

do it. The key to me, the thing that I go with mostly, is how excited the director is by the project. If he's excited, usually it's got a chance.

"Neither *Serpico* nor *Dog Day Afternoon* was a script. They were ideas given to me. I met Frank Serpico, and I got a feeling from meeting him. There was something about him. Naturally it's always helpful to an actor to play a real person. It's a source for you. So I was excited about that project.

"The same thing with *Dog Day Afternoon* but I didn't meet the real guy there. Both those films were very much instigated and encouraged by Marty Bregman, the producer. I think he was responsible for my doing them.

"Those creative situations don't happen very often. I look forward to them. I have to work, though, so I get involved in more work-a-day things and wait hopefully for a situation with more creative opportunity. Those times are exciting. They have happened to me at points in my life, so I can understand when they're not happening. "Which," he laughs, "is a lot of the time."

Pacino tends to find those creative opportunities in the theatre rather than in film. But either place he's prepared to take chances to let them happen. This year, after finishing *Scarface* he returned to the theatre to play Teach in David Mamet's *American Buffalo*. He hopes to take it on tour after a limited Broadway run.

So far, his experience with *American Buffalo* has been positive — unlike his experience with Shakespeare's *Richard III* several years ago. He starred in an off-Broadway production and was roundly booed by the critics.

How did he react to the criticism? He hedges: "I would say that my performance was controversial. It was like a crisis in my life, so it's hard to call the experience an 'I'm glad or sad about it' one. I learned from it."

"I don't know that something necessarily has to be successful in order for one to grow in a situation. Sometimes a situation affords you an opportunity for growth, and even though you fail you learn more."

Most actors, once they become film stars, don't want to take risks in front of live audiences. Pacino is willing. It's the assault on his private life that

bothers him. He won't talk about personal matters and sits stony-faced when topics such as former girlfriends Jill Clayburgh and Marthe Keller are broached.

"Being famous has changed things," he says. "It's a little crazy. I try to do more things now than I normally would do. But there were periods of my life when I was just coping with success. Sometimes it gets to be your whole occupation. You're just dealing with it, living with it, learning to adjust to it. It's a lot to reckon with."

And I think it affects the so-called normal things that you do. I don't ride the subways, which is something I like to do. So you begin there, and you can work up to a list. You're always coping with success.

"When I was growing up 'the trials of success' never seemed to be a topic. No one was ever talking about the difficulties of being a success. It was great to be a success. It's not as much snobbism or aloofness as it is the difficulty of adjusting and also having to say, well, maybe I'm not that interesting a personality."

People have described Pacino as "reclusive." He's philosophical about it. "Those are labels that get attached to you and either time takes care of it or it doesn't. It's true I haven't done a lot of interviews. I've been reserved simply because I won't talk to people about things I know little about. A lot of times I've found I really didn't know what to say or how I felt."

"Now I feel I can talk about certain things a little bit. What helped me a great deal was touring colleges. I'd perform and also I left it open to questions and answers. That put me in contact with what has happened over the last years. Just talking about it has made it easier."

"I'm not the most open person in the world. Basically I'm shy, but when I act it's different. I use the acting. It changes me. I can't think about my image. I live my life. If you do start watching yourself, that's pretty damaging. Sometimes it takes away from spontaneity. I'm in this business to do good work, not be a star."

Scarface takes Pacino back to the dark, brooding type of character on which he made his name. Maybe this time he'll win an Oscar for it ●