

Hopper down for 'Gangster' pic

Thesp enjoys making European fare for the bigscreen

By [SHERI JENNINGS](#)

LACCOS AMENO (Ischia, Italy) -- Dennis **Hopper** announced a new film project, "Gangster," at a press conference Wednesday on the Italian island of Ischia.

Pic is set to begin shooting in October and will span the years previous to the fall of the communist regime in 1989 until today.

Hopper is on the island for the world preem of his pic, "The Piano Player," and to accept the Ischia Legend Award at the Ischia Global Film and Music Festival, which runs through Friday.

He is en route with producer Philippe Martinez to Romania where they will begin pre-production.

Hopper says he decided to sponsor the project after reading a script an American expat handed him while he was on location in Bucharest filming "Out of Season," also with Martinez. **Hopper** had never seen the man before.

Pic concerns two Romanian boys who aspire to go to the U.S. after seeing bootleg films of "Easy Rider" and "Scarface." One eventually makes it Stateside and the other stays in Romania. The two unite after the fall of the communist regime in 1989.

Casting, according to Martinez will begin next month.

His production shingle Lucky UK Film Services will finance the \$10million - \$12 million project.

Hopper told journalists that his relationship with Hollywood has been "love-hate" over the years. "I met Martinez, he has financing and can greenlight projects. It doesn't matter where I make movies as long as I know I can make them."

He added that, in the U.S., "studios control the projects and the distribution. A lot of time the picture just goes onto (video) tape or DVD. It's more interesting to make films in Europe and actually get them on the screen."