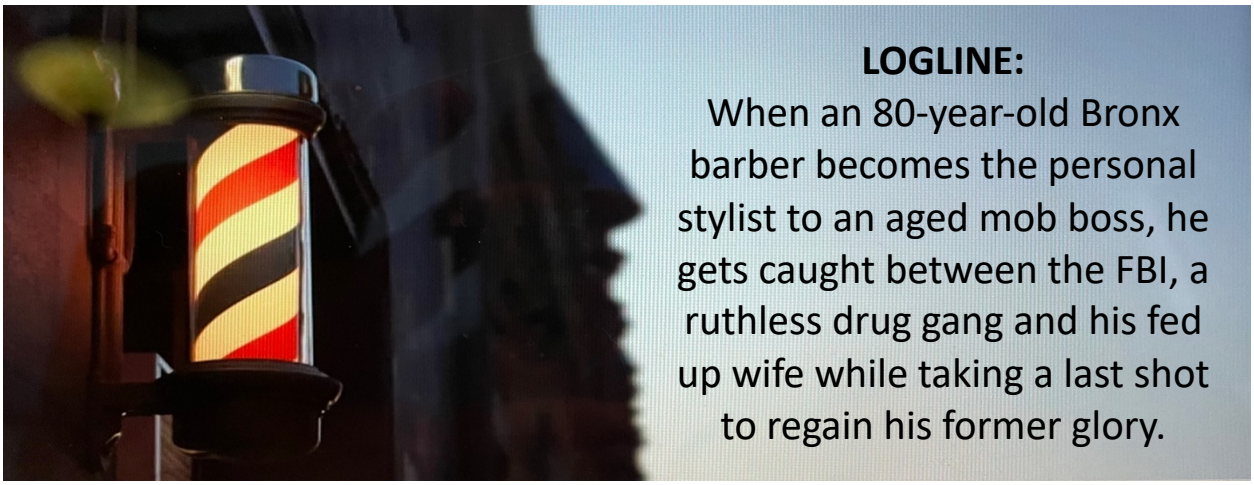
THE KING OF ARTHUR AVENUE

A mob caper comedy by Mike Bencivenga



LOGLINE:
When an 80-year-old Bronx barber becomes the personal stylist to an aged mob boss, he gets caught between the FBI, a ruthless drug gang and his fed up wife while taking a last shot to regain his former glory.

COMPS: Analyze This, American Hustle, My Cousin Vinny. **BUDGET:** $5 - 10 million

THE STORY:

It's all about Jimmy Vesti, an aging Italian barber in the Bronx who was once wealthy and the 'king' of the Grand Concourse who lost everything due to his gambling. He dreams of regaining his stature and winning back the respect of his neighbors and his very bitter wife, Madelena.



This all changes when legendary mob boss Don Carlo Mannetti, who lost his voice after a stroke, needs a new barber after his old one passes. His grandsons select Jimmy 'The Gent' which greatly boosts his status in the hood. It also impresses Fortuna, a young Italian girl who works in the bakery of Jimmy's brother-in-law. Meanwhile a rival mobster, Don Pepe Hermosa, wants to get his hands on the Don's rumored confessional diary that could implicate him as a drug kingpin.

Don Pepe's inept henchmen try kidnapping the mob boss, but Jimmy fends them off with a broom. This further elevates Jimmy's reputation in the community. Don Carlo thanks Jimmy for saving him, revealing that he's been faking not being able to talk to avoid going to trial. An FBI agent, Tony Palmieri, whose father was murdered on Don Carlo's orders, approaches Jimmy. Tony wants him to wear a wire to prove that Don Carlo's faking. He also hopes Don Carlo will reveal the location of his tell-all diary. At first wary, Jimmy soon grows to trust and like Tony.



Jimmy agrees to wear the wire if Tony will take his shy friend Fortuna out to dinner. They go and spend an enchanting evening together. A perfect match. Meanwhile, Don Pepe's men threaten to harm Fortuna if Jimmy doesn't help them locate the diary. With Jimmy's razor at his throat, the Don reveals that he buried the diary in a grave site. Don Pepe's crew abducts Jimmy and races to the Bronx cemetery.

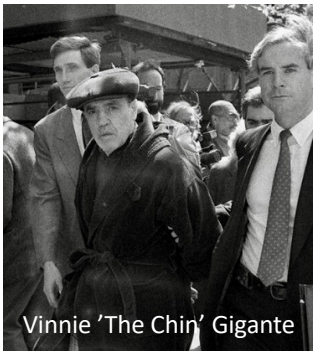


A chaotic chase ensues with the FBI man, Don Carlo and his grandsons all racing after them to the cemetery. At the grave, Tony angrily confronts Jimmy for double-crossing him and working with Don Pepe. Jimmy tries to run, and Tony shoots him. Or so it appears. The truth is Jimmy's death was staged so he can enter witness protection.

The diary is recovered from the grave, leading to the arrest of Don Carlo, Don Pepe and his hapless henchmen. Jimmy's wife thinks her husband died in disgrace, so she's done with him. In the end, Jimmy is living comfortably in the Caribbean (courtesy of the FBI) where Tony and Fortuna visit him on their honeymoon. All of Jimmy's dreams for a better life come true.

THE WORLD OF 'THE KING':

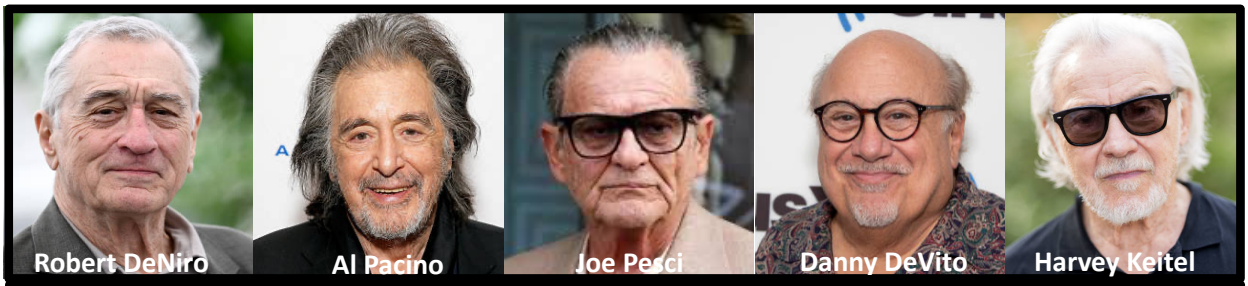
The story is inspired by my grandfather who came over from Italy with nothing but his tonsorial skills. He craftily bought up several businesses and soon owned half the town I grew up in. One night he had too much to drink and got in a card game and lost almost everything. His wife, my Nana, never forgave him and made his life miserable to the end of his days. This story is a fantasy based on those facts and an attempt to give my grandad the redemption he deserves.



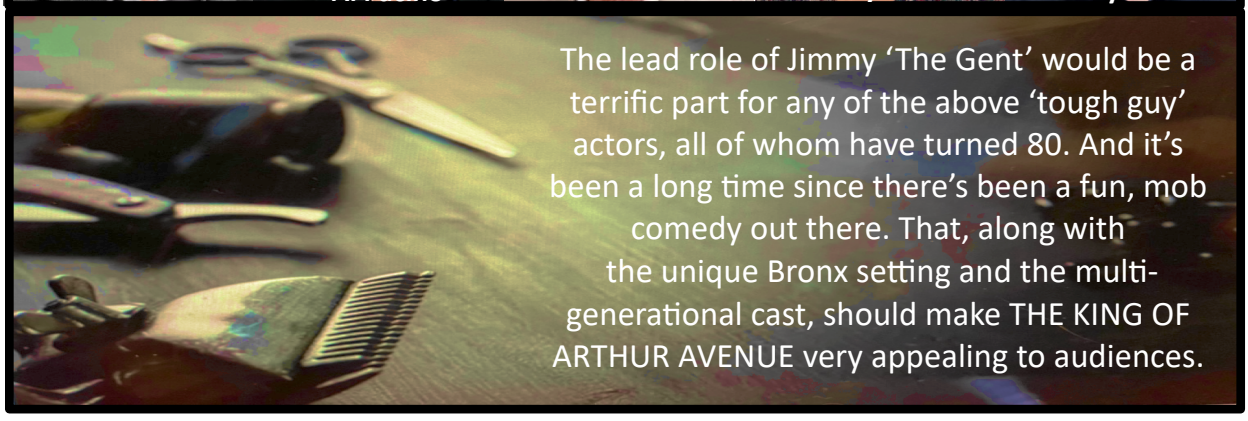
Vinnie 'The Chin' Gigante

The character of Don Carlo Manetti, who fakes a stroke to avoid prosecution, is based on a real-life mobster. For 25 years Vincent 'The Chin' Gigante faked a mental disorder to avoid prosecution as the head of the Genovese crime family. He'd wander the streets of the West Village in a ratty bathrobe and slippers, acting as if he had Alzheimer's. Justice finally caught up with Vinnie 'the Chin' and he was put away in a prison. As soon as he was locked up, he dropped the act and behaved normally until his 2005 death in the slammer.

CASTING & MARKETING:



Robert DeNiro | Al Pacino | Joe Pesci | Danny DeVito | Harvey Keitel



The lead role of Jimmy 'The Gent' would be a terrific part for any of the above 'tough guy' actors, all of whom have turned 80. And it's been a long time since there's been a fun, mob comedy out there. That, along with the unique Bronx setting and the multi-generational cast, should make THE KING OF ARTHUR AVENUE very appealing to audiences.