charming old-school flirt who hides fear, grief, and memory lapses behind a million-dollar smile. Grace's removal from Sundown turns him from lovable rogue into the emotional engine of the crime.

Jean Santelli - A glamorous former performer who treats every hallway like a stage. Jean weaponizes poise, costume, shame, and theatrical authority to help the crew disappear in plain sight.

Lily Turner - A lifelong labor agitator in a faded union shirt. Lily sees class warfare everywhere, radicalizes the catering staff, and later turns federal prison into her next organizing campaign.

Kathy Bennett - A tough former construction worker with a bad back, a tool bag, and a daughter she refuses to burden. Kathy brings the crew muscle, construction knowledge, and the ability to break the right walls.

Eugene Larsen - An anxious rule-follower whose heart medication becomes unaffordable. Terrified of crime, technology, and medical disaster, Eugene becomes the crew's panicked surveillance man.

Danny D'Amico - A tracksuit-wearing blowhard who claims mob connections so often nobody believes him. By the end, the joke flips: Danny really is Don Domenico DiVincenzo, a vanished crime boss hiding in assisted living.

Grace - Bill's beloved companion, physically fragile but sharp, funny, and tender. Her quiet transfer to state care becomes the wound that turns the heist from a survival scheme into a moral reckoning.

Willem Dalton - The polished CEO of Sundown Senior Living, all camera-ready empathy and private-equity cruelty. He speaks in corporate euphemisms while turning vulnerable residents into liability reductions.

Story Snapshot

Sundown Senior Living advertises luxury, dignity, and "golden years," but the reality is powdered eggs, frozen rooms, medication cuts, surprise fees, and residents slowly priced out of existence.

Steve Monroe, a retired actuary, recognizes the system immediately because he spent his career helping corporations turn human suffering into numbers. After Sundown CEO Willem Dalton announces another wave of "operational streamlining," Steve calculates that most of the residents are only months away from being transferred to state care.

Steve proposes an outrageous but mathematically sound alternative: federal prison. The Bureau of Prisons is required to provide healthcare, meals, temperature control, and supervision. If Sundown will not keep them alive, the federal government will.

At first, the residents reject the plan as insane. But when Grace is quietly removed from Sundown and sent to Valley View, Eugene cannot afford his heart medication, Kathy lies to her daughter about how desperate things are, and Bill realizes the Reaper is no longer waiting politely in the parking lot, the group comes together.

The Sundown Seven prepare for a gala heist against Dalton's charity event. Steve brings the numbers. Bill steals the shuttle keys. Jean secures formalwear. Lily radicalizes the catering staff. Kathy secures a sledgehammer. Eugene battles the vendor portal. Danny insists he knows how the criminal world works, though no one believes him.

At the gala, the crew's greatest weakness becomes its superpower: nobody really sees old people. They pass through the ballroom as harmless resident ambassadors while Dalton uses them as props in his branding circus. Behind the scenes, they breach the holding room expecting auction pieces and discover something bigger: insurance paperwork, empty crates, hidden ledgers, and evidence that Dalton was staging his own fraud while erasing residents like Grace as "liability reductions."

The heist transforms from a desperate bid for prison into a public indictment. The Sundown Seven expose the largest elder-care fraud scandal in state history. Dalton is indicted. The residents become folk heroes. Their crime finally forces the world to look directly at the people Sundown tried to make invisible.

Ending / Final Image

The Sundown Seven get the federal medical placement they wanted, and it is absurdly better than Sundown: meals, medication, routine, family visits, dignity, and visibility. Kathy's daughter and grandkids visit regularly. Lily organizes the inmates. Jean becomes the face of the documentary. Bill does crosswords with Grace's pen. Steve watches Willem Dalton, now stripped of his suit and power, sweating on a prison road crew. Meanwhile, Danny is revealed as Don Domenico DiVincenzo and is welcomed into maximum security as the kingpin he always claimed to be.

Theme in One Line

Dignity should not be a luxury tier, and survival should not require becoming a criminal.

Positioning

Golden Years is a broad, high-concept senior heist comedy with a sharp social target and a warm ensemble heart. It offers major roles for older actors, a clean trailer hook, cross-generational appeal, and a timely satirical premise: what happens when the American care system becomes so broken that prison starts looking like the upgrade?

Materials Available

One-pager and full screenplay available upon request or through ISA.

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.

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