

## A PINWOOD DIALOGUE WITH MARTIN SCORSESE

Raised in Manhattan's Little Italy, Martin Scorsese is truly a New York City director. He has repeatedly captured the gritty, often brutal vitality of the city in such contemporary American classics as *Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull*, and *GoodFellas*. Prior to the release of his most ambitious New York City film to date, the 19th-century epic *Gangs of New York*, Scorsese spoke at the Museum with *The New York Times* film critic Janet Maslin about his career and about the constant struggle between commerce and art in modern Hollywood. The discussion was the opening program in a two-month Scorsese retrospective at the Museum.

### **A Pinewood Dialogue following a screening of *Gangs of New York*, moderated by *The New York Times* critic Janet Maslin (November 9, 2002):**

MASLIN: Here's Marty Scorsese. (Applause)

SCORSESE: Is that me? Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

MASLIN: First of all, would you explain what it took for you to get out of the editing room and over here?

SCORSESE: Look what I've done, it's wonderful! (Laughs) It's just...

MASLIN: How did you get out for the two hours that you have?

SCORSESE: Well, I was extricated from the machine. It's this giant board of...you know, I don't know what it is. I go back 25 years, which is really a sign of getting older. *Taxi Driver*, and *Mean Streets* were both done mono—and *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*—all three were done in five days. But now, with...

MASLIN: You're mixing sound now?

SCORSESE: Yeah, mixing sound. Well, actually, we finished the mix; I'm just doing some touchups, today only. "One day only!" Well, we were told to finish up today. It would happen that it would fall on this day. You know, I'll go back and just finish up a few more things, some different pieces, mix some

music and that sort of stuff. But it's this extraordinarily complicated computer board.

Yeah. You know, I don't understand it. (Laughter) So I say, "Why can't I just hear that thing?" "Well, we'll have to go find, you know..." Yeah. Well, they can have it. No, they're great. It's Sound One, Tom Fleischman, and he's the best. His mother is Dede Allen.

MASLIN: Oh...

SCORSESE: Great editor, yeah.

MASLIN: I didn't have anything to do with this film, and I'm really nervous about the opening of it, so...

SCORSESE: That's a good way of putting it. I guess it's, like, beyond nervous. You just don't know; I mean the best thing to do is just do the best you can. Today and tonight, just do those last touches. I was looking at answer prints again today. It's Super 35mm, so it's a little complicated. We have to go to a dupe squeeze negative, that becomes your real negative. And that means this week I've got to check a few of the prints off that dupe negative.

It's... you know, I've got these other documentaries to do, and that sort of stuff, so I'm trying to slip myself off of it, and I guess working it so hard that, you know, now they tell me they're going to release it! (Laughter) So it's like, maybe people want to see this thing...

MASLIN: You were saying backstage it'd be nice if they could keep showing the twenty-minute reel.

SCORSESE: Yeah, just keep showing the twenty minutes! (Laughter)

MASLIN: It's almost business as usual for you to have a lot of advance talk about certain films. With *The Last Temptation of Christ* there was a lot of that, with *New York, New York*.

SCORSESE: Yeah.

MASLIN: With *The Age of Innocence*, there was a lot of fuss about the fact that you'd hired a consultant to tell you how the dishes ought to go.

SCORSESE: Yeah.

MASLIN: How exponentially different is the attention to this film from that?

SCORSESE: In *The Age of Innocence*, there was a lot of anticipation. There is no doubt. But I think in [*The Last*] *Temptation of Christ*, it was a different situation, where it became so notorious, based on the fact that some people had sold scripts out in the street, reading these old scripts—I had no idea. And so by the time we were in the mixing room, we decided to release the film four to five weeks before its original release date.

But here, it's different, I think. Here, everybody's sort of been waiting for this one. For years, I always talked about it, too, *Gangs of New York*, and...

MASLIN: You've been talking about it for thirty years.

SCORSESE: Thirty years, yeah. (Laughter) Well, some of the things take a long time. *Last Temptation* was fifteen years. *Mean Streets* was my whole life up to that point, you know.

MASLIN: Can you explain why it's taken thirty years to do this?

SCORSESE: Having read the Herbert Asbury book, *The Gangs of New York*, back in 1970—it's kind of a nonfiction book—well, it is a non-fiction book. But it also takes in the mythology of New York. It goes back to a time of extraordinarily flamboyant folktales of New York. It goes from the eighteenth

century up to the 1920s. He wrote the book in '26. And so...

MASLIN: And you read it when you were in your twenties, you were staying at somebody's house...

SCORSESE: Yeah, somebody's house. It actually was a friend of mine who was house sitting for somebody out on Long Island. It was New Years Eve night and then day. And then during the daytime, it was snowing outside, we were just by a fire, and I found these books. So this one was *The Gangs of New York*, and I took it out and started reading. They were reading *Time and Again*, which had just been published. But I was reading that one [*Gangs*]. When I told that to Harvey, he said, "That tells the whole story." (Laughter) That's Harvey Weinstein...

MASLIN: ...Maybe you've heard of him.

SCORSESE: You may have heard of him. (Laughter) He's another one; he had heard me telling the stories for years and... It's really about old New York. I mean, that's one of the problems. One of the problems was that none of the old New York exists.

MASLIN: So you had to build it.

SCORSESE: We had to build it, yeah. That was a big thing, we had to build it.

MASLIN: When you first thought of doing this all that time ago, you weren't in a position to build New York City.

SCORSESE: No.

MASLIN: So did you imagine a smaller version...?

SCORSESE: No, bigger! (Laughter) Even bigger, even bigger. But also the fact that I had to tell so much of the story of the old New York, you know? Really, just...I didn't know where to stop it.

MASLIN: So you really never thought about camouflaging existing...?

SCORSESE: There's no way. It would be, financially, not feasible to camouflage New York the way it is now.

MASLIN: So years go by, you build New York in Rome. You've re-shot some of it and you've changed the music to make it...?

SCORSESE: No, no, we're just really completing the music. I do a lot with source music, you know.

MASLIN: Did you re-shoot the ending?

SCORSESE: Not really. I shot some close-ups, which is what I did on *Cape Fear* and...not *Age of Innocence*, but on *Casino*, we re-shot one scene and shot another scene to compress time. Usually in the editing, I find that at a certain point in time, I'll be able to tell if I need some "connective tissue," so to speak, or one more little plot device to carry through.

On *After Hours*, I wound up shooting four days, to combine a lot of story points. Well, the original cut was two-and-a-half hours. And the whole idea was just like a Chinese box, you know, a trick box, where you open it up and you just keep opening; there's another box, then another box, then another box. And eventually, we decided we had to maybe compress about ten or twelve of those boxes by shooting a new scene, and shooting some other elements. And combined it all. And so we re-shot four days, and also a different ending, actually, on that.

MASLIN: With this film—it's not out yet, I haven't seen it; nobody much has seen it—but I can tell you already what one of this years Oscar campaigns is going to boil down to. It's going to be, "You mean Marty never won?"

SCORSESE: Oh, well.

MASLIN: You never won. You have been on the record as saying that that actually bothers you, that the Oscar is an old-fashioned traditional thing, part of the old Hollywood...

SCORSESE: It's wanting to be, I guess... Sometimes it bothers me, and other times I say, "What am I talking about? I made the movies. I got to make the pictures." And they were even, some of them up there, were recognized at that time of the year, which is amazing. And also, I realize that the pictures were kind of...

MASLIN: But you've had very bad luck with them. *New York, New York* didn't even get nominated for Best Song, that's the kind of...

SCORSESE: They didn't like it. (Laughter) *The Omen* won that year, *The Omen*, for Best Song, Okay!? (Laughter) I just wanted to say that, guys, alright? Need we say more? Great song, by the way, *The Omen*, great music. I am an *Omen* freak; I love watching those three, *Omen I*, *Omen II*, *Omen III*, I love 'em. But I'm telling you, *New York, New York*—and *The Omen*, I...

MASLIN: Any time you want to know all about the Oscars, all you need to know is that this man lost to Kevin Costner.

SCORSESE: For directing on *Dances With Wolves*, yeah. Well, the picture, I can understand, because, I mean... (Laughter) The thing is that it's like, you know, the Academy is an institution. And I think as one of the key figures of it at one point told me, he said, "We vote for the film that *should* win." Meaning at times, they may not necessarily look at the art or the craft, but at the... This happened over with *Mrs. Miniver*—over the years. William Wyler's a great director, but I prefer some of his other pictures. *How Green Was My Valley*—and John Ford's a great director, but over *Citizen Kane*—no. You can argue that, I would think, classical as opposed to a new style completely, but you know...

MASLIN: Well, Orson Welles didn't have Miramax campaigning for him.

SCORSESE: I guess not, I guess not. Oh, Harvey and the guys there, they're going out there beating the drums, I guess. But the thing about it, too, is that what I realized was that I... (Knocking sound) Oh, they're outside right now. (Laughter) But you have to sort of get philosophical about it, because I thought, "I got to make these pictures, and the pictures were pretty tough." I mean, *Taxi Driver* was a labor of love. I didn't even think anybody was going to go see it. And it turned out that it became very popular and...

MASLIN: Has anyone seen Travis Bickle's mohawk in the exhibit upstairs?

SCORSESE: [Make-up artist] Dick Smith's.

MASLIN: Honestly, if you go upstairs, the mohawk wig is under glass.

SCORSESE: The reason he had to do it as a wig: he couldn't cut his hair because we were shooting so fast and he had to go on to do *The Last Tycoon*. So we had to make a wig, and Dick Smith was the one who did it.

*GoodFellas* was also an edgy film. I think they were kinda nasty, in a way, the pictures. I think it was amazing I got away with making them, under the system at the studio, under the MPAA, all of that. So I sort of took what we could get and ran—and that was to make the movies. And after a while, you realize that that's all gone now.

*Raging Bull* was another one. It's not the violence of the language I guess, in that picture, but again I didn't think... when I made that, I thought: This was it. I kind of put everything I knew into pictures, and then I was going to start on something new. I thought I was going to go off and do documentaries in Rome for ITV. Really, I was looking forward to it. The Church, religious stories, and that sort of thing. Well, because RAI Television at the time—Rossellini had done films, but also Olmi was doing a lot and Bertolucci had done a few. And I thought that was the way to go—for me, anyway. And...

MASLIN: Well, this one, the part I've seen looks fabulous, but it's no day at the beach, I don't think.

SCORSESE: The *Gangs*? No, it is no day at the beach. No. However...

MASLIN: It's a very violent story, there's a lot of...

SCORSESE: I mean, the thing is, they kept saying, "Oh, Marty, this is violent." I said, "Yeah." "Well, how do you shoot it then?" I said, "Well, maybe..." I think we talked about this once, I mean, *Mean Streets* is rough and then *Taxi Driver* certainly has a lot of violence at the end; and *Raging Bull* has violence; but it's more the emotional violence, which comes by way of being fed, nurtured on the films of Sam Fuller and how he was expressing emotional violence with camera movement and editing. And...

MASLIN: But this is filled with violence about different groups jockeying for position in New York.

SCORSESE: Hitting each other. Yes. Hitting. Okay.

MASLIN: Do you have the 1863 Draft Riots in?

SCORSESE: Yes, we do, towards the end. The Draft Riots are the backdrop.

MASLIN: They'll love it in the Academy.

SCORSESE: But the Draft Riots are the backdrop of it. And the reality is the violence is handled in such a way that I had to sort of say, "Well, you know, what am I going do...?" I think I mentioned this before, where I said when I got to do *Casino*, and it got to the point where Joe Pesci and his brother were killed with baseball bats in a cornfield, I did it very straight. And it was the last statement I think I could make on *that* kind of violence. Especially these two guys—whether you like them or not, as charming as they could be—they were pretty bad gangsters. But being killed in such a brutal way by their friends, this is the end of the lifestyle, this is the end of the rainbow, guys. So that was the last statement for me on that kind of thing. And after that, violence has to be treated in a different way. And therefore, what I tried to do in this picture is, through the editing, *suggest* the impact rather than see it. So it's really more montage than direct violence.

MASLIN: Is it partly a result of the stage of life you're at, the fact that you made a lot of young man's films that were very violent, and that were about outsiders wanting to belong, and about feelings that you might not have anymore, since you...

SCORSESE: No, I'm still an outsider wanting to belong.

MASLIN: Some outsider! (Laughs)

SCORSESE: No, no, no. There's a psychological thing that you realize: Why do you want to belong? Just do your thing and that's all, the hell with it.

Really, I mean, that's part of it with the Academy, too, to a certain extent. If I go on record as saying, yes... I think we talked about it that time, in an interview, years ago. And I said yes, to a certain

extent [it's upsetting not to have won an Oscar]... But when it you think back, it's like being an outsider, and just dealing with that. There's a part of me, having grown up seeing those Academy Awards on TV; there's a certain kind of acceptance... your parents react to it and that sort of thing.

But it ain't in the cards...the main thing to do is to—whatever happens in the future, the important period for me was the '70s, in a way, to the early '80s, or even the beginning of the '90s. So for me, it's just about getting the films made, and to try to combine the kind of film I want to make with what I hope could be interesting at the box office, you know.

**MASLIN:** I promise you this is the last question about this, but is it true that you are superstitious and you will not touch another director's Oscar?

**SCORSESE:** No, I never thought of that—now I won't! Now I'm not going to go touch anybody's Oscar! I mean, wait a minute; I've given 'em out! Gave one to Oliver, and somebody else. Oh, God, yeah.

**MASLIN:** You met Oliver Stone and Spike Lee as film students at NYU.

**SCORSESE:** Not Spike. Oliver and Jonathan Kaplan, who directed *The Accused* and a number of films.

**MASLIN:** Well, what kind of film student was Oliver Stone?

**SCORSESE:** Oliver was really interesting. (Laughter) Yeah. Oliver had just come out of the Army, I think. And it was 1970 or 1969...1970. And I was just an instructor. And it was a small class. It was right at the time School of the Arts was formed—1965, 1966. But I was an instructor and I was just doing this little class where you'd take a 16mm Filmo camera, and you'd tell the kids, you know, "Well, this is it. Now you've got to load it; now you've got to go out. This is overexposure, underexposure." Things I still can't do! (Laughter) I don't get it, you know. I know somehow it's a chemical process and there's light, but that's about it. (Laughter)

But seriously—being in New York, and being in [screening] rooms, like this, you know. But with Oliver, everybody was up there talking, moving, and

everybody was making films. And of course, it was a very political period, too. And there was a lot of demonstrating at the school and that sort of thing. But Oliver was very, very quiet. Never said a word. And they insisted on a grading system. You had to grade. But I remember Gary Crowdus, too, the editor-in-chief *Cineaste*. He was in the class. There were a lot of interesting kids, but this guy...

**MASLIN:** Did Oliver feel there was any conspiracy about the grades that you would have given him? (Laughter)

**SCORSESE:** No, because when I looked at his film—he did this little three minute film—and I looked at it; it was about this soldier who comes back home. No dialogue, just some music. It was silent, black-and-white. And he's in a hotel room, a small hotel room, and he's pacing up and down like an animal outside the hotel room—like a little terrace. And you can see he's troubled, and he has a little duffle bag. And he walks down the street, and finally, he changes his uniform, as I remember, into street clothes. But he takes some of his army paraphernalia, and particularly his honorable discharge—it's a framed honorable discharge—he puts it in his duffle bag. And you tag him, you follow him, and he gets on the ferry, and in the midst of the water, throws the bag away. And then it cuts to color; all these birds taking off. And the music swells. I thought, well, that's an "A".

**MASLIN:** Sounds like it.

**SCORSESE:** That was good. Yeah, it was really good, I thought. And some of the other kids were just basically finding out what to do with a camera. But I would come in and talk about movies I had seen.

**MASLIN:** What year is this?

**SCORSESE:** '70—or '69 and '70, I think. And I would come in usually in that class, and instead of going into the instructions right away about the basic exercise, I would talk about a film I had seen that week or...

**MASLIN:** You had started to make your own films at that point.

**SCORSESE:** Short films, yeah, at NYU, and then *The Big Shave*, I made that in '67. It was at the New

York Film Festival, and that great festival, Knokke-le-Zoute, you know that one? That was in Belgium. Every four years, they have this great festival of what they called “underground films” at the time, and in that year it was shown there. I didn’t have the money to go, but...the main prizewinner was Michael Snow’s *Wavelength*. Do you remember that? Yeah. It’s interesting. Great stuff.

**MASLIN:** If you were trying to make the same films, the same kinds of films that you did earlier in your career—*Who’s That Knocking at My Door?*, *Boxcar Bertha*, and then breaking through with *Mean Streets*—if you were doing that now, what would happen to that work, do you think? Was it a very different atmosphere? Or would it—do you think it would still find an audience?

**SCORSESE:** Well, there’s even more of a chance of finding an audience now. However, I also don’t think—I was so impatient, so ambitious, and such a pain in the neck to everybody. You know, just “Me, me, me...I’m making these movies!” Oh, it was just murder. In the middle of the night I’d think, “Oh my God, I said that...” Oh well, alright, you’re young. (Laughter) Even now, a few times, “Oh, don’t say that again!”

But it’s true, though. I’m totally impatient. Can’t get film? Video. I go to video and, you know, and I get this sort of thing. It’s kind of an odd thing. It’s almost like the kind of films that are being made now independently—because there’s no doubt it will be an independent market. I go right to the independent market. But in a funny way, I don’t know what I would’ve done new. It seems like a lot of the independent films of the past ten or fifteen years are based on a lot of things that were being done in the 1970s, the early ‘70s, or...

**MASLIN:** And you were a very small group, really.

**SCORSESE:** Yes.

**MASLIN:** And now it’s enormous. But you and Brian De Palma and Steven Spielberg...

**SCORSESE:** Yes. Oh, Brian, yeah.

**MASLIN:** ...you all were buddies.

**SCORSESE:** Yeah, yeah. De Palma, Schrader, and Spielberg, and John Milius, and George Lucas.

**MASLIN:** Yeah. But it was a really short list. You guys saw each other all the time.

**SCORSESE:** Yeah. All the time. Argued, laughed and, you know, all kinds of stuff. “I’m going to make this kind of film.” “No, you can’t.” “Yes, I can.” “You can’t.” “I’m going to do that.” “Well, yeah, that sounds great. What if you do this?” “Yes!” You know, up until the late 1970s, it was really good, and then we got a little older, and...

You know, we’d show each other rough cuts, and work on the rough cuts. Spielberg came in my editing room one day. I was cutting... I had two editors on *Taxi Driver*, Marcia Lucas and Tom Rolf were working. But there was one cut I couldn’t make. I was doing something with somebody, he came in, “Try that.” And it worked. (Laughs) De Palma helped me and Jay Cox helped me cutting *Mean Streets* a little bit. They would come in and, you know, look at a reel for me and say, “Try this here,” you know, that sort of stuff.

**MASLIN:** How does it feel to have dueling DiCaprio films with Spielberg?

**SCORSESE:** Well, it’s just my luck, you know, that’s just what it is, it’s just...(Laughter) the Academy, *that*, I mean...

**MASLIN:** Isn’t [*Catch Me if You Can*] the one where he’s twenty pounds lighter and he has no beard and...

**SCORSESE:** Ah, but the weight is muscle. The weight is muscle. He was built up, and he really had to work out every day. There are a number of people that were working with him. And Daniel worked out every day, too, Daniel Day-Lewis. But...

**MASLIN:** Well, you told me he listened to Eminem when he was working out.

**SCORSESE:** That’s right, in the morning. Below my office. He’d come up and apologize, “Sorry, Marty.” Because he always spoke as Bill. Once he got that accent, he never...

**MASLIN:** But you said that helped get him in character.

**SCORSESE:** Yeah, and also, I think the music and the working out in the morning kept him in a state of extraordinary rage that had to be contained. (Laughter) With his moustache, you know. And great hatred, racial hatred. Absolutely. Calls himself the true American. Anybody else is a bastard foreign invader, you know. Yeah. So he had to keep that anger, he had to keep that anger going. And sometimes he'd be waiting for me all day, and he'd be pent up, and I'd hate to go and tell him we're not shooting him today... (Laughter) He's going kill me!"

And Leo was like, you know, a young colt running around, "I'm going to do this, I'm going to—" "Okay, okay." Pull him back. Cameron was waiting. "Throw her in," you know... They were great; it was like, really, the family. It was really quite something.

**MASLIN:** Are you ever going to write your autobiography in the way that Michael Powell did?

**SCORSESE:** Oh, no, no, no. Never.

**MASLIN:** It's a wonderful book, I mean...

**SCORSESE:** Oh, I'm nowhere near as good a writer as he is. He's a great writer. And the more I read now—I think I mentioned to you, I've discovered reading.

**MASLIN:** You said you'd read the Sam Fuller book. And I was going to ask you something about that. You wrote the introduction for it and you talk about being taken to see *I Shot Jesse James*...

**SCORSESE:** Oh, my father took me, yes.

**MASLIN:** ...as a seven-year-old. And this is one of the movies that made you realize that movies were interesting to you.

**SCORSESE:** Yeah, absolutely.

**MASLIN:** But I'm wondering, who were the filmmakers who first made you realize that this could be what you did with your life, that this could be a career and a profession?

**SCORSESE:** Oh, well first off, being deposited in a movie theater when I was a kid, from the age of three or four, because of the asthma, in 1946, '47, my parents...

**MASLIN:** Did they just leave you there?

**SCORSESE:** No! (Laughter) My aunt would take me, my father would take me. Put me in a corner and, you know, "Hope he breathes, doesn't get an attack." This was in Corona, Queens. My aunt took me, and my mother a few times, and my father a lot, and my brother. And so there was nothing much to do except to take me there. And basically, I lived these dreams, these giant black and white nitrate silver content cinema dreams, and then this Technicolor that was amazing. My father, at the time, was very quiet towards me, and I don't remember saying much, but sort of lived through the emotion of the films, in a way.

And basically, I didn't really know... I didn't know who did what behind the screen or whatever.

**MASLIN:** Well, that's what I'm wondering, when you started to figure out...

**SCORSESE:** Well, I think when we moved back to Manhattan, we moved back to the Lower East Side, back to the—1949, 1950—when my mother and father had to move back to the street they were born on, Elizabeth Street. And we were living with my grandparents. I would then walk to the movies. And there were all these kids, and we would all go together. And I began to understand a little of it. I really loved the classical films, you know? The John Ford films and the Howard Hawks pictures and that sort of thing—Hitchcock, of course. And a lot of the B-films, a lot of the B-films.

But I think what really happened was mid-1950s to late 1950s. I think when I saw *Citizen Kane* on television is when I began to realize... because you can see the camera in that one. Now, there's a whole school of thought that says you shouldn't see the camera, you shouldn't see—it should be seamless. But it also made me appreciate some of the seamless beauty of William Wyler and Ford and Hawks again, to see why is it different?

But the Ford stuff is really important, because of the family, the relationship of the family, always, the

warmth of the family, the conflict in the family, this was very important—mainly with the Irish and the Irish immigrants.

And I started to see these foreign films. Because I saw the Italian films of the late 1940s, early 1950s, *Paisan* and *Open City* and that sort of thing. In my Italian documentary I talked about how that made a very strong impression on me. And so the '50s was a time when America was changing. There was the breaking up of the Production Code, and I was very much aware of foreign films, and I began to see Swedish films—Ingmar Bergman, *Smiles of a Summer Night*, and particularly *The Seventh Seal*, which was very strong for me. And then around the same time, I saw *Shadows*, Cassavetes. And I realized that the emotion of that film is so strong, and the sense of reality was so strong in it. "Reality" is a lousy word, but it was genuine, it was real. I really didn't think they were actors. It was like the camera was in somebody's apartment, somebody's house. And it was a whole different way of life, too, the bohemians. I had no idea of that; I'm in a working class Italian-American family. But I knew that the emotion was there, and we saw that the camera could move. The camera could be lighter. You can actually shoot in the streets, you can shoot in people's apartments, and at the same time appreciate the grammar of film, from Orson Welles on, from '41 on. But learning the grammar earlier, but still combining the two somehow. So by 1958, '59, I tried to do some films. In fact, actually, when I was younger, I would do storyboards, but I didn't know they were storyboards, I thought they were panels. And it was a feeling of expressing, wanting to express myself in pictures. They were panels, little panels.

**MASLIN:** Was there anybody you would ever look to who's doing as many different kinds of things as you've wound up doing? You're almost like a curator, and an executive, and a producer, and a writer, and a director. You've been involved in such a tremendously wide range of things. I don't think there really is anybody else that you can point back to who took that active a role. And I'm just wondering if anyone comes to your mind.

**SCORSESE:** No... offhand, no, really. I think at the time in Hollywood, they really weren't thinking that much of kind of becoming a tradition. If anything, the tradition was for the market place, and MGM

and David O. Selznick, "The Quality of Tradition," that sort of thing. But I mean, the Academy, when it was formed—in 1927, I think—the first thing they should've done if they were really thinking that way was to at least get a print of every film that was nominated for anything. Just get a print, and put it away.

You know, you wind up with a situation like this movie *Broadway Melody* in 1929, won the Best Picture of the Year, and there's only a black-and-white dupe that's left. It was in Technicolor. But nobody was thinking that way. And I think in the late '50s, when we began to see the end of the great masters in Hollywood, their last films, and Europe taking over, and Asia, we became more... I guess it was just that they were such dreams to us, we thought they'd always exist. And by the late '60s to early '70s we realized that, you know, "We saw that film back twenty-five years ago, let's get a print of it." There's no print available. You know, we wanted to learn from it. There was no video at that time. And the best thing to do was maybe get a copy of the script, you know, and see some stills. But that was about it. And so it was really a process in the 1970s, where we all became aware of this need for knowledge. And it was just thrown away, because it was a marketplace; it wasn't needed anymore. Just get rid of it. It had made its money; maybe it goes to TV—the hell with it, get it out of here. You don't need a print.

Whenever I asked for certain prints, particularly *The Leopard*, for example, I was told it was too big, it took up too much room. Too many reels. So that's the mentality that myself, and Schrader, and I remember Spielberg, too—getting very, very crazy about. And up to the mid-1970s, when we began to realize... It became, like, a situation where, "They've got a brand new print of *Peeping Tom*," you know. There was only one guy in L.A. who had it. You know, that's it. We screened it every time we can get. But in any event, I can't really think back as to anyone. I keep thinking of the great archivists; Henri Langlois in France and...

**MASLIN:** Yeah, but they weren't great directors too.

**SCORSESE:** No, but, you know, I don't think it ever came together that way.



**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Looking back now, which do you feel quite content about, in terms of what you were trying to achieve, and which one is the disappointment, the most disappointing, you didn't get what you wanted.

**SCORSESE:** Oh, that's an interesting question. I could've used a couple more days on *Mean Streets*, that's for certain. It was twenty-six days. And a certain kind of location, because we had to split the locations. And so there were certain compromises. But it really didn't matter, I think the spirit of the city...

**MASLIN:** Do you watch your own work?

**SCORSESE:** No, no. Rarely. If it has a good piece of music in it, I'll watch it, just for the music. Or the actors' scenes, sometimes.

But I think *Raging Bull*'s pretty... I think we got pretty much everything we *thought* we wanted, anyway, in that. But I've been pretty lucky. *Taxi Driver*. We fought like mad, but we got everything we wanted.

I think probably *New York, New York*, because I always think of *New York, New York* as sort of an experiment, which, if I had prepared a different way, I think I would've gotten what I wanted; but it's not the fault of the film. I think the film as you see it now stands on its own. It's alright, whether you like it or not. It's what it is. And I was trying something that I had to learn, I had to go through on that to come out the other side.

**MASLIN:** It's too bad it didn't have a good song.

**SCORSESE:** Yeah, I know. (Laughter) Well, it's not an *Omen*, what can I tell ya? *The Omen* was just—that's it, man. Satanic, you know?

And I think the one that I really felt that was still the hardest shoot of all that we've done was *The Last Temptation of Christ*. That was the hardest shoot. We just—Joe Reidy, my A.D. [assistant director], and myself, groveling in the sand. We were, like, crawling. It was literally the last twenty-four days of shooting. We just shot everyday. We just shot. "It's raining." "No, it's not raining." "Okay, what scene can we shoot?" I mean, it came down to that. You know. Actors had to leave, the crew was leaving.

Some Italian guys on the sound crew. And it was, like, three days before Christmas, and we had gone over, and I saw the sound crew leaving. And they're going, "Ciao, Martino, Buon Natale!" (Makes sound of blowing kisses) I said to my producer, I said, "Where they going?" They go, "Hey, goodbye." I said, "Goodbye." I said, "Where they going?" I said, "It's the sound crew," I said, "Where they...?" He says, "Well, they're going back to Rome. It's Christmas." I said, "Who's going to do the sound?" "Well, the Moroccan guys." So the kids—well, we finished with them. But I mean, that was okay. The sound was fine.

I don't think I'd ever be satisfied with the scale of the picture. In other words, at first I thought it had to be a certain kind of scale. Then I was sort of thinking maybe a bigger scale, to try to hint at the American biblical epics and the Italian ones. But then I realized it had to be more on the level of an Olmi or the style of a Pasolini; he had more than style going for him, he had that poetry, in a way. As Dante Ferretti said, "He's like a poet with a camera," when he made his films, Pasolini. But there was no doubt that that was the best way to go. Still, even under those conditions, I would've liked about two more weeks shooting there to get certain things. I didn't have enough extras... that kind of thing. It's purely a technical thing. And also I think I opened up the script to certain questions which are almost unanswerable. And I tried to have scenes where they were kind of answered, although in some other way... And I always felt kind of healthy about it, too. I said, "Well, we never finished it." In fact, the end goes off into edge fog. And on the crucifixion, when he says, "It is consummated"—edge fog. The film starts to go. And that happened on the take that I liked. By accident, we were rushing so much that when they took the roll down there, somebody, just by accident, happened to expose it just a bit. And it *would* be on the take that I wanted. And I said, "Well, that's great, though. That becomes—" Then the whole film goes into edge fog, and "Leave it; that's the resurrection!" (Laughter) That becomes the resurrection, you know?

**MASLIN:** Probably the most famous line in any film you've done was an improvisation: "You talkin' to me?"

**SCORSESE:** Yeah. I didn't come up with that line, though, the actor did, so... Yeah. Yeah.

**MASLIN:** Well, I want you to explain, first of all, how that happened, and then ask if there are other ones that you like as much as that.

**SCORSESE:** So, we might find out what it *could* be, only because this territory was taken so beautifully by someone else that you can't do it, which is *Reflections in a Golden Eye* as Marlon Brando looked at himself in the mirror. And you see that he's talking to himself, he said, "You look really good." (Laughter) I thought it was great. I said, "We're not going there." So, okay, we know that, okay. But it's about practicing the guns, it's about—*whsst*—you know, that business with the gun coming out; it's about being tough and about being caught. Almost like a child's fantasy, really. And we had these rooms up on Columbus Avenue where the buildings were being torn down—89th Street and Columbus—and we used a little studio. That was his apartment. And you could hear the people, the drummers outside across the way in the Latin club, they were drumming outside—this was summer time—and the cars outside and that sort of thing. And I was just there on the floor in front of him. We were shooting and I... He started to do that, I said, "Keep going, keep going," and he just kept improvising and repeating it and repeating it, until he got into the business of, "Well, I'm the only one here," you know. "You must be talking to me." In the meantime, our wonderful A.D—he was a great guy—he was trying to save us, and was banging on the door between takes, "You gotta go! You're killing me! We're going be another five days over." "No, no, please, this is really good. Let us, you know..." And he listened to us; that was great, you know.

**MASLIN:** Do you have another favorite of those? I didn't know about that one.

**SCORSESE:** Well, the one I like a lot is what Joe Pesci did, and Ray Liotta did in *GoodFellas*, where he's making a joke and Ray says that he's really funny. And he says, "What do you mean, I'm funny?" You know, "Am I a clown here? To amuse you?" But what happened there was that Nick Pileggi and I structured the script very, very clearly, and with a very strong structure. And in that sequence in the script, they introduced all these

guys, Jimmy Two Times and all these guys at the bar, with the voiceover and... (So you could actually have another thing about how they lived and what they did, easily could fit in there.)

So when I talked to Joe Pesci to have him do that part, he was a little reluctant... We went to the apartment and he said, "I just want to tell you about something, though. See if this would work for it." And he acted out this scene for me, which actually had happened to him, from his old neighborhood where he hung out and grew up in the streets. And this actually, line-by-line, moment-by-moment, it happened to him. And I said to him, "Perfect," I said. "I have the perfect place for it. I know—it could go in right here." And so then we went into rehearsal. And in the rehearsal, we did it about four, five, six, seven times on audiotape, and then I took all the transcripts and then made it into a scene from the transcripts. You know, and then they improvised more, he improvised more from there, you know. But I always liked to watch the rhythm of that.

**MASLIN:** Do you have a favorite performance in your work?

**SCORSESE:** Yeah, that's hard, because they're all... I was saying the other day, all these Academy Award nominated performances. But people say, "Oh, always best with men," you know? I said, "Wait a minute, there're only three men who were nominated for me and who won. There was Robert De Niro, Joe Pesci, and Paul Newman." I said, "The rest—nine other nominations were women." Nine. You know.

**MASLIN:** (Calls on audience member) Yes.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** First of all, I wanted to say that I'm from Belgium, and I am very happy to hear you went to Knokke Le Zoute. (Laughter)

**SCORSESE:** I couldn't go; I couldn't afford it. But they called me... Amos Vogel told me about it later. Yeah. I didn't go.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** My question is that considering that today, the film is more and more considered as a product and less and less as an art form, what would you say to young film directors who feel they have to use their personal voice, and that it's a

struggle to make film as an art, but feel that it's the sacrifice they have to make?

**SCORSESE:** That's always been my dilemma myself, and I—even in *Gangs*, for example, or *The Age of Innocence*, or any of these pictures that I've made, really. How far can we deal with the box office and what the box office demands are? Because they are giving you a lot of money, which means you're responsible for it, and you're obligated to do certain things. Can you tell the same story? Or can you find yourself, a kind of personal way into these stories, and make your own personal statement? Which means, can you feel strongly, passionate enough about something that can—through the nature of the way it's made, the look of it, particularly the casting—be bankable at the box office? I don't think, especially in the culture the way it is now, I don't think that's going to be getting any easier. It's only going to get harder.

And I think younger people, there are a lot of wonderful role models you could take who are making independent cinema, and not dealing with the mass box office, you know. But it would be nice to see once again... And I think some are coming around. Wes Anderson, Paul Thomas Anderson. There's so many of these younger guys—men and women—working, that seem to be crossing over into marketable cinema, by which I mean bigger budgets.

**MASLIN:** What has to happen to *Gangs of New York* for it to be marketable?

**SCORSESE:** You know, I don't know; I never understood enough about the money. I just know that this was a tough one to make, we all made sacrifices. I put most of my salary in the picture, for the first time in my life. And so I believed in it that way...

**MASLIN:** Is a lot of it already sold overseas?

**SCORSESE:** Yeah. In fact the release dates are more important. We have to make certain technical things, like a video transfer and everything, much sooner than we normally would, because of the release dates.

I get upset when I see too much of the money going into a certain kind of film which just plays for

two days and then goes onto DVD and that's it and... It's like a commodity, thrown away. You know. There is that element, though, of film. And that's what I talked about, the first fifty or sixty years in Hollywood, where they didn't really save the films, because it had made—it had its history, it went through...

**MASLIN:** Isn't there something kind of awful about the fact the *Rocky IV* will live forever and the things you're talking about are absolutely gone.

**SCORSESE:** Yeah, that's right. Well, it's just—it's one of those things, though. Even if you try to save everything now, you may save a tenth. You know, and that's what we're trying to do.

But there's some kids that... I saw this film, *Donnie Darko*. Interesting film. I saw it on DVD. Young guy. And I found it very interesting, because it had a Hollywood look, but kind of a personal story, in a way. And he's pretty young, and might be very interesting.

**MASLIN:** Do you see a lot of films by young filmmakers?

**SCORSESE:** Now, I'm trying to. For the past two months, if I can finalize the cutting of this thing, I'm just trying to look at stuff. I'm looking at a lot of Asian films, a lot of Asian films. Korean films are really interesting.

**MASLIN:** For any particular purpose, or just that's what you like to look at?

**SCORSESE:** Well, I like horror films. To relax. (Laughter) Well, some of the horror films. There are a couple of Korean ones that are pretty interesting, and Japanese, and Chinese and... not just horror films, but as much as possible. But I have like, a hundred DVDs just sitting on the floor, and it's between *The Youth of Maxim Gorky* or a new Korean film. It depends on the mood you're in, you know.

**MASLIN:** (Calls on audience member) Yes.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Yeah, is it true that you were originally supposed to do *Schindler's List*, and Spielberg was supposed to do *Cape Fear*?

**SCORSESE:** Yeah, I think Steven was going to direct *Cape Fear*. I'm not sure if he was really going to direct it, but... The story on that was that back when I was with Steve and we were all together in the '70s, he'd tell me, "I'm going to do this film, *Schindler's List*, and here, this is the book." And we were on a plane coming back from Cannes! Where he held up the book to me, he said, "This is it, this is the one I'm going to do. It's going to be this; I'm going to do that with it." And he said, "Now, one day, I'm going to produce a film of yours, and it's going to be the biggest hit, money-wise, that you've made. And I'm going to want to see your face when you see people lined up around the corner." I said, "Ah-ha-ha-ha-ha...Nonsense!" And so years go by and he's still working on *Schindler's*. And then at a certain point, I think when we did *The Last Temptation of Christ*, 1988, '87, he seemed to drop it. And it came to me. And I thought I would try to do it, and worked on it for a while with Steve Zaillian. I had just gone through *Last Temptation*. And I was very passionate about that. And I know you'd have to have the same passion for this subject matter, *Schindler's*. I liked it a lot, but having also gone through such difficulty in the release of *Last Temptation*... And I also remembered Steven's passion for *Schindler's*... And so at the same time, he was talking to me about *Cape Fear*, and so was De Niro. And at that point, I said, "Well, let's leave it; let's just switch it."

**MASLIN:** Is each new film a kind of reaction against the one you've just done?

**SCORSESE:** I would hope to. Yeah. Certainly, *The Age of Innocence* was against *Cape Fear*, I think. But *Cape Fear* was interesting. Very hard movie to make. Thriller, which was based on a real B-film, a great B-film. So you can't make it a B-film. So you update it, in a way. But is it *just* an updating? I mean, what does a thriller mean today?

**MASLIN:** Were you afraid of the idea of remaking...?

**SCORSESE:** Oh, yeah, I don't like remaking stuff. But that was interesting. I mean, the Thompson film with Mitchum and Peck and everybody was quite interesting. It was a very, very clear piece. But in terms of that, yeah. I felt that he [Spielberg] really had the passion for it, and it was best that he would go and take that journey and go with it. And *Cape*

*Fear*, of course, made the most money of any movie I've made.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** What do you think about your films' influence on America's vision of the gangster? And the way that, you know, the popularity of television shows like *The Sopranos*, and the way that your films have influenced that product, and America's fascination with the gangster?

**SCORSESE:** Well, the fascination with the gangster is interesting. I've got to tell you, when I was growing up in the '40s and '50s, I was part of a world that had that as an element. So to me, it was the world. It was the world that has that element involved in it, and it was very, very much a real, day-by-day, working out of this society.

**MASLIN:** You're—I think you once said, "If I can buy toothpaste for nineteen cents, from a fellow on a truck, instead of buying it for fifty cents..."

**SCORSESE:** Oh, yeah. That was the thing. Hey, you know, sometimes my mother would ask, "Hey, what fell off the truck today?" You know. Yeah. Well, not that she's a thief, but you buy say, yellow sweaters. (Laughter) "Hey, look what the guys got off the truck," you know, and you bring it around. You got to beat the system somehow. They were not educated. And a lot of the Sicilians, the Italian-Americans were very, very suspicious about government and church. That's one of the reasons they ran away from Sicily. And they weren't certainly going to, you know, put themselves in the hands of an American police force. I mean, really, you know. You have to understand the cultural issues there. They wouldn't trust it. Just basically, "Stay with the family," and everything else. And so for the first, and into the second generation, I think, it was difficult to get them to understand about taking advantage of America, the opportunity for education, which gives you power, makes you move and that sort of thing.

But in any event, I don't know, I never thought the things that I put on film could've been put on film when I was growing up. And the one thing, despite the fact that you had the majority of the people down there being hard-working, working class families, killing themselves day in and out, going to the garment district, coming back, you know. They were not underworld characters, but the majority

were really good, decent people. But it's that odd combination of knowing people and liking them, and then finding out later what they did. Knowing some people, *not* liking them, and finding out what it was they did, you know. (Laughs)

I never thought... You never brought a camera into where I grew up; you weren't allowed to bring a camera. A motion picture camera? Forget it. That would be outrageous. And then *Who's That Knocking*, I was able to shoot a little bit, and in *Mean Streets* very, very little; but my father had to talk to certain people... to make sure.

But right after that, right around the time I had helped Dean Tavoularis look for locations for *Godfather I* [sic] in my neighborhood, it started to pay then, you see. They went into a couple of places in the Lower East Side, they paid the olive oil factory we found. St. Patrick's Old Cathedral, they shot the interior of the baptism of *The Godfather I* [sic] in there. And after that, the church had a little money and they fixed it up and that sort of thing. So it started to become: "Hey, we could be friendly to the outside world, they could let us in." So then that whole period... I think *The Godfather* changed that, to a certain extent. But *The Godfather* deals with a very patrician level of the underworld, in a way.

**MASLIN:** But could you have ever imagined this turning into America's favorite television character?

**SCORSESE:** No, no. No, that, I can't imagine. That, I can't imagine. I mean...

**MASLIN:** Have you ever watched it [*The Sopranos*]?

**SCORSESE:** No, not really. I saw one show a long time ago. I like it. The actors are good and everything. Some of the actors, I've worked with, they're really great. But I just don't... A number of friends of mine are real fans of it, but I just don't... It's... I know it, so it becomes something else.

That period, by the way. The films I made, *Mean Streets* and *GoodFellas*, and even elements of *Raging Bull*—because the whole thing is not about the underworld—they're of a time and place, '40s and '50s, early '60s. I mean, *Mean Streets* is really about 1960 to '63. I shot it in the '70s, but it really is earlier. Like, the girl groups; Phil Spector, yeah. So, you know, it really was that sound, right before The

Beatles hit, right before. And that way of life doesn't exist anymore anywhere. And I think *The Sopranos* is interesting, because it's modern, isn't it? It's a modern thing. New Jersey, and they got long hair and stuff. I mean, you know. It was a different thing. I'm used to the sort of camel hair coats and that sort of thing. It's a very different... I don't think I could ever even do one about that world now, what it's become.

**MASLIN:** Is there any kind of film that you wish you could make but you just don't...? You have ventured outside of the gangster thing a lot of different times, but you often come back to it, as you have now. And I wonder if there's anything you think of as just being too far away from that.

**SCORSESE:** I'd like to make... I'm fascinated by the ancient world; I'd like to make a film from the point of view of pre-Christian thought and religion. Like Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* would be great. A very religious book; Apuleius was a priest of Isis. By reading the classics—or trying to read them! I wish I had a classic education. I didn't have a classic education, but I try to get through 'em—and I think the interesting thing is trying to see the world apart from—not through the lens, so to speak, of Judeo-Christian thought and religion. Not to put that aside, but I want to see what else links us as human beings and who we are, you know.

**MASLIN:** We have time for a couple more questions, and then Marty really does have to go back to work.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Do you think the original cut of *New York, New York*, will it ever be released, perhaps on DVD?

**SCORSESE:** That was a rough cut. That was the first screening. It's like the stuff you show to your friends and they yell at you. (Laughter) No, you know, "Marty, it's ridicu—" This one, it turns out everybody liked it. Lotta people liked it. You know, De Palma liked it, and Sam Fuller was there, he liked it. But that was the *first cut*. We just put it all together; it was four hours and twenty minutes, and just went on and on and on. And it was, "Oh, that's great, we can maybe move this around," and that's basically it. It's like people saying, "Oh, you know, *Gangs of New York* is a three hour..." No, the first cut was three, three and a half or whatever. That's the *first cut*. And then it's... a film is like a piece of

sculpture; you go in—bang! You know, keep chipping away at it. And it comes down to size, hopefully. In the case of *Gangs*, it's two hours and forty minutes—without credits, you know. All the credits are at the end anyway, so it's two hours and forty minutes *of story*... (Laughter)

And *New York, New York*... You know what it was? You're absolutely right in a sense, because that was—it was a special day; something happened there, it was kind of interesting, at that screening, it was very special. But there's no doubt the picture needed tons of work. But the fact that it was lost, something happened—the black and white dupes were gone, and we could never... Just to have as a reference, we would've liked that, that's all.

**MASLIN:** Have you seen it, or have you just heard of it?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Just heard of it, alas.

**SCORSESE:** Yes, well it was quite indulgent. I mean, it's four and a half hours. I mean, you know, just all your rushes, with just the heads and tails cut off. Basically intercutting stuff and trying to see where the hell the story is. You know, 'cause we were experimenting and improvising a great deal. (To audience member) Yes.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Could you talk a little bit about making of *King of Comedy*, which seems very different than a lot of your other pictures? Like, how you made that decision to make it.

**SCORSESE:** That was, again, a Robert De Niro role that he really wanted to play, and he gave me that script back when I was doing *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, along with the book on *Raging Bull*. And in both of them, I wasn't that interested. *Raging Bull*, I was a little bit interested. I'm not a sports enthusiast, so I didn't quite understand the boxing—as a sport, didn't understand it. It's different in the film, in a way; how I found my way through it was a different thing altogether, not sports at all.

But no, *The King of Comedy*, I didn't quite get when I first read it, the wonderful Paul Zimmerman script. And then it went off for a while. I think a number of people were going to do it. I think Milos Forman was involved; Mike Cimino was involved. And then

after *Raging Bull* was finished, Bob just presented it to me again. He said, "I think you'd really be good for this." It took those ten years, or eight years, to understand a little bit more about what this cult of celebrity was about.

**MASLIN:** You've said that you felt more like Rupert Pupkin the comedian when you made the film, and that now, in a way, you're more like the Jerry Lewis character.

**SCORSESE:** Yeah, exactly. But that's the thing. That was it, that's what I saw, both sides. And I said, "If anything, you'll probably go the other way." But this guy, I know, loved late night talk shows, loved Steve Allen and Ernie Kovacs, who understood about early television, which was so exciting. *Your Show of Shows*, all this sort of thing. The New York comedy, in a way. Brilliant comedy. And so I sort of found my way in it later. And Bob said, "Let's do it. We could do it quickly in New York, shoot it fast," and that sort of stuff. And I said, "Oh, yeah, you're right, let's get back to work." And I was kind of weakened after *Raging Bull*. I had had walking pneumonia, I was a complete wreck... Anyway, I got myself back together and went in to start shooting.

And I realized it was really difficult. It was really difficult. Because it was, to say the least, a comedy of manners, which meant it was all about body positions, body language, and framing: medium shots, hardly any camera movement. And that was another thing, too, that I sort of reacted against in the late '70s. Throughout the whole '70s, every other film—and they are beautiful, some of the great films that were made then—but every time the critics would say, "Oh, it's the most beautiful thing ever made. You could take a frame of this and put it on the wall," that's enough! Let's just make a picture. Let's go back to 1903. Let's go back to Edwin S. Porter. I said, "Let's take it and just: Medium shot, medium." Does the camera move? Or is the person—what is that person doing? And this was the perfect material for these people to be locked in these frames together, you see, and for Rupert to be invading Jerry Lewis's frame, you know? But it was like I felt like I had my hands tied, it was a real—you know. I felt, ridiculously, that if you aren't flying around with the camera—at that point in time, I was thinking—well then, you're not doing your job. And then I said, "Well, wait a minute now, it has to mean something." (Laughs)

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** *Gangs*: is *Gangs* a narrative piece, like *GoodFellas*, or is it going to be a straight story?

**SCORSESE:** *GoodFellas* you could say it's a narrative; it's a story, *GoodFellas*. But it's not a "normal" narrative from beginning, middle, to end. It basically relies heavily on voiceover, and is sort of like a standup comedy routine, in a way. And with that, it's a device in which visually, you can go anywhere.

So you could do anything you want. But I find *Gangs* harder because it was a straight narrative, a straight story narrative, which begins at a certain point, has a middle, it has an end—to a certain extent. I'm not interested in a lot of plot, but it has a story, a very straight narrative. And I find that, you know, with films that seem deceptively simple, with story... I must say, as you get to see more and more films, and you try to make more and more films, you gain more of a very strong respect for clarity of storytelling with a camera, and clarity of script.

**MASLIN:** Steven Spielberg once said about you, "He has never heard of logic." (Laughs)

**SCORSESE:** Oh, yeah. Probably right. Yeah, yeah. I try, you know, but...

**MASLIN:** One final question.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Yes. You just mentioned voiceover, and I've found your use of voiceover really interesting. I mean, in— well, in *GoodFellas* and particularly in *Casino*, where there's the alternating De Niro character and Pesci... and then, sort of jarringly, for one brief scene, Frank Vincent's character. But in the scene, as I'm recalling, where Pesci, just before he dies, he is actually doing voiceover; and then—I think it's at the time that the bat hits his head...

**SCORSESE:** It stops, yeah.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** ...it cuts off abruptly, which was quite startling. But I'm just wondering, in those films, or in films where you've used voiceover, have you anticipated the use of it at the outset? Or does

it become, finally, a practical way of giving information?

**SCORSESE:** No, actually, as a device from the outset... I always liked voiceover in film; I liked it when I saw films narrated by Sir Cedric Hardwicke, let's say—*The Picture of Dorian Gray* or *The War of the Worlds*, that other one in early one in the early fifties.

And then the idea was to make sound pictures. So sound was just as important to me as the image. And to start pushing the envelope with the sound, pushing the envelope with the voiceover—and overdo it, in a sense. In *Casino*, have it become a kind of drug-fuelled argument on the soundtrack, in a way, which can only be silenced with a bat across the head—what happens to Joe, you see. And that worked.

And particularly then in *The Age of Innocence*, too, the idea of taking sections from the book and just reading—literally, not just reading it, but that was all very, very well structured in the script. In some cases, at first I didn't want to use it and we went back and said, "Oh, this is the best way to use it, because there's so much history here, or there's so much of that." But that's pretty much just helping the audience along, to a certain extent. But in the cases I'm talking about, it was devised way in advance, and as a technique.

**MASLIN:** Are there people in this audience who are interested making films themselves? Yes. What was the best advice anybody ever gave you? Let's close with that.

**SCORSESE:** Well, the thing I've always found is—like we talked about certain projects that go on for years and everything—there's a certain tenacity. You just keep going, no matter what anybody tells you. Whatever they write about you or your parents say, you have just got to keep going. And keep going and hanging on and... You'll find it yourself. You'll find out yourself if you want to do it or not.

I mean, that's what I always say about Cassavetes in *Shadows*, you know, he made it look like we can *all* shoot—ourselves! We can just take cameras and shoot, and it got you to the point where you get there and you're ready to go, and you've planned everything out, and you're looking through the lens

and you realize: "I must be insane! (Laughter) What have I done? They're looking at *me*. So: Okay, I know exactly what to do; let's go!" I mean, it gets you to that point. So some people can do it once or twice or three times and that may be it. It just takes too much concentration, I should, dedication, and it's a dangerous thing, because it's... like *Gangs*, all these years—it's like a disease. No matter what happened, I had to go and follow this picture,

whatever's going to happen to it, I just—you know, money, everything just went.

**MASLIN:** Well, good things are going to happen to it.

**SCORSESE:** I hope. Thank you, everybody.  
(Applause)

**MASLIN:** and happy birthday!

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