

A new book offers behind-the-scenes glimpses from the set of one of the greatest movies ever made. **Andrew Pulver** introduces a selection

Shooting the Godfather



▲ Francis Ford Coppola choreographs Marlon Brando's slide down the front of the car after his character's assassination. Vito Corleone was based on at least two real-life mob bosses: Vito Genovese,

whose activities in the 1950s had done much to bring the mafia to the attention of the authorities, and rival "Luciano family" boss Frank Costello (from whom Brando borrowed Don Vito's husky voice).



▲ Al Pacino playing handball in a break between scenes. From a family of Italian immigrants like the fictional Corleones, Pacino was nearly

replaced after a few days of filming, as studio executives initially thought that his performance was too restrained.



▲ James Caan was wired up to a huge number of explosive blood packs, or squibs, for the scene where his character, Sonny, is gunned down. The 147 squibs were a Hollywood record at the time, and Caan only endured the pain out of face-saving bravado.



▲ Gifts were handed out at the end of production. Brando was given some drums, having hammered the skins since he was a boy. He has said on several occasions that if he hadn't been an actor he would have been a drummer.



▲ During makeup sessions, Coppola (right) would talk through the script with Brando and Pacino (centre). Brando was only 47 when he was cast as Vito Corleone, and had to have considerable "ageing" makeup – including a specially made dental plate to produce Don Vito's trademark puffy cheeks. (He'd stuffed his mouth with orange peel for the audition.)

No one at the studio wanted Brando to play the part: he hadn't had a hit in years, and his previous film, *Queimada*, had been the latest in a string of disasters. Coppola was only allowed to offer Brando the role after establishing that Laurence Olivier was too ill to work. Frank Sinatra also wanted the role, but was turned down.

The *Godfather Family Album* is published by Taschen as a signed limited edition, at £400. An exhibition of Steve Shapiro's images from the book will be on show at Hamiltons Gallery, 13 Carlos Place, London W1, from February 25.