

*The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972) opens with a black screen fading in the close up of a man, which the audience already heard talking. The man in question has a distinct Italian accent, he is telling a story. He is in a really dark room, it is so obscure it is difficult to distinguish any objects or guess the size of the room. A warm light creates deep shadows on his face. After having gained the audience's complete attention, the camera is moved away from the subject through a dolly shot. The audience can finally glimpse the silhouette of a hand, a powerful hand. In fact in response to a simple wave, another person in the room immediately gives the Italian man a drink. He is telling an emotional story. His daughter was almost beaten to death. Offering a shot is the first gesture of empathy one can see. Indeed until that moment in the speech, no one has said or done anything to comfort the suffering man. As the audience is shown more of the silhouette, it becomes clear that this mysterious figure of power is paying attention yet is skeptical, as then he will explain himself. Eventually he speaks and as first thing he asks the Italian man why he decided to go to the police. This is what makes him doubtful about the man who is going to beg for revenge. He did not follow the correct procedure. Law enforcements and anyone who relies on them are not to be trusted. It is not a matter of empathy, but of trust. The powerful figure can foresee what the grieving man will ask for, so, when it comes to it, he allows him to get close and whisper. And this is because they (mafiosi) do not talk about murder out loud, they do not contemplate something as trivial and pathetic. They have built this facade of good citizens and human beings with strong values, it is as if he will not accept the fact that he is himself a murderer. As soon as the word 'dead' is pronounced, the camera finally shows Don Corleone, the Godfather. His expression shows how disgusted he is by the idea that someone would think of him as a death machine. When he refuses to act, an establishing shot allows the audience a better view of the studio. The furniture is classic and elegant. It hints that the Godfather is powerful and wealthy. There are other two people in the room, one is the person who prepared the drink. The camera

then goes back to the intimate and private dialogue, despite the presence of the others, between Corleone and the Italian man. The Godfather is playing with a cat while he is listening. Even though this scene was not planned with the animal in it, as the cat happened to be a crew member's pet that was wondering around set that day as stated by the cast in an interview (2017), it fits the film perfectly. It actually adds depth to the scene and contributes to the definition of Corleone's character. He manages to tame the cat who seems to be enjoying it. Cats are not exactly the easiest animal to deal with. They do like some attention, but are also essentially independent and fierce, in the sense that they are proud and unpredictable. Corleone has no problem in making this animal obey him. In a way they are similar. The Godfather is like a cat in spirit: resourceful, independent, astute, smart, strong and firm when needed. The feline is perfectly comfortable in his lap.

Corleone then goes on explaining the man why he is so disappointed in him. He is looking for the Godfather now that he is in trouble, but he has never before made an effort to maintain his friendship and gain his respect. The reason behind all of this is that the Italian man tried to integrate himself in America, in fact he raised his daughter according to the American values and fashion and has built a career in the States. It seems that he did not want to be linked to the Corleone's because he would have been ashamed of that, as well as the fact that the Corleone's family business is not exactly legal. This is the thing that annoys the Godfather the most, other people's perception of his business as illicit. On the other hand the point that Don Corleone makes is that now the man is begging for justice. So the definition of justice in these circumstances is very blurred. The Italian man is looking for revenge since the judicial system failed him. The Godfather has his own definition of justice. He believes in the law of retaliation, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. So since the young lady is not dead he has no right to kill the perpetrators.

The Godfather is still sitting. The suffering man might be standing but there is no shift in power. Don Corleone is comfortable and confident, he knows that by the end of the conversation he will have gained the Italian man's respect. The most important thing for him is indeed honor. In fact there is an unwritten code of honor that should be followed. First of all the Italian man is not calling Don Corleone 'godfather'. It is not just a name like with any other title, it is a position that he earned over the years by gaining everyone's respect. Secondly he is asking for blood during the celebration of a wedding. It is the wedding day of Don Corleone's daughter. This is probably also why the blinds are closed and it is so dark. People outside are celebrating love and happiness, while in this dark cave, slightly lit by artificial light they are discussing murder.

As soon as the grieving man mentions money, everyone starts moving. They are so disturbed by money. It is the only object that in a way makes them realise how illegal and ethically unacceptable their actions are. They justify their deeds before their own consciences as public service, but they are aware that they are lying to themselves. Don Corleone points his disappointment out with two iconic 'Buonasera', with a distinct American accent. In the meantime in the background Sonny, one of the two henchmen, looks impatient. Finally respecting the code of honor, the Italian man kisses Corleone's hand. In return the godfather puts a hand on his shoulder reminding him that this is a commitment for life, like wedding vows. The door opens letting in some joyful music from the wedding, Don Corleone smells the red rose on his jacket while saying 'We are not murderers'. Glorified criminals. Red as passion, red as blood.

Stefan Mocanu (2017) *The Godfather Reunion Cast Tribeca Film Festival 2017*. Available at: <https://youtu.be/L1YKkkGQccY> (Accessed: 16 November 2017)