

FRANCIS AND THE GODFATHER

Based On The True Story

Written by

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OVER BLACK.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
I believe in this picture.

FADE IN:

INT. ROBERT EVANS' OFFICE - DAY

CU ON PETER BART, a well-dressed film executive in his 30s, eyes ablaze with the ecstasy of the pitch.

BART
This picture could make us a fortune.

SUPER: "Peter Bart, V.P. Production, Paramount Pictures -- 1970"

As he speaks, the CLOSE ANGLE begins to loosen until over the shoulder of ANOTHER MAN listening.

BART (CONT'D)
It's not about "groundbreaking cinema."
Or "saying something." Or art.
(reassuringly)
It's not art, Bob. It's simply netting a fuck-ton a' cash exploiting man's age-old lust for blood. Roman gladiators eight times a day with buttered popcorn, and we're the only Colosseum in town. Nobody else can even see it! Had lunch with Wells and Calley at Warners, told 'em we optioned *The Godfather*, ya know what they did? Those two bastards, they smiled at me. Laughed. I sat behind my corned beef like a fool. Then I said to my analyst, "For revenge, and a green-light, I gotta see Bob Evans."

REVEAL: The man Bart's speaking to -- ROBERT EVANS, 40, a gorgeous and powerful man behind a desk, with a voice so silky it makes even blinding rage sound seductive.

SUPER: "Robert Evans, Senior V.P. Worldwide Production, Paramount Pictures"

EVANS
Evans likes what you're spittin'. He hears "fuck-ton 'a cash" and his beard grows. Look at the book sales, there's no question *The Godfather's* got legs; big hairy, chiseled Italian ones. But who's the man to direct it? That's Evans' quagmire.

BART
I have a suggestion--

EVANS
Please, not another Jew, Peter. Our people don't understand the dagos.
(MORE)

EVANS (CONT'D)

Marty Ritt directed *The Brotherhood* with Kirk Douglas; it looked like a blind man conducting a Bris. The only box office near that thing was Douglas's trailer. I hear he was bangin' em' two at a time.

(then)

No, this may be just a cheap gangster pic, but I want the audience to smell the spaghetti. WOPs only.

BART

Alright. How 'bout Francis Coppola?

EVANS

(rubbing his eyes)

Ugh, Coppola again. We been through this.

BART

I know, Bob. Hear me out--

EVANS

(an idea)

Just a minute, "Evans light bulb." Let's get some exercise.

EXT. THE PARAMOUNT LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Evans and Bart puff cigars as they stroll, Evans sporting giant sunglasses and a fabulous coat over his shoulders. A SECURITY GUARD follows close behind in a golf cart.

BY-PASSERS acknowledge Evans with bowed heads, as if he were king.

EVANS

You see the reverence? Evans is the air they breathe.

Bart inadvertently coughs out smoke.

EVANS (CONT'D)

Two years ago, this lot was in the crapper. It'd be parking and Thai handjob joints if not for me. What I'm saying is...

(stops, removes sunglasses)

...I'm fucking Moses, Peter. Moses. I parted the Red Sea with *Rosemary's Baby* and soon I'll cross the desert on *Love Story*. *The Godfather* could be the promised land. And you want me to give it to some fat greaseball who cut his teeth directing skin flicks.

BART

He's done five features; all on time and budget.

EVANS

All shit. *The Rain People*? *You're A Big Boy Now*? You better fuckin' believe I am, kid.

(MORE)

EVANS (CONT'D)
 Big enough to know a hack when I see one.
 (pointing to his head)
 You want a pearl from Evans' treasure
 trove, here goes -- "A good director is
 key to a film's success."
 (tapping Bart's forehead)
 Put it in here, lock it up, don't let
 anyone see it.

They walk for a beat, Evans reconsidering. Then, SIGHING:

EVANS (CONT'D)
 How many directors have turned us down
 now?

BART
 Twelve. They're all booked and/or don't
 want to "glorify the mafia." Coppola's
 the only Italian left. And he needs us a
 helluva lot worse than we need him.

EXT. AMERICAN ZOETROPE / FOLSOM ST., SAN FRANCISCO - DAY - EST.

A converted warehouse, currently being emptied by a TEAM
 of REPOSSESSORS loading expensive furniture into a truck.

CLOSE ON: The front door, which was clearly pulled open
 through a now-ripped "Notice of Default".

COPPOLA (PRE-LAP)
 I am not directing that movie. I don't
 care if we are broke.

INT. AMERICAN ZOETROPE / BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Inside the lavish facility, WORKERS repossess nearly
 everything not nailed down. Walking through the madness
 are FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA (31, hairy, gregarious, on a rant)
 and GEORGE LUCAS (26, flannel-clad, dry and soft-spoken).

COPPOLA
 I won't sell myself to some faceless suit
 who thinks Art is the guy who built his
 pool-house.

He stops at a large wine rack, looks to see if the
 workers are watching.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 I need vino.

He grabs a bottle and begins working a corkscrew.

LUCAS
 (alarmed)
 Wait, is that... expensive?

COPPOLA
 The '34. Twelve hundred bucks I've been
 saving for a special occasion.

Two workers pass him hauling off a gorgeous painting.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
The Lichtenstein.
(pops the cork)
It'll have to do.

He drinks, then offers it to Lucas. Lucas blanches and sips from a straw in his bottle of YooHoo.

SUPER: "Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas --
San Francisco, California"

LUCAS
(re: the wine bottle)
Ya know, returning that alone woulda'
kept Arri off our backs another month.

Coppola rolls his eyes and walks away, Lucas following.

COPPOLA
Zoetrope isn't about equipment.

LUCAS
A film studio. Perish the thought.

COPPOLA
We answer to no one.

LUCAS
Except the bank.

COPPOLA
This is an oasis!

LUCAS
From responsibility.

COPPOLA
From Hollywood! From the major studios!
Something that's never been tried before.
A paradise where filmmakers can be
inspired by beautiful art, sipping thirty-
five year old chablis as we bring forth
our films, George. Pure and unfettered.

LUCAS
And how will that work without cameras,
Francis?

COPPOLA
(defensive)
You wouldn't have shot *THX* but for the
principles this company was founded on.

Coppola pulls a framed sketch off the wall and smuggles it under his coat.

LUCAS
 I won't have anywhere to edit it if you don't meet Bob Evans. None of our "unfettered films" have made any money yet. You're half a million in debt.

The frame stowed, Coppola takes another long pull off the wine bottle and heads for the front door.

COPPOLA
 Have you even read *The Godfather*? It's sensational, salacious, common smut!

LUCAS
 One good crowd pleaser will swing you outta hock.

COPPOLA
 (still ranting)
 The oldest brother, uh... Sonny, has a mistress. Entire chapters are devoted to how gargantuan her twat is.

LUCAS
 (sighs)
 I worry about your drinking.

COPPOLA
 It's in the book! That's why they're so hot for each other. He's hung like a horse and she could give birth to one.

Nearly to the exit, a WORKER steps in front of them, eyeing the frame under Coppola's coat.

WORKER
 Um, sir?

COPPOLA
 ... Yes?

They stare each other down until:

LUCAS
 Give him the sketch.

Coppola petulantly hands over the frame. The worker leaves.

COPPOLA
 I don't want to make crap.

LUCAS
 (re: the sketch)
 Francis, today it's the Warhol. Tomorrow it's the lease. Then your house.
 (pauses)
 This isn't an offer you can refuse.

Coppola sighs, and takes another swig.

INT. ROBERT EVANS' WAITING ROOM - DAY

Coppola sits, quietly rehearsing what he'll say to Evans.

COPPOLA

Mr. Evans, I am honored and grateful that
you invited me here... to discuss...

(shakes his head, again)

Mr. Evans, I am honored and grateful...

A SECRETARY watches (creeped out) when the INTERCOM BUZZES.

EVANS (ON INTERCOM)

Send him in.

INT. ROBERT EVANS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Evans sits in a leather chair. On a sofa, Peter Bart is
beside AL RUDDY (30, tall and dark; but a sweet guy). A
sad wooden chair faces them. Coppola enters meekly.

EVANS

How ya doin', fella?

COPPOLA

Mr. Evans, hi... I am honored and...
grateful that--

EVANS

--Super. Great. Sit down.

COPPOLA

--Okay.

Coppola squeezes his large frame into the small chair.
They sit silently for a beat, Evans sizing Coppola up.

EVANS

I understand you're Italian.

COPPOLA

Yes, yes I am... I am indeed--

EVANS

So are the characters in *The Godfather*.

COPPOLA

Right. Right--

EVANS

You probably have a lot in common.

COPPOLA

Well, Italian immigrants came from all
walks--

EVANS

Good, I wanna smell the spaghetti. And
your little filmmakers' Xanadu in San
Francisco, your... impregnable celluloid
wet dream, Evans heard it's in trouble.

COPPOLA
Some cash-flow issues, nothing we can't--

EVANS
Well, you're in luck, my friend. This place was in the crapper when Evans took over. Then came a little film called *Rosemary's Baby*, baby. Maybe you heard of it.

COPPOLA
Sure, I love Polanski.

EVANS
That piss-ant Pollock owes it all to me. So will you.

Evans glares, expectantly. Coppola, eventually:

COPPOLA
Thank you.

EVANS
You're welcome.
(pointing)
This is Albert Ruddy, your producer. He'll help you make this cheap and broad. Shake his hand.

RUDDY
Call me Al. Pleasure to meet you.

COPPOLA
Likewise. Uh...
(massaging his temples)
Look, no offense, I was hoping I'd get some input on the producer and crew.

EVANS
Of course, you will, Francis. Of course, you will. But with Al, I already saved you the trouble. He's produced five seasons of *Hogan's Heroes*. Ali and I watch it in bed. Dynamite show.

COPPOLA
I'm sure it is, but television's a very different medium--

EVANS
Why? 'cuz it's a smaller screen? You saying Al's no good?

COPPOLA
I don't know Al.

EVANS
You just shook his hand. Whaddya want him to jerk off in a cup. You can run some tests.

Evans, Bart, and Ruddy all LAUGH, Coppola wilting.

EVANS (CONT'D)

(moving on, subject closed)
Any thoughts on cast?

COPPOLA

Some. For Michael, I really wanna dig around Broadway, ya know? New York. Someone dark, antiestablishment; a brooder, not a classic movie star.

EVANS

Evans loves that. Loves it. What do you think of Ryan O'Neal?

COPPOLA

Ryan O'Neal?

EVANS

Let me tell you, working with him is its own *Love Story*. He's terrific.

COPPOLA

Yeah, but as the son of a Sicilian Kingpin?

(off Evan's outraged silence)
I just mean, he's a little WASPy.

RUDDY

Actually, I agree with Francis there.
(on Coppola's relief)
I'm thinking Robert Redford.

Coppola bites his tongue, not off to a good start with Ruddy.

EVANS

Oooh, love Bob. Love Bob! Strong jaw. Could crush baseballs with that jaw.

(to Coppola)
Definitely test 'em both. How about the Don?

COPPOLA

Uh... well, the guy has to be bigger than life; like, the best actor in the world. So, I say Marlon Brando.

EVANS

Ahh, Brando's divine. But will we buy him as an Italian?

BART

We bought him as Mexican in *Viva Zapata*.

EVANS

But playing a Latin is easy. I did it in *The Sun Also Rises*. You coat your forehead in Vaseline and hunch. Much trickier to get inside an Italian. Unless, of course, that Italian's Sophia Loren and you're Evans.

(MORE)

EVANS (CONT'D)
 (a reminiscent laugh)
 Like God himself cupping your balls.
 (to Coppola)
 Just a thought, what about George C.
 Scott? He has darker features and he's
 wonderful. Have you seen *Patton*?

COPPOLA
 I wrote *Patton*.

EVANS
 What?

COPPOLA
 I wrote *Patton*. The screenplay.

EVANS
 Ha! You're a prankster. Evans can tell.

COPPOLA
 No, I wrote it. I did.

EVANS
 I don't think so, buster. It was awesome.

RUDDY
 He did write *Patton*, Bob.

Evans looks to Bart, who nods.

EVANS
 NO...!!!

COPPOLA
 I did, I did.

EVANS
 Why didn't Scott tell me? Fuck him, he's
 on the shit list. And we're in great
 hands, gentlemen! This is our man!
 C'mon, let's take the press photo.
 (calling outside)
 Vivian!
 (back to Coppola)
 We're gonna make it hand over fist, kid!

COPPOLA
 Yeah, it'll be good though, right?

EVANS
 Sure. What's gooder than green?

The secretary shows a PHOTOGRAPHER in. Evans, Ruddy, and Bart move behind Evans' desk, in the chaos of posing.

ANGLE ON: Coppola, still in the chair, staring ahead, awash in the depression of what he's just signed on for.

EVANS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 C'mon, where's Francis? We're not taking
 the picture without Francis.

MOMENTS LATER: A FLASH POP washes over the four men; all smiles but for Coppola. FREEZE FRAME:

SUPER: "September 28, 1970"

SFX: PRE-LAP -- A STARTER BELL RINGS under...

EXT. SANTA ANITA RACETRACK - DAY

THE PONIES explode out the gate and tear down the track.

IN THE STANDS, MARIO PUZO (50s, glasses, schlubby yet endearing) SCREAMS bloody murder at his horse.

PUZO
C'mon, Khartoum!... Run, you lazy
mamaluke!

SUPER: "Mario Puzo, Author of 'The Godfather'"

PUZO (CONT'D)
Go! Friggin' nag!
(turns to someone)
I got twelve hundred bones on him.

REVEAL: Coppola sitting beside him, perturbed as he reads a battered screenplay.

COPPOLA
So... Mario, I'm a little put off here.

PUZO
Why? Que cosa?-- SEVEN! RUN, SEVEN!

COPPOLA
This is your adaptation, but it doesn't read like your book.

PUZO
How do you mean?

COPPOLA
Well...
(flips to top of script)
"The Godfather." Fade In, U.C. Berkeley dorm room. Marijuana in the air, Morrison on hi-fi. Long-hair Michael Corleone and girlfriend Kay, hairy pits, fuck on a water bed." Not exactly ripped from the pages.

PUZO
Hold on, Francis, we're going around number four-- RUN! RUN, GODDAMN YOU!!!

WE SEE: #7 (Puzo's horse) falling behind as they approach the finish line.

PUZO (CONT'D)
No!... No!... NO! TWELVE HUNDRED BUCKS,
YOU BROKEN-DOWN PLOW HORSE! SHIT!
(MORE)

PUZO (CONT'D)

(a beat later, to Coppola)
Well, when it's time for that scene, I
know where you can get a good horse head.
(tearing up his stubs)
What you were asking?

Coppola holds up the script as Puzo sits.

COPPOLA

This... What the hell is this?

PUZO

Ruddy told me to start with a sex scene.
He wants The Sundance Kid to play Michael.

COPPOLA

And how do you feel about that?

PUZO

Rich. See, I had to let Paramount Jew me
over when I sold the rights 'cuz I needed
whatever I could get to square some
maniac bookies. So, I took fifteen over
eighty the film ever got made; fucked
like a snake in a lawnmower. But with
the script, I held out for a hundred K.
Alls I had to do was set it present day,
in any city but New York. To make
filming cheaper.

COPPOLA

And you don't feel like...

PUZO

... Like what? A sellout?

Coppola blushes ("Yeah"), then listens with growing horror.

PUZO (CONT'D)

Francis, when I sat down to write *The
Godfather* I was forty-six years old. I'd
published three novels straight from the
heart and for those efforts, I had
exactly fourteen hundred dollars to my
name. Flat broke with five kids. My
whole goal with that dime-store ass-wipe
was to write whatever'd move more copies
than the fuckin' Bible, and that's what I
did. So, what'd I sell out? *The
Godfather* ain't art. Neither is this
backlot B-movie you're shooting. Sorry,
kid. It don't mean shit.

Coppola tears his eyes away, looks down at the screenplay.

COPPOLA (PRE-LAP)

He did the whole thing for money.

INT. COPPOLA RESIDENCE (SAN FRANCISCO) / KITCHEN - NIGHT

Coppola dries dishes beside his pregnant wife, ELEANOR;
30, an understated, granola-type beauty. She washes.

COPPOLA
 (outraged)
 Three years of his life, four-hundred and
 fifty pages, none of which reflect
 anything he actually wants to say.

ELEANOR
 Some people lose themselves in their
 obligations.

Coppola gestures to the dining room where sons GIO (7) and
 ROMAN (5) draw with Lucas; all three equally engrossed.

COPPOLA
 Think I know how he feels.

Eleanor CLANGS a plate sharply, shooting him a look.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 (realizing)
 Oh, sorry. I'm sorry. I am, I'm just...

ELEANOR
 You're scared a man with his talent could
 so readily capitulate.

COPPOLA
 Yes, and I don't want to direct a film
 with no context; that's just an olive-oil
 shoot-'em-up. I'll become the "goombah"
 director. Italians'll throw cannoli at
 our house, *if we get to keep it.*

ELEANOR
 Don't worry about the house right now.
 If you want the film to have an
 undertone, pick one.

COPPOLA
 But the author himself admits there's
 nothing under the surface.

ELEANOR
 Find something to connect with and
 rewrite the script. Make it your own.

COPPOLA
 What could I possibly connect with--?

Eleanor shuts the faucet; frustrated, tired and pregnant.

ELEANOR
 I don't know, Francis, figure it out.
 Get high or something, okay? My feet and
 my back are killing me, I can't run in
 circles with you tonight.

COPPOLA
 "Get high?" Et tu, Ellie?
 (as she walks out)
 (MORE)

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Thanks. Last thing I need is someone
 else telling me what to do.

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. COPPOLA BACKYARD - LATER

Coppola takes an impossibly long drag off a joint as
 several NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS run in through a gate to join
 Gio and Roman in their treehouse across the yard.

COPPOLA
 (mid-drag)
 You boys behave now.

Beside him, a disapproving Lucas fans away smoke.

LUCAS
 You're a heck of a role model.

COPPOLA
 (scoffs)
 That hurts. How many cars have you
 crashed now?
 (then, bitching)
 And Ruddy, this *TV producer* they've
 saddled me with. Probably wants to set
 the film in Mayberry.

LUCAS
 Give the guy a chance.

COPPOLA
 Why should I have to!

LUCAS
 Bob Crane as The Don. I'm just sayin'.

They watch Gio (the oldest) playacting in a cape and
 crown, lording over two "guards" holding Roman before him.

GIO
 Roman, you're my brother and I love you,
 but you took sides against your King. So
 you must die.

ROMAN
 I didn't know, Gio. I swear I didn't!

Gio gives the guard a solemn nod and he raises his wooden
 sword for the kill, young Roman SCREAMING, truly scared.

ROMAN (CONT'D)
 STOP IT! NO!... DAD!!!

COPPOLA
 Gio! Let your brother keep his head.

Lucas chuckles as Gio begrudgingly orders Roman's release.

LUCAS
Power hungry, that one. Where do you think he gets it?

COPPOLA
I don't want power, George. Just control. Over my life. My work.

LUCAS
Isn't that how it starts? I just want to protect my wife. My kids. Please my shareholders. Ensure my race flourishes. I'll only drop the bomb once. To stop the Red Threat.

COPPOLA
(playing along)
'Cuz if my loved ones get any ideas, I'll have to kill them too.

They both laugh.

LUCAS
It's the force of the galaxy. Starts out making things better. Ends up making 'em worse.

Coppola's eyes narrow, recognizing they're onto something. He stands and stubs out the joint.

COPPOLA
Yeah. I gotta write. Watch the kids.

LUCAS
I'm not your wet nurse!

COPPOLA
Yeah, you are. Shut up.

Coppola heads for the house, calling back.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
"Force of the galaxy," huh? I think you got a little contact high there, brother.

Lucas' smile drops. He takes deep breaths, paranoid.

EXT. SFO AIRPORT / RUNWAY - DAY

A 737 takes off from San Francisco...

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY - MONTAGE

Coppola in a window seat; a large binder, Scotch Tape, and a copy of *The Godfather* on his tray. Over this...

WE HEAR a PRE-LAP phone convo between him and Puzo.

COPPOLA (PRE-LAP)
 Mario. Listen, you said your book
 doesn't mean shit. I know how to change
 that and make it art.

PUZO (PRE-LAP)
 You do?... *Marone'*, I miss being young.

Coppola pulls chunks of pages out of the book, writes
 notes on others and tapes them into the binder.

COPPOLA (PRE-LAP)
 We strip out all but the immediate
 family. It's about a father who sought
 power to escape the same corruption his
 own sons end up proliferating. It's this
 country.

Numbered pages are taped to the plane's wall, seats, etc.,
 as Coppola scribbles scenes furiously on a legal pad.

COPPOLA (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
 It's our ascension; the dream come full
 circle. I mean, we could really hold a
 mirror up to the hypocrisy.

Coppola startles as the plane TOUCHES DOWN. He gathers
 the mess of paper sprawled before him, renewed in purpose.

INT. JFK TERMINAL / PUZO'S OFFICE (LA) - DAY - INTERCUT

THE REST OF THE PHONE CALL -- Coppola on a pay phone in
 the terminal, wrapping up with Puzo.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
 Rip off the blinders and just blow minds.
 It could be epic.
 (off the silence)
 Are you there?

PUZO (ON PHONE)
 Yeah. I'm just afraid the fans might
 miss Lucy Mancini's giant cleft.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
 (appeasing)
 Sonny'll still fuck her at the wedding.
 (off Puzo's silence)
 I know this'll mean starting from
 scratch, but I'd like your help.

PUZO (ON PHONE)
 I don't know, your odds 'a pullin' this
 off are shit, sport.
 (considers, then)
 But I'll take the action.

Coppola hangs up, satisfied. REVEAL: Approaching is FRED
 ROOS; 35, gold cross pendant, flashy dresser, life of the
 party Moe Green type.

FRED ROOS
 Hey, Francie! Good to see ya, good to
 see ya. You got everything?

SUPER: "Fred Roos, Casting Director -- The Godfather"

COPPOLA
 I got an idea, Freddie. It's a start.
 You find me a "Michael"?

They head for the exit, Roos with his arm around Coppola.

FRED ROOS
 Ho!-- Wait'll you see the moves on the
 kid we're seeing, he'll kick your tongue
 out! C'mon, Francie, we're late...

EXT. BELASCO THEATRE / W. 44TH ST., MANHATTAN - NIGHT

The marquee reads, "Does A Tiger Wear A Necktie?"

Coppola and Roos rush in past the posted Playbill listing
 "Hal Holbrook, David Opatoshu, with Al Pacino" et al.

INT. BELASCO THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

The play in progress as Coppola and Roos squeeze noisily
 past OTHER PATRONS and sit.

MOMENTS LATER: On stage, Pacino's "Bickham" confronting
 Opatoshu's "Dr. Werner". NOTE: Pacino is FUCKING AWESOME!

PACINO (AS BICKHAM)
 'finally, out of a clear blue sky, he
 says, "You wanna see a picture of my wife
 and kid?" I think, maybe he's recognized
 me, for Chrissakes. He pulls out this
 picture, see? You know what it was? A
 picture of some whorey lookin' blonde
 and a baby sittin' on her lap. A baby boy,
 only it's a trick shot, see, like you'd
 buy on 42nd Street, the photographer has
 dubbed in a... a yango about that long!
 I don't know what's happenin'! I think
 it's gonna be a picture of me or
 somethin'!

(hysterically)
 I hit him. I hit him hard. He goes flat
 on his ass. I get down on top of him,
 and I hit him!

(beats the desk)
 I hit him and I hit him!

(softly)
 Then, everything's quiet all of a sudden.
 I look down at him. I look down at this
 barber who's my father. I look down at
 him... and I know just what I been
 waitin' for all my life.

ANGLE ON: Coppola in the audience, smiling at Roos, like
 they both just witnessed the Second Coming!

EXT. TURTLE POND (CENTRAL PARK, NYC) - LATER THAT NIGHT

Coppola emerges from the shadows. He swallows nervously. It's late and the CHARACTERS around are sketchy.

Among them on a nearby bench sits AL PACINO (30, anxious, shaggy-haired and scruffy, dressed like he's homeless), smoking and drinking from a paper bag. Coppola approaches.

COPPOLA
Al, hello--

PACINO
(stands up, startled)
Whoa, who the fuck are you?

COPPOLA
It's Francis Coppola.
(Pacino's still freaked)
Fred Roos said you wanted to meet here.

PACINO
Oh yeah, Fred. Sorry, place gets me panicky this late.

COPPOLA
Let's go somewhere else.

They begin a cautious stroll, side by side.

PACINO
No, I love walking in the park, especially now.

He jumps again when a JOGGER runs out from under a tree.

PACINO (CONT'D)
Every ten yards or so, there's a little play in progress.
(points to a bench)
I once saw a man lie down on that bench and die.

COPPOLA
Jesus Christ.

PACINO
Yeah, well, he mighta' been sleeping.
(points to some bushes)
Back there, this one guy fellated another in exchange for half a burger. No cheese. It's not Ibsen, but it's real, ya know. Theater of the human condition.

COPPOLA
So, uh, saw your show tonight. You were wonderful.

PACINO
Now I'm getting fellated.

COPPOLA
 (chuckles awkwardly)
 I guess Fred gave you a book earlier this week. *The Godfather*? Did you read it?

Pacino stops and points to a splotch of muddy grass.

PACINO
 See that mud puddle. That's where I was born.

COPPOLA
 No shit?

PACINO
 Yeah.
 (then)
 Actually, I have no idea. My mother never said. Probably a hospital. What I meant was, I'm from the earth. The streets. I grew up in Hell's Kitchen. I got dirt under my nails. Crotch rash.
 (re: his clothes)
 I look like this. And the fellow in the book, Michael, he's a star.
 (re: their surroundings)
 He's out of this world, the real world, very quickly. And I can't play that. I'm not Dean or Peck or Newman or Wayne. I'm little fish, pig pond. Ya see?

COPPOLA
 But you understand the anger of being trapped here, the allure of rising above. I don't want Michael's ascent to be easy. I want this world pulling at him, never letting his feet all the way off the ground. And that I believe you can play.

Pacino didn't expect this. He starts walking, paranoia getting the best of him.

PACINO
 I'm tellin' you, they won't want me.

COPPOLA
 Al--

PACINO
 They'll want a face.

COPPOLA
 Don't you want to do films?

PACINO
 The right part, sure. You talk to Redford yet? He's great, and that jaw...

COPPOLA
 Just come in and test, Al.

Coppola takes his shoulders, stopping him.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)

Let me worry what "they" want.

Pacino's aware of the intimacy; two men in the park.

PACINO

You're not gonna offer me half a burger,
are you?

Coppola smiles, let's go, and offers his hand.

COPPOLA

Trust?

Pacino considers then shakes AS WE PRE-LAP THE RHYTHMIC
DRUMS OF A NATIVE AMERICAN RAINMAKING RITUAL...

PACINO

You got any ideas on the Don?

COPPOLA

Well, as a matter of fact...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT - EST.

THE DRUMS CONTINUE OVER... the Hollywood sign.

INT. ROOS' CADILLAC / EXT. LONG DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

POV: Inside the car as it pulls off Mulholland and up a
long tiki-torch lit driveway, approaching a gate.

REVEAL: Coppola and Roos wide-eyed at the strange
surroundings as they pull past the security gate.

FRED ROOS

'fuck is this? *Lord Of The Flies?*

EXT. HOLLYWOOD MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Roos parks the Cadillac on the edge of a large circular
driveway, in the center of which a full-blown Native
American rainmaking ritual is underway.

Coppola and Roos get out and take in... the ten-foot high
BONFIRE, around which dance and leap COUNTLESS PAINTED AND
HEAD-DRESSED MEN; hair braided, naked.

RABBITS ROAST ON SPITS tended by WOMEN clothed loosely in
buffalo hide, some bare-breasted as they nurse BABIES.
Others shuck maize, knead tortillas, hang tobacco, etc.

FRED ROOS

(aside to Coppola)
Hang onto your scalp.

They get too close and are nearly side-swiped by a LARGE
MALE DANCING WILDLY, sporting the largest headdress.

FRED ROOS (CONT'D)
Ho, easy, fella!

The male stops and approaches, looming. It's MARLON BRANDO; 45, shoulder-length blond hair, more than pudgy.

FRED ROOS (CONT'D)
Marlon!

BRANDO
No, no. In this land I am called, "He With Deep Pockets".

Coppola and Roos just stare, not sure how to react.

BRANDO (CONT'D)
That was a joke, boys.

FRED ROOS
(chuckling, re: the dance)
Well, Marlon, what the hell are you doing here?

BRANDO
What, this? California's in a drought. I'm taking care of it.

EXT. BRANDO'S MANSION - LATER

The dancing has ceased in favor of feasting. Roos, Coppola, and Brando sit outside a large teepee, Brando passing around the peace pipe. Coppola smokes, COUGHS:

COPPOLA
Marlon, I just wanna say, I'm in awe of you. And I genuinely feel you're the only actor who can bring the dignity and gravitas the Don requires.

Brando smokes, pondering for a long beat, then responds IN FLUENT APACHE...

BRANDO (SUBTITLE)
What you speak, it is true. Father Bear must be lion-hearted. But I have foregone the way of the sacred clown.

COPPOLA
... I don't... I don't speak whatever that is--

BRANDO
(in English)
I'm through acting. I give myself entirely now to righting the injustices of these peoples.

FRED ROOS
This part could be your comeback, Marlon. Think how much righting you could do in the world if you won another Oscar.

Brando shrugs, acknowledging his point.

BRANDO
 For guidance, we must pray.
 (takes their hands, bows head)
 Ehecatl, God of Winds, if it be your will
 I star in this motion picture, give us a
 sign.

Silence, as they wait... then SFX: A BIG-ASS WET FART DRAGS
 OUT for at least five seconds before petering out! Then:

BRANDO (CONT'D)
 Ehecatl has spoken.

He breaks into childlike LAUGHTER, holding up a whoopee
 cushion. Eventually, Coppola and Roos laugh too.

BRANDO (CONT'D)
 I like to make jokes!
 (more laughing)
 You should see your faces!

He pantomimes Coppola and Roos' faces, still laughing as
 a NATIVE AMERICAN approaches:

NATIVE AMERICAN
 Okay, Mr. Brando. We're gonna wrap up.

Brando nods, standing. The Indians start packing up.

FRED ROOS
 Just like that?

BRANDO
 Ten hours. It's in their contract.

COPPOLA
 (surprised)
 You're paying them?

BRANDO
 They won't do the song and dance
 otherwise. I mean, what's the point?
 (leans in, whispering)
 And, actually, I'm not paying. Don't
 have the cash. They want to be actors,
 so I just promised to get 'em SAG cards.
 (laughs at his lie)
 They believe me 'cuz I'm famous!

Brando's LAUGHTER grows to HYSTERIA as he walks off. ANGLE
 ON: Roos and Coppola mesmerized as they watch him exit.

COPPOLA
 So, was that a "yes"?

FRED ROOS
 (shrugging)
 It wasn't a "no".

EXT. THE POLO LOUNGE (BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL) - DAY

Unbridled opulence. A haven for the WELL-TO-DO and FAMOUS, all of whom are preoccupied with the two biggest swinging dicks in the room:

Evans finishing lunch with mega-producer DINO DE LAURENTIIS; 50, thick Italian accent, small but fierce. Evans toasts.

EVANS

Dino baby, I wanna *Cent-anni* you on the recent success of *Waterloo*.

SUPER: "Dino De Laurentiis, Producer -- 'La Strada', 'Ulysses'"

EVANS (CONT'D)

Doing bango-boxo in the old country, hmm? That's real nice. *Quaint*, but nice.

DE LAURENTIIS

(insulted)

You know, Evans, in-a Italy *Love Story* is-a... come se dice... a *genre*, no a title. Audience is *sophisticated* enough to process story from, eh, content. And fucking.

EVANS

So happens this is the love story to end 'em all, Didi. And you wanna talk sophistication, how 'bout *The Godfather*? Took me six months to read that novel. Stone sober.

DE LAURENTIIS

Ah, si, *The Godfather*. Soon, I forget the *real* Cosa Nostra in my street watching American boys-a with capguns defending their, eh, Mickey Mouse Club. And a whore with a *fica* like-a 'dis!

He makes a "giant pussy" gesture with his hands. Evans blushes, up against the wall.

EVANS

No, we're cutting the walk-in box, Dino. We're going high class all the way. Marlon Brando's up for the Don.

De Laurentiis begins HOWLING WITH LAUGHTER!

DE LAURENTIIS

Marlon Brando!!! *An Italian*?! No, no, you're not serious?

(off Evans' scowl, laughing)

You are! YOU ARE SERIOUS!!! Well, my friend, forget opening the film in Italy. They'll laugh him right off-a the screen!

(patronizing him)

Oh, Evans, *come ti senti*? Are you well? I worry about-a you!

(In true Hollywood fashion, the following is exchanged through clenched whitened teeth, smiles plastered on.)

EVANS

Well, Evans doesn't worry about you, ya wop bastard. So have your little laugh, 'cuz come the premiere, I'll have all you goombah fanooks eating ziti from my hand.

De Laurentiis betrays no anger, chuckling through with a grin.

DE LAURENTIIS

Fanook, eh? *Rosemary's Baby* can suck-a my dick.

EVANS

What's that, you've got a babydick?

DE LAURENTIIS (CONT'D)

Vaffanculo.

The two keep chuckling as a WAITER sets down their bill.

WAITER

Have a pleasant evening, gentlemen.

The waiter leaves and both men scramble for the check, a silent tug-of-war beginning.

EXT. PARAMOUNT LOT ENTRANCE / INT. EVANS' JAG - DAY

A THRONG of CHANTING PROTESTERS with signs reading "Italians for Italian Roles" clogs the busy security gate.

Evans turns in from the street and guides his Jaguar coupe through the crowd, being parted by SECURITY.

EVANS

(sotto)

What's this, a pizza-making convention?

He rolls down his window and yells at the BOOTH GUARD.

EVANS (CONT'D)

Open the goddamn gate. Get off your ass!

The gate opens and Evans guns the car into the lot.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - LATER

Evans sits in darkness, the screen reflection alone illuminating his stern face.

ON-SCREEN: An A.C. slates Pacino for his screen test.

A.C. (O.S.)

Screen test. Al Pacino for Michael Corleone. Marker.

ON-SCREEN: The CAMERA sets, pulling back briefly to reveal Pacino standing in all his glory at 5'5".

EVANS
Who's this runt?

Behind Evans, Coppola bristles, Roos and Ruddy sitting beside him.

ON-SCREEN: CLOSE ON Pacino sitting at a small table, playing the Michael/Kay wedding scene. Pale and gaunt, bags under his eyes and his hair wild despite having been combed, Pacino certainly isn't Ryan O'Neal!

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
Now Johnny is my father's godson. And my father went to see this bandleader...

EVANS
(to Coppola)
What's with the hair? And he's pale enough to be a goddamn taint, 'cept for the bags under his eyes. He looks like a fucking junkie!

COPPOLA
New York actors go for that style. A little hair, a little wardrobe and--

EVANS
He'll look like a fucking junkie taint in church.

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
... So, the next day, he signed a release for a certified check of one thousand dollars--

EVANS
I've seen snuff films where the corpse had more marquee appeal. Enough.

He waves his hands, standing. The LIGHTS COME UP.

EVANS (CONT'D)
What's your problem, Francis? I suggest Ryan O'Neal, you bring me the tossing dwarf from some Kabuki freakshow.

Evans heads for the exit.

INT. FOYER OUTSIDE SCREENING ROOMS - MOMENTS LATER

Coppola, Roos, and Ruddy chase after Evans, already halfway across the foyer.

COPPOLA
Bob, if you'd actually watched Pacino--

EVANS
Don't show me that popcorn fart again. I wanna see O'Neal.

RUDDY

Don't forget about Redford.

Coppola stares daggers at Ruddy.

EVANS

Right! The Jaw. Him too--

COPPOLA

If you'd watched, you'd see Pacino's eyes have the chilling intensity Michael needs.

EVANS

"Chilling intensity?" Have O'Neal drown his balls in ice water before you call "Action". This film needs a star.

COPPOLA

We'll have one. Brando's interested.

EVANS

Brando? Not a snowball's chance in hell. The man can't open a picture in Italy!

Coppola and Roos exchange confused looks.

EVANS (CONT'D)

He's been box office poison for years and I hear he's completely off the reservation.

RUDDY

You have no idea!
(to Roos)
Tell him about the rain dance.

FRED ROOS

(ignoring him, to Evans)
But you said Brando's great.

Evans stops, stepping up to Roos.

EVANS

I said he's divine, and who the fuck are you to question Evans changing his mind after foie gras at the Polo Lounge?

Evans moves again, out the door. Coppola to the others:

COPPOLA

Stay here. Both of you.

EXT. THE PARAMOUNT LOT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Coppola finds Evans lighting a cigar, looking at the CROWD OF PROTESTERS clogging the Paramount entrance, still CHANTING "Italians for Italian roles!"

COPPOLA

Certain actors reflect a certain time and place, Bob. The picture should embody New York City, just after the war. That economy birthed these family dynasties, precursors to the corporations ruling us today. That era and its people are the groundwork for the film's commentary.

Evans exhales smoke, laughing.

EVANS

So, just like that, you wanna film in New York. With New York actors no less.

COPPOLA

Mise-en-scene and casting make or break any film. You have to know that.

Evans chuckles some more, then gestures to the protesters.

EVANS

What do ya make of this little charade?

COPPOLA

It's not about hiring Italians?

EVANS

Oh, sure it is. But that's foreplay.
(off Coppola's confusion)
The Italian-American Civil Rights League.
"Guineas for a greasier tomorrow."
They've vowed to do anything to disrupt this production and us "smearing their heritage." This is only the latest stunt. Guess where they're based.

COPPOLA

(his face dropping)
New York City.

EVANS

Which means you got a better chance shootin' a load in the Queen of England than you do in that city.
(a slow burn)
And what sheik's giving you the cash to set this in the '40s, cuz Evans sure isn't. I'm making a lean, mean gangster pic. A blockbuster.
(brandishing his cigar)
And it will have blockbuster faces in it. *Commentary* or no. It's not personal. This is a business. Enterprise.

He drops the cigar on Coppola's shoe.

EVANS (CONT'D)

Oscar Mayer, not Oscar gold!

Evans hops onto a waiting golf cart driven by an ASSISTANT.

EVANS (CONT'D)

Go.

The kid floors it, steering left to avoid PEDESTRIANS.
Evans scolds him:

EVANS (CONT'D)

No! Let them move.

Pedestrians dive out of the cart's way as Coppola seethes.

INT. COPPOLA RESIDENCE / DINING ROOM - DAY

Coppola sits. Lucas sets the table, silverware in hand.

COPPOLA

I find a way to reconcile this *pulp novel* with my own creative benchmark, plus his desire for authenticity and he won't give me what I need. I'm gonna quit!

LUCAS

You can't quit. What about your family?

He gestures to the kitchen where Eleanor, the kids, COPPOLA'S PARENTS and OTHER FAMILY work on a large meal.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

And the company?

COPPOLA

We'll do some educational films, maybe a few commercials. Hang in 'til *THX* hits.

Lucas takes an unsteady breath, pacing nervously:

LUCAS

I don't think *THX* is gonna do that kind of business, Francis. I showed Warners the rough cut yesterday.

COPPOLA

And?...
(off Lucas' face)
They hated it.

LUCAS

They practically threw feces at the screen. They're still gonna release, but they won't spend a penny to market it.

COPPOLA

Great.

LUCAS

That's not all. They're calling in the Zoetrope loan. Immediately. That's another six hundred grand.

This sinks in, Coppola slumping, then snapping:

COPPOLA
Were you gonna tell me about this?!

LUCAS
You were meeting Evans. I thought the fourth horseman could wait. I'm sorry about *THX*.

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| LUCAS (CONT'D) | COPPOLA |
| I'll get in the edit bay | It's fine. Ju-ju-just, |
| and start cutting-- | <u>George!</u> ... Shut up and set |
| | the table. |

Lucas does so as Coppola stews.

INT. COPPOLA RESIDENCE / FOYER - LATER

The DOORBELL RINGS and Lucas lets in Ruddy and Roos. Ruddy is loaded down with several briefcases.

LUCAS
Hey. You made it. Come in.
(re: Ruddy's briefcases)
Need some help?

RUDDY
Sure, thanks. I brought all my research on this Italian League for later.

FRED ROOS
How you doin', Georgie?

LUCAS
Oh, pretty good. For a man who was just fed his own genitals.

They head in.

INT. COPPOLA RESIDENCE / DINING ROOM - LATER

Coppola sits brooding in the same position we last saw him in, untouched food before him as HIS GUESTS AND ENTIRE FAMILY eat merrily, kids running everywhere!

CONVERSATIONS: RUDDY AND ITALIA COPPOLA (FRANCIS' MOTHER):

ITALIA COPPOLA
Are you looking forward to Christmas?

RUDDY
Oh, I'm not very religious, ma'am.

ITALIA COPPOLA
(gasps)
But you're so handsome.

LUCAS AND AUGUST COPPOLA (FRANCIS' BROTHER):

LUCAS
(explaining)
...no, no; it's a sword made of light.

AUGUST COPPOLA
Get outta here!

ELEANOR AND HER SONS:

ELEANOR
...Boys, eat that broccoli.

GIO
No, I don't like it.

ELEANOR
You wanna turn eight? Eat it.

FRED ROOS AND ACTRESS TALIA SHIRE (FRANCIS' SISTER):

TALIA
... and I can relate to Connie having grown up with domineering brothers.

FRED ROOS
You'll do great, Tally.

TALIA
Well, I got a new headshot--

Coppola seizes on this:

COPPOLA
What? Wha-- What about Connie?

The table's instantly quiet; it's the first he's spoken.

FRED ROOS
I invited Tally to audition for us. I saw her in that play last month, she was outstanding.

COPPOLA
I swear to Christ, everything and everyone is working against me. I'm all alone, dripping in doom here.

ELEANOR
It's just an audition.

COPPOLA
So suddenly you're an expert?

TALIA
Don't take it out on her. That's not--

ITALIA COPPOLA
Talia, sweetheart. Don't interfere.

COPPOLA
Evans finds out I got my kid sister auditioning, he'll shit down my throat.

ITALIA COPPOLA
Oh, such lovely language
for your family.

CARMINE COPPOLA
Francis, we're eatin' gravy
here!

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
He already loathes all my casting
choices. Nepotism'll really help my
credibility, Tal!

He stands abruptly and storms out. Still wrapped in their
earlier conversation, an oblivious August turns to Lucas.

AUGUST COPPOLA
You mean like a laser?

EXT. COPPOLA BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Coppola pouts at a patio table. Ruddy and Roos approach.

COPPOLA
Tally's too beautiful to play the Don's
daughter. The groom wants to be a
Corleone and the price is marrying this
beast of a woman. That's how I saw it.

FRED ROOS
Georgie told us what happened with
Warners. How can we help?

COPPOLA
I'll never convince Evans to make the
film I want without getting into New
York. I won't get the atmosphere. I
won't get the actors.

RUDDY
'kay. I have my notes on the League
right here.

Ruddy and Roos sit, Ruddy opening his briefcase.

This continued conversation is INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. GULF & WESTERN BUILDING (NEW YORK CITY) - DAY - EST.

WIDE SHOT: A dark Buick pulls up to the spectacular
skyscraper. THREE MEN in suits emerge and head inside.

INT. GULF & WESTERN STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

WE HEAR FOOTSTEPS before JOE COLUMBO SR. (50s, nice suit,
not ostentatious) comes into view and begins up the stairs,
followed by his aid, GIANNI RUSSO, 27 (more on Gianni later).

RUDDY (V.O.)
Now, the Italian-American Civil Rights
League was formed by Joseph Columbo after
his son, Joe Junior, was arrested for
melting silver coins into bars he tried
to sell back to the U.S. Mint.

ANGLE ON: Also heaving himself up the steps is JOE JR., a brain-dead mouth-breather if ever there was one!

RUDDY (V.O.)
Joe Senior felt his family was being unfairly targeted because of their ethnicity...

INT. GULF & WESTERN CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Joe Sr. and his entourage enter and cross to Ruddy, standing beside a small bar.

RUDDY (V.O.)
... so the League's stated aim is to combat harmful pejorative stereotypes.

Ruddy shakes Joe Sr's hand.

RUDDY
It's an honor, sir. Care for a drink?

JOE SR.
(frowning)
Why? 'Cuz I'm Italian?

SUPER: "Joe Columbo, Boss of the Columbo Crime Family, New York City"

EXT. COPPOLA BACKYARD - AS BEFORE

RUDDY
Basically, the League's a smokescreen for his crimes -- extortion, gambling, fraud. His members are mostly good people, but he's a crook. Probably a murderer. They'll be some hoops, my friend.

COPPOLA
(gruff)
I shouldn't have to jump through any of 'em. That's your job.

Coppola locks eyes with Eleanor through the kitchen window. He smiles, but gets only a pissed-off stare in return.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
(discouraged by Eleanor)
I don't care what it takes. A crook and a murderer?
(nods at Ruddy)
Go do business with him, Al.

INT. GULF & WESTERN CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Ruddy swallows anxiously, now seated with Joe Sr., et al.

RUDDY
Mr. Columbo, our director Francis Coppola is a third generation Italian-American.
(MORE)

RUDDY (CONT'D)

He's not about to besmirch his own people. The script he's crafting has the singular goal of showing how the American dream was corrupted by moral ambiguity and crime amongst all cultures in 1940s New York. Not just the Italians. We have an unscrupulous Jewish film producer, a crooked Irish police captain--

JOE SR.

(cutting Ruddy off)
There ya go, make it about the Paddys.

RUDDY

... I'm sorry?

JOE SR.

If it's about universal corruption, base it on the Irish gangs.

Ruddy is caught; Columbo has a point!

JOE SR. (CONT'D)

Or the Russians. Nobody cares a lick about them. Especially not now.

RUDDY

Mr. Columbo--

JOE SR.

The Japs are startin' something too.
Uh...

(struggles for the name)
... the Isuzu.

GIANNI RUSSO

--The Yakuza.

JOE SR.

--The Ikuzu. Drag their shame out. You can film anywhere in town you like. I'll even get ya a rate on rice.

RUDDY

Sir, we can't change the foundation of the book without sacrificing the characters.

JOE SR.

Ah, so it is about Italians.

RUDDY

It's about the mafia.

JOE SR.

'Scuse me? There is no mafia.

JOE JR.

(seething)
We oughta' break his fucking legs.

JOE SR.

--Junior!

Junior blushes under his father's withering glare. Gianni Russo shakes his head. Ruddy is terrified.

JOE SR. (CONT'D)

(to Ruddy)

My children talk when they should listen.

(then)

But, anyway, Mr. Ruddy, our position is unwavering. So long as your film "propagrades" the myth of this imaginary organization, we'll stand against it.

Joe Sr. gestures to Gianni Russo -- "We're leaving". Ruddy scrambles, pulling documents from his briefcase.

RUDDY

Wait, sir, let's compromise. I have a list of fiscal incentives the production can offer your constituents--

JOE SR.

"Constituents?"

He CHUCKLES, then spots and brushes some lint off Ruddy's pants before standing. Russo stands too.

JOE SR. (CONT'D)

Nobody voted me in, Mr. Ruddy. I'm just a man with powerful friends. Try to film in this town and you'll find out. I don't have to compromise.

(then, to Joe Jr.)

Junior, make it quick.

Joe Jr. stands, rounds the table fast, coming up to Ruddy fast, his hand in his suit like he has a gun! Then, he pulls out... a screenplay, tossing it on the table.

JOE JR.

(to Ruddy)

I been banging this Underwood past couple months, here's what I come with. It's *Seven Samurai* meets *West Side Story*. I got Ann-Margret's tits hangin' out through the whole fucking thing.

He winks and heads for the door before turning back:

JOE JR. (CONT'D)

Oh, and I'm with William Morris.

ON Ruddy's face AS WE:

CUT TO:

EXT. PARAMOUNT LOT - DAY - EST.

Back in LA, business as usual...

COPPOLA (PRE-LAP)
He brushed lint off your suit?

INT. CASTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ruddy faces Coppola and Roos, having just recounted the scene.

RUDDY
(nodding)
Readying my body for the wake, I suppose.
(then)
Guess Evans was right about New York.

FRED ROOS
If I know Bob, I'm sure he'll be gracious
about it.

Ruddy chuckles. Not Coppola. He snaps at Ruddy:

COPPOLA
Don't admit a goddamn thing to Bob. As
far as he knows, you smoothed it over.
Start building the sets in Manhasset.

Ruddy looks askance at Roos -- "Is he crazy?"

RUDDY
Columbo controls the entire state.

COPPOLA
Then pull a rabbit out of your hat. I
wanna film in New York. That should end
any debate.

RUDDY
(quietly)
I'd rather not lie to Bob, Franc--

COPPOLA
Of course not! He's the money.
(sneering)
You've shown real mettle today, Al.

Ouch. Silence as Ruddy recovers from the lashing.

RUDDY
Okay, Francis. We'll start building.
I'll take another run at Columbo.

COPPOLA
Fine.
(a pseudo-apology)
I just want to hear more good news.

There's a KNOCK and Ruddy's secretary, BETTYE McCARTT
(30s, cute -- yes, that's how she spells her name) enters.

RUDDY
Yeah, Bettye.

BETTYE
Ryan O'Neal is here to read.

Ruddy and Roos look away as Coppola huffs.

INT. CASTING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CU ON: RYAN O'NEAL doing his pining-after-dead-girlfriend lovesick face; **PAUSING OVER-DRAMATICALLY THROUGHOUT.**

RYAN O'NEAL (AS MICHAEL)
My father... (PAUSE) made him an offer...
(PAUSE) he couldn't refuse.

A 16mm camera films him and DIANE KEATON playing the Michael/Kay wedding scene. Coppola, Ruddy and Roos watch.

DIANE KEATON (AS KAY)
What was that?

RYAN O'NEAL (AS MICHAEL)
Luca Brasi... (PAUSE) held a gun to his
head... (PAUSE) and my father assured
him... (PAUSE)

ANGLE ON: Coppola, trying to mask horror at the abomination.

RYAN O'NEAL (AS MICHAEL) (CONT'D)
... that either his brains... (PAUSE) or
his signature... (PAUSE) would be on the
contract... (LONG PAUSE)

Thinking O'Neal's finished, Roos reaches to shut off the camera when:

RYAN O'NEAL (AS MICHAEL) (CONT'D)
That's my family, Kay... (PAUSE) It's not
me.

Coppola, Ruddy, and Roos lean forward, hanging on O'Neal, unsure if he's done! At last, he smiles and they CLAP.

| | |
|--|--|
| COPPOLA | FRED ROOS |
| That's great, Ryan. You really did something there. Thank you. | Wow! I got chills. I mean chills. You're the real deal, young man. |

RYAN O'NEAL (CONT'D)
I'm so glad you liked it. I prepared more if--

| | |
|--|---|
| COPPOLA | FRED ROOS |
| Oh, no, no, no. I've seen all I need. I couldn't ask anymore of your time. | No, no! Not without writing you a check with alotta zeroes on it. We're good. |

RYAN O'NEAL (CONT'D)
Alright, well, thanks fellas. I'll see you at the premiere?

FRED ROOS
Love Story, only two more weeks. We'll
 be there.

RYAN O'NEAL
 O-kay.
 (extending his hand)
 Lovely to meet you Diane.

DIANE KEATON
 You as well.

She reaches to shake, but is holding the script sides in her hand. Laughing at herself, she drops the sides. They both bend to retrieve them, smacking heads. O'Neal laughs, looking away just as Diane bends again, this time head-butting his crotch!

DIANE KEATON (CONT'D)
 Oh God! I-- I'm sorry.

RYAN O'NEAL
 It's okay. I wasn't using them--

Diane is her usual Annie Hall frenzied apologetic mess as O'Neal holds the door for her; a belt loop on her flowing trousers catching the doorknob, yanking her back.

DIANE KEATON
 Oooh! Sorry!

At last they're out and Fred Roos closes the door, shooting Coppola and Ruddy a look.

FRED ROOS
 'least we won't have to worry about him
 once Bob sees this footage.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. FOYER OUTSIDE SCREENING ROOMS - DAY

Evans bursts through a door labelled "Screening Room 4" into the foyer, an ecstatic snap in his step.

EVANS
Sen-sational! O'Neal kills it again!

Behind him, Coppola, Ruddy, and Roos exit in defeat.

EVANS (CONT'D)
 You boys are on an upswing. First New York and now this kid. I'm telling ya, he's the find of the century!
 (to Coppola)
 Do you love him?
 (before he can respond)
 'course, you love him. Evans is gonna send him a Jag. Hardtop, not a convertible. We can't risk losing that gorgeous sun-kissed cash-cow head!

He notices the three of them looking down.

EVANS (CONT'D)
 What's wrong?
 (then, realizing)
 You don't love him.

COPPOLA
 He's not a fighter, Bob. He's not
 internal, he's a pretty boy--

EVANS
 A good pretty boy'll bring this town to
 its knees. They're our bread and butter.
 I'm not having this argument with you
 again, Francis.

Evans heads for the exit, calling back:

EVANS (CONT'D)
 O'Neal'll put more asses in seats than
 fucking polio. That's what counts.

Evans pushes open the door, leaving Coppola to brood.

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

Al Pacino sits uncomfortably in a barber's chair as a
 TEAM OF BARBERS/BEAUTICIANS prep him for the works.

REVEAL: Coppola and Roos watching from nearby.

FRED ROOS
 I think you're reaching here, Francie.

The barber begins cutting Pacino's hair. Pacino winces!

COPPOLA
 Why? If Evans sees a pretty actor who
 can actually act, maybe he'll choose him.
 (off Roos' skeptical look)
 It's worth a shot. Al's good-looking
 under all that hair.

Another barber uses a straight razor to hack at Pacino's
 sideburns. He GASPS!

PACINO
 Ooh, ooh, I don't think I like that.
 (yelling to Coppola)
 I told you they wouldn't want me. This
 won't change a thing. A star will not be
 born!

COPPOLA
 Remember you said you trust me? Now grit
 your teeth.

An esthetician begins plucking Pacino's unibrow as the
 barber continues, hair pouring onto the floor.

PACINO
I feel very vulnerable right now. This isn't me.

COPPOLA
You're an actor, Al. There is no you. Michael is a dashing college kid.

Pacino CRIES OUT, his face engulfed by beautifying hands.

FRED ROOS
(to Coppola)
I'm just saying maybe we shouldn't provoke Evans. He already gave us Diane Keaton, Duvall for Hagen, John Cazale as Fredo. All our first picks. Why push him any further?

COPPOLA
Because, as ridiculous as it is, we have to fight for the actors we want. All of them. I haven't given up on Brando yet either.

Coppola notices Roos squirm a bit.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
What?

FRED ROOS
Bob sent me a memo this morning--

COPPOLA
Direct to you? He bypassed me?!

FRED ROOS
Except for Michael, he now only wants us considering Italians for the Corleones.

COPPOLA
Why? I had Ruddy tell him the League was under control.

FRED ROOS
Doesn't matter. He wants an international cast. For the Don, he's talking Ernest Borgnine, Richard Conte, Frankie Valli, even Sinatra.

COPPOLA
Wha-- Jesus Christ, Ole' Blue Eyes?! Maybe he can tap dance with Bing at Connie's wedding. Think of the ticket sales then!

(then)
All Italians means we can't run Jimmy Caan for Sonny. Caan's a Jew.

Roos gestures toward Pacino, leaning in. Hushed:

FRED ROOS
That's my point, Francis. We got a lot
of other battles left to fight. Like it
or not, the buck stops with Evans.

ANGLE ON: A jaded Coppola looks away, noticing...

RACK FOCUS TO: A floor to ceiling length barber pole on
the wall. Coppola's eyes follow the red and blue lines
spinning upward, all the way to the top.

COPPOLA
... No, it doesn't.

FRED ROOS
Huh?

Coppola moves for the exit with purpose.

COPPOLA
The buck doesn't stop with Evans.

FRED ROOS
What are you talkin' about--?

COPPOLA
I'll take care of it.

Glancing back, Coppola notices the gaggle of barbers/
beauticians escorting a towel-wrapped Pacino to the shampoo
sink -- Pacino nearly a foot shorter than all of them!

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
(to Roos, re: Pacino)
Oh, and call Florsheim, will ya? Get
someone to fit him for lifts.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JAFFE ESTATE - DUSK - EST.

A car drives along a winding road on an opulent estate,
pulling up to a huge mansion. Coppola gets out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAFFE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Coppola sits alone at an enormous table, a sumptuous meal
before him. SERVANTS stand at attention along the wall.

Seconds later, A MAN pushes through a swinging door. This
is STANLEY JAFFE; completely bald, the angriest man in
Hollywood with his permanent scowl and red smoking jacket.

JAFFE
Alright, start talking.

Jaffe sits and begins throwing food at his face. He
NEVER STOPS EATING, just CHEWS, SLURPS, GRUNTS, etc.

SUPER: "Stanley Jaffe, CEO, Paramount Pictures"

COPPOLA
 First, thank you for seeing me, Mr. Jaffe.
 (off Jaffe's GRUNT)
 You know I'm directing *The Godfather*.
 (another GRUNT through food)
 And my casting director and I feel we have the right actor for the pivotal role of Don Corleone.
 (Jaffe GRUNTS understanding)
 He's smart and intense, has the physical grandeur to portray a man of such power.

Jaffe glances at a servant and TAPS HIS FORK loudly on his empty plate. She refills, he continues scarfing.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 He... He's a box office draw, he's received acclaim around the world.
 (GRUNT: "And?")
 The only issue is, Bob Evans doesn't want him.

Hearing "Bob Evans", Jaffe chokes and begins COUGHING. After drinking some water, sotto:

JAFFE
 ... 'at motherfucker!

COPPOLA
 (nods, then moves on)
 So, we were hoping, Mr. Jaffe, you could grant us a small favor.

JAFFE
 Jaffe's listening.

COPPOLA
 Well,... give Marlon Brando the part.

Jaffe stops eating immediately, puts down his fork.

JAFFE
 Marlon Brando?

COPPOLA
 (terrified)
 Yes.

JAFFE
 That part is perfect for him.

COPPOLA
 (relieved)
 Yes.

JAFFE
 It'll make him a big star again.

COPPOLA
(elated)
YES!

JAFFE
And I'm gonna run him outta the business!

COPPOLA
(crushed)
No...

JAFFE
And let me tell you why.

Jaffe throws down his napkin and stands, leaning on the table as he gets closer and closer to Coppola.

JAFFE (CONT'D)
Sam Spiegel and my father used to talk about the good old days; when actors were hired help. Chess pieces to be moved however was best for the studio. This is before Sam did "On The Waterfront." Talent got outta line, demanded too much of the take; they got cut loose. And then Marlon Brando comes along with his Sense Memory Technique and Stanislavsky charm. People can't get enough of him, and others like him. So now they're calling the shots -- trailer riders, producing credits, back end points. Pappy lost a lot of his nut after that. All us producers did. And it's not like Brando needed the cash. These actors already get everything for free. He did it just to make Pappy look ridiculous. AND MY PAPPY CAN'T AFFORD TO BE MADE TO LOOK RIDICULOUS. NEITHER CAN I! Now you get the hell outta here! And if Brando wants to try anything clever, you tell him I ain't no squaw lookin' for a SAG card.

Coppola reacts.

JAFFE (CONT'D)
Yeah. I heard about that.

EXT. JAFFE'S FRONT DOOR - LATER

The front door opens; Coppola and Jaffe emerge. Jaffe holds out his hand, all smiles.

JAFFE
Good luck with the picture.

Coppola shakes warily.

COPPOLA
Thank you for dinner and a very pleasant evening.

He gets in his car and drives away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CASTING ROOM - DAY

OVERHEAD ANGLE: Headshots and sandwiches spread over a large table, Coppola before them, head in hands, depressed.

Beside him, Roos SHUFFLES the headshots. Ruddy stands across from them in silence, having just delivered some bad news.

COPPOLA

And how'd Columbo find out?

RUDDY

That's what he does. It's what I was afraid would happen. We've already dropped a hundred grand in Manhasset and now the Teamsters have the set completely boarded up.

COPPOLA

Jesus, Al, you were supposed to reach out again.

RUDDY

I haven't been able to find him.

COPPOLA

Well, where the fuck is he?

RUDDY

I don't know. A guy like that wants to disappear, he disappears!

COPPOLA

Don't yell at me.

RUDDY

Well, I'm sorry, but I'm getting death threats now. LAPD told me to switch up cars so I can't be tailed. I got Bettye my poor secretary driving my Alfa looking over her shoulder half the time. And, excuse me, but it was your idea to start building, not mine--

COPPOLA

I shouldn't a' had to deal with this, any of this, at all! You're logistics, I direct, goddamnit! If I had a feature producer, I wouldn't be in this shape! Hitchcock had David O. Selznick. Look what I got. *Hogan's-fucking-Heroes!*

Ruddy heads for the door, pissed off and hurt.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)

I'm pushing a boulder up a mountain here, Al. You wanna kick a few pebbles outta' my way?

But Ruddy's gone. Roos, disapprovingly:

FRED ROOS

This is no pebble, Francis. And he's not Houdini.

INT. HALLWAY/WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ruddy walks quickly past Bettye, who's sitting at a desk.

BETTYE

Al?

He doesn't respond, just keeps moving down the hall right past... Pacino freshly scrubbed, trim in a suit, great haircut, he looks like (dare we say it) a movie star!

Pacino's eyes return to the sides he's been studying when a furious Evans charges in, past Pacino and into...

INT. CASTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

... the room. Evans SLAMS the door, goes around the table and right up to Coppola, who stands.

EVANS

You went over Evans' head.

COPPOLA

Bob, Jaffe's the CEO, he's got a right to weigh in.

EVANS

Smug-ass spaghetti-slurper. I was shielding you from that lunatic for your own good. I knew that eunuch wants to hate-fuck Brando and our only shot was a united front.

COPPOLA

What united front? You hate Brando too.

EVANS

We were "in talks" about it. We're always in talks! Oh, but that's not good enough for you. You're an auteur. You crap masterpieces for breakfast and we're all just here to wipe your ass. Well, now you've shit yourself, Boyardee, and you can kiss Brando goodbye, even if he does turn out to be the right guy, which he ain't!

Evans heads for the door, then turns back:

EVANS (CONT'D)
 I'm not the sharpest hair up your ass.
 So you better listen up. "No means no"
 when you're in bed with Evans.

He exits, slamming the door, the resulting breeze blowing a bunch of the headshots off and around the table.

INT. HALLWAY/WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Evans straightens his tie, about to walk off when something catches his eye. He slowly zeroes in on... Pacino!

Evans is apoplectic -- "What's he doing here?!" -- but soon he's smiling, a plan forming. He approaches:

EVANS
 Pacino, right?
 (before he can respond)
 Bob Evans, V.P. Worldwide Production.

PACINO
 (standing, shakes hands)
 Al. How are you, sir?

EVANS
 I'm always wonderful. Say, nice haircut.
 What'd that run you, 'bout two bucks?

Evans laughs, slapping Pacino's shoulder.

EVANS (CONT'D)
 Just joshin' ya! I'm glad to see you're back. We could use a face like yours in this picture, even if the studio doesn't like you for Michael.

Pacino's face drops; the wind right out of his sails.

EVANS (CONT'D)
 What's Coppola testing you for, a button man?

PACINO
 (devastated, he lies)
 ... uh, I guess, ... I'm not really sure.

EVANS
 Yeah, I can see that. Stand you up on a couple apple boxes... Grrr! You'll be terrifying!
 (then)
 Look, I gotta run. Good luck, kid.

Evans saunters off, pleased with himself. Pacino's already fragile ego begins melting down. Humiliated and angry, he spins to leave, nearly running into A PASSERBY.

PACINO
 Sorry, sorry.

He goes to step around, but a STUDIO TOUR GROUP rounds a corner, clogging the hallway as Pacino tries to get by.

PACINO (CONT'D)
Pardon me-- 'scuse me-- Excuse me!

Frustration running high, he goes "full Pacino" on the poor unassuming tourists blocking his way!

PACINO (CONT'D)
Sir!... MAKE AN AISLE! GET OUTTA THE WAY! SCOOT!... SCOOT!!!

Bettye calls past the alarmed crowd...

BETTYE
Al?... Al?!

PACINO
(still to the crowd)
MOVE YOUR ASSES! ACTOR WALKIN' HERE!

He finally gets clear and exits the building; everyone staring, stunned at the antics of this lunatic!

A beat later, Coppola emerges from the casting room, his eyes searching before he turns to Bettye.

COPPOLA
Where the hell is Al?

CUT TO:

MEDIA MONTAGE -- STOCK FOOTAGE:

Cinemas around the country; lovers (young and old) standing in lines around the block -- all eagerly awaiting the film on the marquee: "Love Story". WE HEAR NEWS RADIO:

RADIO HOST (V.O.)
... the Christmas time release of *Love Story* has defied even its most optimistic expectations. Young couples are flocking to the tragic love tale, some returning two and three times.

ARCHIVAL PRINT:

Newspapers lauding *Love Story's* "Record Breaking Opening Weekend"; "Greatest Date Movie of All Time". WE HEAR A TV REPORTER:

TV REPORTER (V.O.)
... an amazing turnaround for Paramount Pictures, on the brink of bankruptcy only four years ago. Now at the top of the proverbial mountain...

Old Variety/HR articles trumpet "Robert Evans: Paramount's Savior"; "Bob's Streak Continues".

TV REPORTER (V.O.)
 ... with no sign of slowing, according to
 Senior V.P. Robert Evans,...

TV PRESS CONFERENCE FOOTAGE:

Evans standing outside Paramount, surrounding by PRESS
 and whipping the crowd into a frenzy.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)
 ... a man whose bold choices and tireless
 dedication are largely responsible for
 the comeback, even if he does say so
 himself.

EVANS
 When I took over, this place was in the
 crapper. Now, thanks to me, we've got
 the highest grossing film of 1970!
 (he hushes the crowd, goes on)
 And it won't be the last time, as I'm
 proud to announce Paramount's big
 production of 1971... will be *The
 Godfather*.
 (holds for applause)
 Soon to begin filming in New York City,
 and it's gonna be a smash! 'Cuz I'm
 Moses! And--

SUDDENLY, THE PICTURE GOES BLACK. PULL OUT TO REVEAL:

INT. COPPOLA'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

Coppola, alone, shuts off a TV, his stress having just
 doubled with Evans' announcement. He returns to TYPING.

Moments later, Talia KNOCKS and enters excitedly.

TALIA
 Francis, thank you, thank you, thank you!

She hugs him in his chair. He hugs her back, confused.

COPPOLA
 What's this for?

TALIA
 Well-- for Connie. For giving me the
 part!

Coppola stares, in pure shock, as she continues:

TALIA (CONT'D)
 Bob Evans himself called to tell me. He
 loved my test, said nepotism be damned,
 you're perfect for it. Said I'm worth
 "five Pacinos"...
 (confused)
 ... which I don't-- Is that a Jewish
 thing? I'm not sure what that means.
 But I am so happy, and so stunned.
 Honestly, I didn't think you wanted me.

COPPOLA

I don't. You're completely wrong for it.

Talia steps back, like she was just slapped.

TALIA

Then, why--

COPPOLA

Evans cast you, not me. He probably figures it's a small part, who cares who gets it, and now when we're fighting he can play the "remember I cast your kid sister" card. It's leverage.

(his anger building)

Everything with him is a goddamn power play, Tally!

TALIA

I'm sorry. Fred called me in--

COPPOLA

"Called you in?!" You glad-handed and bat your pretty little eyes, at my table--

TALIA

Well, that's how actors get in the door! It has nothing to do with you--

Coppola stands, boiling over.

COPPOLA

It has everything to do with me! I got no room to move here!

(pointing at the TV)

"Paramount's big production of 1971 is *The Godfather*". It's on a pedestal now. If I quit, it means I couldn't handle a high-profile project. If I stay and let Evans screw it up, then I'm the director who ruined *The Godfather*. My reputation, my integrity, my company, my home are all on the line. On top of that, the actual mafia's pissed at us, and now all the baggage you piled on!

The weight of the situation; her naivete, his anger at her -- washes over Talia, who's moved to tears.

TALIA

Do you want me to not take it? I don't have to take it.

COPPOLA

No, don't do that. I'll probably be fired anyway. Why shouldn't you get something out of it?

Low blow, and Talia feels it. Coppola sits and begins TYPING again. A beat later, quietly:

TALIA
 Since we were kids, you have always been
 the star, Francis. The rest of us only
 try to keep up. But we're here too, ya
 know.

Coppola keeps TYPING as she exits. A beat later, he
 stops and looks up at a newspaper photo taped to the wall
 -- it's the one of Evans, Bart, Ruddy and Coppola.

The PHONE RINGS, but Coppola's eyes remain on the photo
 until he suddenly punches it, breaking through the
 plaster and hurting his hand in the process.

COPPOLA
 Fuck! Ahh... Jesus!

He HUFFS and goes back to typing, using only the
 uninjured hand. A moment later, Eleanor enters.

ELEANOR
 Francis, I've got--
 (noticing the damaged wall)
 What's that?

COPPOLA
 ... well that's an accident, but nobody
 was hurt.

She glares at him, but swallows the anger.

ELEANOR
 Your friend, Mr. Butts, is on the phone.

COPPOLA
 Huh?

ELEANOR
 Yeah. Seymour.
 (off his confusion)
 As in...

COPPOLA
 (getting it)
 Seymour Butts.

He immediately picks up the phone as Eleanor exits.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
 Hello, Marlon.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BRANDO'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

REVEAL: Brando in the tub, LAUGHING at his own joke.

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
 "See More Butts"!

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
Take it on the road. You'll kill with
the five and under crowd.

Brando stops laughing, suddenly very serious.

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
No. I would never bullshit a child.
They speak only the truth. This is why
we hate them.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
... I wasn't implying you'd--

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
Did you see your studio man on TV?

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
I did.

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
This picture'll be subject to a lot of
scrutiny now.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
Do ya think?

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
By nature, I'm very private.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
You're an actor, sure.

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
I worry people won't accept me as an
aging Italian. I've always been so...

Brando checks himself out in the mirror, smoothing his
hair, waiting for Coppola to jump in...

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
... beautiful. Is that it?

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
If one must put a word to it.
(then)
Have to turn you down, Francis. My
career as it is, I can't afford to fall
on my "beautiful" face again. Your word,
not mine.

Coppola bites his knuckles -- "Another problem?!" Then:

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
Marlon, I truly don't believe there's a
part on God's earth you can't play. Your
talent outshines even your beauty when it
comes to disappearing into a role.
That's why I want you.

Brando absorbs this, the flattery working.

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
Well, I did have a few thoughts.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
Yeah?

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
This man, the Don. I think maybe he was
shot in the throat long ago.

Brando switches into Don Corleone's raspy/mumbly voice.

BRANDO (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
So, now he sounds like this. His vocal
cords are damaged. Swollen and obtuse,
like, eh... cauliflower ear.

Coppola struggles to hear him.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
I... I can't understand you.

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
(still as the Don)
But it's alright. Powerful people, they
don't have to speak loud.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
They do have to speak English though.
But listen, I think you're onto
something. Workshop it some more, you
can always quit later.

Brando holds up a rubber duck from the tub, singing:

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
*Rubber duckie, you're the one.
You make bathtime lots of fun.
Rubber duckie, I'm awfully fond of you,...*

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
Bye, Marlon.

BRANDO (ON PHONE)
Vo-vo-dee-oo!

Coppola hangs up. END INTERCUTTING. Coppola rubs his
temples, stretches his injured hand and returns to
TYPING, painfully. The PHONE RINGS again. Irritated:

COPPOLA
ELEANOR! THE PHONE!

ELEANOR (O.S.)
I'M IN THE BATHROOM! DON'T TAKE IT OUT
ON THE WALLS!

Coppola answers the phone.

What?! COPPOLA (ON PHONE)

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PUZO'S OFFICE (LA) - CONTINUOUS

Puzo at his desk, script pages in hand.

PUZO (ON PHONE)
It's Mario. Jesus Fuck, what's wrong?

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
Oh, nothing. Brando wants the Don to sound like a stroke victim is all.

PUZO (ON PHONE)
Evans is giving him the part now?

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
No. But Brando's turning it down anyway.

PUZO (ON PHONE)
... I see. Not my problem. Got your first batch 'a pages here...

Coppola pauses, expecting the worst.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
... And?

PUZO (ON PHONE)
And I thought you were an asshole before...
(laughing)
... talkin' about art!
(reads off a page)
"It's not personal, Sonny. It's strictly business." And a minute later he shoots two men point blank in the head. That's your dream come full circle right there. Horror justified by prosperity. You pulled it outta' the book like I never could.

(off Coppola's silence)
I'm saying it's great writing, Francis.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
(sincere)
Thank you, Mario.

PUZO (ON PHONE)
Yeah. You see Evans on the tube?

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
Lot to live up to.

PUZO (ON PHONE)
Nevermind that. Ruddy settle things with the Guinea Squad yet?

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
I don't think so. Actually, Al and I are kinda' on the outs right now.

PUZO (ON PHONE)
Well, he better. Evans telling the world it'll shoot in New York without reaching a deal... Columbo and his boys won't be happy about that.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD / MCCARTT RESIDENCE - DAY

The pleasance of suburbia: BIRDS CHIRPING, KIDS PLAYING, maybe an ICE CREAM TRUCK.

An Alfa Romeo parks in the driveway of one home. Bettye McCartt (Ruddy's secretary) climbs out with groceries, her young SON and DAUGHTER wrestling in the back seat.

BETTYE
No roughhousing in Mr. Ruddy's car, please!

INT. MCCARTT RESIDENCE / KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Bettye sets the grocery bags on the counter and begins unpacking them. Before her kids can run off:

BETTYE
Wait, you both need a bath. I just have to put the milk away.

The kids start fighting about something...

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. MCCARTT RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE: Two sets of feet sporting polished wingtips move quickly down the sidewalk.

ANGLE: The TWO MEN in suits (their faces out of frame) charge; each with a small caliber pistol already in hand.

ANGLE: Overhead, as the men take aim at the Alfa Romeo in Bettye's driveway.

In the kitchen, Bettye startles as GUNFIRE CRACKS over her children's arguing! She drops a grocery bag.

ANGLE: Oranges spill from the bag and roll across the floor.

Outside, BULLETS tear through the Alfa's fenders and SHATTER its windows!

Inside, Bettye SCREAMS as she rushes to her kids, pulling them down under the kitchen table, landing hard on and breaking her wristwatch. She covers the kids' heads.

At last, the men outside pocket their weapons. One tosses a HANDWRITTEN NOTE inside the Alfa before they both hop into a car driven by a THIRD MAN and PEEL AWAY.

INSERT: The note -- "Keep your cameras out of New York."

The incident is over in mere seconds, leaving Bettye quivering beneath her table, comforting her CRYING kids.

BETTYE

Shh, it's okay. We're alright. Shh...

INT. ROBERT EVANS' OFFICE - DAY

Evans chomps a cigar, sitting behind his desk across from Peter Bart, Coppola, and Ruddy.

RUDDY

We switched cars so I could duck their tail. I never thought they'd pull anything like this. Bettye's scared shitless.

EVANS

We gotta protect our women. Get out to NYC and take the war to them.

He pulls a sawed-off shotgun (a lupara) from beneath the desk and looks through the barrels. Everyone jumps!

COPPOLA

Holy shit, Bob! Put that away.

EVANS

Back off, Nellie. I got a right to be bare-armed, or... shoot bears, whatever the hell it is. Don't tread on Evans.

BART

You saw Phil Spector again, didn't you?

EVANS

(loading the gun)
Little turf row may send you pussyboys running. Evans came up in men's fashion.

He closes the loaded lupara with a flair and sets it down.

EVANS (CONT'D)

We struck a deal. They don't honor it like gentlemen, the gloves are off.

RUDDY

(guilty)
... actually, Bob, we never technically shook hands with them on anything.

Evans' confusion gives way to rage. Bart stands and casually makes his way toward Evans' desk.

EVANS
But you built sets!

RUDDY
They stopped us. We were hoping to
handle it without you.

Bart grabs the lupara away just as Evans reaches for it.

EVANS
You lied to me, Al?

Ruddy looks away. Evans' knowing eyes zero in on Coppola.

EVANS (CONT'D)
You made him.

COPPOLA
New York's too important to bend over on,
Bob.

BART
We may have to bend over now.

EVANS
Too late, I'm already grabbing my ankles,
cornhole puckered. Or did you miss me
vowing to the press this film's our next
Love Story. That means authenticity.
New York. In the 40's--
(to Coppola)
And I don't care how much you fight me on
the period, Coppola. The picture needs
integrity!

COPPOLA
(shocked)
I wanted it to be period! You said we
don't have the money.

EVANS
That ain't how Evans remembers it.
(to Ruddy)
You're flying East tonight. You settle
with the League or you don't come back.
(to Bart)
Pete, take him to the airport.
(off their hesitation)
Now! What am I, talkin' Swahilian?!

Bart and Ruddy stand to exit. Coppola too.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Not you, doughboy.

As he exits, Bart shows Coppola the lupara reassuringly --
"You're safe, I've got it." Once the door closes:

EVANS (CONT'D)
Who the fuck do you think you are, lying
to me?

COPPOLA
The director. And I wouldn't have to lie
if you'd stop undermining me--

EVANS
I'm doing my job.

COPPOLA
Sabotaging my screen tests?
(off Evans' blush, smug)
That little farce you played with Pacino
outside my casting room. You think that
could fool me?

EVANS
Why are you testing some actor I already
axed? We're going with O'Neal!

Coppola shakes his fists, his temper getting the best of him.

COPPOLA
Goddamnit, I should not have to put up
with this!

EVANS
With what, Francis? Input? These are
million dollar decisions!

COPPOLA
You call what you expectorate "input?!"
You complain about the press; you're so
far up my ass, I think you're in love.

EVANS
Bullshit! I've had the greatest asses in
the world! Yours looks like a bag 'a
dirty laundry!

COPPOLA
FUCK RYAN O'NEAL!

EVANS
No, FUCK AL PACINO!

Furious, Coppola heads for the door.

EVANS (CONT'D)
You don't know everything about
everything, King Shit. See *Blow-etlope*
and the fortune you owe for reference.
Think about your wife and kids out
whorin' on Skid Row, 'cuz you got one
chance left to clean up your act.

Coppola exits, SLAMMING the door. Evans yells after:

EVANS (CONT'D)
I said CLEAN IT UP!
(a beat later, sotto)
Guinea brat.

INT. PUZO'S OFFICE (LA) - NIGHT

Puzo pours a couple scotches as Coppola sits self-pitying:

COPPOLA

I don't know what to do, Mario. I just don't know. He questions everything I say; me, the director he hired. I spend all day explaining myself and he can't hear me. It's like I'm tap dancing in outer space.

Puzo sits beside him and hands off a scotch.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)

We wrote a great script, we have the best actors willing to play the parts. I mean, what else am I supposed to do? I don't know!

(sulking)

Just-- I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do!--

Without warning, Puzo slaps him hard across the face; Coppola sloshes scotch all over the carpet. He's stunned!

PUZO

You can act like a man! "It could be epic", you said. Think that comes cheap? You're gonna bump a few heads. What, you shouldn't have to convince nobody? Who the hell are you, Jesus H. Christ Senior?!

(sips his scotch, chuckles)

Ya know where my generation fucked yours up? We were so horrified from the war, we idealized everything. You all assume there's a purpose for you and if ya just get to the right place, suddenly you'll be master and commander. Like this Zoetrope; it's a nice idea - the inmates runnin' the studio - but creation don't happen that way.

COPPOLA

What way?

PUZO

In a fucking bubble. Nobody ever did nothing good without adversity as an ally. Hell, I may not like the friggin' thing, but *The Godfather* connects with people; I think because I wrote it with a gun literally to my head. It makes you strong, sharpens your instincts. You learn what's worth fighting for and how to compromise so when problems arise, you can move forward. Like a man.

(another sip)

You found the book pedestrian.

Coppola tries to protest, but Puzo keeps going.

PUZO (CONT'D)
 But ya had to adapt it, you didn't have a choice. So, you got clever. Now Evans is threatening to sink the ship, get clever again. Work the problem. Work with people, Francis. Something's not goin' how you like, there's usually a pretty good reason. Give 'em the benefit of the doubt. Don't be a cunt.

Puzo gestures a toast. They drain their scotches.

PUZO (CONT'D)
 That's all I'm sayin'.

He gives a deep CHUCKLE and winks at his humbled apprentice.

INT. HALLWAY/WAITING ROOM - DAY

Bettye works at her desk. A MAN approaches from a door down the hall; tall, bushy hair, the unmistakable swagger, he winks at every woman he passes. No doubt who this is:

THE MAN
 Jimmy Caan to see Coppola.

BETTYE
 He'll be just a moment.

JAMES CAAN (30) gives Bettye the once over and perches himself on the edge of her desk.

JAMES CAAN
 I'm reading for Sonny.
 (off her curt nod)
 The handsome brother. What's your name?

INT. CASTING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Coppola sits writing on a legal pad when Fred Roos KNOCKS and pops his head in the door.

FRED ROOS
 Hey, Francie.
 (pointing outside)
 I thought we weren't reading Caan for Sonny. He's not Italian.

COPPOLA
 He's not reading for Sonny. Last minute change.

Roos gives him a look -- "What gives?"

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Bob's giving us the cash to set the film in the 40s.

FRED ROOS
 What? That's great! I thought he hated that idea.

COPPOLA

He did. Until he thought it was his.

Intrigued, Roos steps in and closes the door.

INT. HALLWAY/WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Caan is still on Bettye's desk, wasting his charms. Fred Roos steps out from the casting room.

FRED ROOS

Jimmy.

JAMES CAAN

Ho!

Caan jumps up and pulls him in for a big embrace.

FRED ROOS

Good to see you, pal. Listen, we've got some new sides for you.

Caan just shrugs in that way of his - "Yo, whatever!"

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

Evans flicks his cigar in an ashtray, Roos sitting behind him.

ON-SCREEN: James Caan is reading the "Michael" scene with Diane Keaton, but playing the part as "Sonny" -- wearing a wife beater, eating the lasagna, smacking his lips, etc.

JAMES CAAN (AS MICHAEL/SONNY)

The bandleader -- the balls on this guy! He says no. So next day, pop goes to see him with Luca Brasi. And within an hour, *bada beep bada boop*, he signs the release for a measly grand.

Caan shrugs a'la "Sonny" and steals an olive off her plate. Evans in the audience, to himself:

EVANS

What the fuck?

DIANE KEATON (AS KAY)

How did he do that?

JAMES CAAN (AS MICHAEL/SONNY)

"How did he do" -- Luca held a gun to his head while my father assured him -- BADA BING! Either his brains or his Hancock would be on the contract. That's a true story.

Caan stuffs her lasagna in his mouth.

Behind Evans and Roos, Coppola enters and feigns shock:

EVANS (CONT'D)
 He's a guinea hothead if I ever saw one.
 (pointing at Coppola)
 And I seen one!

COPPOLA
 You're right, I gotta admit. He'd make
 an incredible Sonny.

FRED ROOS
 Brilliant! Why didn't we see it?

Evans stands proudly, adjusting his suit.

COPPOLA
 Shit!--
 (sighs)
 Jimmy Caan's not Italian.

Roos performs an exaggerated slump.

FRED ROOS
 Sonuvabitch. Don't that beat all.

EVANS
 Well, look fellas, the all-WOP mandate
 was just a guideline--

COPPOLA
 No, Bob, we'll find someone else. I've
 asked enough of you already.
 (standing)
 Since our argument, I've been really
 trying to put myself in your shoes, and
 I've realized you're on the ropes same as
 me. Jaffe wants you gone, am I right?

Evans bristles, blowing out smoke, but doesn't disagree.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 You can't afford to give him any excuse.
 Casting non-Italians might throw the
 picture's credibility into question. You
 want to be bold, but you have to kowtow.
 I can relate.

EVANS
 (his ego injured)
 Kowtow? To cocksucker Jaffe? Never!

Coppola and Roos exchange reluctant expressions.

COPPOLA
 Well, you kinda' already did, no?

Evans glares.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 I mean, you were the one who called
 Brando divine. You signed me to the
 picture right after I threw out his name.
 (MORE)

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 You practically gave him the part. The way you spun on a dime, I just assumed Jaffe or someone had you by the balls.

Livid, Evans picks up the ash tray and throws it.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Take it easy, Bob! I understand. It's self-preservation. We all have a master.

EVANS
 "A master." I'll show you a master, ya stupid zip. Follow me.

He storms out. Coppola and Roos trade proud smiles before following...

INT. STANLEY JAFFE'S OFFICE (LA) - LATER

Jaffe stands over his desk, pointing his finger.

JAFFE
 You don't understand. Marlon Brando never gets that movie.

REVEAL: Sitting across are Evans, Coppola, and Fred Roos.

JAFFE (CONT'D)
 He costs way too much and he's completely unpredictable except for being a pain in the ass.

EVANS
 What'll it take? Anything, Stan.

JAFFE
 (correcting him)
 Mr. Jaffe.

No love lost between these two. Evans concedes though.

EVANS
 Of course. Anything, Mr. Jaffe.

JAFFE
 Anything, huh? Okay, how 'bout no cash up front. He does it for back end only.

EVANS
 Done.

Evans starts to stand, but Jaffe continues:

JAFFE
And he puts up a bond to cover any overruns he may cause.

Coppola and Roos look skeptical. Evans compliments Jaffe:

EVANS
 Sharp. No problem.

Evans heads merrily for the door; Jaffe can't stand it!

JAFFE
One more thing.
(after Evans turns back)
I'll need to see a screen test.

Evans swallows nervously. Coppola and Roos cringe.

EVANS
You want to ask *Marlon Brando* to test?

JAFFE
No, I want you to.
(bullshitting)
The shareholders need to be assured of
his commitment.

EVANS
(flummoxed)
Uh,... well-- I'll see what I can do, *Mr.*
Jaffe.

Jaffe shoots him a huge shit-eating grin.

JAFFE
Good luck, Bob.

EXT. JAFFE'S OFFICES (THE PARAMOUNT LOT) - MOMENTS LATER

Coppola and Roos exit with a confident Evans. Coppola opens his mouth to speak:

EVANS
Wait 'til he can't see us.

REVEAL: Jaffe spying from his window.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Peeping Tom Cocksucker.

When they're far enough away:

COPPOLA
How do we get Brando to work for free,
Bob?

FRED ROOS
And possibly pay us.

EVANS
Don't matter. Evans got you your "in".

COPPOLA
What "in"?

EVANS
(re: Jaffe)
I knew that pale-face shaved prick
couldn't let me leave before goosing
himself with a wire brush.

(MORE)

EVANS (CONT'D)
 (off Coppola's confusion)
 You don't think Marlon Brando's screen
 test goes all the way up the totem pole?
 (shaking his head)
Fuckin' amateurs.

COPPOLA
 I don't understand. Anyway, Brando
 hasn't tested since 1953. He won't do
 it.

Evans slaps Coppola playfully on the cheek.

EVANS
 That's your problem, Francis. The Master
 has a plan. Now do your part and trust
 me.

Coppola starts to object, but then settles himself.

COPPOLA
 Okay, Bob. I'll have faith.

Evans winks and walks away, leaving Coppola and Roos lost
 in their newest challenge.

INT. BARE SOUNDSTAGE - NIGHT

A production meeting is underway. A TENT CARD on the
 table lists the name and title of the woman speaking now,
 "NIKKI ROBERTS, Production Coordinator".

NIKKI ROBERTS
 So, production still starts in six weeks.

COPPOLA
 Correct.

NIKKI ROBERTS
 But we haven't locked down a city to
 shoot in.

Her boss (with his own tent card) "GRAY FREDERICKSON,
 Production Manager" gestures for her to stay calm.

COPPOLA
 (making light)
 You say that like it's unusual.

Coppola looks around the table populated by department
 heads and their lieutenants, hoping for laughs. Nope!...

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Kidding.

Fred Roos squirms beside him. Ruddy is noticeably absent.
 "ALEJANDRO ESTEVEZ, Art Director" laments:

ALEJANDRO ESTEVEZ
 It's not just the Manhasset disaster--

COPPOLA
--We'll get those sets back--

ALEJANDRO ESTEVEZ
--or the rush to scout. We have to dress
these locations for 1945.

COPPOLA
I know.

ALEJANDRO ESTEVEZ
You "know," but you've never actually
shot a period film. That kind of detail
takes months. I'm sure the notion of a
studio crew versus six film students in a
VW bus makes you feel invincible, but we
have limitations too.

He looks to his boss, "DEAN TAVOULARIS, Production
Designer" to show backup. Tavoularis is stone-faced.

COPPOLA
Al Ruddy is handling New York. That's
why he couldn't be here today.

"JAKE WEBBER, A-Camera Op" jumps in with the sarcasm...

JAKE WEBBER
Swell. The producer of TV's twelfth best
comedy is on the case.

SNOBBY LAUGHTER all around the table. Coppola withers until
Jake's craggy boss, "GORDON WILLIS, Cinematographer" cuts in:

WILLIS
Goddamnit, that's enough!

Everyone's instantly quiet, some burying smiles.

GRAY FREDERICKSON
All of you, please don't be cavalier.
Gordy, Dean, me and your other department
heads have seen how a time crunch affects
people. So follow our lead. Don't let
the pressure turn you indifferent, or
disrespectful.

"STEVEN KESTEN, 1st A.D." moves on.

KESTEN
What's the status on Michael and the Don?

COPPOLA
We're working on Brando, but it's not a
done deal.
(pauses, considering)
And still no Michael.

Fred Roos looks askance at Coppola (who just lied).

KESTEN
 (frustrated)
 One or both of them is in nearly every scene. I need their schedules so I can start blocking out our days--

COPPOLA
 I realize that.

QUESTIONS COME HARD AND FAST suddenly from around the table... Until an overwhelmed Coppola has to stop it.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Everyone, guys! HEY!
 (when they're quiet)
 I understand there are challenges. But we're all just gonna have to get a little creative on this one.

JAKE WEBBER
 Sure. Fix it in post.

There's SNICKERING as all eyes turn to "ARAM AVAKIAN, Editor", who flips everyone the middle finger.

AVAKIAN
 Yeah, fix THIS in post.

The SNICKERING continues as Coppola trades weary glances with Frederickson, Tavoularis, and Willis.

INT. BARE SOUNDSTAGE - LATER

The meeting has broken up. Stanley Jaffe has arrived and introduces himself to some of the junior crew members -- Nikki, Alejandro, Jake, Kesten, Avakian.

A distressed Coppola stands off to the side watching Jaffe. Roos approaches him.

COPPOLA
 What's Jaffe doing here?

Roos doesn't know, merely shakes his head.

FRED ROOS
 You alright, Francie?

COPPOLA
 Beside the crew thinking I'm a ten-year-old with a windup Super 8? Sure.

FRED ROOS
 Why lie about O'Neal?

COPPOLA
 (shrugs)
 I tell them, it's official.
 (points at Roos' cross pendant)
 Still hoping for a miracle.

They spot Bettye McCartt approaching.

BETTYE

Francis, I have Al on the phone for you.

Coppola sighs, again eyeing Jaffe schmoozing with the crew.

EXT. BLOOMINGDALE'S DEPT. STORE (NYC) - NIGHT - EST.

The store is decorated for Christmas time. THROGS of CUSTOMERS make their way in and out.

RUDDY (PRE-LAP)

A week I've been out here and no sign of the man...

INT. BLOOMINGDALE'S/INT. CASTING ROOM (LA) - CONT. - INTERCUT

Ruddy's on a pay-phone in the store's foyer talking to Coppola back in L.A.

RUDDY (ON PHONE)

... I been past League headquarters everyday, Columbo's "social club", wife's house, girlfriend's house, black girlfriend's house - nothing.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)

Maybe your Alfa had him whacked. He's at the bottom of the East River.

Ruddy doesn't laugh; he's still sore at Coppola.

RUDDY (ON PHONE)

Nah, he's posturing -- if he wants to talk, he'll find me.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)

Know what you'll pitch if he does?

RUDDY (ON PHONE)

I got a notion, but it's pretty radical. Wanna hear it?

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)

No. Whatever it is, you have my full support.

Ruddy pulls away from and looks at the receiver, shocked.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

Look, Al, I don't have a clue how to solve this. It was easier to deny that and scream at you.

RUDDY (ON PHONE)

(shakes head, but touched)
Worst apology I ever heard.

Coppola laughs.

COPPOLA (ON PHONE)
 Yeah, well, I'm not really in the habit.
 (after a beat, serious)
 I have trouble remembering the carpet
 doesn't roll itself out. That being
 said, this needs to happen fast so get
 back to work.

RUDDY (ON PHONE)
 You kiddin'? Never stopped.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: He's surrounded by shopping bags.

EXT. BLOOMINGDALE'S DEPT. STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Slinging the shopping bags (one with a child's sled emerging), Ruddy heads for a cabstand when someone steps right in his way. Ruddy looks up. It's Joe Columbo.

JOE SR.
 Al! Al Ruddy. Merry Christmas.

RUDDY
 Thank you.

JOE SR.
 Hey, I'm glad I run into ya. I wanna talk.

Joe Sr. gestures toward a car at the curb; Joe Jr. stands guard ominously. Ruddy swallows, trying to stay composed.

RUDDY
 It's kinda late. How 'bout we meet for brunch?

Ruddy tries stepping around, but Gianni Russo appears, blocking his path.

JOE SR.
 Fuck brunch, Producer. Get in the car.

Ruddy moves toward the car and Joe Jr., who eyeballs him.

JOE JR.
 You read my script yet?

INT. DARKENED HALLWAY - LATER

FROM BLACK a door opens, illuminating the hallway. Joe Sr. leads Ruddy inside by the elbow, Joe Jr. and Gianni Russo behind them. They walk in tense silence for awhile before Russo leans forward suddenly, startling Ruddy.

GIANNI RUSSO
 Hey, you think I could be in the movie?

RUDDY
Wha-- absolutely, yes--

JOE SR.
Knock it off, Russo.

GIANNI RUSSO
I been told I got a good face.

Joe Sr. quiets him with a look, turning back to Ruddy.

JOE SR.
I've been considering this problem of ours. And it occurred to me, maybe he don't think we're organized.

RUDDY
No, I know you're organized.
(off Columbo's glare)
Shutting down our set. My car. Ya know, my secretary broke her wristwatch diving for cover.

JOE SR.
We don't know nothing about that.

RUDDY
(testing him)
About what?

Joe Sr. stops at a set of double doors, beyond which the MUFFLED DIN OF MUSIC is just audible.

JOE SR.
On the other side 'a these doors is a personal hell for you.

RUDDY
Mr. Columbo, threatening me--

JOE SR.
No, I want you to see it before you start begging. Boys...

Gianni Russo and Joe Jr. move to open the doors; Ruddy breathing erratically in anticipation of the horror!

RUDDY'S POV: The doors open, revealing... MADISON SQUARE GARDEN: FRANK SINATRA onstage wrapping up *Fly Me To The Moon* before a FULL AUDIENCE.

Stunned and confused, Ruddy watches for a beat before Joe Sr. signals his men to close the doors again. Leaning in:

JOE SR. (CONT'D)
Sold out crowd. All proceeds go to stopping your little cinematic crucifixion of the Italian peoples. At least six hundred K says my man at the door.

RUDDY
 Sir, to be clear, I fully acknowledge we can't shoot *The Godfather* in New York without your okay. That's why I've been trying to find you. So I can make an unprecedented offer I feel will put to bed all your concerns. If you'll just hear me out--

He's interrupted by the doors flying open, FRANK SINATRA (55) having just left the stage to THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE.

FRANK SINATRA
 (noticing)
 Oh, hey Joe!

JOE SR.
 Frankie-boy!

They embrace, the jovial Sinatra then noticing Ruddy.

FRANK SINATRA
 Who we got here?

JOE SR.
 Ah, this is Al Ruddy, producer of *The Godfather*.

Sinatra's smile melts into sheer contempt.

FRANK SINATRA
 My agent sends over a screen test and you pricks don't even gimme a callback?!

He grabs Ruddy's tie, pulling him in!

FRANK SINATRA (CONT'D)
 I oughta' break your fuckin' legs.

JOE JR.
 'at's what I'm talkin' about!--

JOE SR.
 Junior!

Junior shuts up. Sinatra eyes Ruddy a bit longer, then releases him, nods to Joe Sr. and exits down the hall.

JOE SR. (CONT'D)
 See? It's these musicians ya gotta worry about.
 (fixing Ruddy's tie)
 I don't like violence, Al. I'm a businessman. Blood costs too much.

He slides the knot up on Ruddy's tie, choking him a bit.

JOE SR. (CONT'D)
 So, what's your offer?

PRE-LAP: THE SOUND OF A VAN DOOR SLIDING OPEN...

EXT. BRANDO'S MANSION - DAY

Coppola and Roos step out of the van, accompanied by a CAMERAMAN and SOUNDMAN lugging equipment.

FRED ROOS
 Alright, fellas, move as quickly and quietly as you can. Rumor is he don't like noise.

Coppola takes in the scene...

REVEAL: The large circular driveway where the rainmaking ritual occurred earlier. The Native American setting (bonfire, roasting spits, huts, canoes, totum poles, buffalo hides, pottery) lays in ruin, pillaged and still smoking; almost as if... well, the white man came through.

COPPOLA
 (sotto)
 What the hell?
 (then)
Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee.

Suddenly, Brando appears wearing a kimono and a straw hat. He is not his usual jovial self.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Hey, Marlon.

BRANDO
 What's the camera for?

COPPOLA
 Well, you were worried about playing an aging Italian. I figured we could film the makeup test, you can improv a little and then see how you look.

He waits nervously to see if Brando buys it. Eventually:

BRANDO
 Very well.

COPPOLA
 (relieved)
 Great.
 (to the crew)
 Let's set up inside.

He looks back at Brando, who's despondent over the site.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Marlon, are you okay to do this?
 (re: the destruction)
 What happened here?

BRANDO
 Someone told the tribe I can't get them SAG cards. They sought reparations.

COPPOLA
Jesus. I'm sorry.

They watch the charred tatters of the large teepee flutter in the wind. CLOSE ON: Brando as he removes the straw hat, his face filled with emotion.

BRANDO
Look how they massacred my teepee.

CUT TO:

VIDEOTAPE SCREEN TEST FOOTAGE:

Inside Brando's house, WE WATCH him exit his bedroom pulling his blond ponytail up into a bun. He removes the kimono and slips on a suit jacket. He then methodically bends the corners of his dress shirt collar.

BRANDO
(to camera)
All those old Italians bend their collars this way. Like a fin.

Satisfied, he sits at a table with cigars, cheese, and salami (props). We think he's considering what to eat until he plucks a wad of Kleenex and begins packing it in his mouth. In the Don's voice:

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE) (CONT'D)
See, he should have the face of a bulldog. Mean-looking, but warm underneath.

Brando stands and moves to a mirror; shuffling with cautious efficiency.

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE) (CONT'D)
And this man doesn't move fast. He's already ten steps ahead of you.

He takes a can of black shoe polish and rubs it through his blondish locks.

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE) (CONT'D)
The hair's dark, tight. He's elegant, but not given to frivolity. After all, he makes his living in the shadows.

Brando scratches his neck with the back of his fingernails, slowly transforming into the character.

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE) (CONT'D)
And yet, he's managed to bathe his wild beast in legitimacy. That's why the other animals respect him. He refuses to be a fool dancing on a string.

He pauses for a moment, just breathing as the CAMERA ZOOMS IN; it's amazing. He is Don Corleone.

The silence is broken when Brando's PHONE RINGS. The Don acknowledges it with a shrug.

COPPOLA (O.S.)
Do you need to take that, Marlon?

Brando ignores him, answering the phone as the Don.

BRANDO (ON PHONE AS CORLEONE)
Yes?... (LISTENS) Am I happy with my long distance? Who frets over such things?... (LISTENS) A favor? But then you must do one for me... (LISTENS) No, not now. The day may never come...

WE PULL BACK FROM THE FOOTAGE REVEALING...

INT. BLUHDORN'S OFFICE / GULF & WESTERN (NYC) - DAY

... a FINELY-SUITED MAN in horn-rimmed glasses leaning over the TV on which the screen test is playing. This is:

SUPER: "Charles G. Bluhdorn, Chairman of Gulf & Western"

Enamored with Brando, and in his thick Austrian accent:

CHARLIE BLUHDORN
'zat's incredible! He became 'zis man before our very eyes!

Nearby, Jaffe simmers. Coppola, Evans, Roos, and Ruddy are beaming.

EVANS
Evans agrees, Charlie-baby. Though I'm humbled you'd concern yourself with matters so trivial.

CHARLIE BLUHDORN
'Vell, Paramount may be just a subsidiary, but no tape of Marlon Brando 'vill escape my attention.

EVANS
(smug, to Jaffe)
Huh. I shoul'da' known.

JAFFE
We oughta' keep our options open. He hasn't agreed to our conditions yet--

CHARLIE BLUHDORN
Conditions?! Ask for 'whatever you vant, but under no circumstances 'vill you turn him 'avay. He is 'facking amazing!
(a bad Brando impression)
"'ze day may never come." Ha, I love it!

JAFFE
I gotta say, Charlie. Actors like Brando with no accountability and crazy demands make my position as studio chief impossibly difficult--

CHARLIE BLUHDORN
'vell, so 'vat? You make a vast salary to endure such stunts. Deal 'vit it.

Evans winks at Jaffe, now livid.

CHARLIE BLUHDORN (CONT'D)
So, 'vat about Michael? Do 've have another star?

EVANS
You want another star? How about Ryan O'-Fucking-Neal?

Bluhdorn leans back, blanching. Evans' face drops.

CHARLIE BLUHDORN
O'Neal?... 'ze Irishman... Hmm...

EVANS
Wait'll ya see his test, Charlie. He--

CHARLIE BLUHDORN
I've seen it. I 'zink 've can do better.

Roos looks at Coppola while stroking his gold cross -- there's that miracle!

CHARLIE BLUHDORN (CONT'D)
Moodier. Mercurial. O'Neal's a 'facking Boyscout.

Now it's Evans' turn for silent anger, Jaffe smiling!

EVANS
'course. But consider the business--

A SECURITY GUARD abruptly comes through the door.

SECURITY GUARD
I'm sorry, gentlemen. We need to vacate the building. There's been a bomb threat.

Nervous looks, but for Evans who wants to continue arguing:

EVANS
It's bullshit. All this time in showbiz Evans never been near a bomb.

EXT. GULF & WESTERN BUILDING (NEW YORK CITY) - LATER

It's chaos as FIRETRUCKS and POLICE surround the front of the building, along with countless LOITERING EMPLOYEES.

Off to one side, Bluhdorn and Jaffe appear to be arguing.

Nearby, a clearly displeased Evans approaches Coppola and Roos. He blows cigar smoke right in Coppola's face.

EVANS

Don't get any ideas, Francis. I'll see every cry-baby in town before I consider that dwarf Pacino again. Nicholson, Beatty, that kid who mumbled his way through *The Graduate*. All of 'em.

COPPOLA

Fine. And Bob... thanks for Brando. Only you could've pulled that off.

Evans offers a curt nod and meanders away, just as a guilty Ruddy returns from talking to a cop.

RUDDY

Cop says the threat came from a phone booth in Little Italy. Looks like Columbo's playing hardball right up to the showdown.

FRED ROOS

What showdown?

RUDDY

The League's reading the script tomorrow. I made them consultants.

COPPOLA

... You did what?

RUDDY

How else was I gonna get them to engage? I offered the chance to help craft a real blockbuster from the ground up, to make sure it's sensitive to their concerns.

COPPOLA

Jesus Christ, Al! And what if the League decides the five families all go out for gelato and Don Corleone's elected President?

RUDDY

We'll talk 'em out of it.

COPPOLA

"We?!"

RUDDY

Yeah, I need you to come.
(off Coppola's scoff)
Listen Francis, my instincts tell me, more than anything, Columbo wants us to feel him shake the earth. It's about power more than substance. Now, I'm not sure yet how we show that deference without destroying the film, but we're gonna have to give him something.

(MORE)

RUDDY (CONT'D)
 The director of a major Hollywood
 production coming to his *picayune* meeting
 is a good start.
 (pauses, then)
 You said I had your confidence. Do I?

Coppola considers, not answering.

EXT. PARK SHERATON HOTEL (NYC) - DAY - EST.

An impressive, "old New York" stone structure. (The same
 used to set up Don Corleone's meet with the Five Families)

INT. PARK SHERATON BOARDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stunning tapestries and an oak table, at the head of which
 stand Joe Sr. and LEAGUE SECRETARY RALPH GRECO.

JOE SR.
 Secretary Greco, I want to thank you for
 helping me organize this meeting here
 today.

CAMERA DOLLIES behind participants' heads, featuring those
 facing us as Joe Sr. introduces them. THE MEN (who all at
 the very least brush up against O.C.) look accordingly.

JOE SR. (CONT'D)
 And the heads of all the other chapters
 from New York, New Jersey. Anthony Maida
 from Clifton, and from Yonkers, Jerry
 D'Alessandro. From Nutley, we have with
 us Ed Luchessi. And all the other
 associates that came as far as from
 Poughkeepsie, Newark, and other
 territories of the tri-state area. Thank
 you.

CAMERA LANDS on Coppola and Ruddy sitting anxiously
 amongst these pseudo-gangsters.

Gianni Russo seats Joe Sr. and pours him a glass of water.

JOE SR. (CONT'D)
 How did things ever get so far? It's so
 unfortunate, so unnecessary to stifle
 cinema, but the myth of this so-called
 "mafia" has to rubbed out.
 (dry spits)
Morto!

As Joe Sr's speech continues, Gianni Russo creeps from
 behind and sticks his head between Ruddy and Coppola.

GIANNI RUSSO
 (to Ruddy, hushed)
 Hey, yo, I read the book again. And I
 really do think I'd be a dynamite Sonny.

Ruddy nods, hoping Gianni will go away. He doesn't.

GIANNI RUSSO (CONT'D)
 I got the anger issues. And let me tell ya, in these pants is a loaf that'll choke a goddamn horse and I ain't afraid to show it.

RUDDY
 (hurried)
 'kay, you're on the list. Thank you.

Russo leans back. Coppola looks at Ruddy, aghast.

JOE SR.
 ... because we have here the script for *The Godfather*, which we will now "purview" and consult upon. Gentlemen.

A hushed SILENCE as the men open their scripts, put on glasses, COUGH, etc. and begin reading. WE SEE a medley of squinting confusion until, finally:

ANTHONY MAIDA
 What the fuck is "Fade In"?

JOE JR.
 (showing off for Coppola)
 It means the screen comes up from black.

ANTHONY MAIDA
 Ah... That's good.

Another silent beat. They read, then:

ED LUCHESSI
 How 'bout "Int"? What's an "Int"?

COPPOLA
 Short for "interior". "Interior Don's office".

ED LUCHESSI
 Who the hell is Don, tough guy?

COPPOLA
 No, the Don. Don Corleone. From the book.

ED LUCHESSI
 Never read it. But this office sounds nice.

More reading, then:

JERRY D'ALESSANDRO
 Why's this Bonasera gotta say he believes in America? Who don't? If he's some kinda' half a fag pinko, change that shit.

JOE SR.
 (pointedly, to Coppola)
 Agreed. We're not communists.

The table raucously AGREES, under which a disillusioned Coppola whispers to Ruddy:

COPPOLA
 We'll never get through this, Al. Not without pop-up books.

But Ruddy doesn't hear; his wheels are spinning, in the midst of a breakthrough. Secretary Greco speaks up.

SECRETARY GRECO
 Says the undertaker made his fortune here. What kinda' cash we talkin' about?

The others TEEM with similar questions. Ruddy snaps to.

RUDDY
 (taking over)
 Gentlemen. Gentlemen, please!
 (as they hush)
 I think I can save us all a lot of time if you'll indulge me for just a moment.
 (to Joe Sr.)
 You mentioned communism; how many of you know it was conceived in Germany, not Russia?
 (no response)
 And that its roots as a concept go as far back as Ancient Greece. Before the written word even.

JOE SR.
 Goddamn history lesson now?

RUDDY
 It's an ideology as old as mankind. From all over the world. And yet, we identify it as Russian. Does that sound familiar?

ED LUCHESSI
 Yeah, it do.

JOE SR.
 It do?

ED LUCHESSI
 Yeah. Couple months ago, my little girl shows me her U.S. History book, talking about the great Italian migration. And before it mentions our food, or our music, or craftsmanship, it says we brought over "La Cosa Nostra". That's our great contribution. Like no other kinda' peoples came with a few bad apples.

RUDDY

But they put a name on yours, the "mafia". They created a word to give it special significance. Increased attention. Just like "pinko". You hear that, you think Soviets and you sit up.

ANTHONY MAIDA

Sorry, what the hell are we talkin' about here?

The others GRUNT their own confusion. Coppola shoots Ruddy an alarmed look, but Ruddy persists...

RUDDY

There's no common name for the Irish mob in America, or the Chinese mob in America, or the Polish, the Greeks, even the Russians. Just the Italians.

ANTHONY MAIDA

That's an infamia!

RUDDY

Yes! That... whatever it means. 'Cuz when you give something a name, you pull it out of the crowd. You make it a separate target. You all want to erase the myth of the mafia, erase the name.

(holds up his script)
We'll help you start right here.

JERRY D'ALESSANDRO

Meaning what? You'll take out the word "mafia"?

RUDDY

And "La Cosa Nostra". That way, we're not actually saying the story's about anything larger than these men --

(gesturing to Luchessi)
Just some bad apples doing what bad apples do.

The men exchange looks; entertaining the idea. Coppola smiles at Ruddy, a twinkle in his eye!

JOE SR.

(to Coppola)
You'd do this for us? Sounds like a big change.

COPPOLA

(humbling himself)
It's, uh... it's massive. Probably take me weeks, but if it's what you want...

The League members appear satisfied; all but Joe Jr.

JOE JR.

But these bad apples. They're still Italians.

The table MURMURS discord. Ruddy looks around desperately, not wanting to lose his momentum. His gaze lands on Gianni Russo, which sparks another lighting bolt!

RUDDY

Hey, who wants to be in the movie?!

The men go silent, looking at each other for approval. Finally, D'Alessandro raises his hand, then everyone else does too; the entire room suddenly GIDDY WITH ANTICIPATION!

Joe Sr. stands and extends his arms toward Ruddy. Ruddy has no idea what this is, but eventually figures out to hug the man, which he does awkwardly as the men APPLAUD.

EXT. PARK SHERATON HOTEL (NYC) - LATER - DAY

Ruddy and Coppola exit the hotel and head down the street. They look sternly at one another, then burst into LAUGHTER.

RUDDY

How many times is "mafia" in the script?

COPPOLA

Once. And "Cosa Nostra" not at all.

RUDDY

Aaah, they don't need to know that.

They LAUGH again, Coppola putting his arm around Ruddy.

COPPOLA

Well, we're in business. 'cept now I gotta put all those mopes on camera.

RUDDY

I had to push 'em over somehow.

(shrugs)

Everybody wants to be in pictures.

They trudge off; the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE BULLPEN (NYC) - NIGHT

It's late. Lucas, Coppola, Fred Roos and Ruddy sit around, eating spaghetti. Takeout boxes sit nearby.

LUCAS

What about Nicholson?

COPPOLA

We tested him.

(cueing him)

Fred?...

FRED ROOS

(doing a spot on Nicholson)

Luca Brasi put a gun to his head and, uh, pulled the fucking trigger!

He does Nicholson's crazy laugh; eliciting CHUCKLES from all.

RUDDY
What'd Evans think?

COPPOLA
Good, just not Michael. Same with
Beatty, Hoffman, Bobby DeNiro, Martin
Sheen, David Carradine, Dean Stockwell.

LUCAS
(dry)
Wow. Can I have a shot?

COPPOLA
Bluhdorn mentioned *Charles Bronson*. And
Evans is talking Redford again.

FRED ROOS
He's it if we don't think of something
quick.
(off Coppola's outrage)
We're three weeks out!

COPPOLA
Pacino was born to play this part. I
know it.

RUDDY
Evans won't have it.

Lucas dangles pasta over his mouth, lowering it in.
Coppola watches, disgusted.

COPPOLA
George, you're in New York now. You
can't eat pasta like a white man.
(handing him a spoon)
Twirl!

Lucas ignores the spoon, carries on as before. Coppola
shakes his head, but then something occurs to him.

FRED ROOS
So, Francie, what should we do about
Michael?

COPPOLA
(watching Lucas)
... Ask him to Sunday dinner.

EXT. PATSY'S RESTAURANT (56TH ST., NYC) - NIGHT

The authentic Italian restaurant's neon red sign FLICKERS
as a beacon to the carbohydrate-deprived.

Coppola waits out front in the cold. Talia approaches
hurriedly, but stops short when she sees her brother.
There are still some hard feelings between these two.

COPPOLA
Hey.

TALIA
You're waiting? Am I that late?--

COPPOLA
No, no, you're early. I asked you in
before everyone else.

TALIA
Oh. Well, it's freezing. Let's get
inside.

She moves for the door, but he blocks her.

COPPOLA
Before we do...
(hesitates)
I saw your play last night.

TALIA
(skeptical)
It's a black box, Francis. I would've
noticed you.

COPPOLA
I hid in the back. I wore a poncho.

TALIA
Why did you hide?

COPPOLA
'Cuz in all the knock-down, drag out
fights I've had with Bob Evans, he never
once held you over my head like I said he
would. Made me wonder if I missed
something.
(pauses, smiling)
Turns out I did.

Her emotions surfacing, Talia hugs him tightly. She
wipes away a few tears and then looks at him.

TALIA
What?

COPPOLA
I need a favor.

He holds the door open for her and they enter.

SUPER: "March 17, 1971"

INT. PATSY'S RESTAURANT / PRIVATE ROOM - LATER

PAN ACROSS: The Corleone family (Brando, Caan, Talia,
ROBERT DUVALL, JOHN CAZALE, and MORGANA KING), seated
around a table, a full Italian spread before them.

COPPOLA (O.S.)
Just live in the characters. Eat like
they'd eat. Talk about what they'd talk
about.

Only Brando watches Coppola speak. The rest (all relative newcomers) gawk at their Lord and Savior, Marlon Brando!

COPPOLA (CONT'D)

Fight however they would. Remember, it's 1942. The war's in full swing, and here you are at another boring Sunday dinner with mom and dad.

ANGLE: The glowing eyes of the young actors are burning holes through Brando, who politely pretends not to notice.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)

Just a little improv, okay? Pretend we're not here.

Coppola sits beside Fred Roos, Ruddy, and Lucas. The cast does nothing but stare at Brando. Seeing he'll have to take the initiative, Brando begins uncorking the wine.

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE)

How was everyone's day?

He pours his "wife" some wine and gradually the others remember what they're here to do.

JOHN CAZALE (AS FREDO)

Pretty good, Pop. Thinkin' 'bout getting a motorcycle.

JAMES CAAN (AS SONNY)

Yeah, and I'm gettin' a mop, so's when he flies over the handlebars, I can clean his ass off the street.

TALIA (AS CONNIE)

Sonny!

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE)

Is this necessary? Language in front of your mother.

As they continue, Pacino skulks in through the dark entrance. Coppola rushes up before Pacino can take in the scene.

COPPOLA

Thanks for coming, Al. I just wanted to apologize again for what happened at your screen test.

PACINO

Don't be sorry. My whole life I been rejected. As a baby, my mother's breasts recoiled at my touch--

(noticing Brando)

Jesus Christ, is that who I think it is?!

COPPOLA

Al, give me your coat.

Pacino's frozen, staring at Brando. Coppola helps him out of his coat.

PACINO
But, wha-- why am I here--

COPPOLA
Shhhh.
(gesturing toward the table)
Go be Michael.

CLOSE ON Pacino; he takes in the moment, steeling himself.

A beat later, the "family" chatter dies down as "Michael" sits and begins serving himself. Then, Brando to Pacino:

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE)
What time do we supper in this house?

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
Sorry. Bus got stuck on Broadway.

JAMES CAAN (AS SONNY)
Sure you weren't just stuck on a broad?

Sonny looks for laughs from his "siblings", then tickles Fredo when he tries not to smile. The Don bristles.

ANGLE ON: Evans walks in urgently. Coppola is waiting.

EVANS
What's going on? Where's the emergency?

COPPOLA
I wanted you to see this.

He gestures to the family dinner which Evans drinks in approvingly until he spots Pacino. Furious:

EVANS
Jesus Christ, is that who I think it is?!

COPPOLA
Just watch him in action for five minutes, Bob. Five minutes.

EVANS
(turning to leave)
You're outta your fuckin' skull, Coppola.

Coppola puts a hand on his shoulder, stopping him.

COPPOLA
Five minutes! And if you're not convinced, I'll go with Redford no questions asked. You won't hear a peep outta me. Please.

Evans chokes back his discord and huffs. But he stays.

Talia watches Coppola out of the corner of her eye.

The director gives her a conspiratorial nod and Talia quickly turns on the waterworks...

MORGANA KING (AS MAMA)
 Constanzia, what's wrong?

Connie looks tearfully at Michael, hesitant to respond.

TALIA (AS CONNIE)
 Michael is enlisting.

MORGANA KING (AS MAMA)
 ... what?

TALIA (AS CONNIE)
 I heard.

Michael looks between Fredo and Hagen, seeking the culprit. Hagen looks down culpably. Sonny is shocked.

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE)
 (to Pacino)
 Is it so?

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
 That's right, Pop. I wish to serve my country.

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE)
 You wish to serve *strangers*.

ROBERT DUVALL (AS TOM HAGEN)
 Michael, before you do anything--

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
 (cutting him off)
 Now, hold on, Tom. I'm speaking to my father.

ANGLE: Evans registers the firmness of Pacino's shift in demeanor, a bit surprised.

PACINO (AS MICHAEL) (CONT'D)
 (to Brando)
 You find this foolish?

JAMES CAAN (AS SONNY)
 It's goddamn wreckless!

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE)
 (silencing him)
 Santino.
 (to Michael)
 Young men often have something to prove--

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
 I've got nothing to prove.

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE)
 A boy your age wouldn't know.

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
Men my age are dying to protect our way
of life. Egalitarian. Moral.
(with muted cynicism)
Like you, Pop.

Everyone at the table clocks Michael's insinuation,
looking for the Don's response.

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE)
And yet, you claim nothing to prove.

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
I'm signing up.

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE)
You'll be classified 4-F.

Michael registers the Don's implication. He turns to
Hagen, who nods affirmative.

Evans moves closer to the scene, curious where Pacino
will go next. And what happens is what makes Pacino
"Michael"; his eyes go dead, black. He is chilling in
his plainspokenness; his brilliant and ruthless cunning.

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
(to Brando)
You pull many strings. None with me. I
don't fear you, and that's where your
power ends. Can you stop me going to
Canada and enlisting--?

TALIA (AS CONNIE)
Michael, stop it.

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
(to Brando, undeterred)
Perhaps I'll rob a liquor store or punch
a cop, and some downtown judge offers me
military service or jail. What will you
do then?

TALIA (AS CONNIE)
That's plenty about the war tonight.

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
(to his father, mercilessly)
How will it look when a Don -- Godfather
to his people -- won't let his son join
the same war his paisan lose their boys
to every day? Forcing that son to hop a
steamer and abscond.

TALIA (AS CONNIE)
I mean it! Can't we just eat?

PACINO (AS MICHAEL)
(one last shot at his father)
Why, it might make you seem a hypocrite.

Evans chuckles at this; the confrontation has him rapt.

TALIA (AS CONNIE)
No more, you two. No more! I'm sorry I
brought it up! I--

She breaks down, falling into Mama Corleone's arms.

MORGANA KING (AS MAMA CORLEONE)
That's enough. *Cambiare argomento.*
Change the subject.

Connie cries softly as Michael continues to stare down his father. The Don eventually breaks eye contact, returning to his meal. As if it's the final word:

BRANDO (AS DON CORLEONE)
You've upset your sister.

But it's clear Michael won the argument as the Corleones all begin eating again.

Evans watches them simply exist as a unit, mesmerized.

MUSIC: Then, (AND ONLY THEN) do we hear the softest bars of Nino Rota's *Godfather* score, symbolically punctuating the hard fought birth of the Corleone family.

As they break bread, conversation resuming, Evans sits beside Coppola. Both continue to watch Pacino, consumed.

EVANS
(leaning in)
Alright, Francis. You can have your
midget.

Relief washes over Coppola. As he closes his eyes and releases the biggest sigh of his life, WE PRE-LAP:

JAFFE (PRE-LAP)
Pacino won't make it past the first week.

INT. JAFFE'S OFFICE (FILMWAYS STUDIOS) - DAY

Stanley Jaffe stands in his office addressing a GROUP OF PEOPLE sitting. WE ONLY SEE THE BACKS OF THEIR HEADS...

JAFFE
Neither will Brando. Coppola. Or, God willing, that sun-fried sack 'a shit in an ascot Bob Evans. He may have a way with Charlie Bluhdorn, but I spoke to Paramount's Board of Directors and they agree; sometimes you have to save the parent company from itself. We could have Sinatra in this film. O'Neal! Redford! Stars! Instead, they pick *Blando* and the hairy afterbirth of some cocker spaniel. That can't be allowed. The Board has the balls to rectify poor leadership. Which is why you're here.

REVEAL: His audience, key personnel from the earlier production meeting -- Nikki Roberts (Prod. Coordinator), Alejandro Estevez (Art Director), Jake Webber (Camera), Aram Avakian (Editor), and Steve Kesten (1st A.D.).

JAFFE (CONT'D)

You all work directly for Coppola or a department head loyal to him. Once they're gone, you lieutenants will ensure a smooth transition for our new actors and director. You'll be handsomely rewarded.

KESTEN

Who is the new director?

JAFFE

(a Mona Lisa smile)

A definite step up.

JAKE WEBBER

You're asking us to betray our mentors. Gordy Willis got me on this picture. Now I should just stab him in the back?

JAFFE

Only if you wanna be Cinematographer on the biggest picture of the year.

JAKE WEBBER

(caving fast)

He'll always be in my heart. That's what counts.

The other lieutenants AGREE -- now bought and paid for!

ALEJANDRO ESTEVEZ

(to Jaffe)

If you have the support, why let them start filming? Fire them now.

JAFFE

To save face with Charlie, the Board wants to give 'em a few days. That way when shit slips up, it'll justify overruling Blühdorn.

NIKKI ROBERTS

Yeah, but what if everything goes perfect?

BART (O.S.)

On a film set?

Everyone looks toward another corner of the room where WE REVEAL: Peter Bart (Evans' V.P.) has been sitting all along.

BART (CONT'D)

When's the last time that happened?

SLAM CUT TO:

CLOSE ON the angry face of GORDON WILLIS.

WILLIS
 Why you little punk! What the hell are
 you doin', tellin' me my business?!
 (re: some film lights)
 I pulled them flags off a' here because I
 want contrast, you ignorant snot-nose.

REVEAL -- INT. GENCO OLIVE OIL OFFICE SET (FILMWAYS STUDIOS)

A CREW preps to shoot the Don's meeting with Sollozzo (in
 which the Don refuses to sell drugs). ACTORS and STAND-
 INS also bustle about as Willis faces off with Coppola.

COPPOLA
 (staying composed)
 The glare off their faces is too harsh,
 Gordy--

WILLIS
 These overheads are the source. It
should be harsh! Christ, it's a pack a'
 dagos in a fucking warehouse not Audrey
 Hepburn on the goddamn Spanish steps!
 (to his grips)
 Now bring those kickers in.

COPPOLA
 (to the grips)
 No, hold on. It's too bright--

WILLIS
 (over him, to the grips)
 Goddamn it, I said take 'em in!

Willis ditches Coppola abruptly to confer with his
 cameraman, Webber. Coppola steams as Kesten approaches.

KESTEN
 (re: Willis)
 Let him use a lava lamp if he wants.
 It's Day 3 and we're half a day behind.

COPPOLA
 I asked for eighty days, they gave me
 fifty. It's a tricky lighting scheme
 we're trying. Good work takes time.

KESTEN
 The lighting isn't our only problem.

Kesten gestures toward the set where...

ANGLE: Brando (dressed as the Don) approaches actor AL
 LETTIERI (Sollozzo) with Scotch Tape and index cards upon
 which he's scribbled his lines for the scene.

BRANDO
 It's Al, right?

Before Lettieri can answer, Brando presses one card onto his tie and another directly on his forehead!

AL LETTIERI
Yes, Mr. Brando, um... Sir, can I ask
what you're doing.

BRANDO
(looks up, "duh")
Learning my lines... And, please, call me
Marlon.

ANGLE: Kesten turns back to Coppola.

KESTEN
He's completely unprepared.

Coppola watches Brando sit across from Lettieri.

AL LETTIERI
(re: index cards)
If I move, won't these fall off?

BRANDO
(pointing to his head)
Not to worry. I have a backup.

He grabs the prop bottle of anisette from the scene, on the back of which he has also taped his lines!

AL LETTIERI
Dream come true to work with you, Marlon.

ANGLE: Back on Kesten, looking expectantly at Coppola.

COPPOLA
He's a brilliant actor. We have to be
patient with his process.
(Kesten's unmoved)
The studio will just have to accommodate.

Coppola moves toward Brando. Kesten gloats privately.

KESTEN
Oooo-kay.

Brando's now fixated on his suspenders -- lifting them up, considering, then down. Up and down. Up and down.

COPPOLA
(watching Brando)
'bout ready for a run-through?

BRANDO
Would this man go suspenders up or down
on this occasion?

COPPOLA
You'll have a sport coat on, Marlon. You
can take the suspenders off if you like.

BRANDO
 (ignoring him)
 Up implies a formality. A longing to
 impress... but he's already decided what
 he'll tell this fellow, Salami.

COPPOLA
 (correcting)
 Sollozzo.

BRANDO
 So, maybe down. Because he's at peace
 with his decision.

COPPOLA
 (in a rush)
 Down works fine--

BRANDO
 Or perhaps he senses the danger in this
 man. In which case, up. For fear of
 being caught with his pants down.

Coppola spots the crew SNICKERING at them. He blushes.

COPPOLA
 Let's try it with them up.

Brando takes a deep breath, horribly put upon. Finally:

BRANDO
 Very well.

Coppola starts to rush off when:

BRANDO (CONT'D)
 (an epiphany)
Wait! Just a minute!

COPPOLA
 Yes?

BRANDO
 What if... he's wearing a belt?

His mind blown, Brando stands and walks off the set,
 removing the suspenders. More CHUCKLES from the crew.

ANGLE: CLOSE ON Coppola closing and rubbing his eyes.

EVANS (O.S.)
 Francis!

COPPOLA
 (eyes still closed)
 Yes, Satan?

He opens his eyes to find Evans standing before him.

EVANS
 We need to talk.

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE (FILMWAY STUDIOS) - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Coppola and Evans alone outside, in mid conversation:

COPPOLA

It's day fucking 3! They haven't even seen any footage.

EVANS

You're behind. And Jaffe's already spent weeks mystifying Brando and Pacino. No footage can compete with a studio board's innate lack of vision. They're gone.

COPPOLA

And just who the fuck do they think can replace me?! I wrote the script, I've been prepping for a year. Who's more qualified than that?

EVANS

... Elia Kazan.

Coppola stops, crushed -- Kazan trumps anybody.

COPPOLA

Kazan? How do you know?

EVANS

I had Bart buddy up with Jaffe, like he's turning on me. He's my Jew Luca Brasi.

(then)

I'm sorry, kid. I liked how this was shaping up.

Coppola starts walking, trying to come up with something.

COPPOLA

You gotta buy me another week. I'll shoot the best scenes, prove the actors--

EVANS

Can't do it. The Board's lost their hard-on for Evans too. But listen, they want a smooth transition for Kazan and in exchange for leaving quietly, I convinced the board to do a deal with Warners so you can keep Zoetrope. Best I could do.

Coppola looks away, considering this -- his dream reborn.

EVANS (CONT'D)

You're solvent again. Family's secure. You get to walk away a winner.

COPPOLA

... no.

EVANS

Whaddya mean "no"?

COPPOLA

I won't go quietly.

EVANS

Francis, don't be an asshole. Saving your artsy shit mill's what you wanted.

COPPOLA

Well, now I want to make this picture.

EVANS

I swear to Christ, you'd fight me if I hired Raquel Welch to tongue your balls.

COPPOLA

More than any film I've done, I know exactly how this one has to be made; not in spite of our goddamn fights, because of them. They've been like a *sadistic refining process*. My vision is so clear because we beat each other down 'til all we had left was truth. That's art.

EVANS

(offended)

Jesus, don't say that--

COPPOLA

--That is art, Bob!--

EVANS

--How dare you suggest it!--

COPPOLA

You could've hired some yes-man, but you picked me, someone who wouldn't settle because deep down you're an artist--

EVANS

Who the fuck are you talking to, fatboy?!

COPPOLA

--AND YOU WANNA THROW AWAY ALL WE FOUGHT FOR NOW?!

Evans is for once beat down, and winded. After a moment:

EVANS

The decision's been made. There's no shortage of department head minions willing to betray you so Kazan can slide right in. And then my balls are clipped.

COPPOLA

You're still the boss tomorrow though?

(off Evans' nod)

All I need is five more days.

(then)

What if there were no minions to help Kazan slide right in?

ON EVANS, considering...

CUT TO:

INT. UNDISCLOSED ANTEROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON an infant BABY GIRL in an embroidered, white dress. This is SOFIA COPPOLA, in the arms of her mother Eleanor.

Leaning into each other on a sofa, faces touching, Coppola and his wife enjoy a quiet moment with their daughter.

COPPOLA
Look what you did, Ellie.

ELEANOR
We did it.

COPPOLA
No. I'm sorry to say I did as little as possible since we learned she was coming. For both of you.

Eleanor doesn't disagree. But she knows a turning point when she sees one. Meeting his eyes:

ELEANOR
So do this with me now.

He smiles at her and they share a kiss.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

A LONG SHOT of a church interior. An ORGAN PLAYS (Is it the same Bach piece as in *The Godfather*? Why not?).

Sofia's parents hold her over the baptism font, her brothers standing nearby along with a PRIEST.

PRIEST
The child's sponsors?

COPPOLA
They couldn't make it from San Francisco, but we don't want to wait any longer. I'll speak for her if that's alright.

The priest nods and readies himself to begin the ceremony (NOTE: I'm not writing out the Priest's Latin; it's the same as in the actual *Godfather* "baptism montage").

PRIEST
(SPEAKS LATIN)

The priest breathes on the baby three times. CLOSE ON Coppola watching intently. The baby's bonnet is removed.

THE PRIEST'S LATIN CONTINUES OVER THE FOLLOWING MONTAGE:

INT. FILMWAYS OFFICE - In a wife beater, Ruddy cleans metallic "parts". He's assembling *something*.

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE - Gordon Willis sits on a camera box, wiping lenses and smoking. Looking through a lens, he spots a cube truck arriving.

INT. BARBER SHOP/SALON - Evans YELLS at someone over the phone while A BARBER tries to shave him, A MANICURIST struggling to buff his nails.

INT. STUDIO MILL - A nervous Lucas checks himself in the reflection of a saw blade, wipes his brow.

CATHEDRAL - The priest blesses the baby with oils.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
(SPEAKS LATIN)

FILMWAYS OFFICE - Ruddy finishes assembling his metal contraption.

REVEAL: It's a typewriter carriage. He slides it into an Underwood, loads pink paper, and begins typing pink slips for "Steven Kesten"/"Nikki Roberts"/"Alejandro Estevez", etc.

Ruddy removes a slip and hands it to Evans, who signs it.

CATHEDRAL - The priest blesses Sofia. CLOSE ON Coppola.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
Sofia, do you believe in God, the Father
Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth?

COPPOLA
I do.

STUDIO MILL - Lucas moves past a hastily painted sign reading, "Art Direction, 'Godfather'".

PRIEST (V.O.)
Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only
Son, our Lord?

COPPOLA (V.O.)
I do.

Lucas spots Alejandro Estevez (the Art Director) at a drafting table. Lucas hesitates, losing his nerve.

PRIEST (V.O.)
Do you believe in the Holy Ghost, the
Holy Catholic Church?

COPPOLA (V.O.)
I do.

About to retreat, Lucas spots a Polynesian temple set shelved in the racks. A mask carved into it looks just like a Stormtrooper's helmet! Lucas finds his grit.

EXT. FILMWAYS MAIN ENTRANCE - The studio's main building has a wide imposing staircase before it. 1st A.D. Steve Kesten is at the base shuffling EXTRAS inside.

REVEAL: Evans watching Kesten.

INT. POST FACILITY - Ruddy stalks through a hallway of edit bays, eventually locating Editor Aram Avakian hunched over a flatbed in a wool sweater.

EXT. PRODUCTION OFFICE/FILMWAYS LOT - Peter Bart tracks Nikki Roberts (the Production Coordinator) down the office's gravel pathway toward a security booth.

SOUNDSTAGE - Camera Op Jake Webber and his 1st A.C. roll a dolly from the cube truck onto the stage's freight elevator. Seeing them descend, Willis stubs out his cigarette and heads down some stairs.

CATHEDRAL - Sofia begins CRYING. **THE CRYING CONTINUES OVER...**

PRIEST
(SPEAKS LATIN)

FILMWAYS MAIN ENTRANCE - Evans makes contact with Kesten and the two head up the staircase, chatting.

INT. FILMWAYS SECURITY BOOTH - Nikki enters and heads for the exit door, which she finds locked.

Confused, she turns to the SECURITY GUARD, who ducks under the counter. REVEAL: Bart standing across from her!

INT. SOUNDSTAGE/ELEVATOR - Willis flies down the stairs and positions himself in front of the freight elevator door, through which he can see Jake and the 1st A.C. descending. Jake carries a tower of film cans.

CATHEDRAL - CLOSE ON the baby and then Coppola.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
Sofia Carmina Coppola, do you renounce
Satan?

SOUNDSTAGE/ELEVATOR - The elevator door opens and Jake is startled to see Willis holding a pink slip and mouthing "You're fucking fired!"

The film cans come toppling out of the elevator door.

COPPOLA
I do renounce him.

FILMWAYS SECURITY BOOTH - Reading glasses perched on the edge of her nose, Nikki scans her own pink slip. She looks up, tears in her eyes and the glasses slip off, shattering when they hit the ground.

PRIEST
And all his works?

STUDIO MILL - Lucas stands before Alejandro, who angrily crumples and tosses his pink slip into a pull chain toilet (part of the bathroom set he was building).

COPPOLA

I do renounce them.

EDIT BAY - Standing amidst the bins of film holding his pink slip, a furious Avakian flails at Ruddy; his thick sweater snagging the pins on a bin. He swings with the other arm, snagging another bin! Increased flailing only further entangles him -- the bins slamming all over the room, eventually toppling along with Avakian!

PRIEST

And all his poms?

COPPOLA

I do renounce them.

FILMWAYS MAIN ENTRANCE - Atop the staircase, Kesten SCREAMS at Evans about the pink slip. Extras watch as Kesten moves to get in Evans' face, but misses the step, slips, and begins rolling down the stairs!

The fall is so horrible Evans begins chasing to stop him.

PRIEST

Sofia Coppola, will you be baptized?

COPPOLA

I will.

The Priest baptizes Sofia with water.

PRIEST

In Nomine Patris...

EDIT BAY - Avakian lays entangled in film, not unlike a mummified body.

PRIEST (V.O.)

... et Filii...

SOUNDSTAGE/ELEVATOR - Jake Webber sits amidst the spilt film cans, crying.

PRIEST (V.O.)

... et Spiritu Sanctu.

MAIN ENTRANCE - A bloodied Kesten lays at the bottom of the stairs surrounded by extras. Evans walks hurriedly away past an APPROACHING AMBULANCE.

CATHEDRAL - CLOSE ON Coppola behind a candle.

PRIEST

Sofia Coppola go in peace and may the Lord be with you.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

Amen.

END MONTAGE/CUT TO:

INT. JAFFE'S OFFICE (FILMWAYS STUDIOS) - DAY

Coppola enters along with Evans, Bart, and Ruddy. Jaffe puts his phone down mid-dial upon seeing:

Charlie Bluhdorn push past the other men.

CHARLIE BLUHDORN

You must answer for 'ze Board, Stanley.

Jaffe pauses, then rises to meet them.

JAFFE

Charlie, you got it all wrong.

EVANS

You tried to cut us out.

JAFFE

(to Bluhdorn)

I don't know what you heard, but I'm innocent. I swear on your kids--

COPPOLA

Sit down.

Jaffe glares, then sits. Coppola pulls a chair beside him.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)

Steve Kesten's in a coma. Avakian's fired. So is Roberts. Estevez. Webber. All your replacement staff. Kazan'll need weeks to get up to speed. But I'll settle my business with the Board long before then.

Jaffe puts his face in his hands, shaken.

CHARLIE BLUHDORN

Don't be afraid, Stanley. I'm not revoking your stock options. But you 'vil tender your resignation.

EVANS

Hear that, cock muppet? You're getting a golden parachute. Like all dipshit studio heads. Only don't tell us you're innocent. It insults Evans' intelligence, which are considerable.

JAFFE

Francis, I--

COPPOLA

Go on, get outta my sight.

EXT. PRODUCTION OFFICE/FILMWAYS LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Jaffe emerges from the office onto the gravel path and is immediately surrounded by SEVERAL SECURITY GUARDS.

Coppola and the gang step out a beat later. Jaffe to Bart:

JAFFE

Pete, can you get me off the hook? For old time's sake?

BART

Can't do it, Stanley.

Bart nods at the guards and they march Jaffe toward a waiting golf cart, his shoulders slumped in dread.

Coppola watches along with Evans, Bluhdorn, et al. as Jaffe is carted away. They then move ominously down the path, GRAVEL CRUNCHING beneath their feet.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD LUNA RESTAURANT (THE BRONX) - NIGHT

We're on location, the FILM CREW resetting STERLING HAYDEN and Al Lettieri for another take of the McCluskey/Sollozzo murder scene (by Michael).

Pacino sits in a far corner of the restaurant facing a wall, panicking. Coppola watches his actor, concerned.

An ANGRY ON-SET STUDIO EXEC -- recognizable by his suit, frantic joylessness and clipboard -- charges up to Coppola.

STUDIO EXEC

Who the hell put this scene on the schedule?

(re: Pacino)

We're not supposed to be shooting with him anymore.

Coppola doesn't acknowledge him, eyes glued on Pacino.

STUDIO EXEC (CONT'D)

You're quite crafty in slowing this down, but the Board has made up its mind.

Coppola merely sips his coffee and the exec huffs off.

STUDIO EXEC (CONT'D)

Somebody find me a goddamn phone!

This cues Coppola to approach Pacino, still facing away.

COPPOLA

Al?

PACINO

I don't want to do this anymore.

PACINO (CONT'D)
 (re: the exec on the phone)
 They don't want me. They're just...
toying with me this whole time. But I
know they don't want me!

Coppola SIGHS and pulls a chair over to sit with him.

PACINO (CONT'D)
 It's the truth, isn't it?

COPPOLA
 You know the truth? They don't know what they want. Never have. None of 'em. That's our job. To show them what they want. We gotta jump through a lot of hoops to do it, so it's easy to think they've got us on a string. But what they're really doing, Al, is waiting for us to dance. And all the bullshit we put up with; the egos and infighting and rejection, is all about getting to the music. That's this, right now. With the cameras about to roll and at least ten minutes before that asshole can shut us down.

Pacino looks up, beginning to come back online.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
This is when we set the tempo. And if you can accept how rare these moments are, then they belong to you.

Pacino gives a tiny nod. Coppola stands and goes right to his NEW A.D.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Are we ready?
 (off the A.D.'s nod)
 Good. I wanna go now.

Pacino, with renewed focus and vigor, sits in his position at the table across from Lettieri and Hayden (as Sollozzo and McCluskey) as the A.D. CALLS OUT:

A.D.
 Roll camera!

CAMERAMAN
 Camera rolling.

A.D.
 Sound!

SOUNDMAN
 Sound speeding.

COPPOLA
 'kay, everyone settle.

SFX: The growing sound of an approaching ELEVATED SUBWAY CAR threatens the crew's audio.

The studio executive appears at Coppola's side as the restaurant begins SHAKING, the subway clearly close by.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
ALRIGHT, WE'RE SET AND--

STUDIO EXEC
(re: the TRAIN SOUND)
Hold up! You have to wait for that to stop!

Coppola looks at:

Pacino; having flawlessly assumed the internal mania possessed only by a man about to make a horrible decision which he can never undo. This is Michael Corleone's beginning.

COPPOLA
(to the exec, smiling)
It's a train. It won't stop.
(then, to the set)
ACTION!

MUSIC: PRE-LAP *Connie's Wedding Tarantella...*

EXT. CORLEONE COMPOUND SET (MANHASSET) - DAY

A HIGH ANGLE of the Corleone mall dressed for Connie's wedding. HUNDREDS OF GUESTS mill about laughing and dancing. Coppola's father, Carmine, leads the band playing the tarantella. Italia sits nearby clapping.

THE ENTIRE CAST interact with the guests, many are the wiseguys with their WIVES and CHILDREN, all clapping.

Several cameras and CAMERAMEN are posted throughout, covering the action. Ruddy, Willis and Fred Roos survey the process. Nearby, Mario Puzo eats some of the prop food.

Seated with his family, Joe Columbo Sr. is outraged when the PRODUCTION STILL PHOTOGRAPHER snaps his pic. Joe Jr. and another HOOD promptly rip the negative from the poor man's camera. Joe Sr. shreds and throws it on the ground.

COPPOLA (O.S.)
Okay, CUT! CUT! CUT! CUT!

REVEAL: Coppola at the forefront of it all, sweaty from the heat and frustrated.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
Everyone, there still isn't enough activity. This should be organized chaos. I remember men tossing sandwiches back and forth to each other, kids dancing in the aisles, wine spilling all over the grass and just-- a thousand Italians screaming over each other.
(MORE)

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Okay? I know it's hot, but we have to
 get an authentic feel here and we're
 very, very behind.

He looks at his A.D.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Let's go again right away.

A.D.
 We gotta change mags.

COPPOLA
 Fuck!
 (then, calming himself)
 Just, please ask them to hurry.

The A.D. runs off and Coppola heads for some shade where
 Puzo sits, eating.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 That's prop food, Mario. It's for the
 actors.

PUZO
 It tastes like a prop.
 (tosses plate on the ground)
 Ooh, that reminds me.
 (takes out his script)
 Scene here where Clemenza shows Mike how
 to cook sauce--

COPPOLA
 Ya know Mario, I got my hands pretty full
 with this scene right now.

PUZO
 I don't wanna forget.

COPPOLA
 (bites his tongue)
 Fine.

PUZO
 First off, what's the scene for?

COPPOLA
 I like to get a good recipe in every
 script. That way if people hate the
 film, at least they come away with
 something.

PUZO
 Shrewd. I'd 'a gone with an alfredo,
 but... Problem right here is he says,
 "You start out with a little oil and you
 brown some garlic."

COPPOLA
 Yeah, what's the problem?

PUZO
Gangsters don't "brown". Gangsters
"fry".

Coppola's inclined to lose it on him, but then he takes a deep breath, realizing the old man is right.

COPPOLA
Good call, Mario. I'll change it.

PUZO
You're doin' A-one, kid. I'm 'a get some
of that cake.

Puzo moves for the wedding cake. Coppola calls after:

COPPOLA
No, that's--

But he drops it, overwhelmed with the futility.

BRANDO (O.S.)
Hey there, folks! FOLKS!

Coppola looks at Brando, standing on a table trying to settle the crowd.

COPPOLA
What now?

BRANDO
Folks, hi. Hi. I'm Marlon Brando. I'm
in the movie.

The crowd APPLAUDS. Brando signals them to stop.

BRANDO (CONT'D)
And I realize what I'm about to do may be
somewhat off color, but I have a bit of a
reputation as a prankster and these two
gentlemen...

He points at James Caan and Robert Duvall, both smiling.

BRANDO (CONT'D)
They dared me to do something for which
they don't think I have the stomach.

The crowd just stares, expectantly. Coppola blanches.

COPPOLA
Oh, shit.

BRANDO
Anyway, there's really nothing left to
say, so...

Brando turns, drops his pants, bends over and moons the entire production! Caan and Duvall are in hysterics.

With everyone else, it's a medley of responses: From mild amusement to outrage; mothers covering their children's eyes, etc. Coppola buries his face in his hands.

BRANDO (CONT'D)
 (pulling his pants back up)
 Many thanks. You will all be receiving a meal penalty.

ANGLE ON: Bettye McCartt (Ruddy's secretary) recovering from Brando's stunt as Joe Jr. approaches with a gift bag.

JOE JR.
 Boy, it's not every day you get to see Marlon Brando's ass in person, huh? Beats an autograph.
 (extending his hand)
 I'm Joseph Columbo Jr., from the Italian-American Civil Rights League.

Bettye registers this with sheer terror, but doesn't move.

JOE JR. (CONT'D)
 We heard about an unfortunate incident where you broke your watch, and we thought we could help you out with 'dat.
 (hands her the gift bag)
 Open it.

Bettye pulls out a Cartier case and opens it, revealing a diamond-encrusted watch -- worth at least ten grand!

She stares at Joe Jr., her mouth gaping.

JOE JR. (CONT'D)
 I know, it's beautiful, right? You're welcome. Just don't wear it in Florida.

He walks away, Bettye still frozen in shock.

ANGLE ON: Coppola rushes up and grabs his A.D.'s wrist.

COPPOLA
 Can we get this started already? Before Brando shows his cock.

A.D.
 Just a few more minutes.

He hurries off, leaving Coppola exasperated.

EVANS (O.S.)
 Hey, Francis!

REVEAL: Evans bee-lining for Coppola.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Francis!

COPPOLA
 (under his breath)
 And here's how this gets worse.

EVANS
 Evans bears tidings. The Board saw your
 rushes.

Evans pauses dramatically, waiting for Coppola.

COPPOLA
 Don't make this a moment, Bob. It's not
 General Hospital.

EVANS
 Brando's in the clear. Pacino...?
 (tentative)
 Word they used was "horrified."

Coppola nods in defeat before Evans cracks a smile.

EVANS (CONT'D)
 As in "chills up their spine!" Smart
 move shooting the Sollozzo murder when
 you did. Really sold the midget's
 mettle. He's in like Flynn, and so are
 you, kid. Kazan be damned!

COPPOLA
 (relieved)
 Well, it's about time. Holy shit.

EVANS
 No, "Holy Evans." Told ya you'd owe it
 all to me.

COPPOLA
 I don't know how you figure. But thank
 you, Bob.

They shake hands. Evans turns to leave, then hesitates.

EVANS
 Actually, one more thing... something's
 been eating Evans' craw. Why'd you
 audition Jimmy Caan for Michael? He was
 all wrong for it.

COPPOLA
 I don't know. Don't ask me about
 casting.

EVANS
 'Cuz it occurred to me; maybe he was your
 pick for Sonny all along. Maybe you
 wanted Evans to think it was his idea.
 So he'd feel good; perhaps be more
 amenable to Brando and other less obvious
 choices.

Coppola remains silent. Eventually, Evans CHUCKLES.

EVANS (CONT'D)

Ahhh, but you couldn't pull a move like that on Evans.

(more CHUCKLING)

You ain't nearly got the stones.

(more CHUCKLES)

Not with Eartha Kitt on all fours and an eight-ball up your ass could you swing such dick.

(LAUGHING, then dead serious)

I mean, could you?

COPPOLA

Don't ask me about casting, Bob.

Coppola turns to leave and Evans grabs his arm, hard.

EVANS

No, Francis, 'cuz if you tricked me, it means I'm slippin'. So I gotta know... Is it true?

Coppola is at once aware of this man's gaping vulnerability.

EVANS (CONT'D)

Is it?

He looks straight into Coppola's eyes, and Coppola returns the look so directly we know he'll tell the truth.

COPPOLA

(after a long pause)

No.

Evans exhales relief. He slaps Coppola on the back.

EVANS

I knew it. I knew it! Jesus Christ, Evans needs a drink.

(pointing at Coppola)

You don't get one, buster. You're making a blockbuster. Remember what I said about the audience smelling the spaghetti? This is what I meant!

He walks away feeling like a king. Coppola smiles privately as his A.D. returns.

A.D.

We're ready, but we can't find the groom.

COPPOLA

Whaddya mean you can't find him?

(to the crowd)

HEY, WHERE'S THE GROOM?!

(no response)

HEY, EVERYONE, WHERE'S CARLO?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

HERE! YO, I'M RIGHT HERE!

REVEAL: The crowd parts for the GROOM. It's Gianni Russo (Columbo's aid)! He got a part after all. To Talia:

GIANNI RUSSO
Let's get married, baby!

He smooches her as Coppola climbs on a large camera crane.

COPPOLA
(shouting instructions)
Alright, I wanna pick it up with "C'e La Luna". Let's go.

The crew jumps into action; slating cameras, rolling sound, BOOM OPS taking position. Coppola rises on the crane above the crowd along with OUR FINAL VIEW of the scene.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
And... action!

It's the magic of the movies -- perhaps tarnished by this story but still very much alive! -- as the wedding guests begin SINGING THE CHORUS to *C'e La Luna Mezz'o Mare*.

THE CHORUS
La la la, la-la-la-la la-la la-la...

On stage, Mama Corleone begins singing:

MORGANA KING
*C'e la luna mezz'o mare
Mamma mia me maritari,
Figghia mia, a cu te dari
Mamma mia pensaci tu.*

As she continues, the crowd wildly festive despite the heat:

SUPER: "In March of 1972, 'The Godfather' shattered box office records in its initial release, quickly becoming the highest grossing film of its time."

SUPER: "Nominated for ten Oscars, the film garnered three -- Best Actor for Marlon Brando, Best Adapted Screenplay for Francis Ford Coppola and Best Picture."

SUPER: "To date, 'The Godfather' has grossed Paramount Pictures over 250 million dollars and continues to play in theaters worldwide."

SUPER: "It is widely regarded as a masterpiece of American cinema."

HIGH ANGLE: As Coppola relishes his vision coming to life and the crowd SHOUTS OUT ONE LAST CHORUS...

THE CHORUS
*La la la, la-la-la-la la-la la-la,
La la la, la-la-la-la-la la-la-la la-la!*

THE END.