

I Believe In America

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The iconic PARAMOUNT PICTURES' LOGO appears, Circa 1970-72, appropriately showing signs of "scratched" celluloid.

Then OVER BLACK, a familiar New Yorker:

WOODY ALLEN (V.O.)
I'll tell you who believes in America...

FADE IN:

INT. ROBERT EVANS' OFFICE - DAY (1970)

WOODY ALLEN (CONT'D)
The mob. The mafia.

While Woody's hair is uncharacteristically long and scraggly, his iconic eyeglasses are an immediate giveaway as is his own peculiar style of delivery & manner.

WOODY ALLEN (CONT'D)
No it's true; it's true. Because where else but in America could "organized crime take in over forty billion dollars a year and spend so little on office supplies?"

As the comedian speaks, our VIEW imperceptibly retreats.

WOODY ALLEN (CONT'D)
And oh, oh, get this: you know the two mobsters under federal indictment? The same ones that are in the news lately? They recently spent the night at the White House. Nixon had to sleep on the sofa.

By now we are watching Woody over the shoulder of his seated audience of one, the famous -- or infamous -- ROBERT EVANS.

EVANS (O.S.)
Poor Dick. He can never catch a break.

WOODY ALLEN
Well I hear Pat Nixon welcomed the change. But Nixon had a rough night; you know, twisting and turning. The next morning, he had a lotta aggravation to shake off, so he carpet bombed Cambodia.

Evans laughs this up. A WASPish rascal decked out in yacht club attire: double-breasted suit, Gucci loafers, no socks.

His desk NAMEPLATE informs us:

**ROBERT EVANS
HEAD OF PRODUCTION, PARAMOUNT STUDIOS**

WOODY ALLEN (CONT'D)
Oh and, Evans, you should see how these mobster guys communicate with each other.

EVANS
Why's that, Woody?

WOODY ALLEN
They don't just come out and say what they want. These guys send coded messages to each other. Like it's all some kinda' game.

Evans picks up VARIETY MAGAZINE:

EVANS TENURE OVER BY END OF MONTH

EVANS
I think I can relate.

WOODY ALLEN
Oh but hey, Evans, do you know what the real joke about organized crime is?

EVANS
No. Tell me, what?

WOODY ALLEN
The mob is like a regular company; I mean, a business, a firm, like American Steel.

For Evans, a fuse has been lit. His mind visibly drifts.

WOODY ALLEN (CONT'D)
Makes you wonder what U.S. corporations are doing to the country.

EVANS
(wondering aloud)
Yeah. Yeah it does.

WOODY ALLEN
Like, what is the American Dream really about?

EVANS
(mumbling)
Organized crime...

WOODY ALLEN
A classless, melting-pot society, we ain't. It's all business.

Said noticing Evans' distraction.

WOODY ALLEN (CONT'D)
I, I say something wrong?

EVANS
Wrong? No, no, no. Woody, you're great; you're beautiful; you're the best.

He gets up to escort Woody out. Wall-to-wall PHOTOS show Evans with a multitude of icons from megastar Kurt Douglas to mob lawyer Sidney Korshak to Hanoi-bomber Henry Kissinger.

EVANS (CONT'D)
But going back to what we were talking about. "Play it Again, Sam." We'll film in San Francisco. Hunky dory with that?

WOODY ALLEN
Um, yeah. If you think it would work.

EVANS
Woody, you'll love San Fran.

WOODY ALLEN
I did a show in Berkeley once.

EVANS
How'd it go?

WOODY ALLEN
Yeah, not bad. In the cab ride over there, I could still smell the marijuana from the previous passengers. I was half-high during my set, I kept giggling at my own punch-lines.

EVANS
You know what they say: if you reach one person...

WOODY ALLEN
(amused)
Right.

Out they go --

INT. OUTER OFFICE - SAME

Evans' secretary is busy taking calls.

WOODY ALLEN
What about Diane? Think we could cast her as Linda?

EVANS
Remind me. Diane...? Diane...?

WOODY ALLEN
She played Linda on Broadway.

EVANS
You like her for Linda in the movie?

WOODY ALLEN
I love Diane for everything.

EVANS
Can't wait to meet her.

WOODY ALLEN
Great, okay. Gee, thanks, Evans.

EVANS
Not at all, Woody.

Woody heads off, a bounce in his step. Evans stares off, a man deep in thought. To his secretary:

EVANS (CONT'D)
Get Peter Bart on the phone, will ya,
Cathy?

SECRETARY (CATHY)
Barbara Streisand has left two
messages. She's still not happy with
the guy cast as the step-brother for
"On a Clear Day."

EVANS
Okay uh, I'll call her -- no wait. I
can't deal with that now. Send candy
-- the uh, the fancy French ones. But
um, make sure to get Peter Bart on the
phone. Top priority.

SECRETARY
People keep asking why you relocated
your office to Beverly Hills and off
the Paramount studio lot.

EVANS
(touchy)
Because the studio is broke -- that's
why.
(reconsidering)
No no, wait. Don't say that.

SECRETARY
I wasn't going to.

EVANS
Say -- I don't know what to say. Say
I'm a snob.

SECRETARY
A snob?

EVANS
Yeah. Tell people, tell 'em "Bob
Evans only lunches in 90210 and only
works in 90210."
(then)
It's half-true. Right?

SECRETARY
(doesn't know)
Right.

EVANS
Ah who cares if it's true or not?
Once it sounds good, it plays. That's
all that matters: impressions and
conceptions.

ALI MACGRAW enters, a ravishing chic-hippie. She wears a paisley-patterned SILK SCARF as a headband like revolutionary bandana.

Evans brightens up, delighted to see her as she is to see him. They embrace, a warm and loving married couple.

EVANS
Oh hello, darling.

ALI
Hi.

EVANS
You just missed, Woody.

ALI
No, I passed him in the hall.

Evans guides her inside --

INT. EVANS' OFFICE - SAME

ALI (CONT'D)
Boy, is he in a good mood.

EVANS
The little guy should be. I just
green-lit a picture for him.
(then)
How'd the screening go?

Ali goes into character à la Jennifer Cavalleri:

ALI
"Love means never having to say you're
sorry."

They laugh and hug, enjoying the joke.

EVANS
Ah the Academy will love ya, baby.

ALI
Save it, Evans; Mia Farrow, I ain't.

EVANS
I never hustled Mia and I would never
hustle you.

ALI
You better not.
(then)
Evans...?

EVANS
Hmm?

ALI
Do you really like "Love Story?" I
mean really?

EVANS
 Ali, are you kidding? "Love Story" is
 about us. And it's the one picture
 I'm banking that will save me. For a
 little while, at least.

Said pouring two drinks, offers one to Ali.

ALI
 Evans, it's only twelve.

EVANS
 Tell that to my anxiety.

Shows his wife the cause of said anxiety: the *NY Times*.

BLUHDORN'S FOLLY

ALI
 It's better than "Bluhdorn's Blow-Job"

She holds up "Hollywood Close-Up," which says:

BLUHDORN'S BLOW-JOB

EVANS
 Jesus. The article actually says
 "blow job." Is this what we're down
 to? Smut as news?

He pours Ali's drink into his and downs the glass in one.

ALI
 It got my attention.

EVANS
 I need a monster hit, baby. Badly.

Intercom BUZZES.

SECRETARY (OVER INTERCOM)
 Creative Affairs, Mr. Evans.

EVANS
 Oh that's Peter. I gotta take this.

ALI
 (playful)
 Oh no, you can't leave me.

EVANS
 One second, darling.
 (into phone)
 Hello, Peter?...Where are you?

Said pouring himself another drink. But Ali takes the
 glass and empties it in a potted plant.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 Okay, stay there, I'll come to you.

ALI

Now?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)

Yes, now. I have something running
around my mind; I can't shake it...okay.

Hangs up.

ALI

Why call me for lunch if you're now
gonna run off at lunchtime?

EVANS

It's just this unexpected meeting.

He goes to kiss her goodbye, but Ali pulls back.

EVANS (CONT'D)

What?

ALI

Don't forget our deal, Evans. Never
let anything get between us.

EVANS

Ali, sweetie, it's one meeting.

SMOOCHES her and off he goes.

ALI

Why are you so desperate to see Peter,
anyway?

EVANS

I feel inspired.

ALI

(calling out)
About what?

EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - DAY

Executives and wannabes come and go under the ICONIC ENTRANCE.
Gas-guzzlers curb up and swerve inside.

PETER (V.O.) (PRE-LAP)
You want Paramount to do what?

INT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - STAGE 5 - SAME

Evans wanders around w/PETER BART, his mild-mannered consigliere,
his voice of reason, the straight man to Evans' shoot-from-the-
hip eccentricity. The mammoth soundstage is empty and bare
except for POSTERS and DEBRIS.

PETER

Say it to me one more time -- actually
don't.

EVANS

Why? What's wrong, Peter?

PETER
 Oh nothing's wrong, Evans, nothing at all. The studio is only bleeding money from one humiliating flop after another. I mean good god, what acid were you on when you okayed this turkey?

He SLAPS a large "Paint your Wagon" MOVIE POSTER on a wall.

EVANS
 "Paint your Wagon" was a successful stage musical, Peter.

PETER
 Yeah -- in the fifties, Evans.

EVANS
 "The Sound of Music" is the highest-grossing picture of all time...

PETER
 And I bet the guys at Twentieth had the "Sound of Music" in mind when they gave the green light to "Doctor Doolittle" or "Star," and no one went to see either of them.

EVANS
 (lamenting)
 "The Sound of Music" was bigger than "Gone with the Wind." What happened?

PETER
 Times changed. Or people changed, I don't know. Either way the Hollywood Land that Harry Warner and Daryl Zanuck built is gone -- long gone.

EVANS
 (mournful)
 Who you tellin'?

PETER
 Corporations, conglomerates -- they're the heart and soul of this town.

EVANS
 (scornfully)
 Thanks be to Howard Hughes. That hyper-hygienic weirdo started all this.

PETER
 And killed a wonderful studio like RKO in the process; I know. But you know what else I know, Evans?

EVANS
 That I need Vitamin A in my diet?

PETER
 We need new thinking, new solutions, because the 1970s doesn't give a single iota about the past or what used to work.

EVANS
 Okay, we made mistakes -- but, Peter,
 I'm a big believer in second chances.

PETER
 (not feeling it)
 Good for you, Evans.

EVANS
 Good for us, Peter -- we have my new
 idea, don't forget.

They exit...

EXT. BACKLOT - SAME

...and stroll along. The place is nearly as empty. Some staff,
 some extras -- nothing like the hustle and bustle of the golden
 age.

PETER
 I've forgotten it and so should you.

EVANS
 Why?

PETER
 You want Paramount to do a picture
 about gangsters?

EVANS
 No. I want Paramount to do a picture
 about American organized crime.

Smiles into the distance -- for our benefit, a CLOUDY IMAGE takes
 shape, showing a movie premier, a real 1970s celebrity affair,
 movie posters show early-disco gangsters.

Then:

PETER
 Why in god's name?

EVANS
 Because this mobster flick is gonna be
 unlike any other?

PETER
 How?

EVANS
 We're gonna show how the mob is
 structured like a company. But with
 the added bonus of the mob having
 their own rules and rituals. And
 Italians, let me tell you, love rules
 and rituals.

PETER
 I thought the mob was Sicilian, not
 Italian.

EVANS

What's the difference between a
Sicilian and an Italian?

PETER

Are you telling a joke or are you
asking me a question?

EVANS

Asking you a question.

PETER

Uh, I think it's like the difference
between a Hawaiian and an American. A
Hawaiian is Hawaiian as well as an
American. But an American is not
Hawaiian.

EVANS

Okay look, Italian, Sicilian, it
doesn't matter because everyone from
that Mediterranean part of the world
is fucking dramatic. And drama is
what makes a good fucking picture.
And like all good pictures, it starts
on the fucking page.

Feeding off Evans' exuberance:

PETER

Do you have a fucking script?

EVANS

No.

Peter's face and shoulders slack with disappointment.
Then, with sudden realization:

PETER

Yeah you do.

EVANS

I do what?

PETER

You have a script, a gangster script -
- a gangster book, anyhow.

EVANS

What book?

PETER

"The Godfather."

Evans lights up. Stunned.

INT. CANTEEN - SAME

...move through. Pour coffee. Peter takes a pastry.

EVANS

Paramount owns "The Godfather?"

PETER

You have to ask? Evans, you bought
The Godfather.

EVANS

I did?

PETER

You remember: you gave Mario some cash
to pay off bookies. Then to your
surprise, he sent you the pages. You
sent them over to me, they were
originally called "Mafia"; every
publisher passed, but I told you they
were good.

EVANS

I don't remember any of this. Why
can't I remember this?

PETER

You had just met Ali, you were high up
in the clouds.

EVANS

(dreamily)

Ms. Flower Child/Snot Nose does have
that affect on me; that's true.

PETER

(sotto)

You and every other actor she stars
opposite to.

EVANS

What?

PETER

Nothing.

EVANS

What's The Godfather about?

PETER

You haven't read it?

EVANS

I read everything.

(then)

Just remind me.

PETER

Only you Evans, I swear to god.

EVANS

Is that supposed to be a crack at my
character, Peter?

PETER

The Godfather is being translated into
every known language on the planet
because the book is currently
rewriting the criteria needed for a
book to be a blockbuster.

PETER (CONT'D)
And The Godfather only exists because
of you -- but you, Evans, you haven't
read The Godfather. Sweet Moses and
Jesus.

EVANS
When you read it, did you like it?

PETER
Very much so; yeah. Well, there were
one or two allusions that concerned
me, but...

EVANS
What kind of allusions?

Peter lowers his voice, wary of being overheard.

PETER
About Frank. Remember, I came to you
about them, but you didn't care
because Sinatra pissed you off about
trying to pull Mia during the shooting
of "Rosemary's Baby" to star with him
in "The Detective."

EVANS
Frank even had Mickey Rudin serve Mia
with divorce papers on the set when
she sided with me.

PETER
Didn't you arrange for both pictures
to open on the same day?

EVANS
Mia wanted "Rosemary's Baby" to kick
"The Detective's" butt at the box
office.

PETER
But you own the rights to The
Detective?

EVANS
(nostalgic)
Ahh. My first deal.

Both men walk out another door...

EXT. BACK LOT - SAME

...and move through.

PETER
Evans, you sabotaged your own
investment.

EVANS
(musing)
Just another day on the farm, Peter.

PETER
Funny farm, Evans.

Both men recede into the distance, their backs to us. They approach a BACKGROUND PAINTING OF A SUNSET that's being moved by two SCENICS. Overhead, a real SUNSET scorches the cloud-flecked sky.

EVANS
It's all about finding an angle,
Peter. A way to convince the
distribution mavens to go along with
this mobster idea.

On that note, we dreamily --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVANS' HOME - PROJECTION ROOM - NIGHT

Peter and Ali are half-asleep and bleary-eyed watching "The Roaring Twenties," the Cagney/Bogart 1939 b/w classic flickering across the home movie screen.

Evans, wide-awake, leafs through a hardback copy of Mario Puzo's "The Godfather," surrounded by MOVIE REELS in cans.

EVANS
(reading aloud)
"A lawyer with his briefcase can steal
more than a hundred men with guns."
(commenting)
Ain't it the sour truth.

Ali sits up, to Peter:

ALI
I forget, what are we supposed to be
looking for again?

PETER
Ask your husband.

EVANS
A pattern. So we know what not to do
the next time around.

PAUL KELLY AS NICK BROWN
(on screen)
You two guys think you're pretty cute.

CAGNEY AS BARTLETT
(on screen)
Shut up. The girl is singing.

KELLY AS BROWN
(on screen)
Now, you listen to me. You tipped off
the feds I was running in a load last
night, and they took it from me.

CAGNEY AS BARTLETT
(to Bogart as Hally)
He makes noise when he eats spaghetti
too.

Evans suddenly looks up -- "Spaghetti"

EVANS
Who directed this? Peter?

PETER
H'm?

EVANS
Who directed "The Roaring Twenties?"

PETER
Uh...Walsh.

Evans starts rummaging through the film reels, movies they've already watched.

ALI
Didn't Walsh direct "Hombre?"

PETER
Probably the best western of them all.
(apologetically to Ali)
After "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," of course.

EVANS
Who directed "White Heat?"

ALI
(to Peter)
I wasn't in "Butch Cassidy."

PETER
Are you sure?

ALI
Am I sure?

EVANS
Hey you two? Who directed "White Heat?"

Peter points to the screen, emphasizing:

PETER
Walsh.

ALI
Katherine Ross was in "Butch Cassidy."

PETER
Anyone ever tell you're Katherine Ross' spitting image?

ALI
No. Never.

EVANS
Who directed "Little Caesar?"

ALI/PETER
Mervyn LeRoy/Mervyn LeRoy

PETER
(to Evans)
Even Herb Stempel could answer that
one.

ALI
Evans, do I look like Katherine Ross?

EVANS
You look like the heaven, moon and the
stars, baby.

ALI
Is that yes or no?

EVANS
(moving on)
Who directed "Public Enemy?"

PETER
Uh, Wellman, William Wellman.
Actually, you know he has cancer.

ALI
Really?

PETER
Leukemia.

ALI
Gosh. Poor guy.

EVANS
I sent flowers.

PETER
Why are you asking these questions
about who directed what?

EVANS
Jews.

ALI/PETER
What?/What'd you say?

Evans holds up film reels: "Hoodlum Empire" and "Pay or Die"

EVANS
All these gangster pictures, most of
'em anyway, they were all directed by
Jews. Not Italians.

PETER
Sicilians.

EVANS
Italians, Sicilians, it doesn't
matter.

ALI
Why not?

EVANS
Because there's nothing Italian or
Sicilian on that screen or in these
cans of film.

EVANS (CONT'D)

(then)

Paramount is going to make the first
real Italian-cum-Sicilian-cum-American
gangster picture.

(with deep exuberance)

Audiences are gonna smell the
spaghetti.

INT. EVANS' OFFICE - DAY

Evans is on the blower:

EVANS (INTO PHONE)

Whattaya mean we can't adapt The
Godfather?

EXT. NYC - SAME

The iconic GULF + WESTERN BUILDING looms over a very 1970s
Manhattan skyline like the scary tower of Mordor.

EVANS' VOICE (CONT'D)

(filtered over phone)

Charlie, Paramount owns the rights.
You're not getting the opportunity
here.

INT. GULF + WESTERN, NYC - BLUHDORN'S OFFICE - SAME

The ill-famed CHARLIE BLUHDORN, a busy, dynamic conglomerate
king, multitasks a multitude of assistants coming & going.

He speaks with a thick, exuberant Austrian accent, so he
pronounces w's as v's so "what" sounds like "vat."

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)

No, Evans, it is you who does not get
it.

INTERCUT BACK & FORTH:

EVANS (INTO PHONE)

What's the problem, Charlie?

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)

Burt Lancaster.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)

Burt? What about him?

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)

He wants to make The Godfather.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)

I can't believe it.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)

He wants the starring role, too.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Burt's too old to play Michael
Corleone, Charlie.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
Lancaster wants to play the godfather,
you putz.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
That's verkakte, Charlie.

This pleasantly surprises Bluhdorn:

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
Evans, you know Yiddish?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Geez Charlie, I thought I was speaking
Italian.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
You're speaking bupkis, Evans.
Lancaster is offering me a million
bucks for the rights.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
A million?

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
A million. And that's a million more
than you've ever made for me, Evans.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Charlie, the way The Godfather the
book is selling, I promise you here
and now The Godfather the movie will
make you twenty times that if done
right. And Burt Lancaster, with all
respect, won't do it right.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
Promises, smomishes, Evans. The board
of directors wants the million -- I
want the million. Get something from
my crazy investment.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Goddamn it, Charlie, The Godfather
will pay off in spades; it will be the
kind of movie people in Kansas City
will want to see.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
(interested)
Kansas City...?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
The Godfather holds a promise of
greatness, Charlie, and if you give me
a million bucks to make the darn
thing, we can live up to that promise.
Audiences from all over will come.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
Are you going to make the picture in
Kansas City?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 (evasive)
 Uh well, um -- look the point is,
 Charlie, The Godfather will play in
 Peoria.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
 If you're trying to shtik me, Evans...

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 Charlie, when you hired me, you
 trusted me enough to tell me to decree
 by my gut. Trust me now.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
 All right, Evans; all right. I'll
 talk to the board of directors. Who
 can say what they'll say? But I'll
 talk to them and see what they say.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 Charlie. Thanks.

He hangs up and we stay with Evans, who turns around
 to Peter eager to learn the outcome.

PETER
 Well...?

EVANS
 We're on.

PETER
 That was a close one.

EVANS
 Too close. Now to find a director.

Both men move out to --

INT. CORRIDOR - SAME

They stroll along.

PETER
 Well I found us a producer, anyway.

EVANS
 Who?

PETER
 Al Ruddy.

EVANS
 Ruddy's not Italian.

PETER
 Why does Ruddy have to be Italian?

EVANS
 Because we want audiences to smell the
 spaghetti.

PETER
 I'm not too sure you should keep
 relying on that analogy.

EVANS
Sure I should, and Ruddy ain't
Italian.

PETER
Hey, you wanna film on location in New
York and on the cheap or not? Ruddy's
our guy.

EVANS
Bluhdorn thinks we're filming in
Kansas City.

PETER
Who gave him that idea?

EVANS
What's it matter who gave who what
idea? We're filming in New York.

PETER
Then we gotta rope in Al Ruddy.
Nobody knows New York better and or
how to stretch a dollar.

EVANS
Maybe Ruddy knows a director.

PETER
There's Bogdanovich.

EVANS
I didn't know Bogdanovich was Italian.

PETER
Bogdanovich is Italian?

EVANS
It doesn't matter what he is.
Bogdanovich is signed up to do a
comedy at Warner.

PETER
Okay. Arthur Penn.

EVANS
Busy doing a western, something to do
with Custer.

PETER
Peter Yates.

EVANS
Nah, he's in the middle of a war
picture with Peter O'Toole

PETER
(eureka)
I know -- Costa-Gavras.

EVANS
Forget it. He won't leave France.

PETER
Too bad. I loved Z.

EVANS

As did I, but Peter, this picture
doesn't need a good director; it needs
a good Italian director -- a maestro.
Comprende?

PETER

Don't you mean capiche?

EVANS

(not listening)

Is there or is there not a competent,
visionary director with Italian
heritage in this vile, corrupt
cesspool of a town?

PETER

There's one in San Francisco.

EVANS

Who?

PETER

You don't like him.

EVANS

I like everybody.

PETER

Coppola.

EVANS

Except Coppola.

They pronounce Coppola as cop-pa-la.

PETER

Ah, Francis is okay.

EVANS

He's loony-tunes.

PETER

A touch on the eccentric side, maybe.

EVANS

No. Hell no.

PETER

Bob...

EVANS

I hate it when anyone calls me Bob.
It's always before they're gonna say
something they know I won't like.

PETER

Francis may be brilliant, Evans.

EVANS

That's your WASP-wannabe-New York
Times bullshit coming out.

PETER

You loved "Patton."

EVANS

Patton's a great picture -- but
Coppola didn't direct "Patton."

PETER

Coppola's a shoo-in to win best script
this year.

EVANS

I bet Edmund North wrote all the good
parts.

PETER

("be reasonable")

Evans...

EVANS

All Coppola has to show for himself as
a director is some arty-farty flick
which did no business. He turned
Broadway blockbuster "Finian's
Rainbow" into a Hollywood disaster.
And everyone rained on "The Rain
People."

PETER

Roger Ebert wrote "The Rain People"
was interesting and provocative.

EVANS

Ebert's from Chicago, a cultural
wasteland. What does he know?

PETER

That Francis is experimental.

EVANS

Which is film school-speak for anti-
American, pro-Euro-trash snobbery.

PETER

New Wave had a big impact.

EVANS

Coppola is a fast-talking, self-
publicizing hustler.

PETER

Evans, are you criticizing Francis or
describing yourself?

EVANS

Coppola will never direct The
Godfather.

PETER

Is this because he won't kiss your
ass.

EVANS

Peter, believe me: Coppola is the last
person on this earth I want kissing my
ass.

Evans' secretary leans around a corner:

EVANS' SECRETARY
 David Merrick called. Truman Capote
 didn't turn in a draft for "The Great
 Gatsby."

Evans sighs to himself.

EVANS (CONT'D)
 Another annoying problem.

Turns to Peter resignedly:

EVANS (CONT'D)
 Call him.

PETER
 Capote?

EVANS
 Coppola.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - DAYS LATER

Establish outside Zoetrope Studios.
 Pre-lap a PHONE RINGING.

INT. ZOETROPE STUDIOS - SAME

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA answers the ringing phone.
 He has a professorial appearance: horn-rimmed eyeglasses, beard,
 heavyset build. He walks and talks as if he's under great
 strain. To a quick observer, he comes off like an amphetamines
 junkie (which he might be).

COPPOLA (INTO PHONE)
 Hello?...No, I'm sorry, Francis Ford
 Coppola is not here. May I take a
 message?...I believe he sent the check
 in the mail this morning...I will tell
 him. Thank you.

He aggressively hangs up.

COPPOLA
 I swear every creditor in the state is
 after me.

PETER
 Are things as bad as that, Francis?

COPPOLA
 Oh you know, things could always be
 worse.
 (then)
 I think.

GEORGE LUCAS steps in from an adjoining room. Looks like a cool
 racecar driver, but is quiet and reserved as they come.

LUCAS
 More bills.

Said handing envelopes to buddy Coppola.

COPPOLA
Looks that way.
(re: Peter)
See who's here?

LUCAS
Oh. Hi, Peter.

PETER
Hey, the legend of UCLA.

LUCAS
No Francis was the UCLA boy-wonder.

COPPOLA
(to Peter)
George was the whizz-kid of USC.

PETER
Oh sorry.

COPPOLA
It's confusing.

LUCAS
Alphabet soup usually is.

PETER
Francis tells me you're cutting your
first picture.

LUCAS
THX 1138.

Said gesturing inside the adjoining room, a makeshift facto
editing suite. Two Editors review reels of film, chopping and
splicing.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
(re: Coppola)
You hear? Eleanor's pregnant.

PETER
(to Coppola)
Oh that's great.

Both men shake hands. The editors call George back.

COPPOLA
It is great.

The phone RINGS again.

PETER
But...?

Coppola YANKS the phone cord from the wall socket.

PETER (CONT'D)
Running a studio isn't all champagne
and caviar, huh Francis?

Coppola wanders around. A man with a lot on his mind.

COPPOLA
 I've staked all my personal money,
 such as it is, into this place. I
 stand to lose everything when I have a
 wife, kids, a new baby on the way...I
 don't know what to do.

PETER
 Paramount is making a gangster
 picture. The Godfather.

COPPOLA
 The book The Godfather?

PETER
 You read it?

COPPOLA
 I haven't had time to read.

PETER
 It's good.

COPPOLA
 Oh?

PETER
 Very good.

COPPOLA
 Why are you telling me?

PETER
 Because we want you to adapt and
 direct.

COPPOLA
 We? Does Evans even know you're here?

PETER
 I know there's a uh, a clash of
 personalities between you two. But
 Francis, this is all Evans' idea.

COPPOLA
 You, you guys don't want me to go
 anywhere near this idea, Peter.

PETER
 Why not?

COPPOLA
 Peter, I'm...

The walls are festooned w/photos and posters of 1960s Euro movie icons from Goddard to Truffaut to De Sica. Coppola stares at them as if they were staring at him in judgment.

COPPOLA
 "The Godfather" is, you know...

PETER
 A terrific book.

COPPOLA
 And mainstream.

PETER

What?

COPPOLA

I should be filming Kerouac not...look, if you wanna adapt the Beat Generation to the screen, come to me. But "The Godfather"...

PETER

What's wrong with "The Godfather?"

COPPOLA

It's not underground, it's not avant-garde.

PETER

You haven't even read it.

COPPOLA

And still I know it's not something Fellini would make. No auteur would.

PETER

Why not?

COPPOLA

It's not art.

PETER

What is art?

COPPOLA

Not that.

PETER

Francis...

COPPOLA

Yeah?

PETER

Read the book first before making any snap negative judgments.

Said handing over a HARDBACK COPY. Coppola flips through the 400-plus pages. Takes a seat. Opens on page one.

SCENE BECOMES A SERIES OF TIME DISSOLVES:

- Coppola reading, upright on a chair
- sitting back, one leg over the arm rest
- lying flat on his back on a couch
- in the makeshift kitchen, preparing pizzas for everyone, his eyes on the open Godfather.

Over scene, we intercut on Peter

- observing George Lucas edit THX 138
- eating dinner with everyone, keeping an eye on Coppola reading off to the side as he eats.

-- sleeping crumbled up in an armchair. Coppola, awake, flips to another page.

The morning sun washes over Peter's sleeping face. He stirs awake. No one is around.

MURMURING VOICES from the kitchen beckon him.

Peter stumbles over FILM REEL TINS strewn about the floor.

He stops at the doorway, unseen by Coppola and Lucas in the next room.

COPPOLA

Yeah okay, the book is pretty darn good, there's a lot going on. But it's not something that would get Paul Crump off death row. I mean, where's the value?

LUCAS

The way things are with us financially, Francis, I actually think this gig is a god-send.

COPPOLA

When did you start believing in god?

LUCAS

When I saw this month's mortgage interest payments and realized that only a miracle could save us.

He pushes across the table unpaid bills and late notices.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

And you getting paid to make "The Godfather" could be that miracle.

COPPOLA

Yeah there's a lotta sense to that, George. But the world is full of guys who say "Well, first I'll make the money and then I'll make the personal movies." But somehow they never get around to doing it. And I wanna make personal movies now. Honest movies.

LUCAS

Why can't The Godfather be personal or honest? Or both?

COPPOLA

Trash is all Hollywood understands, especially Evans. And "The Godfather" is...hmm...a little trashy in parts. And I didn't open Zoetrope to make trash, little or otherwise.

LUCAS

Think of it like serendipity, like some force is giving you a financial break to keep Zoetrope in operation.

COPPOLA
 Then may this force or whatever be
 with you, George, and you direct "The
 Godfather."

LUCAS
 I would if they'd asked me to, but
 they didn't ask me, they asked you,
 Francis.

Coppola flicks his eyebrows, restless and dissatisfied.

Lucas mouths to himself, "**May this force be with you.**" Writes it down. Scratches it out. Rewrites "**May the force be with you.**" Happy -- underlines it twice.

COPPOLA
 How can be the Picasso or Joyce or
 Stravinsky of filmmaking and show
 America to itself if I'm some...I don't
 know...some employee anchored to a
 paycheck?

LUCAS
 Artists have to survive, too. Think
 of "The Godfather" like working for
 Rodger Corman again.

He gestures to a colorful poster on the wall: Coppola's 1963 B-flick for Corman: "Dementia 13"

LUCAS (CONT'D)
 (wry)
 Except this time you actually get
 paid.

COPPOLA
 God just when I thought I was out, the
 system pulls me back in.

Spots Peter staring wide-eyed at him. Awkward moment.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Oh hey, morning, Peter. How'd you
 sleep?

PETER
 (going with it)
 Great thanks.

LUCAS
 Want some coffee?

PETER
 That would be great. Thanks.

Silence as coffee is handed over to Peter.

PETER
 (to Coppola)
 So did you read it?

H'm? Oh. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

PETER
Well, Francis...? You in or out?

EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIO LOT - DAYS LATER

Peter and Coppola on the move.

Evans is up ahead, in mid-conversation with a new, young actress: DIANE KEATON.

DIANE
And I've also done commercials.

EVANS
Commercials?

DIANE
Yeah.
(voice lowers)
Deodorant commercials.

EVANS
Well it's always nice to keep fresh.

Diane laughs, both out of enjoyment and nerves. Woody Allen is in the background with director HERBERT ROSS.

EVANS
Oh I think Woody wants you.

DIANE
Oh. Uh, well, nice meeting you.

EVANS
You two, Diane. Have fun filming in
San Francisco.

DIANE
Oh thanks. We will. He's hoping
anyway, right?

BUMPS into an Extra. Makes her all the more clumsy and giggly. Evans looks endeared.

EVANS
Diane...?

DIANE
Um, yeah?

EVANS
By any chance, did you attend Smith or
Wellesley college...?

DIANE
Me? No. Nu-uh. Nope.

EVANS
Just wondering.

DIANE
Um...okay.

She continues on her way.

Evans spots across the way --

Peter and Coppola, with RUDDY, a big, tall, rasping-voiced, rough diamond New Yorker.

RUDDY
Francis, you were born to make this movie.

COPPOLA
Ruddy, save the pitch. I'm not saying yes to a single thing until I hear yes to some guarantees.

EVANS
(wry)
I can guarantee you a thing or two.

Peter tries to keep the mood light and non-argumentative.

PETER
Hey, Evans, look who I brought back.

EVANS
(begrudgingly)
Francis.

COPPOLA
(with same reluctance)
Evans.
(off an encouraging
smile from Peter)
How's the studio business going?

EVANS
(sly smile)
You tell me, pal.

COPPOLA
Asshole.

PETER
Alright, alright.

RUDY
Evans, I think it's a stroke of genius getting Signore Coppola onboard.
Mazel tov.

COPPOLA
I do have some stipulations.

EVANS
Is that Italian for wanting more money?

COPPOLA
How big is the budget, by the way?

EVANS
Maybe two million. Maybe.

PETER
(low to Coppola)
2.5.

EVANS
(to Coppola)
We were thinking urban, gritty, maybe
throw in some hippies, something
audiences can feel the funk and boogie
to.

Peter and Coppola swap a knowing glance.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Is that eye-exchange supposed to
convey something?

PETER
Uh, Evans--

COPPOLA
(to Evans)
We were thinking the movie should
stick to the book's nostalgic post-war
time and setting.

EVANS
Oh we were, were we?

COPPOLA
And do a story about the emergence of
America post-World War II. The
forties are after all about the growth
of America, the growth of its business
system.

Evans gives Peter a sour glare.

PETER
It could work, Evans.

EVANS
Oh sure. With endless millions of
dollars on tap, it could work very
well, Peter.

RUDDY
I might know a guy who knows a guy
who's got a cousin who could swing us
some cars from the forties.

EVANS
Well if this friend of a friend's
cousin can also swing us wardrobe
along with buildings from the forties,
all at basement prices, we could be
going places.

COPPOLA
One other thing...

EVANS
GOD...

They have to step apart from each other to make way for a CHORUS
LINE OF EXTRAS for CATCH-22, traipsing through.

COPPOLA
We're not stereotyping this movie.

EVANS
Who asked you to?

COPPOLA
No sleazy Chico Marx impersonations,
no Italian guys "who-a talk-a like-a
dis."

EVANS
What actor talks like that?

COPPOLA
I just told you. Chico Marx. And you
might as well know now that we have to
excise all the book's sleazy elements.

RUDDY
The book has sleazy elements?

COPPOLA
Lucy Mancini getting an operation on
her vagina so she can enjoy sex more.

EVANS
That sounds more weird than sleazy.

COPPOLA
And the picture is not going to
glorify murder. Murder's a sin;
gangsters are sinners -- all the
"aren't mobster's groovy" stuff, all
gone.

With the extras now gone, our guys can huddle up.

EVANS
What's left?

COPPOLA
A story about power.

EVANS
Okay, finally, now I'm with you.

COPPOLA
And it's a story about succession.

EVANS
You've lost me.

COPPOLA
Like a king with an empire and three
sons, each having a different part of
the father's personality.

RUDDY
Didn't Henry II have three sons?

PETER
King Lear did.

EVANS
Are we still talking about "The
Godfather?"

COPPOLA
Think of it as a metaphor.

EVANS
A metaphor for what? A piss-poor
picture?

COPPOLA
(with pride)
For an American family trying to
survive capitalism.

EVANS
Fuck you and the pretentious horse
you rode in on.

INT. PARAMOUNT OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Evans storms in, w/Peter and Ruddy hot on his heels.

PETER
Francis' metaphor about family and
capitalism isn't half-bad, Evans.

EVANS
(paces around)
No, Peter -- no no no - I don't like
it - I don't like it at all.

PETER
Evans, remember: Francis is Italian.

RUDDY
(to Evans)
And that's key. Having an Italian
onboard.

EVANS
I know that's the...
(exacerbated)
Having an Italian at the helm was my
idea.
(points out the window)
But not that fucking Italian.

Coppola can be seen outside, looking around.

PETER
Francis is cheap, Evans. The guy is
broke, okay. Do you know how much
money he owes Warner Brothers?

EVANS
Maybe you should remind him, Peter.
Because the arrogant way Coppola's
carrying on, anyone would think Warner
Brothers owes him money.

RUDDY
Exactly. Evans, the guy's like a
third world country. We can use that,
push him around.

PETER
 (to Evans)
 It will be like "Love Story" where you
 can call the shots.

Against every nerve firing in his body:

EVANS
 Make the deal.

JUMP TO:

Evans watches outside the window:

Peter shakes hands with Coppola. Ruddy slaps Coppola on the back. Smiles all round. Coppola waves over to Evans. Taunting.

Evans responds w/the MIDDLE-FINGER.

A STUDIO SECRETARY enters:

STUDIO SECRETARY
 Mr. Evans?

EVANS
 I wish I wasn't.

SECRETARY
 New York's on line one. It's urgent.

JUMP TO:

Evans punches line one.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 Charlie?

INT. BLUHDORN'S OFFICE, NYC - SAME

Bluhdorn is absolutely spent. Over scene, he drains a Pepto-Bismol bottle.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
 It's over, Evans.

INTERCUT:

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 What's over?

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
 The whole caboodle. They're shutting you down and selling the studio.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 Who is?

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
 Who else? The board of directors.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 But you said you'd talk to them.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
 I did. And they want me to do what I do: make money. And I can't make any making pictures.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 Charlie, I've just this second okayed a deal to make THE GODFATHER.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
 Un-okay it, Evans. This time next week, Sound Stage 30 will be a parking lot.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 They can't.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
 That's how it works, Evans: here today, fercockt tomorrow. At least we tried.

Evans shuts his eyes. His universe has just ended. Then with new resolve:

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 Charlie, stall 'em.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
 What for?

CUT TO, over the SOUND OF AN AIRPLANE in flight:

EXT. NYC - GULF + WESTERN BUILDING - TEN HOURS LATER

Bluhdorn's VOICE echoes like the voice of god over Manhattan's notorious traffic and honking horns.

BLUHDORN'S VOICE
 Evans, you're crazy.

INT. GULF + WESTERN - CORRIDOR - SAME

Evans marches toward Bluhdorn with Peter who carries a CAN OF FILM. Evans and Peter look sleepless and disheveled.

BLUHDORN (CONT'D)
 Bananas.

EVANS
 They inside, Charlie?

BLUHDORN
 Evans, the last mensch the board of directors wants to see is you.

EVANS
 Fuck 'em. They're seeing me and more besides.

BLUHDORN
 It's a hundred-to-one shot you'll change their minds.

EVANS
I'm a big believer in upsets, Charlie.

BLUHDORN
You better have more than hope, Evans,
or you'll be back selling pants with
your brother uptown.

EVANS
Ready, Peter?

PETER
Yeah, no; I'm barely here, Evans.

EVANS
Same here.
(then)
To hell with it, preparedness is
overrated.

Inside they go --

INT. BOARDROOM - SAME

The double bank of seats is occupied by board members,
all men, all stuffy and dour. Some smoke.

Evans takes position at the head of the table,
trying to be all ease and charm.

EVANS
Good morning, gentlemen. I uh, I
apologize for not being better
dressed. But when you take the red-
eye and have no hotel room, it's not
easy keeping up with the style of the
room.

No laughter. Not even a smile. It just hangs there.

In a corner, Bluhdorn exhales sharply.

Peter pulls down a PROJECTOR SCREEN behind Evans. He hurries
over to the PROJECTOR at the opposite end,
gesturing to Evans to "do something."

EVANS
I uh, I understand that you're
thinking about getting out of the
moving making business.

BOARD MEMBER #1
We are getting out of the moving
making business.

Murmurs of agreement ripple.

EVANS
Ah. I see.

This is going to be a slow death. Painful to watch.

EVANS (CONT'D)

Well, hand on heart, I can't blame you. Paramount is number nine in Hollywood when there are only eight major studios.

(pensive)

It's just sad, is all. What happened? Where did the golden age go?

(beat)

But you know what? That's all self-pitying bullshit. Guys like me messed it all up. We got too cocky. Took our past successes for granted, when it takes ball-busting, nerve-wracking hard work, with a lotta luck mixed in, to make a good, enjoyable picture.

(beat)

And that's the end of it.

Just when it looks like Evans is about to depart:

EVANS (CONT'D)

But it doesn't have to be the end. We at Paramount have learned from our mistakes. From here on in, the money we spend is not gonna be through extravagances; the money we spend is gonna be on the screen.

On cue, Peter FLICKS ON the projector while PUSHING a desk-button. This activates the drapes to close, darkening the room with the exception of the magical projector.

This BEAM OF LIGHT flickers film dailies of Love Story onto the screen and partially onto Evans as he speaks.

Ali looks young and radiantly beautiful. Her co-star Ryan O'Neal looks fresh and appealing. Together they make an inviting couple.

EVANS (CONT'D)

One in particular is Love Story. I think Love Story is gonna start a new trend in movies. A trend towards the romantic, towards love...towards people.

(beat)

I think Love Story is going to bring the people back into the theater in droves. I would also like to bring up another project, and that's The Godfather.

Images change to footage of bestseller lists: Godfather tops them all.

EVANS (CONT'D)

The Godfather and Love Story are the two biggest books of the last decade. Paramount owns them both. If it weren't for Paramount, neither book would have been written. We were in there in the beginning, and we would like to be there to the end, working closely with the cast and crew, to make these bestsellers the great movies they're going to be.

EVANS (CONT'D)
 We at Paramount don't look at
 ourselves as passive backers of film.
 We look at ourselves as a creative
 force unto our self. Trendsetters,
 not trend followers. And that is why
 Paramount is going to be paramount in
 the industry in the seventies.

Evans stops. The projector stops. As the drapes open, letting
 back in sunlight, Evans exits followed by Peter, leaving a
 thoughtful silence in the air.

INT. GULF + WESTERN FOYER - LATER

Evans and Peter wait quietly.

Bluhdorn's SHADOW looms over them.

BLUHDORN
 You're a bigger scam artist than I
 gave you credit for.

PETER
 Are we fired?

EVANS
 Is Paramount finished?

Bluhdorn BEAR-HUGS them both.

BLUHDORN
 You're some showman, Evans.

EVANS
 We're okay?

BLUHDORN
 Go back to work, scam artists. Make
 pictures, work hard, and may whatever
 god you believe in grant you mazel.

He breaks away for the elevators.

PETER
 (to Evans)
 I guess Mike Nichols' performance tips
 paid off.

EVANS
 Where was Nichols when I was a half-
 assed actor?

PETER
 Now what?

EVANS
 Now...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - ZOETROPE PICTURES - DAYS LATER

EVANS' VOICE (CONT'D)
 ...we get ourselves a script.

The sound of a TYPEWRITER CLACKING fills the air.

INT. ZOETROPE - OFFICE - SAME

Coppola types using an OLIVETTI TYPEWRITER. His fingers dance on the keys like Debussy playing Deux Arabesque. A hardback copy of The Godfather is open beside him.

Typewriter keys rap words onto a yellow page:

A HIGH ANGLE of the CORLEONE MALL: six houses clustered around a common courtyard; one large and dominating the others, the house of DON CORLEONE himself. There are at least five hundred guests filling the main courtyard and gardens. There is music and laughter and dancing and countless tables covered with food and wine.

George Lucas enters.

LUCAS
Started already?

COPPOLA
Just the opening.

Lucas reads over typed pages.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
(smiling)
What? No good?

LUCAS
No it's good, it's good.
(then)
You're opening the movie with the wedding, huh?

COPPOLA
It seems a good way to introduce everybody.

Lucas nods. Smiles after reading:

PETER CLEMENZA is the life of the Tarantella; dancing joyously, bumping bellies with the ladies.

LUCAS
Yeah, the wedding's a great way to introduce the characters, all right.
(then)
But is it the right way to open the movie?

Coppola stops typing. Intrigued by his friend's comment.

LUCAS
A wedding has a lot of people, a lot of noise, it might be a bit sudden. You might need some kind of prologue. You had such a terrific beginning in "Patton." Maybe you should come up with something just as unusual.

Coppola sits back. The gears of his mind turning.
An EDITOR working on THX 1138 calls Lucas back.

Coppola picks up The Godfather. Starts reading with a fresh outlook.

"All his years in America, Amerigo Bonasera had trusted in law and order."

Coppola underlines this, very important.

JUMP TO:

Coppola murmurs to himself, reading p.29:

COPPOLA
"The undertaker closed his eyes for a moment and then began to speak. His voice was quiet, the voice he used to console the bereaved. 'I raised my daughter in the American fashion. I believe in America.'"
(to himself)
I believe in America.

Inspired, Coppola moseys into an adjoining --

INT. A STUDY - SAME

Here sits the author himself, MARIO PUZO. A portly, supremely intelligent, lovable guy, puffing on a cigar, reviewing the horseracing page.

COPPOLA
Mario...? You busy?

MARIO
H'm? Me? No. What'cha need?

Said putting away the sports page, embarrassed.

COPPOLA
I was reading your book again, you know, and I was thinking and thinking and thinking about the opening of the movie.

MARIO
Okay.

COPPOLA
And um, and I think we should actually stay close to the book and open with the undertaker's story.

MARIO
Bonasera? But I thought you wanted to open at the wedding?

COPPOLA
I do and we still can, with Bonasera having a private audience in Don Corleone's office.

Puzo's eyes light up -- an idea, an opportunity.

Our VIEW slowly isolates Coppola as he explains himself. Scene is reminiscent of when Michael lays out his plan to kill Sollozzo, both men are coming out on their own.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
 Bonasera came to America thinking he left the old world behind him. Only to discover that America has failed to live up to its promise. Class prejudice, inequality, injustice -- they exist here as any where else. So to make things right with himself and his family, Bonasera has to revert back to the old traditions: patronage; protection; vengeance. And America's failure to overcome these mistakes is what defines and fuels the Don's power.

(beat)
 What'd you think?

Mario can only stare back. Speechless.

SCENE BECOMES A SERIES OF DISSOLVES

of Coppola and Mario collaborating over pool...working separately... taking a break, playing dice.

OVER THIS WE SUPERIMPOSE

-- THE KEYS OF A TYPEWRITER

slapping words onto the page -- LETTERS FILL THE SCREEN, the sound of keys as piercing as gunshots.

-- Love Story premiere

Police hold back the crowds. Evans and Ali are on the red carpet alongside Ryan O'Neal & Charlie Bluhdorn.

It's a big, happy affair.

NEWS REPORTER
 We're here at the Loews State Theater in New York for the premier of Love Story.

-- Love Story phenomenon

Massive crowds outside movie theaters, from LA to London. Ali on the cover of Time -- "The Return to Romance." She and Evans are the It-couple of the moment.

END ON:

Coppola typing away, in the zone.

Mario is fast asleep on a couch, the betting page spread out across his chubby chest.

A TV SET in the background shows Ali on Dinah's Place.

NOTE: for our purposes, the actress playing Ali is featured via composite cinematography, like FORREST GUMP.

DINAH SHORE (ON TV)
Hey, Ali. What's new?

Ali leans over and whispers.

DINAH SHORE (ON TV)
No no, you can say that on television now. Go ahead.

ALI (ON TV)
Okay. Well, I'm gonna have a baby.

Audience and Dinah go crazy. Coppola finishes typing on:

INT DAY: CHURCH (1955)

KAY wears a shawl over her head. She drops many coins in the coin box, and lifts a burning taper, and one by one, in a pattern known only to herself, lights thirty candles.

THE END

We pre-lap Evans' VOICE, reading aloud:

EVANS (VO PRE-LAP)
"Kay wears a shawl over her head. She drops many coins in the coin box..."

EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIO LOT - DAYS LATER

Evans moves through with Peter. Both men reading over a copy of the same completed script.

EVANS (CONT'D)
...And lifts a burning taper, and one by one, in a pattern known only to herself, light thirty candles. The end."

(pensive)
Hmm.

(to Peter)
And which draft is this?

PETER
Second.

EVANS
It's good.

PETER
You gonna tell Francis that?

EVANS
Hell no. And you're not to, neither.

PETER
(bumps into a technician)
Oh excuse me, I'm sorry.

EVANS
What's the prince doing now?

PETER
Casting.

INT. ZOETROPE STUDIOS - DAYS LATER

Please NOTE: this is the real life Footage.

TEST CAMERA POV: a film clapper snaps...

Screen Test. Roll 6. F.F. Coppola.

COPPOLA'S VOICE (O.S.)
Action.

...and reveals THE REAL BUT young, brash ROBERT DE NIRO auditioning for Sonny Corleone, wearing a pork-pie hat over his long hair bunched up by a hair-clipper.

ROBERT DE NIRO AS SONNY
You gonna take both of them? Marone a
mia. You gonna take them?

JUMP TO:

a young, thoughtful MARTIN SHEEN, long-haired, moustache, auditioning for Michael Corleone. Smokes, unsure of the material.

MARTIN SHEEN AS MICHAEL
They tried to kill him, my father.
They did. They nearly did. Mr. uh...
(looks over the script)
Mr. Brasi went after them.

JUMP TO:

TEST CAMERA POV: a film clapper snaps and reveals --

a young, very unsure of himself Al Pacino. Alone in a chair, tense and tight, unsure of everything.

AL PACINO AS MICHAEL
The story goes that he killed six men
in two weeks.

Comes out of character. Speaks directly to our OFF SCREEN Coppola, while shifting awkwardly in his chair.

AL PACINO (CONT'D)
S--so I'm not saying it like, Sonny,
you know, and say, "Sonny" you know,
or "Freddy, come here; I'd like you to
meet..." I'm not doing that.

COPPOLA (O.S.)
Michael isn't sure how far to go. So
he does it in this very indirect
way...

COPPOLA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
He doesn't say, "Lookit, my father is
a criminal, a gangster, who's been
shot." So he kinda instead tells her
little anecdotes.

AL PACINO
Okay.

COPPOLA (O.S.)
So at first it's nice. Even when
you're uh -- it's lighter. But the
scene is a serious scene.

AL PACINO
Okay.

COPPOLA
So you wanna go again?

AL PACINO
(forcing himself)
Let's do it.

INT. EVANS' OFFICE, LA - DAYS LATER

Al Pacino's real-life screen tests play on a DROP-DOWN SCREEN. Evans and Peter are eyes-glued. Coppola looks happy & excited about his new find.

EVANS
Who's the dark midget?

COPPOLA
Al.

EVANS
Who's Al?

COPPOLA
Al Pacino.

PETER
Who?

COPPOLA
He's new, he's done some Broadway and
uh--

PETER
Why's he reading for Michael Corleone?

EVANS
(to Coppola)
Why's he reading at all?

COPPOLA
Isn't it obvious?

EVANS
No.

PETER
(to Coppola)
Not to me.

COPPOLA
Al is Michael Corleone.

EVANS
He's what?

COPPOLA
Look at that face and tell me Al's not Michael Corleone.

Evans looks at Pacino. Then back at Coppola.

EVANS
Al's not Michael Corleone.

COPPOLA
Have you read the book?

EVANS
Have I read it? I bought the darn thing, Francis, before it was even written.

PETER
(cutting in)
Francis --? Francis --? I've gone with you on everything so far -- true? But I have to admit I'm leaning toward Evans on this--

Coppola cuts in by reading aloud *The Godfather*:

COPPOLA
"Michael Corleone," he uh, yeah, "He was handsome in a delicate way."
(re: Pacino)
There. There is "handsome in a delicate way" personified.

A pensive silence.

EVANS
Ryan O'Neal. That's Michael Corleone.

PETER
O'Neal's too WASPy.

EVANS
O'Neal's Irish.

PETER
Park Avenue Irish. Not Queens Irish.

Coppola watches this exchange, baffled.

EVANS
O'Neal was born to play Michael.

PETER
Redford would be better.

EVANS
Redford isn't in "Love Story." O'Neal is.

COPPOLA
(dry)
A blonde, blue-eyed Michael Corleone?

EVANS
There are blonde, blue-eyes in
Northern Italy.

Coppola becomes increasingly exacerbated:

COPPOLA
Sicily isn't in Northern Italy.

PETER
Mario describes Carlo Ricci as blonde
and blue-eyed in the book.

COPPOLA
Because Carlo Ricci is from Northern
Italy on his mother's side.

EVANS
There you go.

COPPOLA
There I go what?

PETER
I think we're getting off point.

COPPOLA
What is the point?

EVANS
That we need star power. And plenty
of it. Charlie wants girls to scream
at premiers. And right now Ryan
O'Neal is the only magnet we have.

COPPOLA
Girls? Screaming? For a mob picture?

EVANS
When it comes to Charlie Bluhdorn,
Francis, the bottom line is the bottom
line. So don't go supposing you can
click your auteur heels and fly on
back to sunny Frisco if this picture
goes pear-shaped. Because if we --
and mentally note, we -- if we fail to
put asses on seats, it'll be our asses
on the block.

COPPOLA
(insisting)
Then okay Al Pacino as Michael
Corleone.

EVANS
(insisting back)
That gutter rat has no star power.

COPPOLA
Al Pacino is America personified. He has the facial features of the Old World while still looking like the authentic brand of an Ivy Leaguer. That means when Al's wandering around Sicily with the shepherds, he'll still look like the part: an Anglo-Saxon-Catholic in exile.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
And that authenticity is what will attract asses into seats.

Evans sits back, worn out. Just when Coppola, just as tired, thinks he's won --

EVANS
What about Burt Reynolds for Michael?

COPPOLA
Ohh, I'm gonna shoot myself.

PETER
Alright, alright, let's, I don't know, let's table Michael for the time being. What about his girlfriend, his wife, what's her name? Kay?

COPPOLA
I haven't tested anyone for Kay yet.

EVANS
You mightn't have to.

COPPOLA
I'm not casting your wife as Kay.

EVANS
I wasn't thinking of Ali; she's not WASPy enough. But I know someone who might be.

COPPOLA
Is she in LA?

EVANS
Actually, she's in San Francisco. Filming a different picture.

INT. ZOETROPE STUDIOS - DAYS LATER

TEST CAMERA POV: FILM CLAPPER SNAPS AND REVEALS --

Real-life JAMES CAAN in a military uniform, auditioning for Michael, adding a cheekiness to the character. He plays against real-life DIANE KEATON.

CAAN AS MICHAEL
But uh, Mr. Brasi went after them. And so the story goes that he killed six men in two weeks.

KEATON AS KAY
You're trying to scare me. You don't want me to marry you.

Keaton's eyes change, more into the scene, more seductive as we, IN A TRICK-JUMP CUT, reveal that Keaton is now auditioning with Pacino.

KEATON AS KAY (CONT'D)
That's very clever. But, it's not
going to work.

INT. EVANS' OFFICE, LA - DAYS LATER

Real-life FOOTAGE of Keaton's and Pacino's audition on the drop-down screen. Evans, Peter and Coppola watch. Ali is present this time, idly flipping through scripts, now visibly pregnant.

EVANS
Okay, so? You like Diane?

COPPOLA
I loved her in "Lovers and Other
Strangers."

PETER
Diane was great in that.

COPPOLA
And she'll be greater in this if she
plays opposite Al.

EVANS
I hope this "Al" refers to someone
other than this Pacino midget.

COPPOLA
Look at Diane. Look at her reaction
to Al. Look at Al's reaction to
Diane.

EVANS
What reaction? I don't see anything.

COPPOLA
They like each other.

EVANS
And may their romance together be
happy and long. But this Pacino guy,
I don't know.

Then out of no where:

ALI
He undresses you with his eyes.

Everyone turns to her.

ALI (CONT'D)
Pacino. His eyes work you over.

COPPOLA
(excited)
That's what my wife said. Exactly
that and exactly like that.
(then to himself)
Or was it George's wife who said it?

Evans and Peter turn back to Ali.

ALI
It's true.

An ASSISTANT sticks her head in the door.

ASSISTANT
Barbara Streisand called about the
casting of the step-brother again for
"On a Clear Day."

EVANS
(to Peter)
God. Three months and they still
haven't found a suitable guy.

Peter shrugs.

ASSISTANT
And producer Howard Koch has called
three times.

EVANS
Why?

ASSISTANT
He wants to replace Elaine May.

PETER
Again?

ASSISTANT
She refuses to show him or anyone her
rough cut.

Evans goes to respond when --

ALI
Oh no. I'm not going to the doctor
again on my own. No, sir.

Evans exhales, too tired to fight any longer.

EVANS
(to Coppola)
Fine, yeah, okay -- Francis, Pacino
can be Michael.
EVANS (CONT'D)
(to Peter)
Call his agent.

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD - MORNING

Peter exits a deli with PACINO'S AGENT busy eating a bagel.

PACINO'S AGENT
You can't have Pacino.

PETER
Why not?

PACINO'S AGENT
I'm after signing Pacino up to a flick
at MGM.

PETER
What flick at Metro?

PACINO'S AGENT
Talk to Jim Aubrey, it's his flick.

PETER
You talk to Jim Aubrey. Pacino needs this part more than air.

PACINO'S AGENT
What Pacino needs and what I need are two very different things. And I need to keep in with MGM boss Jim Aubrey.

Walks off, food in his mouth.

INT. BISTRO RESTAURANT - LUNCH

Peter joins Evans and Ali, they're in the middle of their Caesar's salads.

EVANS
Pacino's agent said that?

PETER
That's what he said.

EVANS
I can't believe it.

ALI
I can.
(lamenting)
Agents...

PETER
(to Evans)
I thought you'd be happy.

ALI
(to Evans)
If it gets out that another studio stole an actor right from under you, you'll look weak when you're already looking weak.

EVANS
(snapping)
I know that.

This commotion attracts unwanted attention from Patrons.

ALI
(hurt)
I was only trying to help.

Evans cups her hand apologetically:

EVANS
I know.
(kisses her)
Sorry.
(refocusing)
I need a phone.

JUMP TO:

Evans uses one of the restaurant's PUBLIC PHONES.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Jim Aubrey, please.

INT. METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER - RECEPTION - SAME

RECEPTIONIST
Robert Evans for James Aubrey.

INT. AUBREY'S OUTER OFFICE - SAME

Aubrey's RECEPTIONIST routes the call.

RECEPTIONIST
Line two, Mr. Aubrey.

Aubrey's door reads:

**JAMES THOMAS AUBREY JR
MGM PRESIDENT**

INT. AUBREY'S OFFICE - SAME

MGM BOSS picks up a telephone, in the middle of reading a script entitled "Shaft."

AUBREY (INTO PHONE)
Aubrey.

SPLIT SCREEN ON EVANS:

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Jim, thank god. Look, I need a favor, pal.

AUBREY (INTO PHONE)
I'm listening.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Pacino.

AUBREY (INTO PHONE)
What's a Pacino?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
He's an actor you just signed but I need bad. Look, how about you release the guy from his contract? Or maybe move some dates around or...

AUBREY (INTO PHONE)
Evans, I'm gonna tell you what I told David Lean this morning.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
What's that?

AUBREY (INTO PHONE)
Drop dead.

Hangs up and we go full screen on:

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Jim...?

Thinks for a moment. Mind racing. With a second wind, he replaces LOOSE CHANGE on a waiter's tray with cash. Slots in two dimes. Dials, PUNCHING the buttons.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Sidney Korshak, please.
(beat)
Sidney?

SPLIT SCREEN: revealing the infamous lawyer SIDNEY KORSHAK in his NYC office. Busy signing a multipage contract.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
Yeah?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Emergency. Another studio has swiped an actor from a picture I'm doing.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
What's the studio?

EVANS
MGM.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
Who's the actor?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Al Pacino.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
Who?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
He's new, a comer.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
How'd you spell it?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
(as if obvious)
C - o - m - e - r.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
Not comer -- the actor's name.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Oh. A-l.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
Yeah.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
P-a-c-i-n-o.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
That's a stupid sounding name. You
sure you want him?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
I don't want him. The pain-in-the-ass
director wants him. But now I need
him because I can't be seen losing
actors to another studio.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
Gotcha.

He hangs up as we go FULL SCREEN on Korshak,
speaking into intercom:

KORSHAK (CONT'D)
Get me Tracinda Corporation CEO Kirk
Kerkorian on the phone.

EXT. LAS VEGAS GRAND HOTEL - MINUTES LATER

A wing is being built. Cranes move material, construction
workers are everywhere. KIRK KERKORIAN, corporate titan and co-
inventor of the megaresort, surveys his domain.

A SECRETARY shouts over a rollicking jackhammer:

SECRETARY
Sidney Korshak, Mr. Kerkorian.

INT. FOREMAN'S TRAILER - MINUTES LATER

KERKORIAN (INTO PHONE)
Sidney, I love you, you know I love
you, but I can't involve myself.

SPLIT SCREEN AGAIN, REVEALING KORSHAK:

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
Kirk, you own the studio.

KERKORIAN (INTO PHONE)
But I don't run the studio, Sidney. I
promised Jim Aubrey when I hired him:
no interference.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
(being amiable)
I understand, Kirk; I understand.

KERKORIAN (INTO PHONE)
Anything else and I would do it.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
I know. No problem. Forget about it.
(then)
So uh, how's the hotel business
treating ya?

Kerkorian visibly senses a rat.

KERKORIAN (INTO PHONE)
Good. Yeah. Good.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
(suggestive)
Construction on schedule?

KERKORIAN (INTO PHONE)
Yeah. Well, you know.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
I do know, Kirk. One delay and costs spiral, budgets overrun. The whole project can become a terrible dilemma.

KERKORIAN (INTO PHONE)
Yeah that, that's true.

KORSHAK (INTO PHONE)
But avoidable if handled right. I can help if you like. You know I represent their bosses, right?

Kerkorian makes a face. Then:

KERKORIAN (INTO PHONE)
Sidney, what uh, what was that actor's name again?

INT. EVANS' OFFICE, LA - MINUTES LATER

Evans enters to be met with --

SECRETARY
James Aubrey wants to talk to you.

Evans takes possession of the phone.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Jim?

SPLIT SCREEN ON JIM AUBREY IN HIS OFFICE, FUMING.

AUBREY (INTO PHONE)
I'll get you for this, Evans.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
(confused)
Jim, I--

AUBREY (INTO PHONE)
You can have this Pa-chin-o or Pinocchio or whatever the hell this nothing-nobody actor is called.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
I can? Oh Jim that's--

AUBREY (INTO PHONE)
But know this, asshole: when I'm through getting even with you, you'll be back auditioning for Matador parts. Fucker.

He SLAMS down the phone and we return to FULL SCREEN on:

EVANS
(to Secretary)
Call Peter Bart. Tell him to call
Francis Coppola and tell him Pacino is
a go. And send Sidney Korshak a case
of Dom's. Better make it two cases.

SOUND OF: baby noises, from Evans' office.

Evans goes to investigate. Puzzled.

INT. EVANS' OFFICE - SAME

Evans' BABY SON JOSHUA is in his chair, semi-sitting, semi-slumped over.

Joshua coos and smiles at his dad.
Evans smiles broadly with pure delight.

EVANS
(softly)
Hey...hey, what are you doing here?
H'mm?

He starts SPINNING THE CHAIR. Going slowly.
Joshua makes happy noises. Giggles. His eyes shine.

Sensing something, Evans looks over --
Ali is sitting on the couch. Enjoying the exchange of loving
warmth.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Well, hi.

ALI
You look happy for once.

EVANS
(playing with Joshua's
head)
Of course I am. My handsome son is
sitting behind my desk. And my wife
is looking more beautiful today than
yesterday.

ALI
(joining him)
I'm fat.

EVANS
Oh sweetie, please. You'll lose that
in a month.

ALI
Guess who I ran into at the store.

EVANS
Don't know. Who?

ALI
Orson Welles.
(beat)
He wants to read for Vito Corleone.

EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS BACKLOT - DAYS LATER

Coppola follows Evans and Peter.

COPPOLA
Orson Welles, huh?

PETER
Good news, right?

EVANS
You know who'd be my dream actor for
Vito Corleone. Carlo Ponti.

This jars Coppola. Doesn't like where this is going.

PETER
Sophie Lauren's Carlo Ponti?

EVANS
Carlo would be marvelous.

COPPOLA
(announcing)
Mario Puzo thinks Marlon Brando would
be perfect as Vito.

Evans and Peter halt abruptly.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
Mario even sent him a letter. And get
this: Brando's interested.

Evans glares accusingly at Peter.

PETER
Hey this is all him, don't look at me.

EVANS
I will look at you.
(re: Coppola)
You brought this hurricane into my
life.

COPPOLA
I was originally going for Laurence
Olivier, because he almost looks like
the mobster Vito Genovese, who Mario
used as a basis for Don Corleone. But
I think Mario's own choice might be on
the money.

EVANS
(snide)
That's what you think, huh?

COPPOLA
Who's America's answer to Laurence
Olivier? Brando.

Evans flashes his fierce side, a junk-yard dog:

EVANS
I'm gonna lay it on the line for you
this one time: you mention that name
again in my presence -- you're out!

Coppola goes to respond when he stops himself, suddenly inspired. He starts writing on his notebook -- sudden, odd behavior.

EVANS (CONT'D)
What, what are you...
(to Peter)
What's he writing?

INSERT Coppola's writing:

Let me lay it on the line for you and
your boss, whoever he is. Johnny
Fontane will never get that movie!

EXT. EVANS' HOME - DAYS LATER

Evans plays tennis with Ali.
Coppola harasses him from the umpire's chair.

COPPOLA
Orson Wells would be terrific as The
Don. So would Ernest Borgnine.
Edward G. Robinson. Anthony Quinn.
George C. Scott, even. But Brando
would be better than any of them.

Evans stops, annoyed. The BALL bounces past him.

ALI
Game!

She waits for some accolade wearing a playful smile. Instead:

EVANS
(to Coppola)
The studio is struggling to stay
afloat and you want us to okay another
Queimada?

Ali rolls her eyes and returns to the base line to receive Evans' serve.

COPPOLA
But I can control Brando -- I know I
can.

EVANS
As long as I live and breathe at
Paramount, Francis, Marlon Brando will
never appear in this motion picture or
any Paramount motion picture.

Serves with a FEROCIOUS SWING and GRUNT.

ALI (O.S.)
Ow!

Evans winces, apoplectically.

INT. BEVERLY HILLS RESTAURANT - DAYS LATER

Coppola pesters Evans while he's busy having lunch with Japanese investors, who look unsure about what's happening.

COPPOLA
Brando is the greatest living actor.

EVANS
Francis, I'm in the middle of a luncheon.

COPPOLA
Don't believe me Brando's every actor's hero, ask anyone.

EVANS
A bloated, passé down-&-outer would be more accurate, Francis.

Coppola stops a waiter.

COPPOLA
Quick. Who's the greatest actor?

WAITER
Uh, the guy on the motorbike. In "The Wild One."

EVANS
Francis...?
(calm & measured)
Fuck off and die.

A hushed silence falls. Coppola -- get this -- collapses right to the floor like a bag of bricks. Beyond exhausted. This naturally attracts wide-eyed attention of patrons and waiters.

Evans chuckles to himself in spite of himself. Turns to his very-confused lunch guests.

EVANS (CONT'D)
This is what you get when you order Italian, gentlemen. Nothing but drama.

Coppola goes on bended knee:

COPPOLA
I am bringing you brilliant casting choices -- and you won't even let me pursue it?

EVANS
All right, Francis; all right.

COPPOLA
You'll let me cast Brando?

EVANS
I'll let you have your chance to test Brando - if - if, number one, he does the screen test for nothing.

EVANS (CONT'D)
 If, this is number two, if the man-child puts up a bond guaranteeing that if he pulls any of his Mutiny of the Bounty shenanigans we will be reimbursed for any overruns -- immediately.

COPPOLA
 No argument. Thank you, Evans. Thank you.

He goes to leave. Delighted with life.

EVANS
 Oh and Francis?

COPPOLA
 Yeah?

EVANS
 I have a third condition. Brando must do the picture for nothing.

Coppola's jaw drops -- what????!!! Evans smiles back at him as he forks food into his mouth, smug and triumphant.

EVANS
 Get outta that one, smart guy.

EXT. ZOETROPE STUDIOS - DAYS LATER

We can see Coppola inside...

INT. ZOETROPE STUDIOS - SAME

...pacing around nervously. Everyone looks tense and quiet. Coppola's wife Eleanor rushes in.

ELEANOR
 He's here.

Attention falls on the door. Approaching footsteps, the sound of spurs from cowboy boots.

Coppola and Co. are frozen.

A SILHOUETTE OF A TALL MAN appears, big in build. We don't see him, but we know this can only be one person: MARLON BRANDO.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS RESTAURANT - DAY LATER

A young JACK NICHOLSON, beaming a half-cheeky, devilish, Brando-like smile.

He sits opposite Evans, who looks puzzled and perplexed by the young, as yet unknown actor facing him.

EVANS
 Well, the flick is a romance musical. The director, Judy Garland's former-hubby. The star, a cabaret diva.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Now um, they're already in production,
you would just have to...
(finally)
Hey? You feeling okay?

Nicholson simply nods, remaining silent and smiley.
Both bizarre and unnerving.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Anyway, we're uh, we're looking for a
certain, I don't know, a type. Rodger
Corman dropped your name, so uh, all
goes well, there'll be ten grand in it
for ya. Should be only a few weeks
work...

Nicholson keeps on smiling.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Okay, okay, what, what is this?

NICHOLSON
What'd you mean? What's what?

EVANS
"What's what?" What's this? You.
Why aren't saying anything? Why are
you just smiling all the time?

NICHOLSON
Can I talk to you straight, pal?

EVANS
Please. Do. Pal.

NICHOLSON
We don't know each other, but um, I
just directed a movie which didn't do
too well. I'm also starring in a
movie that's doing better critically
speaking, but it ain't exactly setting
the box office alight, neither. Um...
(then)
Are you married?

EVANS
Happily.

NICHOLSON
Well I got myself an ex-wife, see, as
well as a beautiful baby daughter, so
that means alimony and it means child
support.

EVANS
Welcome to modern living.

NICHOLSON
Yeah but that's the point I'm getting
at, see?

EVANS
I can't see a thing past your weird,
big smile.

NICHOLSON
I need fifteen grand to keep moving in
this modern world. Because, let's
face it, the way taxes and prices are
today, ten grand ain't gonna do it for
me, you understand?

Evans doesn't know whether to laugh or flame out.

EVANS
Tell me something.

NICHOLSON
Anything.

EVANS
How does a guy like you get off
talking like that to a guy like me?

NICHOLSON
Well, gee pal, you know, I'm Irish;
so, I got something on my mind, I get
it out there. I mean what else am I
gonna do with it?

Evans just stares, open-mouthed. Can't believe this guy. Thinks this over. Just when we think he's about to tell this guy to hit the bricks he says:

EVANS
How about twelve and a half?

NICHOLSON
Grand?

EVANS
Yeah.

EVANS
You mean it?

EVANS
Yeah.

Nicholson SLAPS the table with delight:

NICHOLSON
Hot doggone it. You don't know what
this means to me, pal; you don't know
how this helps me. I won't ever
forget it.

Peter appears with Coppola.

PETER
Evans...

EVANS
Hey, Peter. Watch yourself around
this Irishman. He'll swipe the cream
from your coffee.

PETER
(insistent)
Evans...

EVANS
What?

PETER
It's Brando.

EVANS
Oh what the Christ? From one maniac
Irishman to the next. What's Brando
done now?

INT. NYC - BLUHDORN'S OFFICE - DAY LATER

Bluhdorn takes two calls at once, a receiver on each ear.

BLUHDORN
(to phone line #1)
I think three dollars a share is fair
-- so offer a buck fifty. That's
right, I'm buying the only way I know
how to buy: cheaply.

(into phone line #2)
And you. I told you to buy South
Puerto Rico Sugar at five eights of a
point. No buts -- buy South Puerto
Rico Sugar at five eights of a point.

He SLAMS down both phones.

SECRETARY'S VOICE (OVER INTERCOM)
Robert Evans.

BLUHDORN
Which line?

SECRETARY'S VOICE (OVER INTERCOM)
He's here, outside your office.

BLUHDORN
Outside? What's wrong?

JUMP TO:

Office doors open. Evans, Peter and Coppola march in.

EVANS
Uh, Charlie...

BLUHDORN
Don't Charlie me, Evans. If it's bad
news, out with it immediately.

Inspired, Coppola quickly jots down in his notebook:

INSISTS ON HEARING BAD NEWS IMMEDIATELY

EVANS
A casting quandary has arisen
regarding Vito Corleone.

BLUHDORN
 You know what I do with quandaries,
 Evans? I deal with them "as a cleaver
 deals with meat."

EVANS
 (to Coppola)
 Show him.

JUMP TO:

A clanky PROJECTOR starts up.
 Bluhdorn and the others watch the real-life BRANDO SCREEN TEST on
 a drop-down screen.

BLUHDORN
 (aghast)
 Is that, is that who I think it is?

EVANS
 It is.

BLUHDORN
 No. No way. Never, never --

Cuts himself off, watching Brando fiddle w/props & makeup.

BLUHDORN (CONT'D)
 What's he saying?

EVANS
 Keep watching, Charlie. Keep, keep
 watching.

Brando turns around...then after a moment faces the camera with
 rolled-up Kleenex tissues into both cheeks. Smiles.

BLUHDORN
 That mick is incredible -- incredible.
 He looks like an olt' guinea.

Evans sees Coppola smiling triumphantly only at him.

EVANS
 (whispering)
 Smile now, fuck-face. I'll get you
 the next time.

Everyone watches Brando's self-transformation -- his new walk
 with a limp, developing new, impromptu mannerisms.

FADE TO BLACK

After a moment's hesitation we hear four famous words:
 "I believe in America"

FADE UP:

INT. HARLEM, NYC - GODFATHER SET - MONTHS LATER

FILM CAMERA POV: we are watching the real-life actor SALVATORE CORSITTO as Bonasera over the shoulder of Marlon Brando as Vito Corleone

CORSITTO AS BONASERA
America has made my fortune.

As he speaks, THE VIEW imperceptibly begins to tighten on Corsitto, as opposed to pulling back like the movie.

CORSITTO AS BONASERA
And I raised my daughter in the American fashion. I gave her freedom -- but, I taught her never to dishonor her family.

View lands in CLOSE, when:

COPPOLA (O.S.)
Okay, that's where we need to open.
Tight on Bonasera.

Reveal Coppola conferring with his cinematographer GORDON WILLIS. Actors do their own personal rehearsals while receiving makeup.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
His tormented, anguished face needs to fill the screen. Then as he tells his story, we do a pull back,

WILLIS
Well by my count, Bonasera's speech or monologue is nearly three minute long.

Shows a stopwatch to the cameraman, TONY KARP, busy fiddling around with a special-looking MOVIE CAMERA.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
What do you think, Tony?

TONY KARP
The computerized lens will give you the smooth pull-back you want.

Said tinkering around a RECTANGULAR BOX under the lens, which holds the motor and gears.

TONY KARP (CONT'D)
We can program where the lens needs to be at the required time.

A CAT purrs up against Coppola's leg, distracting him.

COPPOLA
Whose cat is that?

WILLIS
I heard someone say it's a stray.

Coppola picks up the cat and absently-mindedly places him in an unseen Brando's lap.

COPPOLA
Here, Marlon.

BRANDO'S HANDS play with the cat, cradling him, rolling him around in his hands.
CUE CARDS with dialogue are everywhere.

WILLIS
(to his crew)
Let's get an overhead light over
Marlon.

COPPOLA
Easy on the light. The room needs to
be dark.

WILLIS
How dark? Because I like to go pretty
dark.

COPPOLA
Then go nuts because we want this
scene to sharply contrast with...

EXT. STATEN ISLAND - GODFATHER SET - WEEKS LATER

HIGH ANGLE ON: wedding scene, set-up and rehearsals. Big and bright.

COPPOLA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
...the wedding scene.

Coppola finishes up with Willis and his team.

COPPOLA
Vito Corleone's business dealings
inside his dark office pay for this
bright and deluxe affair. That's what
we want to show: the fusion of
business with family. Evil and good.

SCENE BECOMES A SERIES OF SCENES

Showing Coppola, via FORREST-GUMP-like composite cinematography, directing the Wedding Cast, a large motley group, or conferring with Willis about camera shots, or reviewing budgets with the Production Designer.

END ON:

Ruddy stepping up to Coppola. Excited.

RUDDY
Francis -- ? Ain't he perfect?

Said motioning over to a hulk of a guy in a wedding tux, seated alone, in the distance.
This is the one and only LENNY MONTANA, aka, Luca Brasi.

COPPOLA
(intimidated)
For what?

RUDDY
Who else? Luca Brasi. Ain't he Luca
or ain't he Luca?

Coppola warms to the idea. Lenny is in his own world, intently talking to himself.

COPPOLA
Yeah. Yeah, he is a Luca Brasi.
(then)
What's he doing?

RUDY
Practicing his lines. Poor guy's nervous about meeting Marlon, he wants to impress.

COPPOLA
He ever acted before?

RUDY
Some wrestling. You gotta know how to act when ya wrestle.

COPPOLA
He wrestled on TV?

RUDY
Riker's Island.

COPPOLA
Riker's, the prison?

RUDDY
Okay, look, don't freak out but Lenny was a solider in the Colombo family.

COPPOLA
The Colombo crime family?

RUDDY
The guy's hoping for a career change.

COPPOLA
Please tell me he hasn't killed anyone.

RUDDY
Well, um...

COPPOLA
Ruddy...

Cuts himself off, inspired by Lenny practicing his lines.

RUDDY
(not noticing)
New York's a tough town, Francis.
It's not prim and proper like where you grew up in "West Egg F. Scott Fitzgerald" country.

COPPOLA
(not listening)
Gordi --?

WILLIS
Yeah?

COPPOLA
 Grab a camera.
 (to staff)
 Bring over Diane and Al. Quick. And
 bring them some food.

JUMP TO:

CAMERA POV: filming real-life Diane and Pacino as Kay and Michael respectively. They notice Lenny reciting his lines.

INT. EVANS' BEDROOM - DAYS LATER

Evans watches the rushes from his bed. He bounces his baby son with both hands while talking to Peter on the phone, the receiver held up by a BUTLER decked out in a P.G. Wodehouse-like Jeeves uniform.

PACINO AS MICHAEL (ON SCREEN)
 You like your lasagna?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 I hate it.

SPLIT SCREEN TO REVEAL:

Peter in a Paramount Studios office. Resting the phone receiver on his shoulder because he's busy organizing and shuffling script coverage reports with two secretaries.

PETER (INTO PHONE)
 You hate it? All of it?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 I hate Pacino. I hate the wedding. I
 hate Pacino.

PETER (INTO PHONE)
 But do you like Pacino?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 It's the whole thing. It's not what I
 thought it would be.

PETER (INTO PHONE)
 What you think it would be?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 I don't know -- not this.

PETER (INTO PHONE)
 It is interesting in parts.

Ali hurries into the bedroom, holding up baby JOSH. He is wearing new baby clothes.

ALI
 Evans, look. Look what I bought Josh.
 Doesn't he look so cute?

Evans' gaze never leaves The Godfather dailies:

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
It's too ethnic.

Ali frowns. Looks at Josh, and he stares back, cooing.

PETER (INTO PHONE)
It's colorful.

EVANS
(to butler)
When you look at the screen, what'd
you think, David?

BUTLER
Not my sort of people, sir.

Evans salutes his coffee cup in agreement.

EVANS
WASP rage. But where's our parade?

Ali realizes that Evans is ignoring her and Josh.

ALI
Sorry we disturbed you.
(then)
Oh. Evans? You're Jewish.

She and Josh depart.

EVANS
What's that supposed to mean?
(into phone)
No, no, Peter, not you. One sec.
(calling out to Ali)
Ali?
(beat)
Ali -- ?

SOUND OF: a door slamming closed.
Evans lowers his gaze. Unhappy.
Peter's voice attracts his attention.

EVANS (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
When um, when is Francis gonna make
this Pacino actually do something?

PETER (INTO PHONE)
I was wondering about that myself.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
What're they shooting now?

INT. LONG ISLAND, NY - GODFATHER SET - DAY

We are on the famous Guggenheim estate, the living room, made up to be the famous Woltz bedroom.

We find Coppola, Willis and crew huddled over the famous HORSE'S HEAD. Only it looks old and dusty. Hard to tell if it's real or a fake. By the way, everyone is sweating from the scorching heat.

COPPOLA
What's that?

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
That's what the dog company sent us.

COPPOLA
It looks like Mr. Ed.

WILLIS
We can't use that.

STUDIO HENCHMAN
Tick-tock, gentlemen. Dollars and cents are disappearing here.

Just the sound of this guy's voice gives Coppola and his crew a bout of anxiety. They all exchange a knowing look of weariness, starting to really hate this guy.

Willis tries to be magnanimous:

WILLIS
We might be able to shoot it from one side.

COPPOLA
Let's try it, let's put it under the sheets.

COPPOLA (CONT'D)
(to anyone)
Somebody wanna get John Marley?

WILLIS
"Under the sheets?"

COPPOLA
Yeah.

WILLIS
That's how you want to do it? Not place the head in front of John when he wakes up?

COPPOLA
Nah. Let's stick with the book.

WILLIS
Huh. I musta read it wrong.

We break away to find a TECHNICIAN talking on a telephone.

TECHNICIAN (INTO PHONE)
Well now they're doing a scene about putting the frights on some bigwig from Hollywood...

INT. LITTLE ITALY, NYC - DELI/COFFEE SHOP - SAME

CAESAR is the other caller, a tough and rough guy in his forties, a genuine Mafioso. His silk suit sharply contrasts against his coarse facial features, like he's been in numerous fights over the years.

TECHNICIAN'S VOICE (OVER PHONE)
...Like we had to when that studio guy ignored Frank's telegrams; remember?

CAESAR (INTO PHONE)
I get what you're getting at.

TECHNICIAN'S VOICE (OVER PHONE)
Don't forget me, babe.

CAESAR (INTO PHONE)
Yeah yeah yeah, kid; yeah.

Hangs up. Takes up a tray of coffees and donuts. Goes to leave, when he sees an unpeeled ITALIAN LEAGUE STICKER on the counter.

Throws a glance at the OWNER, a fellow Italian-American.

Taking the hint-slash-veiled threat, the owner STICKS it on the glass to the main door.

Caesar, satisfied, goes to leave, when he stops at the door, waiting.

The owner opens the door like a doorman.
Caesar heads out --

EXT. LITTLE ITALY STREET - SAME

Caeser shoulders his way through through a massive gathering for "Italian-American Unity Day." A big, busy, noisy rally.

American and Italian FLAGS are held aloft.
A banner reads:

ITALIAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHT LEAGUE

A small, stocky, immaculately-dressed MAN addresses the crowd from an elevated platform with fiery passion.

JOE COLOMBO
We represent good, we do good, we are good. We will absorb anything, fight anything, fight anyone that is discriminating or defaming our people at all times.

BIG APPLAUSE AND CHEER

The speaker gives a big wave, soaking up the atmosphere. He also happens to be crime family head JOE COLOMBO.

Colombo descends a makeshift staircase. Accepting good wishes from passer-bys - "Hey, Billy-boy. How are ya?"

Caesar hands his boss a coffee. Whispers in his ear.

COLOMBO
Wha --?

Caesar whispers some more as an underling helps Colombo put on a CAMEL HAIR COAT.

Colombo slides into the back of a black sedan. Caesar leans in, free to talk normally.

CAESAR
Whattaya wanna do?

COLOMBO
 "What'd I wanna do?" Like I gotta
 tell ya.

Caesar nods. Sedan pulls out and WIPES FRAME, revealing...

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS RESTAURANT - DAYS LATER

...cars pulling out.

Evans waits by the curb, finishing up a meeting with A-list actor WARREN BEATTY.

EVANS
 Warren, be a pal. Direct "The Great Gatsby" and play the great man himself.

WARREN
 I'll do you one better, Evans. I'll direct and star if you star opposite me as Nick Caraway.

EVANS
 Warren, be seneschal. My acting days are over; in fact, they never really got started.

As Warren tips the valet and hops into his two-door Mercedes:

WARREN
 You'd make the perfect Caraway, Evans.
 The great believer.

Peels out, leaving a disappointed-looking Evans.

The Valet curbs Evans' two-door Mercedes. Valet looks different from all the other clean-cut kids working through college. This Valet is bigger. Meaner. Slyer. But Evans is too distracted to notice.

VALET
 There you go, Mr. Evans.

EVANS
 Thanks.

Tries to tip and take his car keys, but:

VALET
 She sure is a beauty.

EVANS
 Yeah.

VALET
 You drive that mighty pretty wife of yours in this car, Mr. Evans?

Evans focuses, something is not right here.

VALET (CONT'D)
 Man oughta take care. Make sure he
 doesn't do or make things he
 shouldn't. Know what I mean, Mr.
Evans?

Said slipping a BUSINESS CARD inside Evans' breast lapel.

VALET (CONT'D)
 Loved Rosemary's Baby, by the way.
 The best.

Evans enigmatically watches the valet head off.

He takes out the business card: Italian American Civil Rights League

INT. EVANS' BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

Evans paces up and down the patio, the phone cord taut from the living room. He holds BABY JOSHUA, in his other arm, bouncing him up and down.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 Who or what is the Italian American Civil Rights League?

SPLIT SCREEN on Al Ruddy, on The Godfather set in NYC. In the background, Coppola directs Brando, Caan and Duvall in the post-horse's head scene/pre-Solozzo meeting.

RUDDY (INTO PHONE)
 Uh, well, they're kinda new, they just established themselves.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 If they're only new how come I know who they are?

RUDDY (INTO PHONE)
 Maybe that's to do with their membership growing from forty thousand to a hundred thousand in the last six or so months.

SCREEN #3 WIPES IN FROM THE LEFT to reveal Peter, a three-man conference call. He's in a Paramount Studios office, signing off on dozens of coverage reports one-at-a-time.

PETER (INTO PHONE)
 A hundred thousand?

RUDDY (INTO PHONE)
 Celebrities, unions, the church. It's a big club with a million dollar war chest.

Ali carries a 'lazy man's load,' bringing out plates w/dinner and wine, trying not to drop anything.
 She gestures "hurry up" to Evans.
 He motions back "I'm coming."

PETER (INTO PHONE)
 Evans, you think we should halt production?

RUDDY (INTO PHONE)
 Whoa, whoa, whoa, guys, fellas, let's
 not go crazy here.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 (rattled)
 I'm not shutting down The Godfather -
 we've come too far and I'm too close
 to be pushed around by a couple of
 pasta-slurping peasants.

Joshua starts making "uh-uh" noises, disturbed by his father's
 agitated grip.
 Ali takes Joshua.

ALI
 Hey ---.

EVANS
 Sorry. I was...
 (into phone)
 Besides, we uh, we couldn't shut down
 if we wanted to.

RUDDY (INTO PHONE)
 Why not?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 Not seen the bestseller's list lately?

PETER (INTO PHONE)
 I know.

RUDDY (INTO PHONE)
 Know what?

PETER (INTO PHONE)
 The book won't stop selling. The
 sales are getting stronger.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
 And New York wants to cash in. What's
 the prince filming now?

INT. DON'S LITTLE ITALY OFFICE, NYC - GODFATHER SET - DAY

CAMERA POV: Real-life rehearsals of The Sollozzo Meeting,"
 getting changed from their own casual clothes into wardrobe.

JAMES CAAN AS SONNY
 Aw, you're telling me that the
 Tattaglias guarantee our investment?

We break away from the camera crew to find Coppola and Willis
 having a spat.

Willis storms off, had enough, murmuring to himself ("pansy
 artisans") Door slams behind him. Coppola storms off in another
 direction, SLAMMING A DOOR behind him.

We stop on a TECHNICIAN, on the phone.

TECHNICIAN (INTO PHONE)
 Naw, they haven't stopped.

TECHNICIAN (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
 It's crazy around here. People
 hugging each other one minute,
 punching walls the next...

EXT. LITTLE ITALY BAR - SAME

Caesar is on the other line.

CAESAR (INTO PHONE)
 But they're still making the movie?
 (beat)
 Okay. Right, kid. Thanks.

Hangs up and moseys over to Jo Colombo enjoying a game on TV with the guys. Leans into his ear.

CAESAR
 They're still filming you know what,
 Joe.

COLOMBO
 Still, huh?

CAESAR
 Wanna slam this testa dura Evans?

COLOMBO
 If you wanna kill a snake, whaddaya do?

CAESAR
 Cut off the head.

Taking the hint, Caesar heads back to the telephone on the bar. Starts dialing.

INT. GULF + WESTERN - BLUHDORN'S OFFICE - DAYS LATER

Bluhdorn is as always busy on the telephone. Buying one company after another.

BLUHDORN (INTO PHONE)
 Make an offer on Stax Records, but
 only after you acquire the Sega
 Corporation...I know already. Just
 sweeten the deal by telling Rosen he
 can stay on as CEO if--

Without warning -- office doors burst open.

SECRETARY
 (upset)
 Mr. Bluhdorn...

Police rush past her.

POLICE #1
 Mr. Bluhdorn. You have to come with us, sir.

BLUHDORN
 What? Why? What's wrong?

POLICE #2
Bomb scare.

They take hold of Bluhdorn and guide him off.

EXT. GULF + WESTERN - HOURS LATER

Staff crowds the plaza on Columbus Circle. Bomb Unit is on scene, as NYPD have cordoned off the area, holding back the press.

POLICE DET.
It's all clear, Mr. Bluhdorn.

BLUHDORN
So it was bogus?

POLICE DET.
We have to take every threat that comes in seriously, sir, what with the Black Panther trying to blow up stores, the Weather Underground doing god knows what all.

BLUHDORN
That's crazy. What am I to them?

POLICE DET
You know your business better than me, Mr. Bluhdorn. And the threat did come in.

(then)
Made any enemies lately?

Bluhdorn looks away, thinking.

EXT. SHERATON HOTEL, NYC - DAYS LATER

A tour guide explains the significance of this midtown location to a gaggle of tourists.

TOUR GUIDE
And it was here at the Sheraton Hotel that notorious Albert Anastasia, head of Murder Inc., was infamously assassinated in the hotel's barber shop. Wow, huh?

INT. SHERATON HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME

Bluhdorn addresses the room, which is occupied by Evans and Peter, Coppola and Ruddy. But his focus is on Colombo, Caesar and a bunch of Mafioso hoods in loud, double-breasted Mafioso suits.

BLUHDORN
I would like to thank Al Ruddy for arranging this meeting and for bringing together Joseph Colombo and the other leading members of Italian-American Civil Rights League.

Our VIEW examines the room similar to the "Meeting with the Five Families" in THE GODFATHER.

Colombo rises to address everyone.

COLOMBO
Thank you, Charlie. And let me start by stating that the Italian-American Civil Rights League is under God's eyes. And as long as the League continues to do good things, the League will get stronger and stronger. And those that go against the League will feel its sting. This is who we are.

Colombo's crew APPLAUDS as he retakes his seat.

BLUHDORN
I thank you, Joe, for stating plain your mind. And in that spirit of openness, allow me to reciprocate by plainly stating that my first job was working in the Cotton Exchange, here in New York, earning fifteen dollars a week.

(harder)
Today I'm rebuilding cities in the Dominican Republic with the stick -- ask the locals.

(in a threatening manner)
That's who I am.

Discommoded MUMBLINGS from Colombo's crew as if under threat.

RUDDY
Charlie, Charlie, hold it a second.
(to Colombo)
Joe? Everybody? No one's out to hurt anyone, least of all you guys.

CAESAR
That don't look to be the case from our end, Ruddy. We've been hearing things.

RUDDY
What things?

CAESAR
It's like an Italian American can't make a buck no more without being tagged a gangster.

His fellow League members murmur in agreement. Coppola smirks to himself.

PETER
(whispered)
Why are you smiling?

COPPOLA
The irony of the mafia complaining about being perceived as the mafia.

RUDDY
 (to Colombo & co)
 Hey, fellas, fellas, fellas: I promise
 you here and now, from my lips to St.
 Antony's ears, The Godfather the
 picture will not be the tired, by-the-
 numbers stereotype of the Italian-
 American community.

EVANS
 (breaking in)
 Believe me, gentlemen, the Jews and
 the Irish come off just as corrupt.

Disgruntled faces stare back at him.

EVANS
 A--and WASPS, too. Naturally. Right,
 Francis?

COPPOLA
 (wry)
 The Godfather derides all ethnicities
 equally.

COLOMBO
 I wanna see the script.

COPPOLA
 (now concerned)
 See what?

COLOMBO
 That's what you guys call it, right?
 The uh, the pages the actors learn
 from. I wanna see it.

The last thing Coppola wants, so --

COPPOLA
 Well we uh, we tend to take the
 Goddard approach and uh, avoid a
 fully-fledged script in favor of using
 the camera to film in the moment.

CAESAR
 God-who?

BLUHDORN
 Francis, pass the darn thing already,
 what's wrong with you?

Peter elbows Coppola to hurry him up. He finally slides the
 bound script across the mahogany table.

RUDDY
 (to Colombo)
 You should know, Joe, you're the only
 person outside production to see it.

COLOMBO
 A gesture I'll cherish until my last
 breath.

Colombo places his Ben Franklin eyeglasses on his nose. Starts
 reading.

COLOMBO

What's "watching in close view" mean?

Evans, Bluhdorn, Peter and Ruddy look to Coppola.

COPPOLA

It's a camera angle, when a camera angle is tight on someone or something.

Ruddy gestures "hurry it up."

COPPOLA (CONT'D)

It's a close-up.

Colombo rubs his eyes.

COLOMBO (CONT'D)

These damn glasses.

CAESAR

What's up, Joe?

COLOMBO

I need a new prescription.

(re: script)

Here. Caesar. Start reading.

CAESAR

Ah Joe. Not me.

COLOMBO

What's wrong with you?

CAESAR

What'd I know about reading? I'm a lover.

(to Mafioso #1)
Paulie?

MAFIOSO #1

Me Paulie? Or Paulie Junior?

CAESAR

You Paulie. Read this for Joe. Loud and clear.

MAFIOSO #1

When did I become Cicero? I ain't no pubic speaker.

(re: passes the script
to Mafioso #2)
Louie should read it.

MAFIOSO #2

I hate the sound of my voice.

(Mafioso #3)
Bruno? You gotta pair of lungs.
Let's hear ya.

MAFIOSO #3

I sing. I don't read.

COLOMBO

Oh for--

He peevishly takes the script and slides it back to Coppola.

COLOMBO
You read it.

COPPOLA
Me?

COLOMBO
You're the writer, ain'tcha?

COPPOLA
Co-writer.

RUDDY
Joe, for cryin' out loud, it's over
170 pages. All you need is the gist.

COLOMBO
(to Coppola)
Then give me the gist.

COPPOLA
It's about a father.

CAESAR
Yeah...?

COPPOLA
And his three sons.

Colombo's eyes LIGHT UP with interest.

COLOMBO
So it's about what a man leaves
behind?

COPPOLA
Legacy. Right.

COLOMBO
(to Bluhdorn & Co)
Alright, fellas, it's like this: we
control the Teamsters. That means we
control the supply trucks and the food
trucks. Now I ain't saying anything
unfortunate is gonna happen, but god
forbid these supplies and food don't
show up. And not just in New York,
neither. Chicago, Detroit -
California.

CAESAR
Forget about it.

RUDDY
There's no need for threats, Joe.

COLOMBO
I didn't threaten nobody.
(to crew)
You hear me threaten anybody?

Uniform "no" from his crew.

RUDDY
 This picture, this movie, is not a smear campaign against Italians in America. It's about the mafia, it's about--

COLOMBO
 (abruptly)
 Mafia -- ?

Chilly silence.

COLOMBO (CONT'D)
 What, what's a mafia?
 (to his crew)
 Any of you guys know anythin' about any mafia?

Murmurs of "no" and "nu-uh" ripple.

COLOMBO
 (back to Ruddy & Co)
 We don't know nothing about no mafia. Maybe there's mafia in Italy. I don't know. Get on a plane and jet on over to Italy and find out. You want honest, god-fearing, hard-working stiffs, the kinda guys who laid the bricks that built this country, get on a subway and get off at Bensonhurst.

His crew MURMUR and TAP on the table to show their approval.

RUDDY
 Hey, Joe, you don't like the word mafia or Cosa Nostra or whatever, no problem, we'll take out any mention of the word mafia or Cosa Nostra or whatever.

Colombo looks to Coppola for verification. Everyone looks to Coppola for verification.

COPPOLA
 Uh, yeah. Okay.

COLOMBO
 You'll take them all out?

COPPOLA
 Well it's only mentioned one time--

RUDDY
 (to Colombo)
 Gone. Finito.

Colombo keeps looking at Coppola. Taking the hint, Coppola purposefully flips through the script. Stops on page twenty three.

WOLTZ
 You smooth son of a bitch, let me lay it on the line for you, and your boss, whoever he is. Johnny Fontane never gets that movie. I don't care how many Mafia Guinea wop Greaseball Goombahs come out of the woodwork!

He crosses out ~~Mafia~~. "Greaseball, goombahs" remain.

COLOMBO

Okay. Well, we hear that you're looking to film on our fair city streets.

RUDDY

We were hoping to, yeah.

EVANS

Certainly, we plan to pay for such services. After all, this ain't Russia.

Mild laughter.

Coppola, inspired, writes on his fat, messy notebook:

WE'RE NOT COMMUNISTS

INT. EVANS' BEDROOM - DAYS LATER

Godfather Dailies of the "Meeting of Five Families" flicker across the drop-down screen. The footage is dark and rough, hard to see anything.

Evans, showered and in a bathrobe, pulls the blinds to block out the sun, squinting at the screen with a pained face.

Goes to cross the room -- when -- he suddenly seizes up in tremendous pain -- AAGH!

Drops to the ground, hand on his back.

Ali, also showered, rushes in.

ALI

What happened? What's wrong?

Evans, in pain, points to The Godfather Dailies.

EVANS

That. That's what's wrong. That and my sciatic nerve.

Ali helps him onto the bed.

ALI

Your sciatic nerve is acting up because you're in such a state.

EVANS

(re: godfather dailies)

Look at what I have to deal with. Shitty lighting and lab work. I can't see a thing. Can you see anything?

ALI

Aw Evans. It's only a movie.

Evans almost pushes her away in a semi-temper.

EVANS

Is that all you can say to me?

ALI
 There's nothing more to say. You're
 obsessing about nothing, Evans --
nothing.

Evans struggles over to his bedside table. Pops open a prescription bottle, which Ali rolls her eyes to, holding in her frustration.

EVANS
 You've been out of the game too long.
 You've lost your edge.

ALI
 What edge? What are you talking about?

EVANS
 Here.

Takes a script out of a beside drawer. Tosses it over.

THE GETAWAY
 by Walter Hill
This screenplay is dedicated to Raoul Walsh
 Based on the novel by Jim Thompson

ALI
 (unenthused)
 What's this?

EVANS
 Sam Peckinpah's directing.

ALI
 Why are you telling me?

EVANS
 Because I got you the lead female role. It goes against your type.

ALI
 I don't care where it goes; I don't want it.

Pushes away the script.

EVANS
 You'll be staring opposite Steve McQueen.

ALI
 You star opposite Steve McQueen if you think it's so swell.

EVANS
 You're losing your media halo.

ALI
 And what if I am?

EVANS
 Chanel might replace you.

ALI
 Let them.

EVANS
You have to maintain your position.
We both do.

Ali stares at her husband long and hard.

ALI
Do you want me to leave?

EVANS
(re: godfather dailies)
I want to be able to see this damn
movie.

Fed up, Ali storms out.

Evans stews for a moment. Bedside phone abruptly RINGS, giving him and us a start.

EVANS
(to himself)
This better be good news.
(into phone)
Yeah?

PETER (OVER PHONE)
Evans...? You better come in.

Evans hangs his head. It's bad news.

INT. EVANS' OFFICE - DAYS LATER

Godfather dailies are projected on a screen.

Peter stands with two other executives, studio accountants, grave, dour expressions.

EVANS
Go.

EXECUTIVE #1
The weekend's returns for "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" are in.

EVANS
And?

EXECUTIVE #1
They're disappointing.

EVANS
Are we going to take a loss?

EXECUTIVE #1
Our numbers suggest no and that we will eventually recoup our budget.

EVANS
What does "eventually" mean?

EXECUTIVE #2
 That Wonka is not going to be the massive hit we calculated it would be and, let's not forget, the hit this studio very much requires.

EVANS
 Does New York know?

EXECUTIVE #2
 It was New York who told us.

Evans and Peter swap an uneasy glance. Silence falls as this horrible news sinks in.

Executive #1 idly focuses on The Godfather dallies. Pacino is visible in the hospital foyer.

EXECUTIVE #1
 Hey. I know him.

PETER
 Pacino? How?

EXECUTIVE #1
 Sorry, I don't mean know him, know him. Twentieth has him in a picture, I saw it last week. "Panic" in something.

EVANS
 Twentieth can have him back.

EXECUTIVE #1
 I can't believe that's the same guy. Last week he was dirty and sweaty. Now he's clean-cut and proper. A real preppy.
 (then)
 That guy's a really good actor.

Evans and Peter are both struck by that endorsement. Look at each other. Then, in a new light, watch Pacino as Michael running through the hospital to assist his father.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT, BRONX NYC - GODFATHER SET - NIGHT

FLIM CAMERA POV: real-life Pacino as Michael exiting the bathroom and standing still, coolly sizing up Sollozzo and Mccluskey -- not "blasting" as Clemenza instructed him to.

Coppola and Crew are filming. The mood of the set is like the scene: taut and terrifying. Evans and Peter watch in person, riveted.

CAMERA POV: Pacino finally crosses the restaurant and sits with Sollozzo and McClusky.

Evans blurts out, nerves gone:

EVANS
 B--but he's not shooting, Clemenza told him to come out shooting.

VOICES
 Sshh!

Evans belts up. Gestures "sorry"

The scene continues with Pacino acting as Michael, silent and fraught with anxiety and indecision.

Evans and Peter are frozen.

Pacino as Michael stands and shoots -- bang like a cap gun.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Reset!

COPPOLA
(to special effects)
Okay, let's --
(remembering to actors)
Thank you, that was great, guys.
Phenomenal.

COPPOLA
(back to special
effects)
Let's--

Willis breaks in with:

WILLIS
Wanna print?

COPPOLA
What? Oh yeah, sorry. Yes.
(to Special Effects)
Can we get going on the blood mist
coming out the back of Sollozzo's?

Evans and Peter swap an impressed look and move outside w/ Ruddy.

EXT. BRONX STREET - SAME

Stage Lights are being set up for "Michael being picked up" scene.

Peter and Ruddy join Evans as he thoughtfully sizes up all the work being done by the crew.

EVANS
Okay, so the runt ain't all bad.

Ruddy exhales with relief. Then:

RUDDY
And Francis...?

EVANS
He's doing a man's job -- but don't tell him that.

RUDDY
You kidding? It's working under the gun that's driving this guy.

EVANS
That's something, at least.

Ruddy becomes hesitant.

RUDDY
So then, you're happy, Bob?

Evans turns to him -- Bob?

EVANS
Why did you call me, Bob?

PETER
(to Ruddy)
What's wrong?

RUDDY
Nothing's wrong...

PETER
But there is something.

EVANS
There's always something.

RUDDY
Francis wants to film the Sicily
section in Sicily.

PETER
He what?

Ruddy shrugs.

EVANS
Napa County not good enough for the
young prince?

RUDDY
Francis says the authentic scenery
will be worth it, Evans.

EVANS
No. Sorry, Ruddy, no can do. I've
given in on everything and this is one
thing I can't give in on. On this I'm
remaining firm. No means no. So no.

Stage Light comes on full blast with a sizzle sound effect,
flaring screen white, silhouetting Evans & Co.

WHITE OUT TO REVEAL...

EXT. SICILY - MONTH LATER

...the quaint, sleepy picturesque hillside village of Savoca,
outside of Taormina.

The cast and crew are sprinkled around. We recognize certain
elements like Apollonia's iconic purple dress.

We pass the Italian SPECIAL EFFECTS TEAM applying HIGH EXPLOSIVES
to a car in a trial explosion. Someone accidentally PRESSES THE
DETONATOR BUTTON--

SPECIAL EFFECTS #1
(in Italian)
Run!

Everyone scatters -- Car EXPLODES. Lucky escape.

Equally recognizable is Bar Vitelli, the setting where Michael discusses his marriage with Appollonia's father.

A charming, 18th-century stone-flagged building, draped in climbing plants with a vine-covered terrace.

Piano music invites us through the beads hanging over the entrance door...

INT. BAR VITELLI - SAME

Coppola hums along with the great composer NINO ROTA, an elderly, gentle gentleman, playing a variation of "The Godfather Waltz" on the slightly out-of-tune piano.

NINO ROTA
(in Italian)
I wrote a similar piece for a comedy a little while back.

COPPOLA
(in Italian)
Nothing wrong with stealing from yourself.

INT. EVANS' OFFICE, LA - MONTH LATER

DAILIES of the wedding between Michael and Appollonia flicker across the drop-down screen.

Evans is on the phone to Ali in El Paso.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
How's Josh?

ALI (OVER PHONE)
What?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
How is...

EXT. EL PASO, TX - THE GETAWAY SET - SAME

A lonely Ali sits in a deck chair outside her trailer, the phone cord is stretched to the max.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
...Joshua?

Ali gazes into her trailer. The nanny rocks the baby cradle.

ALI (INTO PHONE)
Sleeping. He misses you.
(beat)
I miss you.
(low)
I miss us.

INTERCUT:

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Oh I miss you two, baby.

ALI (INTO PHONE)
What time are you flying in on Friday?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Oh Ali, I don't think I'll find the time.

ALI (INTO PHONE)
What?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Coppola is back from Italy or Sicily or wherever.

ALI (INTO PHONE)
You're not married to Coppola.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Listen Ali, I'm looking over all the footage with a fresh perspective. And, as much as part of me hates to admit it, the guinea has shot a lotta good scenes.

ALI (INTO PHONE)
(disinterested)
Dynamite.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
The lighting's still a problem, but there's something there, and I'm a big believer in potential.

ALI (INTO PHONE)
(whatever)
Great. Unh-huh.
(then)
Well what if me and Josh flew out to you for a couple of days?

Peter enters Evans' office.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Oh Peter has just come in, darling.

ALI (INTO PHONE)
What?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
I'll call you later.

ALI (INTO PHONE)
Evans--

We stay with Ali as the LINE DISCONNECTS. She drops the receiver, close to tears.

A HANDKERCHIEF is held up to her face.

Ali looks up to see the unmistakable silhouette of the king of cool, STEVE MCQUEEN, standing over her, offering to wipe her teary eyes.

INT. EVANS' OFFICE - SAME

Peter sits opposite Evans.

PETER
(re: dailies)
Now you're happy with what you're
watching?

EVANS
I'm not saying I'm happy. I'm saying
I have hope. The four-eyed wop can
film a scene. But something's still
missing.

PETER
What?

EVANS
For all this "ethnic" authenticity
Coppola keeps going for, when are we
gonna see the two heavyweights have at
it?

PETER
Who? Frazier and Muhammad Ali?

EVANS
("duh")
The mick and the runt?

PETER
(astounded)
Brando and Pacino?

EXT. BUILDING, HARLEM NYC - GODFATHER SET - DAY LATER

Filming is back in NYC. Cast and crew prepare to film "Vegas/Moe Greene" scene. Room made up to look like the Flamingo Hotel suite. Dancers dressed up as Vegas showgirls are led in.

Coppola helps the band bring in their instruments while dealing with Ruddy:

COPPOLA
Brando and Pacino?

RUDDY
It makes sense, Francis. Father and
son. You gotta admit, Evans' idea is a
good one.

COPPOLA
Maybe if I hadn't been so busy
fighting with Evans I would've seen
the need for such a scene and written
one.

RUDDY
Write one now.

COPPOLA
When do I have the time? It would take me weeks, a month even.

INT. PARAMOUNT SCREENING ROOM, LA - DAY

Evans watches a rough cut of "T.R. Baskin" with the director and producers.

Peter sits behind Evans, leaning into his ear about The Godfather:

EVANS
A month? Who does that closet-WASP-wannabe think he is?

PETER
We could bring in a script doctor?

EVANS
Easier said than done.

PETER
There's Robert Towne?

EVANS
Who?

PETER
Towne. He worked on "Bonnie & Clyde."

EVANS
Okay now we're talking. What else has this Towne done?

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - GODFATHER SET - DAY

Cast and Crew prepare to film the baptism scene. Eleanor Coppola hands over BABY SOFIA to Diane Keaton.

Ruddy and Coppola discuss:

RUDDY
Towne just turned in a draft for Hal Ashby. "The Last Detail."

COPPOLA
Bobby's doing that?

RUDDY
"Bobby?" You know this script doctor guy?

COPPOLA
From our Rodger Corman days.

RUDDY
So you're good to call Towne?

Eleanor steps up to her husband.

ELEANOR

I'm not sure Diane knows how to hold a baby. She keeps letting Sophia's head drop back.

Both Coppola and Ruddy turn to look.

EXT. CORLEONE GARDEN - GODFATHER SET - DAYS LATER

The crew and Brando prep to film the "Don's death" scene as Coppola strolls around with the future Oscar-winning script writer ROBERT TOWNE. He looks like an extra out of "Easy Rider," a sixties zonked-out, Pete Townsend-like rock star.

COPPOLA

We really need this scene to be about the father and son relationship, we want the audience to know that they love each other.

TOWNE

But without one saying it to the other?

COPPOLA

Right. See the problem is the book doesn't feature this scene. We don't have any kind of reference. But Evans - I can't believe I'm saying this - Evans is right: the movie needs some kind of resolution between Vito and Michael.

INT. GODFATHER SET - ROOM - NIGHT

On a small video screen, Towne watches real-life DAILIES of Brando as Vito, and Pacino as Michael: Vito visiting Genko dying in the hospital (deleted in the theatrical version).

Vito takes a distant Michael aside in the corridor.

VITO (ON SCREEN)

Just a minute, Michael. I wanna talk to you. What are your plans when you get out?

MICHAEL (ON SCREEN)

Finish school.

VITO (ON SCREEN)

That's fine. I approve of that. Michael, you never come to me as a son should.

Towne rewinds to the wedding, and plays Michael explaining to Kay at the wedding:

MICHAEL (ON SCREEN)

That's my family, Kay. That's not me.

INT. KITCHEN - GODFATHER SET - NIGHT

Coppola makes pizzas for the cast and crew as he confers with Towne.

TOWNE

So in the beginning, if I'm getting this right, the story arc starts off with this emotional and psychological gulf between the father and the son.

COPPOLA

Right. The father is one way, the son is another.

TOWNE

Each has his own ideals and way of how to live in the world.

COPPOLA

But circumstances change all that. The son decides to abandon his principles and take up the sword to defend his father and his family.

TOWNE

So the son's own principles are untested?

This gives Coppola pause, intrigued by that question.

TOWNE (CONT'D)

Then it is personal for Michael. Everything must be. His father getting shot, the second attempt on his life, how the cops helped, getting punched in the face -- Michael must take this personally. Who wouldn't?

COPPOLA

Okay. But Michael would still handle it in a business-like manner.

TOWNE

Right. He doesn't fly off the handle and shout and scream for blood.

COPPOLA

He's cool, he's calm.

TOWNE

He knows what he wants and he's going to do it, he's prepared to go all the way.

COPPOLA

Something he learned from the old man.

TOWNE

From The Don; right.

COPPOLA

Because the Don, well, he takes things personal too. If a bolt of lightning strikes a friend, he'll take it personal. When Michael joined the Marines, he took that personal. That's what makes him great, or uh, you know, pushes him to live by his own code of ethics.

TOWNE

Which is why he doesn't have faith in politicians or in the law, he doesn't think they'll help him or protect his family. So he must.

COPPOLA

Whatever it takes.

TOWNE

No restraint, no limits.

(beat)

But there's a dark side to all that, isn't there?

COPPOLA

What, whattaya mean?

TOWNE

There's no reward for living honestly. Michael can't live well or ethically, the system won't let him. The dream is corrupt.

(then)

The great promise of America, somewhere, somehow, it went wrong.

This hangs for a moment.

Prelap the SOUND of typewriter keys...

INT. THE DON'S OFFICE - GODFATHER SET - NIGHT/SUNSET

...rapping words onto a yellow page.

Alone, Towne works feverishly through the night.

Pulls a sheet out of the machine. Crumbles it up, unhappy. Rolls in a fresh page.

TYPEWRITTEN TEXT fills the screen:

DON CORLEONE

Barzini will move against you first.

MICHAEL

How?

DON CORLEONE

He will get in touch with you through someone you absolutely trust. That person will arrange a meeting, guarantee your safety...

He rises, and looks at Michael...

...and at that meeting you will be assassinated.

Pre-lap Brando's voice as we dissolve to:

EXT. GARDEN PATIO - GODFATHER SET - DAY

CAMERA POV: Real-life Brando and Pacino as the Don and Michael act out the father advising the son: "I work my whole life, I don't apologize, to take care of my family."

Over scene we reveal Coppola and the crew filming, everyone doing their part, concentrating, working hard. CUE CARDS with Brando's lines are held up.

Towne watches his words being acted out.

Once Brando as Vito shuffles off and Pacino as Michael sinks back into his chair, deep in thought --

COPPOLA
Okay cut it. Thanks everyone, thank you.

Some clap. Coppola turns to Towne:

COPPOLA
That'll get you a writer's credit, Bobby. Mario, me and you. Guaranteed.

TOWNE
C'mon, Franny, don't be ridiculous.

COPPOLA
You don't want the writing credit?

TOWNE
You get an Oscar, mention me.

The eccentric scriptwriter walks off, smiling.

RUDDY
Well that's it.

COPPOLA
What's it?

RUDDY
Production.

WILLIS
(to Coppola)
We filmed everything.

COPPOLA
(to Willis)
We're done?

INT. EVANS' OFFICE, LA - DAYS LATER

Peter steps into VIEW.

PETER
We're not done.

Evans is bent over, receiving an INJECTION from a PHYSICIAN.

EVANS
There's more?
(sharp pain)
Ow!

PHYSICIAN
Hold still, Evans.

EVANS

This better be worth it, Roy.

PHYSICIAN (ROY)

Trust me, will ya? Max Jacobson gave
me the recipe.

PETER

Evans --?

EVANS

Sorry. What's up?

PETER

Business Affairs.

EVANS

What about them?

PETER

They want to see us.

EVANS

When?

PETER

Now.

EVANS

We don't have a meeting scheduled with
Business affairs.

PETER

That's why it's an emergency meeting.

EVANS

Why didn't you say Business Affairs is
holding an emergency meeting?

PETER

Because I didn't think I would have to
since we don't have a meeting
scheduled with Business Affairs.

EVANS

What do you think they want?

PETER

What do you think Business Affairs
want? To talk about business, to talk
about Paramount's financial health,
which isn't very healthy.

EVANS

Do I have to be there?

PETER

Do I have to answer that?

Evans gets a final injection -- ow!

INT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - BOARDROOM - LATER

Evans and Peter are on one side of a long boardroom table.
They sit across STUDIO ACCOUNTANTS.

The de facto honcho is MS. VANDERLEE. Behind her Pepsi-bottle glasses and schoolmarm manner is a very attractive face.

MS. VANDERLEE
Paramount Studios is dying, gentlemen.

EVANS
Oh c'mon now. That sounds a little overdramatic.

MS. VANDERLEE
And your assessment of my assessment is simply not compatible with economic reality.
(condescending)
Not to mention grammatically mangled.

EVANS
We've had some hits.

MS. VANDERLEE
Oh I beg your pardon, please set us and the record straight.

EVANS
I will. "Rosemary's Baby," "True Grit," uh...

PETER
"The Odd Couple."

EVANS
Right. "Romeo & Juliet."

MS. VANDERLEE
Excuse me -- excuse me, excuse me. Is that what you two are clinging to? Hits -- modest hits, at that -- from the 1960s?

Peter and Evans exchange caught-out glances.

EVANS
(still trying)
The late 1960s.

Ms. Vanderlee looks at her Business Affairs colleagues. They share her askance.

Evans suddenly remembers:

EVANS
"Love Story."

MS. VANDERLEE
What about it?

EVANS
That was the top grossing film of the year.

MS. VANDERLEE
Very true. Love Story was the box office smash of the year -- two years ago.

MS. VANDERLEE

(then)

"Love Story" may have saved your puffy
behinds in 1970, gentlemen...

EVANS

Puffy --?

MS. VANDERLEE

...But I promise you, it will not save
you in 1972. Last year Paramount
failed to score a single hit in the
top twenty. Not one. Instead you two
geniuses gave to the movie world a
peculiar romance involving a child and
some woman old enough to be his great
grandmother. Not to mention Barbara
Streisand's first ever flop.

PETER

"On a Clear Day" wasn't our idea.

EVANS

(to Ms. Vanderlee)

That was Charlie Bluhdorn all the way.
A way for him to star-bang Streisand.

MS. VANDERLEE

Would you care to call New York and
remind Mr. Bluhdorn of this?

This shuts up both men. Ms. Vanderlee opens a big BLACK BOOK,
getting down to business.

MS. VANDERLEE (CONT'D)

Now let's review Paramount's coming
lineup for the year, shall we?

PETER

Uhm well, we have a picture coming up
with Woody Allen.

MS. VANDERLEE

Woody Allen the comic?

EVANS

It's an adaptation of one of his
Broadway plays.

MS. VANDERLEE

Never cared for Mr. Allen's style of
humor myself, neither.

Not a good start.

PETER

W--we have a Western. "Bad Company."

EXEC #1

(interested)

Is John Wayne in it?

PETER

Jeff Bridges.

EXEC #1
Jeff who?

MS. VANDERLEE
What about "The Great Gatsby?" Why haven't you mentioned that?

PETER
Because we haven't made "The Great Gatsby."

MS. VANDERLEE
(shocked)
You mean you're not even in post-production? Why not?

EVANS
It's a tough 180-pages to lick.

Ms. Vanderlee SLAMS shut her big black book -- had enough.

MS. VANDERLEE
Gentlemen, for your sakes, I hope you can put our minds to rest by naming at least one project in post-production that at least appears commercially attractive.

A loooooong silence. Until Evans mumbles --

EVANS
"The Godfather."

MS. VANDERLEE
I'm sorry, what?

PETER
"The Godfather."

MS. VANDERLEE
(searching through her files)
Ah yes. Mario Puzo's big, bad bestseller.

INTERCUT TO:

INT. ZOETROPE STUDIOS, SF - DAY

Coppola works an editing machine from the late 1960s called a "Movieola" (looks like a sowing machine), examining footage of "The Godfather" playing on a small viewing screen.

BACK TO:

Ms. Vanderlee, reading from a sheet.

MS. VANDERLEE
"The Godfather." Originally budgeted at one million dollars. Then ballooned to two million dollars, then 2.5 million dollars.

MS. VANDERLEE
And now, to date, has chewed up over
six million dollars.

PETER
Six million?

Evans and Peter share flabbergasted glances.

EXEC #1
6.5.

EVANS
Canadian dollars?

MS. VANDERLEE
We're not amused.

EVANS
Believe me, I'm crying like a little
girl on the inside.

PETER
(to Ms. Vanderlee)
How's that possible?

MS. VANDERLEE
Let's take a for instance, shall we?

EVANS
Must we?

MS. VANDERLEE
The assassination of Santino Corleone.

Which she pronounces as San-tin-o Cor-leo-nye.

MS. VANDERLEE (CONT'D)
Instead of filming on an actual toll-
booth, production hired out an
abandoned airstrip, and built a toll-
booth and dressed the whole area to
look like a highway.

Evans shifts awkwardly in his chair.

MS. VANDERLEE (CONT'D)
Take another example: the Vito
Corleone funeral scene. Twelve
thousand was spent on flowers alone,
over.
(emphasizing)
On flowers.

Awkward silence.

MS. VANDERLEE (CONT'D)
You risked everything on this picture,
gentlemen.
(listing)
The studio, its proud history, its
employees.
(then)
I pray it will be worth it.

INT. CORRIDOR - MINUTES LATER

Evans and Peter move through, hurriedly and harassed. Evans keeps one hand on his sore, sciatic-ridden back.

EVANS
I want Coppola and The Godfather here.

PETER
In LA?

EVANS
Where I can keep an eye on both of 'em. Everyone's assess are on the line.

PETER
Francis' contract assigns him discretion to edit in San Francisco.

EVANS
Then we need to find a way that breaks Francis' contract.

INT. ZOETROPE STUDIOS - DAY/NIGHT

George Lucas assists Coppola cut the post-Solozzo killing montage scene.

Coppola turns to editor, PETER ZINNER:

COPPOLA
How long is the movie at this point?

PETER ZINNER
Uh...I got 103 minutes and thirty-four seconds.

Not the news Coppola was expecting.

COPPOLA
It took an hour and a half for us to get to Michael killing Solozzo?
(worried)
How long is left?

PETER ZINNER
I'd say, oh about ninety-six minutes, give or take.

COPPOLA
The movie is over three hours long?

INT. EVANS' OFFICE, LA - DAY

Peter enters with the studio lawyers.

PETER
We might have something.

Evans pours himself a drink, more Scotch than Tab. His hands shake, bad nerves.

EVANS
Anything.

STUDIO LAWYER
A clause exists on Mr. Coppola's
contract regarding "manageable
length."

EVANS
A clause?

Peter nods yes.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Okay. Good. That's good, but --

Evans is rendered mute by a wave of back pain. Eases himself
into a chair and manages to speak over the strain.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Only what does "manageable length"
mean?

INT. ZOETROPE STUDIOS, SF - NIGHT

Coppola on the phone to Evans.

COPPOLA (INTO PHONE)
It means what?

SPLIT SCREEN:
to reveal Evans in his LA office, shuffling about using a WALKING
CANE:

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
It means you have to cut the picture
to within uh...
(reading a page)
Two hours and ten minutes.

COPPOLA (INTO PHONE)
Evans, I'm trying to edit eighty hours
of film, okay? Unspooled, it's like
ninety-five miles long. I can't
possibly--

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
If it's a second longer than two hours
and ten minutes when you show the
first cut, I'm relocating the work
prints to Los Angeles.

He hangs up and we go FULL SCREEN on Coppola. He's too visibly
stunned to be mad. Slowly hangs up the receiver.

Then he gradually starts to flame out into an exploding rage -
his hands slashing at any and all objects -- tears the cluttered
room to bits.

Lucas and the editors observe from the doorway.

LUCAS
Evans must have called.

Coppola's OSCAR STATUTE for "Patton" CRASHES against the wall, just missing Lucas.

EXT. ZOETROPE STUDIOS - SAME

We watch Coppola in the distance, trashing the room. San Francisco's nightlife continues all around us.

FADE TO BLACK:

After a moment, a voice breaks the silence.

VOICE
Cue it.

A projector starts up. The haunting opening chords to Nino Rota's music fills the air.

FADE UP:

INT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS SCREENING ROOM - WEEKS LATER

The first rough cut of The Godfather flickers across the screen.

In the reflected blue light, Peter and Paramount Exec's watch on one side.

Coppola, Ruddy, Towne, and other crew members watch on the other side.

At the very back is Evans - get this - lying in a PORTABLE BED. His back is propped up against ten of the PUFFIEST PILLOWS ever made. Smokes a cigar over tumblers of Irish Whisky dispensed by Studio Catering staff.

SCENE BECOMES A SERIES OF DISSOLVES OF

-- Evans watching, disgruntled, shifts around in his bed.

-- Coppola studying Evans's reaction.

Finally the end credits roll over Diane Keaton as Kay lighting candles in a church for Michael's soul.

Voice lowered, Peter leans over to Evans who stares blankly at the screen:

PETER
It's just over two hours.

He shows Evans a legal pad with SCRIBBLED NOTES on further cuts.

PETER (CONT'D)
Take out a couple of more scenes, we
might be able to bring it down to
ninety minutes.

Evans' face contorts -- more cuts??!! Peter doesn't notice, too busy eyeing his legal pad.

PETER (CONT'D)
We might maneuver out of this, after
all.

Evans tries to rise out of bed -- can't. Too sore. So:

EVANS
Francis...?

Coppola breaks his attention away from his fawning clique.

EVANS (CONT'D)
May I have a word with you? Alone.

Evans is wheeled out of the room.

TOWNE
That is one bizarre sight in the
middle of all this.

Coppola is inspired. Scribbles down on his notebook:

a bizarre sight in the middle of all this

TOWNE (CONT'D)
No wonder the industry's in trouble
with guys like that running the joint.

INT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Evans, alone, paces about using his walking cane, gathering his thoughts. Expects Coppola any second.

Clock reads: **2:24pm**

DISSOLVE TO:

Evans, still waiting. Clocks reads: **2:45pm**

DISSOLVE TO:

Evans looks out the window, left and right. Stewing, fuming.
Clock reads: **3:07pm**

Door opens. Coppola is escorted inside, like the wiseass troublemaker entering the principle's office.

EVANS
Nice of you to show, Francis.

COPPOLA
Yeah sorry, I was, you know.

EVANS
No. I can't say I do know. Know
what?

This sharp rhetorical question gives Coppola pause.

Evans' Secretary backtracks out, glad to clear the firing line.

To break the awkward silence:

COPPOLA
Was talking with Peter. He's happy, anyway. There're one or two scenes he'd like to cut, but my guys say the picture's terrific. That I shouldn't touch a frame.

EVANS
The picture stinks, Francis.

COPPOLA
Wh--what?

EVANS
You deaf, auteur boy? It stinks to high heaven. It's all plot and no heart -- no family -- no feeling -- no anything. You shot a great film, but where the holy fuck is it? In your kitchen with the spaghetti?

COPPOLA
Now listen, Evans, I--

EVANS
No you listen, y'fat fuck, and listen good because I ain't gonna say it twice. You shot a saga, pal, but you turned in a trailer. We're going back to the cutting room, and we are gonna put that half-assed picture you think is so perfect back together.

COPPOLA
We?

EVANS
You and me, buddy. Here. In LA. You can leave your pansy, Godard-worshiping, ass-kissing assistants back in San Francisco where they belong.

COPPOLA
Fuck you and fuck that -- I'll never agree.

EVANS
I ain't askin', Francis -- I'm tellin'. Life is change. Get ready.

COPPOLA
(realizing)
Wait a minute here, wait a second. You actually want me to make the picture longer?

INT. ZOETROPE STUDIOS - CUTTING ROOM - DAYS LATER

Coppola packs up cans of film.

GEORGE LUCAS
(surprised)
He wants you to make the picture
longer?

INT. CHARLIE BLUHDORN'S OFFICE, NYC - DAYS LATER

BLUHDORN
He wants you to make the picture
longer?

Coppola is present.

COPPOLA
Ask him yourself.

Said gesturing to a defiant, pissed-off Evans.

BLUHDORN
Evans, say it ain't so?

EVANS
Can't do it, Charlie.

BLUHDORN
Evans, no studio head in the history
of studios has ever told a director to
make a picture longer.

EVANS
I'm a big believer in making history,
Charlie.

BLUHDORN
I'm not. Francis says the picture is
fine. His people say the picture is
fine. Hell, Evans, even your people
say the picture is fine.

EVANS
I quit.

BLUHDORN
Whah --?

EVANS
I ain't signing my name to that
picture, not in its present shape; no,
sir. Thanks for the chance and the
memories, Charlie. And, Francis, go
fuck yourself two times; on second
thoughts, make it three.

(then)
See you around the old folks home,
fellas; it's been swell.

The door closes with a KA-CLICK.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Evans is going down. Alone. A face of furious anger...
His expression begins to soften...showing regret...

He becomes teary eyed.

The elevator doors open and a woman gets on.
Evans quickly recovers and folds his arms.

They ride down together, shoulder to shoulder.
Evans, struggling to hold it together.

The elevator stops. Doors open. The woman departs.
As soon as the doors close, Evans breaks down SOBBING, his hands covering his face in shame.

The elevator reaches the foyer.
Evans quickly wipes clean his tear-stained cheeks.

INT. FOYER - SAME

Evans goes to push through the revolving door, when:

VOICE
Mr. Evans...?

Evans looks over his shoulder. A RECEPTIONIST at the Welcoming Desk is holding up a TELEPHONE.

He takes the phone.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
H--hello?

An unusually soft-spoken Bluhdorn is on the other end:

BLUHDORN'S VOICE (OVER PHONE)
Evans...
(beat)
Cut the picture the way you want.
I'll back you.

CLICK! -- line disconnects. Evans slowly lowers the receiver.

Coppola appears beside him.

COPPOLA
We might be able to catch the four
o'clock if we leave now.

He goes for the revolving door, when it STICKS with a suited man inside. The man turns around, facing Coppola, and PUSHES AGAINST THE GLASS -- a car exhaust BACKFIRES like a gunshot.

Coppola reacts, visibly stirred by the image before him.

An usher force-pushes the door to rotate --

Coppola, thoughtfully, takes the next door with Evans. Sunlight washes out frame...

INT. PARAMOUNT SCREENING ROOM, LA - DAYS LATER

..."Connie's Wedding" flickers across the large screen. The instantly recognizable tarantella music blares.

EDITING MACHINES, Movieola and Steenback, have been brought in, worked by two editors, Peter Zinner and WALTER MURCH.

Evans and Coppola are on their feet watching the screen and each other. They're like two heavyweights in the ring.

EVANS
(making a face)
What kind of music is that?

COPPOLA
Music with heart and character. You know, the very ingredients you said were lacking in mobster pictures.

EVANS
It's a little...

COPPOLA
What?

EVANS
It's ethnic.

COPPOLA
What, excuse me?

EVANS
Listen, Francis, I'm not out to insult you or anybody, but you can't really expect me to sign off on this kind of thing.

COPPOLA
Why not?
(pointedly)
Because it's lower class?

Evans notices the two editors are staring at him.

EVANS
Don't look at me like that. I could never show my face at the club again. They'd all laugh at me, whisper behind my back.

COPPOLA
Who's they?

EVANS
They.

Stony silence in response.

EVANS (CONT'D)
Be reasonable, Francis.

COPPOLA
Okay, how's this? We test it.

EVANS
To who?

COPPOLA
To a test audience, who else? And we'll decide yah or nah by their reaction.

EVANS
(sticks out his hand)
Shake on it?

They shake - a firm grip on both sides.
Neither wants to let go first.

INT. DOWNTOWN MOVIE THEATER - NIGHTS LATER

Forty people watch a rough cut of The Godfather...

INT. THEATER FOYER - SAME

...Nino Rota's and Carmine Coppola's music blaring.

Evans and Coppola wait for the outcome.

Doors swing open. The audience streams out, all with satisfied, enjoyment on their faces. Coppola turns triumphantly to a sighing Evans.

EVANS
Let's get back.

INT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - CUTTING ROOM - DAY/NIGHT

A SERIES OF SHOTS: of Evans and Coppola cutting The Godfather: talking...bickering...storming away from each other, in a huff.

JUMP TO:

They're reviewing scenes of Kay lighting church candles.
This is the original, unreleased ending.

Everyone looks terribly fatigued.

Evans dials a phone. Waits for a response.

INTERCUT TO:

EXT. EL PASO, TX - GETAWAY SET - SAME

The PHONE RINGS from inside Ali's trailer.
We also hear Ali GIGGLING inside.

The nanny can be seen in the distance, playing with Josh.

BACK TO:

Evans hangs up. Annoyed. Stress levels rising.

On screen: Diane Keaton as Kay prays.

EVANS
You call that an ending?

COPPOLA
She's praying for Michael's soul.

EVANS
She's what --?

While the two egos go at it, editor Peter Zinner starts tinkering around with the Steenback editing machine -- working on a new idea, juxtaposing the baptism scene with the Mafia Hits.

COPPOLA

A New England WASP is engaging in the traditions of the Old World. That's poetic drama in motion.

EVANS

It's flat-out boring.

COPPOLA

It's my picture, Evans.

EVANS

Damn right. But it's also the writer's picture, Francis.

COPPOLA

I co-wrote it.

EVANS

And it's the producer's picture.

COPPOLA

I helped produce.

EVANS

And it's the composer's picture.

COPPOLA

I hired the composer.

EVANS

And it's the executives' picture, and I hired you, Francis, at a time when you couldn't direct a cartoon in this town.

COPPOLA

Can't believe I'm living outta Jimmy Caan's maid's room like an immigrant for this?

EVANS

You'll be Jimmy Caan's maid if you don't get your act together and come up with an ending.

PETER ZINNER

Got it.

Evans and Coppola look.

Zinner puts on the montage juxtaposition of the baptism and murders of the heads of families.

PETER ZINNER (CONT'D)

Good and evil.

(beat)

And of course irony.

EVANS

Why irony?

PETER ZINNER
 Because, look, Michael's becoming a
 Godfather, in family and in business.
 His arc complete.

COPPOLA
 God, yeah.

EVANS
 But we can't end at the baptism? What
 about the revenge killing on uh,
 what's his name?

COPPOLA
 Carlo.

PETER ZINNER
 The baptism scene isn't your ending,
 per se. But it allows you end on...one
 sec...

Works the Steenbeck editing machine. Brings up the scene when Al Neri closes the door on Kay.

PETER ZINNER (CONT'D)
 There. The final curtain. Kay's look
 says it all.

Coppola and Evans sit back. Turn to each other.
 Then look at Zimmer, impressed.

A SECRETARY rushes in:

SECRETARY
 New York is on the horn.

EVANS
 Not now.

SECRETARY
 Marlon Brando has pulled out of
 attending the premier.

COPPOLA
 You're kidding me?

EVANS
 You got any pull with him?

COPPOLA
 The guy ignored me flat for six
 months; so, no.

EVANS
 I shoulda hired Elia Kazan.

COPPOLA
 You try directing Brando.

EVANS
 I'm a producer not a director.

COPPOLA
 Then produce.

A second secretary rushes in:

SECRETARY #2
Charlie Bluhdorn is apparently foaming
at the mouth. He wants to talk to
either of you.

Both Evans and Coppola turn to each other, saying:

EVANS / COPPOLA
You talk to him / You talk to him.

EVANS
Fuck it.

Evans picks up the nearest phone. Speed dials.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Hello, this is Bobby -- I mean, this
is Robert Evans. May I please speak
to Henry Kissinger?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
(beat)
Yes, I'll hold.

COPPOLA
Kissinger?

EVANS
I might be able to swing him to come.

COPPOLA
Kissinger should be dumped into a
prison, not invited to a movie
premier.

EVANS
Henry's misunderstood.

COPPOLA
Mis-what --?

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Hello, Henry?...The Godfather's the
problem, Henry...No, not the book.
The picture. We made it and...Yeah, we
made it into a movie...Well the
premiere's tomorrow night. It's all
or nothing, Henry, and I'd be shooting
sevens if I could saunter in there
with you by my side.

(beat)
Forget about shuttling to Moscow,
Moscow will still be there the day
after tomorrow.

Peter enters with his assistants.

PETER
Okay, what's going on? Bluhdorn's
going ballistic.

EVANS
(feeling the pressure)
Henry, you're not hearing me. I need
you tomorrow night...Right.

Hangs up. To secretary #1:

EVANS

What line?

SECRETARY #1

What?

EVANS

Bluhdorn? What line?

SECRETARY #1

I'm not sure.

All the phone lines are flashing. Evans starts punching lines: "Hello, Charlie?" Tries another: "Charlie?" Finally hits a third line:

Bluhdorn's FIERCE YELLING VOICE can be heard filtered over the receiver.

EVANS (INTO PHONE)
Charlie, Charlie, Charlie -- Henry
Kissinger is coming.

Evans holds up the receiver so everyone can hear Bluhdorn's ecstasy.

BLUHDORN'S VOICE (OVER PHONE)
Evans, I love you, I love you!

COPPOLA
Love for one tyrant from another
tyrant. Only in America.

EXT. NYC - SUNSET

New Yorkers trudge through the snowy/slushy streets.

As the sun drops in the horizon, reveal --

A GALA in full swing across the street...

EXT. ASTOR THEATRE - SAME

...The Godfather Premier. The hottest place in town.

An endless series of limos unloading CELEBRITIES and POWER BROKERS to an exciting crowd and clamoring photographers.

Blinding flash bulbs POP! -- POP! -- POP!

The red carpet brigade surge forward over the glare of klieg lights.

INT. ASTOR THEATER - SAME

It's just as crazy and loud inside.

Evans moves through with Robert Towne:

EVANS
What'd you think about doing a rewrite
job on "The Great Gatsby"?

TOWNE

Nah.

EVANS

Why not?

TOWNE

Who would want to try and outclass
Fitzgerald? Not me, anyway.

EVANS

Great.

TOWNE

I do have another story in mind,
Evans, it that'll cheer you up.

EVANS

Depends. What's it about?

TOWNE

"How Los Angeles became a boomtown
through incest and water. A second-
rate shamus gets eighty-sixed by a
mysterious socialite."

We break away and find the Ladies Restroom. As a woman dressed to the nines steps out, we slip past...

INT. LADIES ROOM - SAME

...more women VIP's leave, revealing:

Ali, by the sinks, staring off. Something's wrong.

She rotates her WEDDING RING on her finger. Only to pull it off. Then:

BLURGGH! -- someone vomits from behind a stall.

Ali refocuses.

ALI

Diane -- ?

DIANE KEATON (O.S.)

(from behind the stall)

Yeah?

ALI

You okay?

DIANE KEATON (O.S.)

Oh yeah. Fine. Great. Just ate
something, that's all. Sorry.

ALI

Don't be.

(to herself)

You sound how I feel.

INT. ASTOR THEATRE - FOYER - SAME

Guests enjoy fancy, delectable hors d'oeuvres.

Coppola finishes up an interview, sipping champagne.

COPPOLA

I don't like directing and battling it out every day on the set. I thought I would, I thought I'd love being the big cheese. But, now, I find myself very disillusioned. Except with the writing, for me that's most pleasant. It's just you and the material, and you're not this constant target for being shot at. And what's weird is after saying all that, I'm trying right now to close a deal to direct a whole other movie.

The interviewer and Coppola exchange farewells. Coppola takes a big satisfied sip of champagne.

Voices nearby dominate, one guest being introduced to another guest:

GUEST'S VOICE #1
And this is famed British director
Nicholas Roeg.

GUEST'S VOICE #2
How do you do? Wow, it's a pleasure.
I love your work.

GUEST'S VOICE #1
Nicholas actually caught an earlier showing of *The Godfather* this afternoon.

GUEST'S VOICE #2
Ohh. And did you enjoy it?

NICHOLAS ROEG'S VOICE
Well it's very well made, but it lacks decency.

Coppola goes white.

NICHOLAS ROEG'S VOICE
It's a doom-laden, black, nasty thing that pretends to present a Leftist critique of the system when in fact it slyly promotes the privatization of government services, while replacing civic responsibility with a cold corporatocracy. It's a very right-wing philosophy.

Coppola looks devastated. He empties his champagne into a potted plant, sickened w/himself.

Ruddy joins him, ecstatic about:

RUDDY
Hear what that schmoozer Bluhdorn did?

COPPOLA
(distracted)
What?

RUDDY
 He angled the success of Puzo's book
 to totally con the theater exhibitors
 into doling out money up front.
 Almost thirty million bucks.

This gets Coppola's attention.

COPPOLA
 How'd he pull that off?

RUDDY
 He "made them an offer they couldn't
 refuse": if you want the movie now,
 pay us money now.

COPPOLA
 And the theaters agreed?

RUDDY
 The theaters want to cash in on the
 book's success.

(commenting)
 I'm telling you, pal, this is the
 start of a new era.

Guests are DING!-DING!-DING! into the main screening room.
 Ruddy leads a queasy-looking Coppola onwards.

COPPOLA
 It's all about the money, isn't it?
 Not art or truth, or even
 entertainment. It's all about the
 dollars.

Ruddy, not listening, is scoping around for:

RUDDY
 Where's Evans?

INT. ASTOR THEATER - BALCONY - NIGHT

Evans surveys the crowd below. Ali is behind him.

EVANS
 You still wanna play Daisy Buchanan?
 Because I wouldn't get your hopes up.
 Robert Towne just turned down 175
 thousand bucks. Can you believe that?
 It gets better. He wants twenty-five
 grand to write something I couldn't
 tell you what it's about. I swear,
 the "Great Gatsby" is cursed, you
 know, like "Macbeth" or--

He cuts himself off when he notices something in a mirrored-reflection.

EVANS (CONT'D)
 Hey. Where's your wedding ring?

ALI
 Bob...?

That awful word -- "Bob." Evans' face slowly creases with a horrible realization that something terrible is about to happen.

ALI (CONT'D)
We need to talk.

Evans turns around. Ali is struggling to maintain eye contact, ashamed, holding back the tears.

EVANS
You've met someone.

ALI
(blurting out)
N--no.

EVANS
You're lying, Ali.

ALI
Yes.

EVANS
Is it who I think it is?

ALI
Yes.

EVANS
Is it too late? Can I do something to change things?

ALI
You won't change, Evans. You can't. You love the game too much.

EVANS
I love you.

ALI
I'll always be second.

EVANS
What about Josh?

ALI
You're his father, that won't ever change. Never. And I won't hit you for alimony.

EVANS
You wouldn't need to, I'll always pay for--

ALI
Stop. No one is warmer or more generous than you, Evans.

EVANS
But it's not enough?

ALI
I'm the one who's not enough for you, Evans. That's the problem.

EVANS
Ali...

People rush in, on a high, semi-drunk -- it's screening time.

They whisk Evans away. He, in stunned silence, goes with the forward-moving flow. Looks back at Ali as she recedes, smaller and smaller...a blur.

INT. ASTOR THEATER - FOYER - MINUTES LATER

Coppola waits outside the screening room. On automatic pilot, he exchanges polite smiles and handshakes with well-wishers,.

Evans is placed beside him.

There, both men stand, shoulder to shoulder.
Each reeling from their private hell.

EVANS
(absently)
Any interest in adapting Fitzgerald?

COPPOLA
(absently)
"The Last Tycoon?"

EVANS
"The Great Gatsby"

COPPOLA
Yeah. Sure. What the hell, right?
God knows I have a family to support.

EVANS
Don'tcha think "The Godfather" will
bring you some cash.

COPPOLA
I think we missed an opportunity and
failed.

Evans looks at him.

COPPOLA
We took a popular, pulpy, salacious
novel and turned it into a bunch of
guys yammering in the dark about
capitalistic survival games.

EVANS
Yeah. I suppose we did.

It's go time. They start to walk in.

INT. SCREENING AUDITORIUM - SAME

COPPOLA
Was it worth it?

EVANS
No.
(beat)
But I'm damned if I can think of one
thing I'd do differently.

Coppola "hmm's" in agreement. They move down an aisle.

EVANS (CONT'D)
You regret directing this picture?

COPPOLA
You know it's funny, Evans, but it
occurs to me that I'm not the man or
the filmmaker, I thought I was.

EVANS
Who are you?

COPPOLA
Someone who wants to be famous.
(beat)
And rich.

EVANS
Isn't that how it goes for all of us?

COPPOLA
It's not very honorable, is it?

EVANS
It is what it is, Francis.

They sit down in their designated seats.

COPPOLA
Is that all there is, Evans?

EVANS
God I hope not, Francis.

Lights go down. Projector starts up. Our VIEW imperceptibly begins to loosen on Evans & Coppola, illuminated by the flickering blue light of the screen.

COPPOLA
Where are we going?

EVANS
I don't know. To a better place,
let's hope.

COPPOLA
I think to make it work the way we
want it to work, we have to do more
than hope.

We hear four famous words from the screen:

"I believe in America"

FADE OUT:

The End