So they worked on the accents and Pacino's accent is not any accent found in nature,

but you know, it's the characters. It's a character.

This is the Lawyers, Guns, and Money podcast.

[MUSIC]

Hi, everybody. Welcome to the Lawyers, Guns, and Money podcast.

And I'm very excited for the second time to welcome friend of the blog, Glenn Kenny,

who has a new book called The World Is Yours, The Story of Scarface.

And there's a lot actually to be released on video, but I still like to hold it.

I like to go on a talk show.

And another terrific book, a follow up to his book, Mad Men, The Story of Good Fellas.

And this is really a terrific book. And it was also fun because in preparation for this,

I rewatched both Scarfaces and Blowout and the HBO documentary about Di Palma,

an essentially extended interview, which is fascinating.

But another thing that I read in preparation, which may be a good place to start, is Julie

Solomon's fantastic book about making of the bonfire of the band of bandages, which actually

she just released a podcast about that as well with some updated interviews, which is really

fascinating. And so obviously, that was a book about a movie that turned out to be a disaster

rather than a movie that's had such a long and long standing cultural impact. One really thing

that interested me about the book is that De Palma, like most people in the movie, actually came off

relatively well. It wasn't like Final Cut where, you know, where kind of Chaminos of Ellen is that

it was really a story about how intelligent, hardworking professionals could just get involved

in a project that goes off the rails. And so obviously, you know, your book is about a project

that turned out much better in the end, but in some ways had as much or more, you know, sort of

of chaos and internal tension became out well.

So, you know, so I know obviously you reference

the Devil's Candy in your book.

So, you know, I was wondering if that was on your mind

at all to sort of, you know, be another book

about a De Palma project and one that obviously

is very different in terms of how it would come out.

And if that was on your mind at all as you wrote this.

- I didn't think of the Devil's Candy

while I was writing this book for a variety of reasons.

I mean, obviously I didn't think of it at a certain point

because I referenced it in the book

and I talk about Julie's way of looking at "Topama"

during the process of the making of that film

that was a disappointment or a disaster

depending on how you look at it.

But it didn't occur to me because,

because I mean, I was writing about a film

that was successful for one thing.

It was successful aesthetically,

it was successful financially,

but also because I was just sort of getting myself

out of a jam with the book that I had been contracted

to write in the first place,

which had been a book about Sleepless in Seattle.

I had some rather gratifying success with "Made Men,"

the story of Goodfellas.

And as such, my editor at Hanover Square Press,

Peter Joseph wanted a follow-up.

And I thought, being a smart guy,

that I'd do something counterintuitive,

that I would do--

oh, I don't want to do another gangster movie.

I don't want to do another genre movie.

I'll do "Sleepless in Seattle."

The 30th anniversary is coming up.

It has an interesting connection to "Goodfellas,"

because Nick Pellegi was married to Nora Efron, the writer

in "Sleepless in Seattle."

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

So that was the idea.

And I worked on that for about six months

and it was a disaster for various reasons.

I actually just put up on my blog a chapter from the book,

the abandoned book, a chapter about the two forebears

of the movie, Leo McCarry's two films,

Love Affair and Affair to Remember.

But it just, it was just,

every level you could possibly imagine

this project was a disaster.

So I was in a bit of a jam and I had a contract,

I had gotten money and all sorts of things.

So I needed to switch things up

and I had a conference with my editor and I said,

"Let's do something else."

And this something else is something that I had talked

about doing a book about many, many years ago,

20 years ago almost, a Scarface book.

And they said, "Okay, go ahead."

So that was the first thing on my mind.

I wasn't thinking about any other book, except, you know,

I was thinking of how to save my skin rather than, you know,

competing with Julie's, with Solomon's amazing book.

And I corresponded with her during the writing of the book

because, well, during the editing of the book,

because I needed permissions from the various authors

of the stuff I was courting from.

and Julie very kindly gave me permission and some nice words.

So I wasn't really thinking about that book.

I was thinking how I was going to do a book about Scarface.

But obviously it did occur to me during the writing

of the book because the two films are not usually far apart.

And the movies have to be looked at.

De Palma's career is really interesting.

His friends are, you know, he's best friends with Scorsese, with Lucas, with Spielberg.

These are, you know, these are his guys, so to speak.

But his career has not been like any of them.

And one reason his career has not been like any of them is that he doesn't, he hasn't

used his he hasn't used his status, you know, in Hollywood, so to speak, he hasn't used it as any

kind of stepping stone to being a producer or a mogul. You know, Lucas started Lucas films

and Spielberg started DreamWorks. And score says he has his own production company,

Cecilia, which does a lot of his which does his films and gets behind a bunch of films that he

feels worthy. De Palma never did that. De Palma never did, you know, I'm going to be a producer,

I'm going to do other things. And he only did his own films. And they've either been his own

conception or an assignment. And they've always been with studios. So he has a sort of different

trajectory and he has a different way of working. And I find that way of working really, really

interesting. And the thing about Scarface is that it was not one of his own personal ideas.

at this period in time, Nor was Bonfire the Vanity with one of his personal ideas either.

At this period in time, he had done several films which were his own conception,

and some of them had not done well commercially. So he feels both in terms of business and in terms

of his own personal philosophy, that it's important for a director to vary his output, to do things

that he wants to do, but also to do things that come to him as assignments or ideas that he hasn't

generated because it's just a token of professionalism. So Scarface was that. Scarface was not something

he wanted to do. I mean, he eventually, he wanted to do it for several reasons. He got paid reasonably

well and there was some more money in it for him if the film became a hit. But it was a project that

that came to him through Martin Bregman,

the producer and Al Pacino, the star.

And to a large extent,

Di Palma worked at their pleasure.

And we go into this in this book,

and one of the reasons the movie took so long to make

is because Martin Bregman was going to let his star,

his guy, Al Pacino, who he had known for many, many years

and had a very varied relationship with,

with that he was going to let Al have his head, so to speak, and do as many takes as he needed for

as many takes as he saw fit in order to find this character. That was one thing that drove

the studio people crazy, but that De Palma himself knew was kind of in the cards.

So, you know, he's happy to not happy because by the end of the film,

he was pretty fed up.

There's a great bit in Oliver Stone's memoir Chasing the Light,

where they finished principal photography and Oliver Stone says to Brian De Palma,

well, hey, you're going to the wrap party?

And he says, no, I'm not going to the wrap party.

I never want to see any of these fucking people for the rest of my life,

which is a very Brian De Palma-esque thing to say.

We wouldn't see those people again.

and they would actually reunite for another film, Carlito's Away.

But that was, you know, the stars had to align for Carlito's Way.

Every one of the players in that triangle, Di Palma, Gregorin and Pacino,

had to have gotten into not some kind of trouble, but

got into a situation where it became attractive and mutually beneficial for

them to collaborate again. And from all accounts,

Carlito's way went rather more smoothly than Scarface.

And I believe if you get to Palm on a certain day of the week and ask him what he thinks

his best film is, that will be not necessarily his personal favorite, but the one he feels

he really just accomplished what he set out to do from Sim to Stern.

Carlito's way is that film.

And also interesting that he'd work with Sean Penn again, given that apparently his relationship

on Casualism War was not great either.

- You know, Brian DePalma is an interesting guy.

He got, you know, I was introduced to him through Jay Cox,

who's been a friend of his for a long time.

And I talk about their friendship in the book.

- Scorsese collaborator, right?

- Jay is a friend of Martin Scorsese as well.

And, you know, Jay has amazing stories

of his time with these directors.

And I sometimes ask him, why haven't you written a book?

Elise says, well, you know, I think part of the condition of my friendship with

these guys is that I don't write about.

So fair enough.

Um, but, um, Jay and Brian go back.

Uh, I think Jay and Brian met before, uh, before, um, yeah, Jay and Brian met a

little after score says a few years after Scorsese and Jay met, Jay met

Scorsese in 1960, when Jay had met Scorsese and Stanley Kubrick within about two months

of each other, when Marty was at NYU and Stanley Kubrick was just finishing 2001 Space Odyssey.

So that doesn't happen too often in life.

But he met Brian a couple of years later in LA.

They became great friends and they became collaborators.

worked on the script for Mission Impossible. He did the narration for the documentary segment

and Sisters about Siamese twins. So yeah, so he was able to introduce me to Brian and I got two

good interviews with Brian. I could have gotten more or I should have gotten more maybe, but

Brian was interesting to talk to a really smart guy. He doesn't suffer fools well. I felt a little

more on guard talking to him than I've felt talking to Scorsese, who I kind of have a

long standing professional relationship with going back to 1989, when I drew him for the

first time. Brian, I hadn't met before. Whereas Scorsese and I now have a real, you know,

we don't talk often, but we have a rapport. With DiPommo, I'm sort of like a little more

guarded because I'm like, I don't want him to shut me down. He has nothing to, you know,

he's unlike, unlike Scorsese who likes to put forth a relatively, you know, you're not

what it's not quite a funcular, but he's a valuable guy and he likes talking to people.

And Brian, I think is a little more selective in terms of people he likes talking to, let's

put it that way. So I was a little on my guard about it, but it worked out pretty well. And

I got some good stuff from him.

And I think what happened during the process

of writing the book is that I just felt,

the more and more I found out

about the process of this film,

the more I really took his side.

What surprised me when I looked at the book as a whole,

once it was done,

was that I'm really siding with De Palma throughout,

for what it's worth.

>> Yeah, which again, I think is good.

Like actually how the Devil's Candy comes out too interestingly,

despite the very different trajectory of the movie.

So I think it's interesting to go back to where De Palma was.

So obviously, he just finished Blowout,

a truly great movie that unfortunately bombed at the box office.

Which I think it was sort of one reason he may have not wanted his own project,

is that kind of to come off that.

What I found really fascinating is that he had spent about a year trying to

develop Prince of the City, you know, a story about corruption, the NYPD, and Sidney Lumet

had actually been trying to develop Scarface. And that's right. And it's so hard to imagine now,

because Prince of the City seems like such a quintessential Lumet movie and Scarface,

such an incredible Lumet, and those two directors switching. Kind of fascinating too, but, you know,

it's sort of hard to imagine. So that's kind of been given his druthers,

DiPama would still prefer to have done Prince of the City. He was really interested in the character

Chiello, turning to Bob Lucci, fictionalized. He loved this guy's kind of car salesman

affect. And I think DiPama's vision of it would have been a little more blackly comic than

perhaps what we get in the in the Lumet film, which is much more dire and serious.

But yeah, they had been working on this true story for a while, Prince of the

City, about a corrupt cop who then kind of like, you know, testifies about the

corruption, the rampant corruption of the police department.

You know, unlike Serbico, Lumez's other corrupt cop movie with Al Pacino, this was not a film

about, you know, Serbico was very, was almost sanely in his purity. The character in Prince

of the City is a corrupt cop who kind of gets cornered into giving up his fellow officers.

that's a much different dynamic. And so, you know, there's a, but they had been working on this for

a while, Dapama and David Rabe, the playwright with whom Dapama had written Casualties of War,

speaking of Sean Penn movies. And Dapama and Rabe had a really great rapport. And everybody's

recollection of this project is different. Dapama recollects being approached to do a

a Scarface film while he was working with David Rabe. And

there the idea was to do it in the 1930s. David Rabe says he

left the project after the milieu had been changed to Miami

because he said he didn't know that milieu he didn't want to

learn about it. But in other chronologies, you know, it's

Lumet who comes up with the idea of sending it in Cuba and the

cocaine milieu. So Rabe and De Palma would have been off it by

then anyway. This is the thing about writing these kind of

histories, you know, because a lot of this stuff just isn't

written down anywhere. So who knows that but the but the point

was that it was the suggestions to set it in Miami during the

cocaine and in the cocaine trade in Miami in this period did come

from someone and it was set down and then Oliver, it was

determined that Oliver Stone do the script. And it was that

Oliver Stone's script that Di Palma was approached with several years later after him and Ray

didn't do a 1930s version of the film that was presented to Di Palma and impressed him

enough that he said, and he will say this throughout my talking to him and other interviews

too, that his main brief while shooting the film is that he wanted to honor Stone's script.

thought Stone's script was really good and he wanted to film it.

Yeah, and I think that sort of setting it in Miami, I think, was really inspired to

just sort of completely just remake Scarface in the same era.

I just don't think would have been nearly as interesting.

Now, one thing you point out, which I had no idea, is that Stone actually, in researching

the movie, faced a lot of legitimate physical peril, and the production basically got run

out of Miami, that they were able to go back and do some location shots.

basically the boot and it doesn't feel like it at all.

It's really one of the many brilliant things

about the direction is that it feels like

it was all shot in Miami, but actually it mostly wasn't

literally because of the idea that the film cast a bad light

on the Cuban community there.

Again, very much parallels to the issues

with the Copa had filming,

the Godfather having to make all those deals with New York.

Well, I found that I didn't know about that.

I thought that was one of the more fascinating parts of the book.

Yeah, I mean, the objections to the Godfather were not put in such a violent way as the objections

to carpet. And we're more along the lines of almost sort of embezzlement. Oh, you want to

shoot a movie about the mafia in New York? Hey, pay me. But in Miami, there was objection,

And not just from the law-abiding folks of the town, but also the drug interests themselves

were not too thrilled about being portrayed.

So they were kind of doubly screwed.

And as DePalma put it, having to get up in the morning and have a guy with an Uzi by

your bed style protecting you is no way to go about doing creative work.

So that was a real problem.

So they moved the-- they picked up some stuff in Miami.

They went back after the principal photography was completed.

They went back in kind of a stealth fashion and did about 10 days shooting there.

So there was a good amount of Miami there.

Certainly the whole business in the motel, the exteriors for the chainsaw scene, they

needed to be in Miami.

they needed that kind of art deco architecture and so on and so forth.

A lot of the other stuff could be doubled in Santa Barbara, not L.A.,

but Santa Barbara for sure, especially the Bolivia stuff.

So, you know, they made do movies are contrived, you know,

as much as we are acclimated to films that have a certain kind of location

integrity, you never really know because they can do they can do these things so

how they can simulate these things so well that, you know,

they're meant to fool you.

Their whole point of movies is to fool you.

So, you know, that worked out pretty well.

It was kind of a pain.

And it was one of the things that contributed to the,

to the, to the expense and the, the time,

the time factor being elongated.

- Yeah, and you know, Shiko, yeah,

there's so many memorable and just being able to watch

the movie and the pleasure, you know,

having seen it many times, the pleasure of going from the confrontation with Lopez to

the world is yours on the blimp to the famous scene of Sosa and Tony laughing at each other.

This, I've been out to it a million times. I'm just like, man, DePaul was a master, like Jesus.

But the most famous scene in the movie is obviously the chainsaw scene, which is one

one of the things that got a lot of competition,

the ratings folks.

And as De Palma says, you see, no,

the violence is entirely left up to the viewer's imagination.

Like that's one of the fascinating things about it

is that other than the blood,

which is obviously the best way of doing it.

You know, so it's sort of,

but just sort of everything about that shot,

you know, sort of despite, you know,

being implicitly gory just sort of shows

how thoughtful De Palma is, you know,

and all the cross cuts inside and outside

with Steven Bauer flirting with Warren over Wallace.

- Yeah, no.

- It's just amazing.

- I mean, he really judges the whole thing beautifully.

And in the book, I talk about how when I saw the film

for the first time, I was in my early twenties

and I had, you know, I was dumb.

And I had, you know, I had made a casual study of DuPomme

as a fan of his work.

And during the chainsaw scene, I'm thinking,

well, why isn't he doing this famous split screen stuff?

But of course, his famous split screen stuff

would not have made any sense

because the whole point of going outside

and watching Manny, you know, just sort of blithely flirt

with his blonde and a bikini is to get your tension going

and say, get in there, you idiot, you know,

which is not going to, that's not going to be your reaction

if you're watching two things happening

at once in split screen.

The other thing that's De Palma does,

and I didn't put this in the book, and I should have,

maybe in the paperback I can add it in,

But there's a brilliant little visual addition in the scene that adds to your attention,

which is the fact that when they're outside, the camera is on a crane and it swoops down

from an outdoor view of the living room window and then swoops down to the car where Manny

is sitting there talking to this girl, little bikini, leopard, a woman who disappeared and

was never seen again a couple of years after that. That's a whole other story. Tammy leopard.

There's a guy on the sidewalk on a walker who's moving very, very slowly.

And that's kind of a subliminal cue for you in terms of your feeling of hurry the hell up.

Not only is he sitting in a car not doing what he's supposed to and his buddy's going to get

chainsaw to death, but that guy's going too slow too. And that's the kind of little, you know,

visual detail that that only a really, you know, inspired accomplished director like

to Pama would think of. Yeah, and before that, we definitely want to talk about Al,

who unfortunately weren't able to interview.

But I mean, another thing that struck me with this movie

is just the incredible treasure trove

of great New York character actors.

You know, of course we have, you know,

two who end up playing major roles in Breaking Bad.

I love Harris Eulon who played Mal,

who also played one of the great sleazy academics

of all time, on "Lord and Order."

I almost wish you could have gotten more of him,

just really splendid performance.

- He's super old now,

and I wasn't able to get a hold of him,

but he's someone I wish I could have talked to.

I wish I could have talked to Bob Lozier too, but he's no longer with us.

Um, and, uh, yeah, that guy, um,

the guy who's in all the Darren Aronofsky's movies to Michael, um,

uh, so they want to play.

Go play swarms. Yeah. Yeah. Um, he's,

he's an amazing New York character actor who's also in one of the most, uh,

well-known porno films of the 70s, the opening of Misty Beethoven, albeit not in a actual

pornographic role. And there's Mark Margolis, that's him. There's Paul.

Oh, F. Murray Abraham. Oh, Mark Margolis.

F. Murray Abraham in a very short but very coked up role. Miriam Colon.

Ending up out of an helicopter.

Tom Montana, who's played by Miriam Colon, who played Brando's mother in One-Eyed Jack's.

Amazing. Yeah, fantastic casting. Paul Schenari Sosa, he was born in Wisconsin. So,

future Loretta, sweet husband, Dennis Hollihan is the banker. Yeah, I mean, it's it's stuff. And

of course, Richard Belzer, who barely survives his own nightclub scene. But yeah, it's, it's, it's,

it's, it's, it's, it's a really well cast kind of thing. You know, all of the Thomas movies have

pretty great supporting actors. My favorite is Dennis Franz, you know, who's a, you know,

get your friend Ted from in town and down, get him in town and downtown and in here from

which we'll call it body dump. No, not body double. I'm dressed. Oh, and he's involved

in France's voices in the beginning of, of, of Scarface. He's one of the guys, his voice

is dubbed in as one of the guys interrogating Tony because DePano didn't like the vocal

performance of two actors playing the interrogator. So he had his buddy Dennis Franz and
Charles

Durning come in and dub them in for an exchange for they each got a case of very good wine.

Wow. That's a great story to its own right. That's a preview again, why PD blew to like

I don't blame a word of that shit.

So Glenn, you'll have to forgive me for, I have just recently rewatched the movie, but

I haven't had the opportunity to read the book.

And I'm sure you talked about this, but I mean, you mentioned earlier how exhausted

everyone was by the production of this film.

And I'm sure you go into that a lot.

Was this, I mean, one of the things that occurred to me as I was doing my rewatch this morning

is how exhausted all of the actors seemed

by the end of the movie, right?

But simply by the fact that Tony is just continuously

coped up and is obviously not slept,

and Michelle is the same way.

I mean, was this intended?

Was this an artifact of the shoot being difficult

and the actors being sort of on edge towards the end?

Or was this much more intentionally constructed

in terms of De Palma thinking about these people

are winding down in terms of their ability

to actually do stuff in this world.

- No, I think that was what DiPama's conception was.

The film was not shot sequence,

although the final shootout was done more towards the end

of the shoot than the beginning.

And then there were reshoots and so on

that had to be conducted.

But yeah, no, I think this is the conception of DiPama

and certainly to a certain extent Pacino,

who really thought deeply about everything he did

and also constructed a series of variants on what he did

to the extent that the film's editors told me

that they could have done seven separate,

discrete Tony Montana characterizations

based on the amount of takes

and different interpretations that Pacino did.

So, in addition to being, I think,

something that the actors had to think through,

it's also the result of the film's editing

that we get that, you know, because they, they need to, they, it was,

it was Jerry Greenberg and David Ray,

who had the responsibility of creating all these,

all these takes that were printed and all of this footage that they had to work

with. And they had the responsibility of creating a coherent through line,

not just of the narrative, but of the characterization.

So they may take a little more credit for that than even any, and I mean,

editors deserve a lot of credit. That's where the film is made.

But in this case, they may deserve even more credit

because they were creating a continuum,

an emotional continuum that from a material

where they have a lot of different options.

- And Pacino literally burned his hand on a gun barrel

in the last scene, right?

Which both I think added to that characterization,

but also created a lot of challenges for the public shooting.

- He gave the Palma a chance to shoot

for a few days without him,

which I won't be so presumptuous to say

that was a relief for DiPama,

but it did let DiPama have a lot of fun

in terms of just going to town on the final shoot-out scenes,

the extent that Stone himself thought

it was a little too much.

He says, "I've been in Vietnam,

and this isn't really how it works."

And DiPama's like, "It's a movie, I don't care.

And I'm gonna make it exciting."

So all these long hair guys going over the fence and so on,

that was all added during that time

that, you know, Dopama now had to wait for his leading man to get out of the hospital,

you know, which is tense, but also he's also not doing take after take with his leading

man anymore.

So I imagine that there was some sort of, there were mixed emotions and not all of them

were negative.

And you were, and, you know, I'm a big fan of Oliver Stone who we'll come back to, but

To put it delicately, I would say, at the beginning of this time, multidimensional female

characters were not necessarily his forte.

It was a bit of a challenging role for the incomparable Michelle Pfeiffer, but she still

makes an impression.

That must have been a fascinating conversation or set of conversations as well.

Actually, I think Stone's conception of the part was rather different.

And I didn't go through the script to, you know, there's the version of the script that

I have is an earlier version than what was shot.

And it has some scenes that never made it to the films, including a scene where Manny

and Tony are in Freedom Town and they're having movie night and they watched the treasure

of the Sierra Madre together.

a bit of interesting foreshadowing.

Stone wanted Glenn Close to play Elvira.

So that's a very different sort of thing than,

there's a very different kind of vibe

than what you, than Michelle Pfeiffer is going to,

21 year old or 22 year old Michelle Pfeiffer

is going to bring to the character.

So I'm not saying he wanted the character

to be more substantive, but certainly more, I mean, just in terms of their physicality,

Glenn Close is someone who's not waif-like. And there's an age difference, too. Glenn

Glencose was born in 1947 and Michelle Pfeiffer was born in 1958.

So there's a 10 year age issue.

So we're talking about a character who's going to come across much, much, much differently.

But Stone's idea for Glencose wasn't taken seriously from the very beginning.

And that's for a very specific reason is that Marty Bregman, the producer, would have loved in a way to have cast his wife, Cornelia Sharp, in the role. But she wasn't having it anymore because Bregman's efforts to make her into a big star had not paid off and she was kind of getting tired of it. And in fact, when I asked to talk to her for this book, she's like, she's like, I'd rather not relive those times. Fair enough. But Michelle Pfeiffer,

If you look at pictures of Cornelius Sharpe and you look at pictures of Michelle Pfeiffer,

you think, "Oh, there you go.

They're very, very, very much the same type."

So that was what Bergman was looking for.

I mean, he's...

It's interesting when you've got a guy like that in this sort of situation because we talk about directors following their obsessions, following their whims.

There's a guy who really can follow his whims and obsessions in a very definite way and impose them on his productions.

So that's what he did.

You know, let him close.

No, get out of here.

Michelle Pfeiffer, that's what I like.

And Pfeiffer was a little younger than Cornelius Sharp, too.

So it's the Marty Bregman aesthetic at work.

And that was what got her the role.

And she was not, as she has said, she was not-- and Corinna the Sharp is also a good

10 years older than Michelle Pfeiffer.

So she didn't feel up to it.

She didn't feel competent about it.

She said there was never a moment in the shooting of the film that she wasn't terrified, that

She was going to blow it.

And there's only, you know, and she was sort of, you know, if you look at Pfeiffer's subsequent

career, she has a lot of natural warmth as an actor.

And that was all very deliberately tamped down.

She was told not to use it.

The mantra after every take was, "Did you smile?"

No.

Good.

this was allowed to slide was a bit of improvisation that Pacino did, where Tony Montana goes to kiss

her while she's still involved with Frank. And she very roughly rejects him and says very coldly,

I don't fuck around with the help.

And Tony says, oh, you play that way, you know?

And and then they kind of try and sort of settle back into,

you know, their positions, because he still has to drive her around in his

Cadillac that she has such a strong ability to.

But he takes off her hat and puts it on. And,

you know, he looks like an idiot.

And she laughs because it's funny.

And that was that was an improvisation that Pacino did.

And in a sense, Pfeiffer's breaking character there.

But it's it's it's an interesting moment.

It's the only kind of moment of, you know, these these people end up married

and have this, you know, horrible marriage and it's just a nightmare throughout.

So it's a brief moment of respite for these characters, where you see,

you know, to a certain extent why they might find each other's company

tolerable under certain circumstances.

I want to I want to interject very briefly here.

So last night I was watching this.

I was watching this with my with my 15 year old daughters, which I think

we can question the wisdom of overall.

But one of the biggest points was she obviously hates him.

Why are they even talking?

And I had to go through and explain.

And that scene was actually the only one that like they were able to watch and say,

Oh, well, I guess there is sort of some sort of level of flirtation going on between these

two people that conveys some sort of interest on her on her level for him, but they were

both very much. Why is she even talking to him? Right? She hates him.

Oh, the rationale coming from Pfeiffer herself is rather grim, which is she's an addict.

He's her supplier. Simple as that.

And given that I rushed and she's the one of course who says don't get high, you know the rules

here on your own supply and yet that's uh

It's clear that's what she's also the only one in the movie

Who doesn't meet a violent death?

She leaves and she stays gone. So who knows?

She could have gone to rehab now works with the underprivileged children. I don't know

but uh, you know, I mean

I mean weirder things have happened but um

Yeah, so she's the only one who doesn't get kind of bisected by machine gunfire by the end of the movie.

That's not nothing.

No, definitely not.

It's also interesting that, and of course, as you say, De Palma was somebody who took writers very seriously and really made an honest effort to honor Stone's script, which is obviously overall very good.

There was obviously tension between them on the set.

Obviously, Stone was an aspirational director,

and at times, De Palma had to put his foot down.

I'm the director here.

But I don't get the sense that it was in a meeting.

I think he understood Stone's ambitions,

but that's sort of interesting as well,

that Stone obviously had his own vision,

and there were times when you couldn't really help

communicating that to actors when he was on set.

I thought that was fascinating as well.

sort of figure these two very strong personalities.

- Don wanted to be direct.

He'd already directed, he'd made two films.

He made Seizure and the Hand, both horror films.

And he had this weird relationship with Martin Bregman

because Martin Bregman was one of several producers

who had sort of dangled the carrot

of maybe I'm gonna make platoon,

which was Oliver's calling card script as a young man,

and then never did make platoon.

And, you know, Bregman would say to Stone, well, you know, you

directed these two horror films that were flops, and this movie

is going to a guy who's directed horror films that have made

money. They had a weird, you know, if you know about Stone's

own biography background, you know, he had the stockbroker

father who he felt like he wanted to rebel from. He joined the army and went to Vietnam,

more or less to spite his dad, which is not something I would do. And his book,

Chasing the Light, is just fantastic. He's very honest and he's very, and he's very much,

he tells his stories with an equanimity that you don't necessarily expect from someone

who's as strong a voice and who's got this kind of sort of a wild man reputation as he does.

It's a really good read. But because he's had, he doesn't necessarily acknowledge this as such

within the text of the book or even when he spoke to me and he gave me a very good, very thorough

and very entertaining interview. I mean, he's a showman even when he's being interviewed,

which can be very advantageous. But, you know, I think his relationship with Bregman is very,

you know, it's very, you know, he looks at Bregman as another kind of father figure.

And when Bregman came to him to do the Scarface script, you know, he wasn't in great shape.

Now, it wasn't just a matter of him being a director of two failed horror movies.

He was a bit strung out in terms of his own addiction to cocaine.

And he saw the assignment to write this as kind of an opportunity to sort of strain himself

out a little bit.

But him being him, he's very funny.

He said, well, I got the assignment to write the script because I was already doing a lot

of drugs at the time.

I was able to go to Bimini and to Miami and hang out with these drug kingpins.

It's great when you're researching that if you won't get high with them, they won't really

tell you what's going on.

So it was kind of advantageous for me to be doing drugs with these guys.

So I did the research under those circumstances and conditions.

And then when it came time to write, I thought I would be probably best to sober up.

And I went to Paris where I knew that these drugs would be harder to get and they were

and I did it.

And then he said to me, then I went back to Hollywood and I was able to do cocaine socially

again.

I didn't get addicted to it, but I was able to do it socially again.

I'm like, good for you.

And you know, who am I to judge?

I don't know.

Who am I to judge?

And this, because this was the early 80s, you know, when cocaine was actually cocaine

as opposed to, you know, pool cue chalk that you would buy in bars many years later.

So good for him, I guess.

But yeah, and I'm sure he doesn't do it now, but you never know.

So what they said about John Entwistle, but.

Yikes.

So also another actor we haven't discussed yet is Mary Lizzard,

Master Antonio and you know, frankly as a you know, that's one part of the original film

I wish could perhaps have been altered did not necessarily

Hold up super well not not no fault of her certainly and then you know, she would obviously go on

To do Scorsese's the color of money among others, but I don't think ever quite became the star that she deserved to be

Yeah, another person who doesn't do you know, I didn't get an interview with her and I felt kind of bad about it

But then when I was researching her, yeah, I went to her, you know, I

I use a lot of, I go to the New York Public Library for Performing Arts a lot and they have

files for every actor in the world in there, of print interviews and so on and so forth.

And she has the thinnest file of anybody. She doesn't do interviews, period. So there's like

one thing from People magazine and so on. So I couldn't get to her and I tried. I tried for a

long time, just as I had tried for De Niro. And, you know, she's not, she doesn't, she

doesn't put herself out a lot. And nobody really, you know, no one can really tell me

why. Everybody loved working with her. Stephen Bauer said he had a, you know, it was, it

was a fine, it was, it was, it was fine. He really enjoyed their rapport and they got

along great, but she didn't bring she didn't bring a lot of drama or insecurity with it

to the set. She didn't seem to have, um, she didn't get rattled. You know, there's one of

the editors was telling me there's some stuff in the raw footage where, um, you know, Pacino

is doing take after take after take. And sometimes he would notice Fifer getting rattled by it.

And that wasn't the case with massed from Tony. She was just sort of able to go along

with it. But yeah, pleasant to work with. Not. But she's very fierce. And it's very,

it's very funny how, how much it's clear that De Palma and Stone really take the subtext

of the Howard Hawks film with the incestuous desire of the brother for sister, which, depending

on who you believe, was either brought to the table by writer Ben Hecht or by Howard

Hawks himself, you know, Howard Hawks saying, well, what about the Borges, you know, then

incest and stuff. But but here, you know, here the subtext is made into text, you know,

she comes in and she's like, fuck me, Tony. And it's like, whoa. And the funny thing is

that Bauer told me that like, that was the one thing that Pacino had trouble with, that he wasn't

going to he wasn't going to betray an incestuous desire for his sister, because that was a bridge

too far. He could kill all these guys, you know, but the incest thing was a bridge too far.

Fortunately, he doesn't need to because, you know, De Palma is a filmmaker and he could just employ

the Kuleshov effect. So in the nightclub scene where you really get that, the strong impression

of his lust for her, all you need are the close-up of his eyes cut to, you know, the guy who she's on

on a date with touching her flank back and forth, back and forth.

And you get like, oh, he's jealous.

And that's all you really need.

You know, he's not just he's not, you know, and maybe Pacino's mind.

He's just outraged that his sister is, you know, partaking in this milieu

that he warned her against.

But the way that to palm of shoots and cuts that sequence is, yeah, he's jealous.

And then by the end, when she's yelling at him, you know, so you want to fuck me,

fuck me, Tony. And Pacino chooses to play that as looking befuddled. And it's fine.

You know, given what he's going through at that point in time, it makes sense for him

to be befuddled. So and it doesn't last too long because the guy comes on the balcony

and kills her. So that was the end of that. But yeah, that was that was, you know, Cora

and Stephen Bauer, that was just too much for him. That's a bridge too far.

It did.

And Bowers quit.

Oh, go ahead.

Well, it did occur to me on rewatching the scene where Tony shoots Manny and she comes down and explains, we were about to surprise you.

That struck a false note with me because it seems to me that these two people who are the closest in the world to Tony Montana should know that this is not a man who's going to enjoy surprises, right?

No.

And why they would try to surprise him with their wedding

struck me as something that didn't quite make sense

in the context of the film.

- Honestly, it's something that Stone inherited

from the original.

I mean, it doesn't quite make sense in the original either.

Although it makes a little more sense

'cause in the original, they're both kind of dumber.

I mean, not to say, not to disparage George Raft

or who plays Chezkin and Andevorzak.

Their characters are a little less worldly

than the ones in, yeah, Andevorzak.

They're a little less worldly

than the ones in Dapama's film.

So it doesn't play quite so really, you thought that?

You know? (laughs)

So yeah, but it does, you know, so yeah.

But again, it's, you know, one thing that struck me while doing the research for the book was that just that how much, how much, you know, stone really hues to the to the original story, the original storyline.

He's very faithful to the original storyline.

As Bregman points out in his own conception of the movie, he wanted it to be operatic.

So basically what, what, what stone script does is that it takes the original story really sticks pretty close to it, but also as this operatic dimension, uh, hyper hyperbole.

So you know, that's, so, so that's just a remnant of that.

They're just staying close to the, uh, to the original as much as they can.

Um, and, uh, you know, and again, Stephen Bowers, interesting cause of course he would go on to, you know, splendidly play a drug kingpin in Breaking Bad and Better Call Saul.

Of course, another aspect is that Bauer actually is Cuban, you know, which brings us to, you know, Al Pacino playing, you know, the playing a Cuban person, which obviously today would be reacted to much differently.

You wouldn't get the yeah, it wouldn't happen.

I mean, what happened is, is there a star that has enough power that they could make make it happen? I don't know. The thing is, it probably wouldn't even come in for discussion.

But he wanted a key. First Pacino wanted a friend of his, Jimmy Hanley, to play Manny.

And I think it was mainly out of his desire to help out a fellow stage. And, you know,

There's a sad story of Jimmy Hanley.

He was a stage actor.

He worked with Pacino in productions of American Buffalo and James Hayden.

I'm sorry, not James Hanley.

James Hayden.

He had a pretty substantial drug addiction, a pretty substantial heroin addiction.

Pacino, who is not, you know, at a certain point in his life, Pacino gave up drinking,

but he was never a drug person.

People sometimes ask me, "Well, they must have been doing a lot of cocaine on the set

of Scarface."

I'm like, "I don't think so."

You know, first of all, you couldn't make it under those conditions.

And secondly, what the hell are you talking about?

You know, both neither DiPama nor Pacino has ever done coke in their lives.

You know, Stone, yes.

Stephen Bauer, yes.

Stephen Bauer's girlfriend at the time, Melanie Griffith, yes.

Stephen brought that experience to bear,

but he also brought fluent Spanish and ability to speak,

you know, with a Cuban accent.

His birth name is Echeveria.

His dad was an airline pilot.

His dad gave him permission to change his name

to a stage name because, in part, because he says,

you know, I get so much hassle over my name

from air traffic controllers that can understand

how people in show business might not even

want to be bothered with it.

So the name that he chose for his stage name,

Bauer is his maternal grandmother,

who is a German immigrant.

We forget that the Cuban population,

the native Cuban population has,

is like that of America, a nation of immigrants,

as well as native born indigenous people.

So yeah, but he has, he told me that he got,

he lived in Malibu with Melanie Griffith

in what he calls a shack.

And when Pacino, when his buddy didn't get the part,

he was just physically wrong for it.

He had blue eyes and fair hair

and he did the screen test with a dye job

and it just wasn't convincing at all.

So once that was determined that it wasn't going to happen,

Pacino was delighted to be working with someone who was an authentic Cuban guy.

And he said, uh, you know,

Steven had a house in Malibu, a shack with Melanie Griffith and who among us

wouldn't be a shack?

That is the lunch.

And Pacino rented a house up the road from there, a much nicer house and told

Steven, you know, I want you to come to my house every day.

we're going to have breakfast together and we're going to work this out.

And what they did was they spent the day together from breakfast on,

and they talked to each other in accents, uh,

Steven's father's accent. And then Pacino put a little spin on it as people,

you know, people are like, Oh, how can he play a Cuban? Well, you know,

his character is not fully Cuban. He says right off the bat, my dad was a Yankee.

So it's a, it's a, it's a, it's a bit of a, um, a meld.

And so they worked on the accents and Pacino's accent is not

any accent found in nature.

It's the characters. It's a characterization. So there you have it.

I mean, I think it's fine. When Carlito's Way came around,

Pacino was playing a Puerto Rican. He's not Puerto Rican either.

Edwin Torres, God bless the man.

one of the greatest people I've ever had the privilege to meet Judge Edwin Torres,

who wrote the books upon which Carlito's Way is based and was the first,

uh, New York state Supreme court justice to have been Puerto Rican born.

He's now 92 years old. I brought him the book a couple of weeks ago.

I love him so much. He's such a great guy and he's a funny, funny man.

He was a very, uh,

noteworthy judge because he grew up among criminals and still to this day,

almost all his friends are criminals, but he was, he was a tough guy.

He was a judge who coined the phrase,

your parole officer hasn't been born yet. Sucker.

Actually. And he said to me, I didn't say sucker. I said, motherfucker.

I'm like, I know you did. Um,

he wrote these books, Carlito's way. And, uh, you know, he wrote the script,

he wrote a script too. And, uh, Bregman said, if we had shot your script,

it would have been a 12 hour movie. And Ed was like, yeah. Um,

But, you know, he was, when Pacino was playing Carlito,

he asked Edwin to help him with dialect and accent.

And they're in the trailer one day up in Spanish Harlem,

and there's a knock on the door,

and one of Edwin's friends,

upon whom many of these characters are based,

a guy named Nicky the Roach,

sat beside the trailer, said,

"How come you got this gambon, this, you know,

this Italian, this wop, playing one of us?"

And Judge Torres said,

'cause he's only the biggest fucking movie star

on the planet.

He slaps the, and that's the end of the discussion.

So nowadays, of course,

being the biggest movie star on the planet is not enough.

And you probably wouldn't even ask anymore,

but that was the end of this now.

I can't, how can I put this?

I can't get too exercised about it.

Acting is acting.

And there are some places where maybe it's in questionable taste to go or ill-advised

for various reasons to go.

But I don't believe, you know, just as I don't believe that a gay man or a gay woman can't

play a cis heterosexual, so I don't believe that a cis heterosexual can't play a gay person.

I think until you're in actual, you know,

real matters of skin color,

you know, I think actors can be actors.

And there's a great movie by the directors,

Siegel and McGahey, called Suture,

in which the black actor, Dennis Haysbert,

and the white actor,

but a white guy in a black, and they play brothers.

And it's not the skin colors never discussed.

It's never mentioned.

It's just, that's it.

This is it.

And that I think, you know, it's a very brilliant film

and you, you know, you just buy it.

You just buy it because of the way it's constructed.

And yeah, it's kind of amazing.

- Well, one of the things that occurred to me

as I was watching it, 'cause I have a friend who is Cuban

and he actually has talked about quite a bit about this,

But in both Di Palma's not exactly his next film,

but in one of his next films, Andy Garcia,

who's a Cuban-American plays quite memorably

an Italian-American and then Garcia again plays

a Cuban-American in a film with Pacino,

like three years after that, right?

So for whatever reason at that time Hollywood did regard

Cubans and Italians as basically interchangeable.

- Yeah, I mean, I don't think Di Palma did.

I think this is a very specific kind of,

It was a very specific kind of casting.

I mean, remember this is a concept,

this was Pacino's concept to begin with.

He didn't necessarily think it was going to be that,

but once he found out, he certainly went into it

with a real, with a lot of gusto.

Similarly, Stephen Bauer showed up in a subsequent

Di Palma movie, the rather undervalued Raising Kane,

where all he had to do, you know, de Palma said to him,

all you have to do is show up and look good.

And there's no ethnicity involved whatsoever.

He just has to be really good looking

and wear clothes really well, you know,

to contrast with the lunatic played

by John Lithgow in that picture.

You know, he's kind of the ideal husband

as opposed to the non-ideal husband.

But yeah, you got, you know, and you got,

yeah, you got Garcia in the "Godfather Part III,"

And he's good in that.

And I mean, Garcia is just great.

Ocean's 12, all that stuff, he's just fantastic.

- I love him in the Ocean.

- Ocean's 11 through 13 as Terry,

a not an ethnic character at all.

So, you know.

- Yeah, I mean, standing for Steve Wynn, obviously.

- But I mean, he plays him,

he plays Terry Bimp with this very

suppressed menace that has an ethnic tinge to it. Like that kind of, when we talk about people,

Italians having tempers, you know, even though he's not specified that way, he seems like that kind

of person. Because he's, you can tell he's kind of like, he doesn't want to get mad, but he'll kill

you, you know, and then, you know, and Pacino, Pacino shows up in Oceans 13 too. It's all happening.

Cinque diementhes. Yeah, so, you know, obviously, this film, as we've talked about, you know,

has a lot of really memorable set pieces, which is obviously one reason it's lasted, you know,

the nightclub scene, the chainsaw sequence, a lot, but, you know, one of my favorite scenes,

which isn't discussed as much is the ordered assassination attempt outside the United Nations.

And that's in that unless I'm forgetting it doesn't really have an analog in the original film,

like my mind kind of wanders a bit, the innovation of the film has been--

That's an excellent point. Tony Comante in Hawks' film has never called upon to

grow a conscience, whereas Tony Montana is. And there is some foreshadowing to that because he's

I love kids. And there's that whole bit at the Fontainebleau where Manny's trying to pick up a

girl. He says, hey, watch my friend. And he's like, I love kids. And weirdly enough, and this is in the

book, in an early draft of the script, and we should all thank God this never actually happened,

but in an early draft of the script, there was a scene where they were going to shoot,

they're going to actually shoot the Mariel boat lift.

They're going to start the movie in Cuba.

They're going to have Tony on the boat.

While they're going over to Miami,

a little kid falls off the boat and Tony jumps in and rescues the kid.

Then you have a totally different character.

- Yeah, right. - It's insane.

Tom Mounts, that's T-H-O-M, Mount,

comes in right before shooting and starting.

He says, "This scene is not going to be shot.

You guys are fucking crazy.

We're not going to Cuba.

We're not shooting on a boat.

If you ever want to like really make a hassle for yourself

as a filmmaker, shoot on a boat.

Don't-- there's a great movie, The Ghost of Peter Sellers,

in which Peter Medak, the director of some really

outstanding British films of the '60s and '70s,

including The Ruling Class with Peter Sellers--

he's Ruling Class with Peter O'Toole, excuse me.

So this whole movie is about how Peter Medak is going to make this pirate movie

with Peter Sellers and how disastrous it is,

not only because Peter Sellers is fucking crazy and he is,

but also because they're shooting it on a boat.

You will never have more trouble in your life if you ever choose to shoot on a

boat on actual water. Um,

you've seen and you've heard many tales about the making of Jaws where it was

very difficult. Um, you know, you can't do it. It's,

you will go insane. Um, who did it and didn't go insane? Roman Polanski.

I mean, Roman Polanski went and that's a whole lot of,

but knife on the border, it shot on a small boat. Um,

but that had to be a real pain in the ass too. Just don't shoot on a boat.

So that was one reason. Also we're not going to Cuba. Also,

it doesn't make any fucking sense for the character that he rescue a kid.

So that went and Oliver Stone is pulling his hair out.

How could you do this to me? But everybody else is sort of like, yay,

we don't have to do this scene.

- And it is kind of a stone-ian twist

that it's when he finally does the right thing

to get some killed,

and you can think of it like sort of Bud Fox,

and David, that's kind of an irony.

But it does it, 'cause it actually makes the character,

frankly, more interesting than the original way.

It doesn't necessarily seem that unreasonable.

- I think it's stronger,

I think it's stronger without the actual Kid Rescue.

I mean, it's just one of those things.

It's also one of those things where like,

It's reflective. It's more reflective. You know, having him rescue a kid is altruism, right? That's not he has nothing to do with altruism.

He's never done anything where he's had to give something up in order to get a result. So Tony Montana's whole thing, he's like, you know, the Woody Allen shark that keeps moving.

keeps moving. He always has to do things. He always it's always

a radical binary. He either wins or dies, right? That's the

whole thing about the chainsaw motel scene. He goes in there

knowing how it could be a possible burn because how can it

not be, but also it's like, well, I'm either gonna walk out

of here triumphant or I'm gonna be dead. And that's it. There's

no alternative for him. So the thing about that scene by the UN

like, you know, he's kind of in a corner relative to having to do something for Sosa, but he's also

like, you know, no, his will is still, his will is still, you know, the thing he goes by. So he's

not going to, you know, yeah, just the indignation, not just the indignation of the lack of morality,

but just sort of like, no, you can't ask me to do this. I'm not doing this. Fuck you. And, you know,

know, and he kills Mark Margolis, who speaks English very well, by the way, his character

is supposed to not understand or speak English, but he's fine. He's a regular in Darren Aronofsky's

films. He's kind of a good luck trucker for Darren Aronofsky. I've never asked Darren

about why that came to be the case, but it is. But yeah, so yeah, that scene is great,

where he's just sort of like, "No, fuck you, man." Yeah, I don't do it. I'm not doing it.

Well, when you just mentioned that he's doing this winner die thing, it immediately made

me think of contemporary American politics.

I wondered how many references are there to Tony Montana's Donald Trump, and I did a quick

Google search and a billion, including De Palma himself.

De Palma himself is giving interviews where he says there is this parallel continuity

between Donald Trump and Tony Montana.

Although Tony Montana is a hell of a lot smarter.

Trump wouldn't give a fuck about killing the kid either.

That ball would go off.

Yeah, yeah.

I mean, look at the way Trump acts around his wife.

You know, are you here?

Who are you? What are you?

You know, yeah, no, I think, you know, Trump has a certain feral cunning.

But I mean, in Scarface, you can actually see Tony thinking every now and then.

Not too often. But when he's with Sosa

And you're doing the math in his head.

So, you know, the below the scenes is really amazing, too.

Yeah. Yeah. He's not dumb.

Whereas whereas all Trump really has is that feral, that feral cunning.

Tony is a lot more calculation in his quiver, so to speak.

And I think I think Tony Montana is by far a smarter guy than Donald Trump.

I still I mean, I still get astonished that this idiot is

is where he is in in life and culture.

you know, it's just, you know, it's not even the matter of, oh, my God,

am I living in a computer simulation?

I feel like I'm living in the bizarro world of DC Comics fame, you know.

But yes, the I have seen the T-shirts with the

with the Tony Montana black and white silhouette and the red

lettering with Trump's face on it.

And I think it's offensive.

insult to Tony Montana.

I like you Tony. There's no lying in you. Nobody said that.

Nobody's ever said that about Donald Trump.

I like you Donald. There's only lying in you.

I remember when I worked at I worked, when I worked at

Premier I was at 1633 Broadway and that was a, I was my,

the guy who was the chairman of the shed who had just shut

down premiere and offered me a job at the website, which I should not have taken.

Amy Bogeye, I liked him, named Jack Cleager.

During our meeting, he gets on the phone and he says, because he's just shut down every magazine that has shed except for Elle, which is going to move to another building, so he's got to talk to the real estate guy about, well, we're not renewing our lease on four floors of real estate.

He says, yeah, I got to talk to Fred Trump, one of Donald's brothers who owned the building.

He says to me, the smart Trump.

Yeah, he's the smart one.

Like, okay.

There had to be one somewhere.

Yeah, but yeah, people think, because people think Donald Trump's some sort of gangster.

Imagine.

So one thing we should, I guess we're getting towards the end here,

but one thing we should mention is the, as I said, the breadth of the resonance.

So, you know, as DePaul puts in the documentary, the movie did, you know,

good commercially, not, not a blockbuster, but a relief after the blog.

It didn't make universal pictures think let's do this again sometime.

Well, it had this second life, you know, first, you know,

obviously getting quoted in seminal albums by Nass and Public Enemy and so on.

and then really getting this incredible resonance among.

- Yeah, the studios didn't care about the hip hop resonance,

but they did care that the home video version

instantly became the biggest selling home video product

of all time.

And that was why they became more enthusiastic

when the idea of Carlito's Way came about, certainly.

But Carlito, you know, so yeah, I mean,

and DiPama didn't expect that.

DiPama doesn't follow hip hop.

He didn't start following hip hop because of the popular,

he's set in his ways.

He did not become a hip hop fan.

And he remains moderately bemused.

Stone too, I mean, it's just not Stone's thing.

These are men of the sixties.

But it did become a huge thing.

And it did, you know, and somebody had a bright idea

of like re-scoring the film with these hip hop songs

that were inspired by Scarface and De Palma.

So smart man has final cut on all his work

or most of his work and said,

no, you can't do that.

I have final cut and you can't do that.

And the score remains sacrosanct.

And that's fine because Maroder's score really is

interesting and innovative and in its own way

kind of groundbreaking.

'Cause it's an orchestral score

done entirely with electronics.

I love especially I love the source, but the most but I think

the most

yeah, the most the most significant has a significant

place in film history as such.

Yeah, I actually think it holds up really well. And also, it's

the less famous of his Debbie Harry collaborations,

- Fresh radish, he had a long time.

- He's got the yayo.

I mean, to DiPoma's credit, I mean,

he uses the music exactly the way he wants to, you know.

Schrader with American Jigolo, you know,

I'm not suggesting there's anything wrong with that,

but he clearly saw "Call Me" as Julian's theme song

for that movie and he was absolutely right to use it

and to make it the opening song

and to have it have that prominence on the soundtrack.

But for DiPoma, you know,

I often wondered to what extent he thought the actual song he uses pushed it to the limit in the middle, not sung by Debbie Harry, but sung by a relatively anonymous, gritty rock singer named Paul Engelhardt, I think.

But that whole scene is, I really thought, and I thought watching this to Paul Engaman, and it was written by George Marauder and Pete Bellott, his usual English language lyricist.

I always saw that as kind of, kind of a Brechtian,

because that whole sequence, that montage plays

like a trailer for the movie,

a trailer that's like an advertisement for itself.

And it represents the only portion of the film

in which anybody's having a good time.

You know, after that, it's all downhill.

You know, he's got, he's pushing to the limit.

He's the king and now he's going to have his downfall.

And I kind of, I kind of, because De Palma is a director

who has some experience in terms of self-awareness in films.

If you look at his beginnings

and even to the use of split screen

is an ostensibly self-aware, self-reflective

kind of film formal elaboration.

I wanted to thought about the Brechtian dimension

of the film, and that's the one thing I felt badly about

in terms of not being able to interview Pacino,

who declined after about a year of negotiation

because he was doing his own book,

which will be out in October, I'm told, called "Sunny Boy."

I wanted to talk about that to Pacino

because Pacino is very well versed in Brecht.

It's one of his passions as a theater actor

and the resistible rise of Humberto.

we as a play that he's done before Caucasian Chalk Circle.

So that was one thing I really wanted to ask him about,

but I didn't get to and that's life.

But, you know, I tried to discuss it with Sylvester Lavay,

George Emerator's co-composer on that.

And he was just like, "Eh, we just like the guy's voice."

You know, that's...

(laughing)

Sometimes that's just what it is.

And that doesn't mean the Brechtian dimension

isn't there in the result, but it doesn't have to be

constructed to be there in order for it to be there.

Critics learn this to a certain extent,

that intentionality is only a certain amount

of what ends up being there.

But then without the intentionality,

it's your limb upon which to go out.

But I felt confident enough to do that.

they're going to do is say, no, it's not Brechtian.

Right.

Yes.

So I guess in conclusion, it's, you know, I guess, interesting to just sort of put, you

know, De Palma's career in a broader context.

And, you know, it would go on again, there's, you know, the masterpiece that didn't make

any money in Casualties of War.

You know, there's a couple more commercially, you know, commercially successful, good movie

in The Untouchables.

You know, the Mission Impossible, of course, is a legitimate blockbuster.

But then his career kind of becomes more alienated

from Hollywood, but doesn't.

And one of the things that really struck me

in the documentary was in discussing casualties of war

and redacted, he's not just a post-war,

he's somebody who's sort of really passionate,

sort of about the evils of war.

That was not just a trivial thing for him or,

he's just generally just a really thoughtful guy

who sort of has, you know, likes to do a variety of things,

but likes to do things his way and ends up, you know,

making his last movies in Europe

and kind of outside the American studio system.

It's really a fascinating career in a lot of ways.

- Yeah, I mean, you know,

as a fan, I was always up and down with his work

and writing about him in this book, I just became,

I just think he's great.

I think he's great.

And even the films that I'm not crazy about,

I think are aspiring to things

that are really admirable and interesting.

And I just, you know, like I said,

in the book, I take his side.

And I came away from writing this

with just a real admiration for it.

He's a great artist and he's a serious person.

So, but you know, he's kind of like an unofficial retirement

now hasn't made a film in five years.

I would love to see him make another movie.

I hope circumstances change to the extent

that he can actually make another film.

An American, well, I wanted to make an American film.

I wanted to make an American film.

I don't care where he makes a film, as long as he,

I mean, I think he's still got a lot to say.

He's a couple of years older than Scorsese,

Coppola, you know, he's about the same age as Coppola.

Coppola is 85, Brian's 83, Marty's 81, 82.

Lucas Lucas is still the baby of the group, I think.

Well, he's not going to not be the baby of the group.

It's not like he's going to be.

You know, older all of a sudden, but all these guys are getting up there, I know.

and Francis has a new film out coming out.

I'm very excited to see that.

Yeah, "George is the Baby" at 80.

It's a hell of a thing to say.

But I'd love to see him direct again.

But let's face it.

I mean, these are, I just turned 65 and it's very exciting.

I applied for Medicare.

I just got my Medicare card.

It's very exciting.

I just got diagnosed with tinnitus,

which is also exciting.

I've gone up 65 years without any major sight

or hearing issues.

And this year I had cataract surgery

from a condition that was kind of after a hemorrhage.

So it wasn't an aging issue.

It was a thing that happened.

And then I just found out I have tinnitus.

So 65 years with no sight or hearing issues.

And now I come down with this.

And so you get that feeling of,

Oh, now my body's beginning to betray me. That's great.

But these guys are older still.

And it's it's it's.

So I'm watching these guys who are my, you know,

the luminaries of my adolescence and early adulthood and who remained,

you know, pretty much that throughout the whole of my life.

And they're kind of approaching the twilight of their lives.

I mean, thank God for the advances we have in geriatrics.

I mean, they could go on, you know,

Emmanuel de Oliveira kept making films until he was well past 100.

I don't know. I would love to see these guys go out, all of them go out swinging.

You know? But I'm very happy.

I'm quite happy for what they've delivered so far.

106 was Emmanuel de Oliveira's death date.

So and he was working up until that point, but the industries changed, which is a big thing. I mean,

who are the younger directors who are close to what these guys are doing, you know,

cameras in a different arena? I guess someone like James Gray, you could say.

I really underrated, actually, I love that.

Yeah. And the thing about James is he makes big pictures.

You know, he doesn't, you know, and that's part of the problem.

Because this is not an industry that supports the kind of big pictures that he wants to make.

So, yeah, I mean, I don't want to end by on a note of booming everybody out.

But these kind of movies that we're talking about are not...

They're not here and they're not coming back.

As of course, as he kept saying, you know, just, you know, however many the sore winners of culture keep criticizing him.

It's right that that sort of, you know, he's one of the few people who stalls the cloud to make a, "Killers of the Flower Moon."

But it's, it's, it's, it's becoming a lot more difficult.

That's you know, he has a lot of you know, he has to shoot at his own pace. He has to have his cast go at their own pace

This is why it costs so much money, but he said to me said with the exception of raging bull

Believe it or not

Every film he's made since raging bull

Until the Irishman has been a knockdown drag out fight the whole way

Wow

People don't you know, he's paranoid. I mean he's thinking people don't want to make movies

He makes movies in spite of an industry that doesn't want to make movies. He says I'm you know, I'm of Hollywood

But not in it

Or I'm in Hollywood, but not of it whatever

But you know to Palma to despite having worked with this idea of you know

Not even one for them and one for me, but just sort of like maintaining a professional

You know

method of working, he himself, you know.

Now he's in a period where the industry's

not even making movies that they can assign him, right?

Tough times.

- Yeah, well, that's a great way to end it.

Thank you so much, Glenn.

This was a fantastic conversation

and I really want to recommend to everybody listening,

The World Is Yours, really fantastic book.

just we could, you know, there's many more great stuff.

Exactly. Yeah.

- It's worth picking up.

- Yeah. This is not a substitute.

I want to be very clear,

but thank you so much for joining us, Glenn,

and good luck with the book.

It's really fantastic.

And I loved also the, you know,

that it motivated me to revisit a lot of a diploma,

which is really enjoyable.

So yeah, so thank you very much.

and we definitely look forward to your next project as well.

- Thank you, you bet.

- Sounds great, thank you so much.

- Yeah, this has been the Lawyers, Guns and Money podcast.

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And we will be back again soon.

Thank you so much.

(upbeat music)

- Thank you again for listening

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of the Paranoid Style for supplying,

as our intro and outro music,

I bet my lands and titles,

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[MUSIC]