

# There's Life After 70: A Review of 'Last Vegas'

By

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I have been looking forward to seeing Last Vegas since I saw the trailer for it as a coming attraction at [RED 2](#)--a wonderful movie about old spies who are "retired", and "extremely dangerous". Old farts like me having a bachelor party in Vegas with lots of buxom babes in bikinis, what could be better? (For those of you too young to know, "buxom" means big boobs.)

But as my wife and I were walking (slowly) to the theatre downtown, I occurred to me that it could be a disaster. Old farts with infirmities like me behaving like 20-somethings, what could be worse? I kept remembering Morgan Freeman's line in TV ads for the movie. A childhood friend (Michael Douglas) tells him that he is about to marry a woman who is 32. "32?," Freeman's character gasps, "I have a hemorrhoid that's over 32." Hmm, worth a little smile maybe, but certainly not a belly laugh. Would the movie turn out to be lots of cheap shots about the infirmities of old age and the desire to be young again?

I'm happy to say that it is not a series of cheap shots, though there are a few. And, yes, the old farts have young eyes and drool a bit at the sight of the babes in bikinis (even managing at one point to become the judges of a bikini contest at the hotel pool). But at every critical point they make grown-up decisions that actually add to their happiness, and which might add to the happiness of 20-somethings if they only knew enough. If you stop to think about it -- which is entirely unnecessary and inadvisable while watching this movie -- the take-away message is that there is life after 70 -- after a stroke, after titanium hip and knee replacements, after the death of a wife of 40 years, and after the loss of the denial of aging. Being old has its benefits.

The storyline of this movie is familiar from other bachelor party movies with a few twists to reflect age. Four childhood buddies from Brooklyn, all now 70-something, go to Las Vegas for a wild celebration of the marriage of one of them (played by Michael Douglas). He is very successful financially and has never married, preferring the company of a succession of young women. One of the buddies (played by Kevin Kline) has retired to Florida, had hip and knee replacements, and does aquatic exercises with people who appear to be inching up on 100. He is grumpily married to a smart, attractive woman his own age. One of them (played by Morgan Freeman) has had a stroke and now lives cautiously with his son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter, who worry that at any moment he will tumble over dead. The fourth (played by Robert De Niro) has lost his

wife and now sits all day in a scruffy easy chair wearing PJs and a tattered bathrobe and rejecting the advances of a neighbor. When they arrive in Las Vegas, they meet a woman (played by Mary Steenburgen) who has retired from the practice of tax law to become a lounge singer who is very good but under-appreciated. She is divorced, a single mother whose children are grown and who now is living her personal dream. She is far and away the most desirable of all the Las Vegas women in the movie, notwithstanding their taut skin and remarkable breasts. Two of the old men eventually fall for her.

Through a stroke of good luck, the old men get comped to the most remarkable hotel suite imaginable. Donald Trump might be embarrassed to stay there -- though maybe not. It has a huge living room with a grand piano on one floor, four bedrooms and countless baths on the second floor, a fully stocked kitchen and bar. A great place for a party, and a great party there is, filled with temptations and opportunities for self-discovery.

But let me not ruin the story. Suffice it to say that it is great fun. If you are over 60, run (metaphorically speaking) to see it. Under 60 -- I'm not so sure it's for you. In fact, on the way out, we met a mixed-age couple. He -- the older by some years -- loved the movie. She -- who made sure we knew she was under 60 -- clearly did not. Maybe it was the vision of the future that distressed her or maybe there are different developmental stages of humor. Who knows? But, it's for sure that some things just aren't for the young. They are not ready.

One quibble. The movie takes some cheap shots about very old people. While making it clear that being over 70 can be as good as or better than being in your twenties, it also takes it for granted that it won't be so great to be 85, 90, 95, or 100 -- whenever the body and mind succumb to the ravages of time.

But I guess our society's ageism has to be challenged one market demographic at a time. And it is great progress that old people can be heroic characters in genre movies like RED (spy stories), Last Vegas (bachelor parties), and -- I can't wait -- a movie coming soon called *Grudge Match* with Sylvester Stallone and Robert DeNiro. Rocky and the Raging Bull at 70+. Sounds great. I hope it's as good as *Last Vegas*.

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Michael Friedman is co-author of [The Diagnostic Manual of Mishegas](#) (DMOM), a parody of the American Psychiatric Association's [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders](#) (DSM).