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## Accorsi set for 'Versus'

### Italo thesp penning and may direct heist pic

By NICK VIVARELLI

ROME -- Italo A-list actor Stefano Accorsi is developing "Versus," a high-profile thriller centered around the contempo international jewel heist gang known as the Pink Panthers, with hot gallic multi-hyphenate duo Julien Lacombe and Pascal Sid ("Behind the Walls") on board as scribes.

Accorsi, who besides co-penning is also looking to make his directorial debut with "Versus," describes the French-language crimer as "a meticulously researched reconstruction" of some of the spectacular heists pulled off by the network of thieves which since

1993 have been worth over \$500 million, in hotspots including Dubai, Tokyo, Paris, London, Monaco and Biarritz, seen from the perspective of the Interpol investigators on their trail.

"It's clear that the movie builds towards a conflict between these two worlds – the cops and the robbers – each one of which, in a sense, does not have a raison d'etre without the other," he said.

Accorsi called the Pink Panthers an "old-fashioned group of bandits who like to live the good life, who are still part of the great tradition of romantic gangsters; and in this respect are a dying breed."

Interpol believes they comprise up to 300 thieves, working in different cells, most of which from the city of Nis in Southern Serbia.

The plan is to mount "Versus," which is budgeted at between Euros 5-7 million (\$6.8 million-\$9.5 million), as a French-language France-Italy- Serbia co-production, shepherded by Accorsi's Paris-based shingle, which is called Stephen Greep.

Lacombe and Sid are the writer/director team behind 3D chiller "Behind the Walls," starring Laetitia Casta, who is Accorsi's wife. They are also attached to MK2's non-conventional war pic "Cameron."

Making the transition from acting, Accorsi, who broke out internationally as a thesp in Gabriele Muccino's "The Last Kiss," is also penning another heist move, "Il Colpo" which Muccino will direct and Domenico Procacci's Fandango will produce. Accorsi said "Il Colpo"

will star the same male ensemble team as Muccino's two "Kiss" pics and be similar in spirit to Mario Monicelli's "Big Deal on Madonna Street."

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