

FRED ROOS CASTING & PRODUCTION ARCHIVE

THE DAWN OF NEW HOLLYWOOD

THE MANHATTAN RARE BOOK COMPANY, ABAA, ILAB

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An extensive archive of casting and production materials, spanning six decades of American filmmaking.

1960s-2023

OVERVIEW

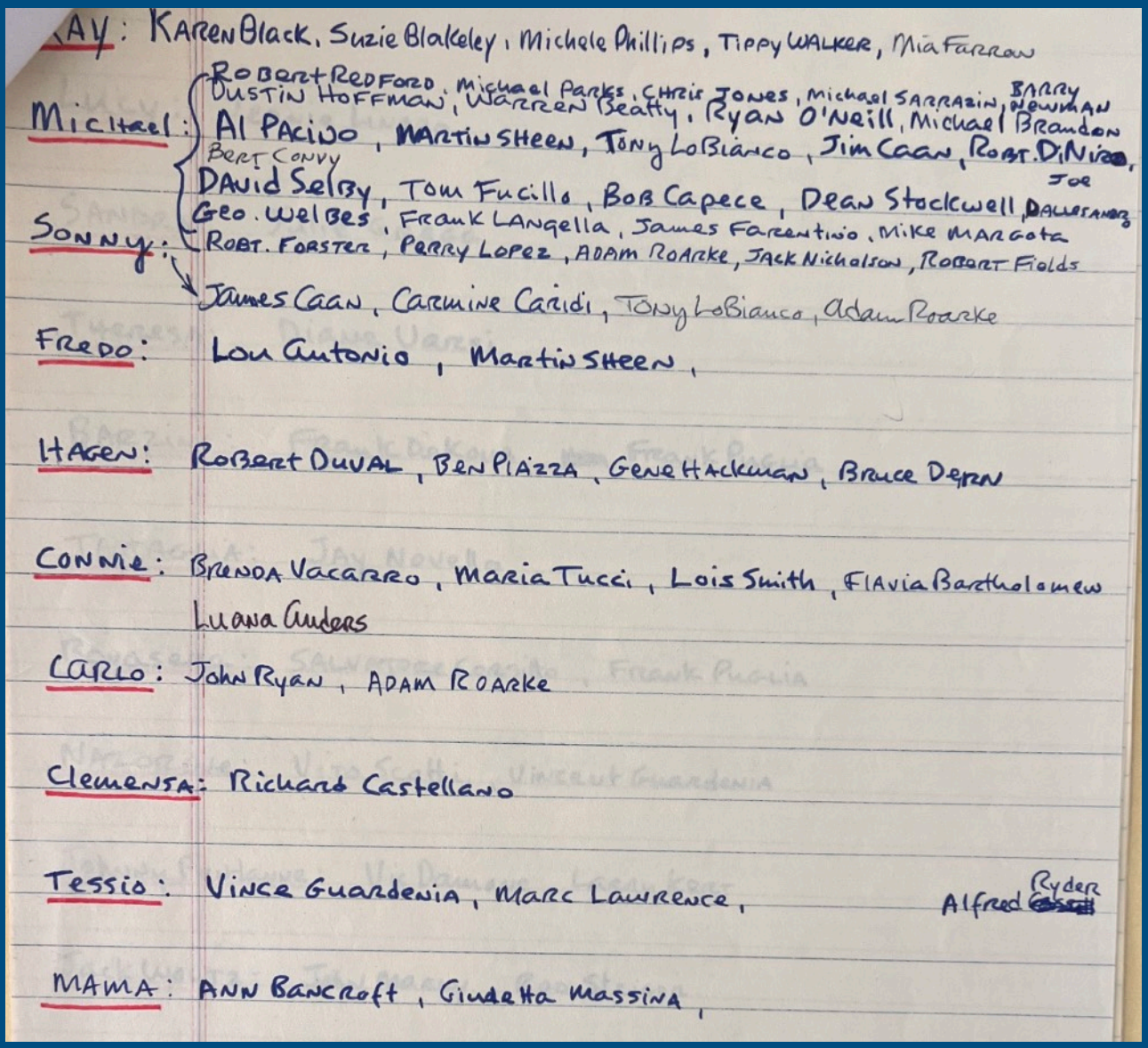
A comprehensive working archive documenting the casting and production processes of Fred Roos, spanning more than six transformative decades of American filmmaking.

The archive comprises over 4,750 pages and approximately 1,450 discrete objects, preserved in six banker boxes.

At its core, the archive documents the work of one of the most influential casting directors and producers of the New Hollywood era. Roos played a central role in identifying and shaping the careers of actors who would come to define American cinema, and his working papers capture that process at a granular level: not as retrospective narrative, but as it unfolded—tentatively, iteratively, and often unpredictably.

While the archive is anchored in casting, one of its defining characteristics is the absence of any clear boundary between casting decisions and broader creative and production concerns. Throughout the material, questions of actor selection are inseparable from issues of story development, financing, scheduling, and overall production strategy. This reflects Fred Roos's role not only as a casting director, but as a producer operating at the center of the filmmaking process.

This integration is most clearly demonstrated in the extensive body of material relating to *The Godfather Part II,* for which Roos received the Academy Award for Best Picture as a producer. *The Godfather Part II* files—comprising approximately one quarter of the archive—extend well beyond casting lists to include production memoranda, logistical planning documents, and detailed notes from Roos to Francis Ford Coppola addressing story structure, character motivation, and narrative coherence. In these materials, casting emerges as one element within a larger, integrated decision-making process.



GODFATHER I CASTING NOTES, JANUARY 31, 1971

Less than two months before filming began and nothing is fixed. Diane Keaton is not yet in view as Kay; Michael Corleone remains radically open, with Jack Nicholson, Robert De Niro, Martin Sheen, James Caan, Frank Langella, and others under active consideration; Fredo has not yet resolved into John Cazale; and Tom Hagen is still a live question, with Gene Hackman and Bruce Dern in the mix. Even the family's matriarch is unsettled—Ann Bancroft appears as a possibility, a reminder that traces of the old Hollywood order still linger inside what would become a defining New Hollywood film.

What the page captures is not just casting, but a field of unrealized films: alternate *Godfathers* briefly coexisting, with Roos at the center, assembling and testing the network from which the final constellation would emerge.

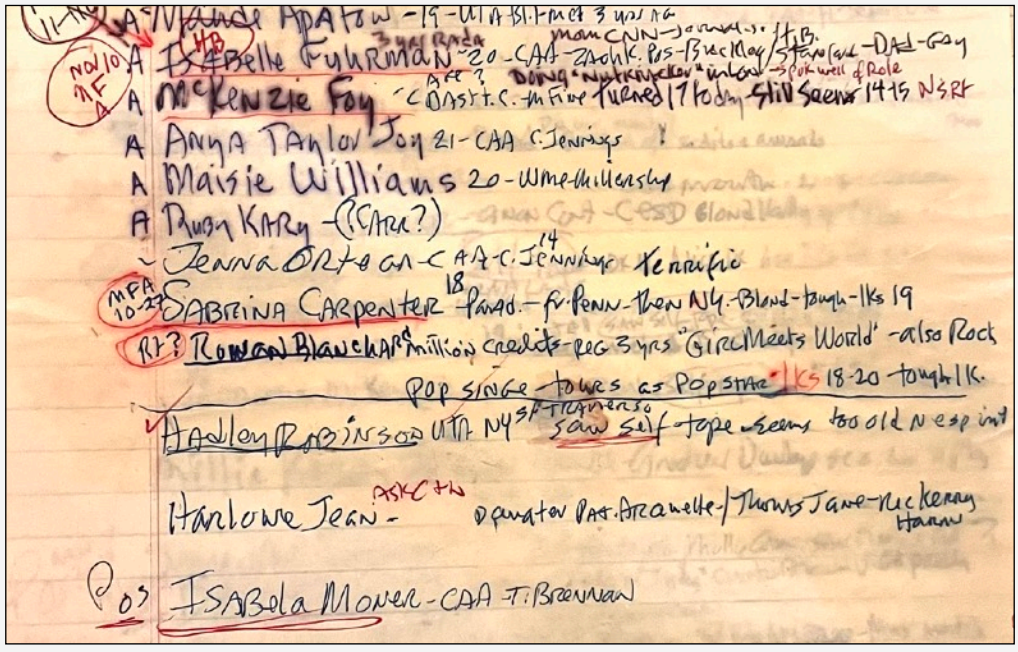
The archive is further anchored by material relating to major films including *The Godfather* (Parts I–III), *American Graffiti*, *Apocalypse Now*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. These files contain casting lists, role breakdowns, correspondence, and evaluative notes that illuminate the selection of actors whose performances would become canonical. At the same time, they preserve alternative possibilities—actors considered, rejected, or deferred—revealing how contingent these now-iconic decisions often were.

Beyond these major projects, the archive documents casting activity across a wide range of films and television productions during the late 1960s and 1970s, a period of profound transformation in the American film industry. Materials relating to projects such as *Five Easy Pieces*, *Zabriskie Point*, and *Harold and Maude*, as well as episodic television work including *The Andy Griffith Show* and *That Girl*, collectively trace the emergence of a new casting sensibility. Rather than relying on established studio systems, these materials show a more fluid and exploratory approach, with actors moving across projects and being evaluated in relation to evolving roles and narratives.

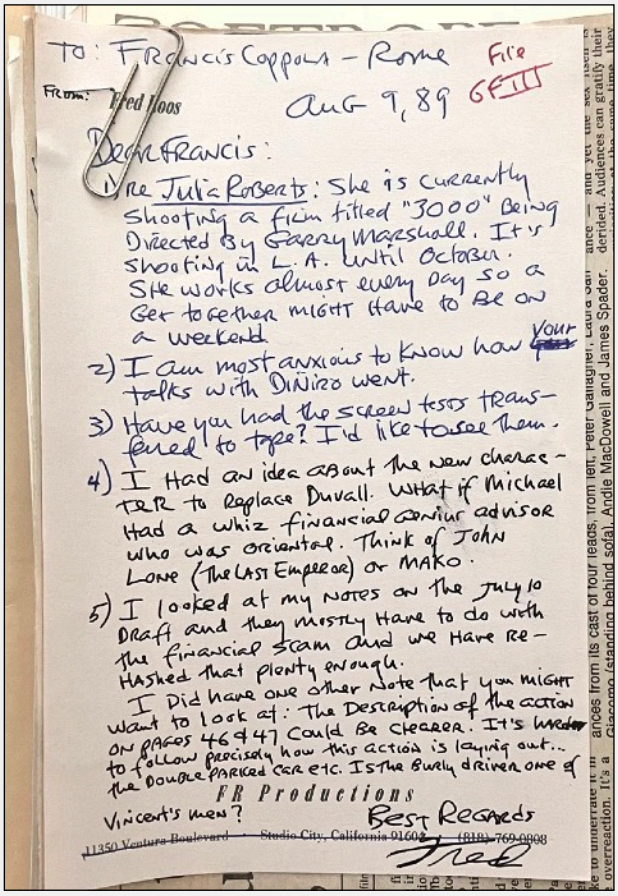


Early casting list for *Harold and Maude*, preserving a wide range of alternative possibilities. Future stars—including Richard Dreyfus and Rob Reiner—appear alongside lesser-known actors, illustrating how many potential paths existed before the film's now-iconic casting was finalized.

One of the most distinctive features of the archive is the body of handwritten notes in which Roos records his first impressions of actors. These are not formal evaluations, but quick, intuitive sketches—often just a few words—capturing how a performer registers at the moment they first come into view. In 1968, reviewing candidates for Zabriskie Point, he describes Harrison Ford as “very interesting – blond – strong handsome face,” and notes Al Pacino as “M.A. saw in N.Y. – what reaction?” Years later, in the Godfather Part III files, Julia Roberts appears as “V.P. + very sexy – red hair – sister of Eric Roberts,” while decades on, Sabrina Carpenter is recorded as “from Penn – then NY – blond – tough – looks 19.” Taken together, these notes form a continuous record of perception across more than fifty years, capturing actors at formative moments—often just before or at the threshold of wider recognition—and revealing the consistency of Roos’s evaluative eye across generations.



Casting notes from 2017 for Sophia Coppola’s 2023 film *Fairyland*, including an early evaluation of Sabrina Carpenter (“from Penn – then NY – blond – tough – looks 19”). Like earlier notes on actors such as Harrison Ford and Julia Roberts, the document captures Roos’s first impressions at a formative moment. Across the archive, similar notes on innumerable future stars—including George Clooney, Reese Witherspoon, Keanu Reeves, Jim Carrey, Natalie Portman, and Jennifer Lawrence—appear in Roos’s casting lists, illustrating the continuity of his evaluative approach across decades.



TO: Francis Coppola – Rome
From: Fred Roos
Aug 9, 89
File GFIII

Dear Francis:

1) Re Julia Roberts: She is currently shooting a film titled "3000" being Directed by Garry Marshall. It's shooting in L.A. until October. She works almost every day so a Get together might have to be on a weekend.

2) I am most anxious to know how Your talks with DiNiro went.

3) Have you had the screen tests transfered to tape? I'd like to see them.

4) I had an idea about the new character to replace Duvall. What if Michael had a whiz financial consiur advisor who was oriental. Think of John Lone (The Last Emperor) or Mako.

5) I looked at my notes on the July 10 Draft and they mostly have to do with the financial scam and we have rehashed that plenty enough.
I did have one other note that you might want to look at: The Description of the action on pages 46 & 47 could be clearer. It's harder to follow precisely how this action is laying out... the double parked car etc. Is the Burly driven one of Vincent's men?

FR Productions
Best Regards
Fred

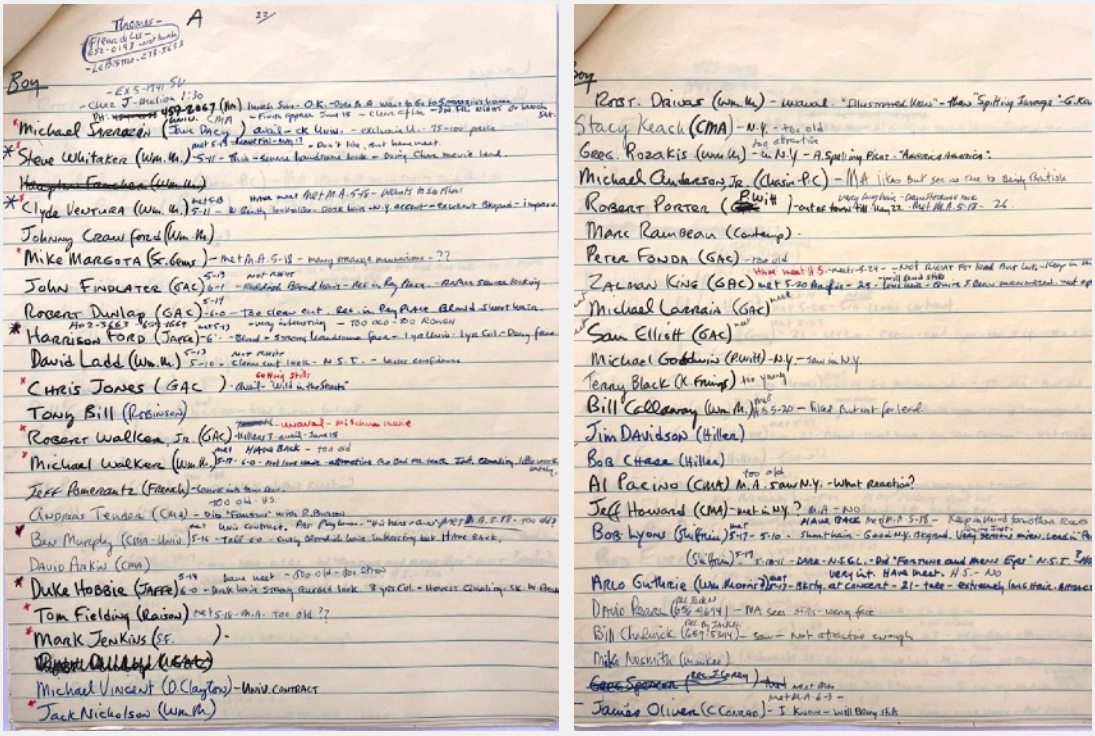
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Letter from Fred Roos to Francis Ford Coppola (August 9, 1989), combining casting updates with story notes for *The Godfather Part III*. Roos tracks Julia Roberts' schedule while she is filming "3000" (later *Pretty Woman*), situating her at a pivotal moment in her career, and references outreach to Robert De Niro alongside proposed character revisions and critiques of the film's financial plotline.

Across the archive, this same method recurs: extensive casting lists paired with concise, often candid annotations, embedded within larger working files that incorporate budgets, schedules, script revisions, and correspondence. These materials capture the early stages of decision-making, where possibilities remain open and casting pools are broad, while also demonstrating how those possibilities were narrowed through an ongoing process of comparison, elimination, and revision.

The archive resists any clear distinction between "major" and "minor" projects. Casting lists, development notes, and correspondence move fluidly across productions of different scales, with the same actors, ideas, and evaluations recurring in multiple

contexts. What might appear as a secondary or unrealized project often functions as a testing ground, where actors are first identified, assessed, and carried forward into later, more prominent films. Taken together, these materials form a continuous working ecosystem, in which individual projects are less discrete units than interconnected stages within an ongoing process of discovery and selection.

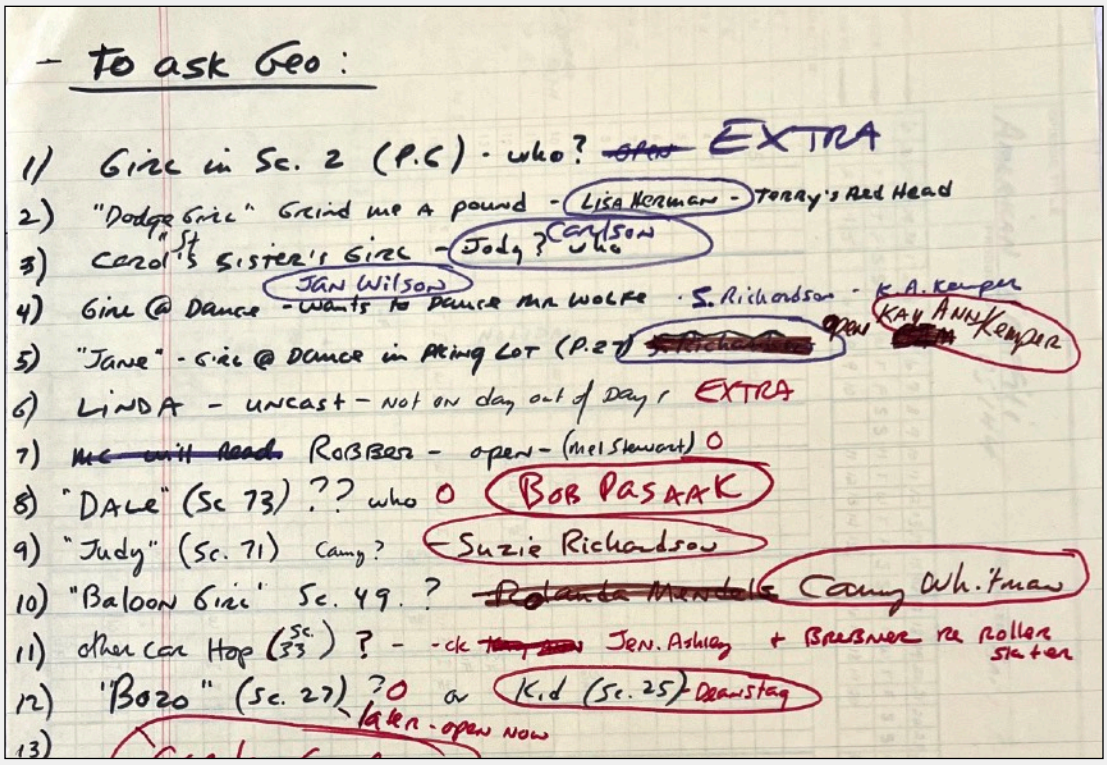


Casting lists from 1968 for the minor role of “Boy” in Antonioni’s *Zabriskie Point*. Despite the limited scope of the role, the candidate pool includes Harrison Ford, Al Pacino, Sam Elliott, Peter Fonda, and Jack Nicholson, among others. The document illustrates the absence of any clear boundary between “major” and “minor” projects: the same emerging actors circulate across roles of varying scale, forming a continuous casting ecosystem from which later, more prominent films would draw.

Importantly, the archive does not present a formal or retrospective account of filmmaking decisions. Instead, it preserves the process itself: overlapping projects, evolving lists, and working groupings that reflect the practical realities of production. Materials are frequently organized not as finalized records, but as active tools—annotated, recompiled, and reused across multiple stages of development. Casting

lists sit alongside script notes; actor evaluations alongside budget calculations; correspondence alongside scheduling grids. The result is a body of material that documents not a single function, but the interconnected system through which films were made.

As a whole, the Fred Roos Archive constitutes a rare primary-source record of how films were developed, cast, and produced during a period of significant change in American cinema. It bridges the transition from the late studio era to the emergence of New Hollywood and extends into the contemporary industry, offering insight into both continuity and change in filmmaking practice.



Working casting note from *American Graffiti*, listing minor roles and extras, with selections and revisions in Fred Roos's hand. Developed with George Lucas, the film marked a turning point in Lucas's career and became a defining work of early New Hollywood. Even at this granular level, the document reflects the collaborative and iterative process through which one of the era's most influential films was assembled.