

Program note for **Pinewood Dialogue with Thelma Schoonmaker** and screening of **Raging Bull**  
**November 24, 2002**

Series: *MARTIN SCORSESE DIRECTS*

## **RAGING BULL**

*United Artists, 1980, 128 mins. 35mm print source: MGM/UA.*

*Directed by Martin Scorsese. Written by Paul Schrader and Mardik Martin. Based on the book by Jake LaMotta, Joseph Carter, and Peter Savage. Produced by Robert Chartoff and Irwin Winkler. Photography by Michael Chapman. Editing Thelma Schoonmaker. Principal cast: Robert DeNiro (as Jake LaMotta), Cathy Moriarty (Vickie LaMotta), Joe Pesci (Joey LaMotta), Frank Vincent (Salvy), Nicholas Colasanto (Tommy Como), Theresa Saldana (Lenore LaMotta), and Mario Gallo (Mario).*

## **Films edited by Thelma Schoonmaker**

<i>Gangs of New York</i>	2002
<i>Bringing Out the Dead</i>	1999
<i>Il Mio Viaggio In Italia</i>	1999
<i>Kundun</i>	1997
<i>Grace of My Heart (co-editor)</i>	1996
<i>Casino</i>	1995
<i>The Age of Innocence</i>	1993
<i>Cape Fear</i>	1991
<i>Made in Milan</i>	1990
<i>GoodFellas</i>	1990
<i>New York Stories: Life Lessons</i>	1989
<i>The Last Temptation of Christ</i>	1988
<i>Bad (Music Video)</i>	1987
<i>The Color of Money</i>	1986
<i>After Hours</i>	1985
<i>The King of Comedy</i>	1983
<i>Raging Bull</i>	1980
<i>Street Scenes (co-editor)</i>	1970
<i>Woodstock (co-editor)</i>	1970
<i>The Virgin President (co-editor)</i>	1968
<i>Who's That Knocking at My Door?</i>	1968
<i>Finnegan's Wake (co-editor)</i>	1965

## **From *Scorsese on Scorsese*, ed. by David Thompson and Ian Christie (Faber & Faber, London: 1989):**

During preparations for *Raging Bull*, we shot some 8 mm while Bobby was training in a gym and I remember we were looking at this, projected on the back of a door in my apartment on 57<sup>th</sup> Street, and Michael Powell was sitting on the floor watching it with us. Suddenly Michael said, "There's something wrong: the gloves shouldn't be red." Back in 1975, he'd written to me after seeing *Mean Streets* to say that he liked it, but I used too much red—this from the man who had red all over his own films, which was where I'd got it from in the first place! But he was right about the boxing footage, and our cinematographer Michael Chapman also pointed out how color was detracting from the images. A man named Gene Kirkwood, who worked with Chartoff-Winkler at the time and was associate producer on *Rocky*, used to walk into our offices and he talked about how much *The Sweet Smell of Success* and *Night and the City*, both in black and white, had to do with *Mean Streets*. We said,

no, it's too pretentious to use black and white now. But then it clicked in my mind that color wasn't going to last anyway—the film stock was subject to rapid fading.

There were so many boxing pictures being made in the seventies that I dreaded that moment in the future when I wouldn't be able to sleep and the only thing on TV would be the poorest of them and nothing else, and I'd be forced to look at it! A real nightmare. I was never a fight fan. I was two fights at Madison Square Gardens for research and the first image I drew was a bloody sponge. Then the second time I went, I was in the fifth row from the front, and I was the blood coming off the rope. As the next bout was announced, no one took any notice of it. In *Raging Bull*, the camera almost always stays in the ring with Jake. When I'd seen boxing matches between double features on Saturday afternoons as a kid, it was always from the same angle, and that's why I became so bored. The only person who had the right attitude about boxing in the movies for me was Buster Keaton.

I felt that Jake used everybody to punish himself, especially in the ring. When he fights 'Sugar' Ray Robinson, why does he really take that beating for fifteen rounds? Jake himself said that he was playing possum. Well, that may be Jake in reality, but Jake on the screen is something else. He takes the punishment for what he feels he's done wrong. And when he's thrown in jail, he's just faced with a wall, and so with the real enemy for the first time—himself. Jonathon Demme gave me a portrait of Jake made by a folk artist and around the edge of this piece of slate was carved. 'Jake fought like he didn't deserve to live.' Exactly. I made a whole movie and this guy did it in one picture!

The Pinewood Dialogues, an ongoing series of discussions with key creative figures in film, television, and digital media, are made possible with a generous grant from the Pinewood Foundation.

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