

Document Citation

Title	Offer Coppola didn't refuse
Author(s)	Dennis Hunt
Source	<i>Los Angeles Times</i>
Date	1992
Type	article
Language	English
Pagination	F26
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	Coppola, Francis Ford (1939), Detroit, Michigan, United States
Film Subjects	The Godfather: part III, Coppola, Francis Ford, 1990 The Godfather: part II, Coppola, Francis Ford, 1974 The Godfather, Coppola, Francis Ford, 1972

HOME TECH VIDEO

An Offer Coppola Didn't Refuse

■ Paramount gets the director to re-edit his three 'Godfathers' into a six-cassette trilogy.

By DENNIS HUNT
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Moviegoers who didn't like "The Godfather Part III" will probably consider this sacrilege, but Francis Ford Coppola, who directed the film and its two predecessors, has interwoven them into a trilogy for home video.

"The Godfather Trilogy 1901-1980," which came out Wednesday, is a nine-hour, 43-minute epic on six cassettes. The cost is steep: \$200. The package includes a leather-bound case, a booklet and a documentary about the making of the films.

The venture began with Paramount. "When 'III' was coming out, we immediately started thinking about this videocassette package," said Hollace Brown, senior vice president of advertising and promotion at Paramount Home Video. "We pitched the idea to Francis, who liked the idea."

Coppola then "went back and re-edited the three movies together." Brown said, "moving things around and making changes here and there to make it flow seamlessly as one piece."

Previously, Coppola edited the original "Godfather" and "Godfather II" together, adding extra footage to create an epic TV miniseries that started from the Cor-

leone family's origins in Italy. That re-editing made sense, since the historical footage in "II" made a logical prelude to the action in the original.

In the new trilogy, "III" benefits from the association with the other, far superior movies. "III" plays far better as part of the trilogy than it does alone. (There is no extra footage in the trilogy beyond the nine new minutes of film that were woven into "III" when it was released on video last fall.)

At the moment, Brown said, there are no plans to put the trilogy on TV as a miniseries. But that could happen eventually since, at \$200, sales will undoubtedly be limited to hard-core "Godfather" buffs.

The booklet in the package contains 28 pages of photos and previously unreleased "Godfather"-related materials, such as storyboard sketches and screenplay drafts. But the 73-minute documentary about the making of all three movies isn't new. It's "The Godfather Family: A Look Inside," originally a cable-TV special that was previously available as part of a video set including the three individual movies. The documentary has never been sold separately.

Paramount is marketing another package, "The Godfather Collection," which includes three separate films for \$90—without the documentary. They can also be purchased separately at \$30 each. This is the first time that "III," which sold at about \$100, is priced for the sales market.

The trilogy is available on video

only, for now. In December, Pioneer will release it on laser disc at \$200. That package will include the booklet but not the documentary.