

U.S. Buyers Vying for Big Titles at European Film Market (Berlin)

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Courtesy of Berlin Film Festival

From the buzzed-about "Gambit" to "Coriolanus" to Stallone's "Headshot," the North American players are having a big impact.

The Weinstein Co., CBS Films, and FilmDistrict are circling the Coen Brothers'-scripted remake of the 1966 British art heist movie *Gambit*, to star newly-crowned BAFTA winner Colin Firth and Cameron Diaz.

A deal could be made within days, according to insiders, and the title has emerged as one of the more buzzed about projects at Berlin.

Alongside *Headshot*, IM Global's \$40 million-budgeted Sylvester Stallone action project, which is generating strong interest, and Hyde Park's spy actioner *Echelon*, the market is proving to be a happy hunting ground for North American rights buyers hungry to take a punt.

With the second week unfolding and the deal-making ramping up before most folks begin exiting the market Wednesday, the EFM has already seen some headline grabbing U.S. deals.

FilmDistrict has already put out for one big buy at Berlin, taking U.S. rights to Miramax's horror title *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*, produced by Guillermo Del Toro and Mark Johnson, and counting Guy Pearce, Katie Holmes and Bailee Madison on its star sheet.

Scandinavian sales banner TrustNordisk inked two big U.S. deals — selling Lars von Trier's apocalyptic drama *Melancholia* to Magnolia in a seven-figure deal, and another memo from Todd Wagner and Mark Cuban's *Magnolia* for Norwegian thriller *Headhunters*.

Magnolia has been active across the market place also taking North American rights to *Magic Trip*, the documentary revolving around the author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* from co-directors and co-writers Alex Gibney and Alison Ellwood, and North American rights to Fred Cavaye's French thriller *Point Blank* from Gaumont.

The French action thriller stars Gilles Lellouche as a man racing through Paris to save his pregnant, kidnapped wife. Roschdy Zem, Gerard Lanvin and Elena Anaya co-star.

It was like days of yore early in the market with the Weinsteins getting in early with a headline grabber, corraling U.S. rights to Ralph Fiennes' directorial debut, *Coriolanus*, in Berlin. Fiennes, Gerard Butler, Vanessa Redgrave and Brian Cox star in the \$10 million pic in Competition at the Berlinale. TWC has also acquired pan-Asian pay TV rights in a deal with Icon Entertainment Intl. The film is a contemporary staging of Shakespeare's play about the Roman warrior.

ATO, co-founded by musician Dave Matthews and music executive Coran Capshaw, has acquired North American rights to *The Woman in the Fifth*, a psychological thriller from *My Summer of Love* director Pawel Pawlikowski.

ARC Entertainment has teamed up with XLrator Media to pick up the U.S. distribution rights to John Carpenter's horror thriller *The Ward*. The film premiered at last year's Toronto Film Festival and the move finally gives it a chance to be seen by American audiences.

No specific details of the release strategy were given although many platforms will be involved.

ARC is a marketing-based distribution company. Earlier this week the two partnered on U.S. distribution rights to period action movie *Ironclad*, being sold by ContentFilm.

Paddy Considine's directorial debut *Tyrannosaur*, starring Peter Mullan, is being boxed up for the U.S. after a distribution deal with Strand Releasing. U.K.-based sales label Protagonist Pictures also struck a deal with D Films for Canadian distribution on the title.

Other U.S. foreign language pick ups included Music Box grabbing Phillip Stolzl's historic rom-com *Goethe* from Beta Cinema and Strand Releasing taking U.S. rights to Tom Tykwer's ménage-a-trois feature *3* from Match Factory.

Additional reporting by Borys Kit.