

Photographer reflects on his 'Godfather' images

By Robert K. Elder

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You know his images, if not his name.

Photographer and Chicago resident Steve Schapiro not only designed the movie posters for films as diverse as "Midnight Cowboy," "Par-

enthood" and "Billy Madison"—he's also responsible for some of the most famous production stills from Francis Ford Coppola's "The Godfather" trilogy.

Last month **Taschen** books released a limited edition of Schapiro's "The Godfather Family Album" (\$700, lim-

ited to 1,000 copies).

Here Schapiro—who moved to Chicago in 2004—offers commentary on some of his favorite images among those he shot for "The Godfather" trilogy.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEVE SCHAPIRO



Marlon Brando during filming of the wedding, "The Godfather," 1972

"Brando loved kids, and they loved him. One of his great joys was talking and kidding around with them. During the filming of the famous wedding sequence in "The Godfather," there was plenty of down time. On that day, Brando probably spent more time with these two little girls in their wedding party dresses than with some of the other cast members. Here, one of them brings him a glass of water. I was particularly struck by Brando's great humanity and warmth, which I saw displayed in this way. Playing Don Vito Corleone, he still had time for these little girls who adored him."

**Pacino and De Niro,
"The Godfather:
Part II," 1974**

"During the filming ... I talked Al Pacino and Robert De Niro into posing together. There is naturally no part in any of the 'Godfather' films where this could actually have happened since De Niro, as the young Vito Corleone, had barely fathered Michael (his son, played by the adult Pacino). I felt this was a great coup to capture these two great American actors in one photograph."



**Hyman Roth, played by Lee Strasberg, returns to America,
"The Godfather: Part II"**

"This shot is a replica of the famous sequence of Lee Harvey Oswald being shot by Jack Ruby in 1963 after the Kennedy assassination in Dallas. ... By shooting the sequence in this way, Coppola brought back memories which reverberate and intensify his film. I was happy that I caught the moment at the peak of action as if I had covered the original 1963 shooting, which became a strong emotional image."