

= The Italian Job (2003 film) =

The Italian Job is a 2003 American heist film directed by F. Gary Gray , written by Wayne and Donna Powers and produced by Donald DeLine . The film stars Mark Wahlberg , Charlize Theron , Jason Statham , Edward Norton , Seth Green , Mos Def and Donald Sutherland . It is an American remake of the 1969 British film of the same name , and is about a team of thieves who plan to steal gold from a former associate who double @-@ crossed them . Despite the shared title , the plot and characters of this film differ from those of its source material ; Gray described the film as " an homage to the original . "

Most of the film was shot on location in Venice and Los Angeles , where canals and streets , respectively , were temporarily shut down during principal photography . Distributed by Paramount Pictures , The Italian Job was theatrically released in the United States on May 30 , 2003 , and grossed over \$ 176 million worldwide . Critical response was generally positive , with publications highlighting the action sequences . A sequel , The Brazilian Job , has reportedly been in development since 2004 , but has yet to be produced as of 2015 .

= = Plot = =

John Bridger , a professional safecracker , has assembled a team to steal 35 million dollars worth of gold bullion from a safe held by Italian gangsters in Venice that had stolen it weeks earlier . The team includes Charlie Croker , a professional thief ; Napster , a computer expert ; Handsome Rob , their wheelman ; Steve , their inside man ; and Left Ear , their explosives expert . They successfully complete the theft by stealing the actual safe and stealing the gold from it after the safe lands underwater while the gangsters are occupied with a decoy led by Rob and Napster . After leaving the city , the team agrees to split up the gold and part ways once they return to the United States . However , Steve turns on them : in the Alps near Austrian border , he and his own men intercept their van on a bridge and take the gold . When John confronts him , Steve kills him . Rob drives the van into the lake off a bridge , where they keep themselves alive using oxygen tanks from the heist . Steve assumes they are dead and leaves with the gold .

A year later , Charlie and the others have returned to the States and have located Steve under his new false identity , changing his last name to Frizelli , moving to Los Angeles and laundering the gold for money . Charlie goes to Philadelphia and meets with Stella Bridger , John 's estranged daughter and also a skilled private safecracker working for the police , who is furious with him , believing that Charlie was responsible for the death of her father , but Charlie instead convinces her to help get revenge on Steve by helping with the heist to steal back the gold .

The group monitor Steve 's expensive mansion in Los Angeles , identifying the various security details . Charlie gets in contact with an associate , Skinny Pete , to obtain explosives for Left Ear , to blow the mansion gates , and Rob obtains three heavily modified Mini Coopers and calls in his friend Wrench , a car mechanic , to modify them so that they will be able to drive through the mansion and carry the gold out . Charlie guides Stella , disguised as a cable repair representative , through Steve 's mansion to scope out its interior using a hidden camera . Steve flirts with Stella while she is there , unaware of her connection to John , and she decides go on a date with Steve to draw him out of his house , allowing them to steal the gold . However , the group finds that Steve 's neighbors are having a party , and their use of explosives will certainly draw attention , so they bail on the plan . Stella accidentally reveals her connection to John to Steve during their date . Following it , Charlie arrives himself and Steve is shocked about the team 's survival , but taunts Charlie over John 's death and the reveal of the plan , causing Charlie to punch him in the face before leaving .

Following this , Steve becomes paranoid , knowing that Charlie and the others are likely looking to steal the gold back , and begins to launder it faster through a Ukrainian jewelry store owner named Yevhen . Yevhen unintentionally reveals his knowledge of the Venice heist , and Steve kills him to keep him quiet . News of Yevhen 's death reaches his cousin , Mashkov , a leading member of a Ukrainian crime family . Mashkov traces a link to Skinny Pete , since he traced the gold over Yevhen , and confronts him , and Skinny Pete is forced to reveal Charlie 's involvement . Meanwhile , Steve

makes plans to move his safe with the gold to Mexico , using an armored truck to transport it to a private plane waiting at Los Angeles International Airport .

Napster overhears the plan , and Charlie devises a new plan to steal the gold en route to the airport by having Napster gain control of the downtown traffic light system as to be able to guide the armored truck to a specific location . On the day of transport , they are surprised when three trucks leave Steve 's mansion with Steve monitoring them overhead by helicopter , but soon determine that two are decoys . Napster successfully routes the target truck to a staging point , out of Steve 's sight . Left Ear detonates part of the street , sending the van into the Metro rail tunnel where the others are waiting . Knowing that Steve will have sent out pursuit vehicles on losing sight of the truck , Stella is able to successfully crack the safe , and they load the gold into the Mini Coopers , which are small enough to fit through the storm drain tunnels . They are able to stay just ahead of Steve 's armed men and make it through part of the Los Angeles River bed onto the streets , where Napster , still in control of the traffic system , is able to create a green wave to allow them to easily flee . Charlie lures Steve away from the other two as they head for Union Station , forcing Steve to land his helicopter and pursue in a stolen truck .

At Union Station , the cars are loaded onto a train car with the help of Wrench . Steve arrives shortly thereafter and after bribing Wrench , is surprised to find Charlie and the others waiting for him . Steve brandishes a gun and demands his gold back , but Mashkov arrives ; Charlie explains that he has offered Mashkov part of the gold and Steve in exchange for helping with security protection . Steve is taken away by Mashkov , revealing he will be killed . The group boards the train as it departs to New Orleans , and celebrate in John 's honor . The epilogue shows them all having used their share of the gold for their own desired purposes .

= = Cast = =

Mark Wahlberg as Charlie Croker , the team 's mastermind and thief , who seeks revenge for the murder of his mentor , John Bridger .

Charlize Theron as Stella Bridger , John 's daughter and a safe and vault " technician " . She prefers the use of technology to crack safes for the police , unlike her father , who did the whole thing by touch .

Edward Norton as Steve Frazelli , the " inside man " during the Venice heist who later betrays Charlie , John , Rob , Lyle and " Left Ear " , and leaves them for dead .

Donald Sutherland as John Bridger , Stella 's father and safecracker whose methods are " old @-@ fashioned " , handled entirely by touch . He is Charlie 's longtime partner .

Jason Statham as " Handsome Rob " , the team 's wheelman and a ladies ' man . According to Charlie , he set the record for the world 's longest freeway chase and received 110 love letters sent to his jail cell from women who saw him on the news .

Seth Green as Lyle (a.k.a. " Napster ") , the team 's computer expert . He claims he is the real inventor of Napster , saying that Shawn Fanning , who was his roommate at Northeastern University back in 1999 , stole the idea from him .

Mos Def as Gilligan " Left Ear " , the team 's demolition and explosives expert . His name comes from an incident during his childhood when he put too many M @-@ 80s in a toilet bowl and lost the hearing in his right ear .

Franky G as Wrench , a mechanic who Rob contacts to engineer the Minis to carry the gold . He also assists in planting explosives to drop the armored car into the subway , where he serves as the lookout .

Boris Lee Krutonog as Yevhen , a jewelry store owner with ties to the Ukrainian mob . Hired by Steve to help sell the gold , Steve shoots him after realizing that he knows too much about where the gold came from .

Olek Krupa as Mashkov , a high @-@ ranking member of an L.A. Ukrainian mob family and the cousin of Yevhen . He uses Yevhen 's store as a laundering front and also has a front on a local junkyard , and he is also against Steve for murdering Yevhen .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

Neal Purvis and Robert Wade wrote a draft of a remake of the 1969 British crime comedy *The Italian Job* which was rejected by Paramount . Screenwriting team Donna and Wayne Powers were subsequently commissioned to write a remake . The duo viewed the original film , which neither had seen before , only once " because [they] wanted to get a sense of what it was about " in regards to its tone . Over the course of two years and through 18 drafts , they developed a screenplay which was described by director F. Gary Gray as " inspired by the original . " Gray , Powers and Powers , and executive producer James Dyer identified the most prominent similarities as the trio of Mini Coopers used by the thieves , as well as the titular heist involving the theft of gold bullion . Some sequences of the film were storyboarded and previsualized by Gray before production began .

= = = Casting = = =

Gray had been interested in working with Wahlberg since seeing his performance in *Boogie Nights* (1997) . After reading the script for *The Italian Job* , Gray contacted Wahlberg , who " fell in love with it " after reading it himself . Green was also attracted to the project because of the script . Theron was Gray 's first choice for the character of Stella Bridger , and Wahlberg also recommended her for the role . She spent time with a safecracker in preparing for the role . Gray 's casting director Sheila Jaffe suggested Statham for the role of getaway driver Handsome Rob , and Gray agreed with her choice . Norton took the role of Steve Frazelli , due to a contractual obligation he had to fulfill . Wahlberg , Theron , and Statham attended special driver 's training sessions at Willow Springs International Motorsports Park for nearly a month during pre @-@ production .

= = = Filming = = =

Gray and cinematographer Wally Pfister worked together to develop a visual style for the film before production began . They viewed car commercials and magazine photographs , as well as chase sequences from *The French Connection* (1971) , *Ronin* (1998) , and *The Bourne Identity* (2002) as visual references . Pfister wanted " dark textures and undertones and strong contrast " ; he collaborated with production designer Charlie Wood on the color palette , and the two would confer with Gray on their ideas . Paramount preferred that *The Italian Job* not be shot in the anamorphic format , despite Pfister 's wishes to do so . Gray wanted a widescreen aspect ratio , so they chose to shoot the film in Super 35 for a 2 @. @ 4 : 1 aspect ratio . Once principal photography began , Gray frequently utilized dollies , as well as Steadicams and a Technocrane , to keep the cameras almost constantly moving .

Most of *The Italian Job* was shot on location , at sites Pfister scouted over 12 weeks during pre @-@ production , but some scenes were filmed on sets . The Venice building where the film 's opening heist sequence takes place , the van from which the thieves survey Steve Frazelli 's mansion , a hotel room , and the LACMTA Red Line subway tunnel were sets constructed at Downey Studios in California . For the scene in which an armored truck falls through Hollywood Boulevard and into the subway tunnel below , Pfister set up seven cameras to capture the vehicle 's ~ 30 foot (9 @. @ 1 m) descent . Three hundred cars were used to simulate the traffic jam at the intersection of Hollywood and Highland , which was controlled by the production crew for a week . Three of the 32 custom @-@ built Mini Coopers used during principal photography were fitted with electric motors since combustion engines were not allowed in the subway tunnels , where some scenes were shot . Other Mini Coopers were modified to allow for camera placement on and inside the vehicles . The director remarked that " [the Mini Coopers are] part of the cast . "

Gray wanted the film to be as realistic as possible ; accordingly , the actors did most of their own stunts , and computer @-@ generated imagery was used very sparingly . The second unit , under

director Alexander Witt and cinematographer Josh Bleibtreu , filmed establishing shots , the Venice canal chase sequence , and the Los Angeles chase sequence over a period of 40 days . Filming on location posed some challenges . The opening heist sequence in Venice , Italy , was strictly monitored by the local authorities , due to the high speeds the boats were driven at . The frigid temperatures at Passo Fedaia in the Italian Alps created problems during production : " The guns would jam , and if you could imagine not being able to walk 40 feet with a bottle of water without it freezing , those are the conditions we had to work in , " Gray remarked . Pedestrians had to be allowed to use the sidewalks of Hollywood Boulevard between takes . Also , scenes which took place on freeways and city streets were only filmed on weekends .

= = Release = =

= = = Box @-@ office performance = = =

The Italian Job premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival on May 11 , 2003 , and was theatrically released in the United States on May 30 , 2003 . In its opening weekend , the film grossed \$ 19 @, @ 457 @, @ 944 , ranking at # 3 . Paramount re @-@ released the film on August 29 , and by the time its theatrical release closed in November 2003 , the film had grossed \$ 106 @, @ 128 @, @ 601 in the United States and Canada and \$ 69 @, @ 941 @, @ 570 overseas ? \$ 176 @, @ 070 @, @ 171 worldwide . It was the highest @-@ grossing film produced by Paramount in 2003 .

= = = Critical response = = =

Based on 177 reviews collected by Rotten Tomatoes , The Italian Job has an overall approval rating of 73 % , with a weighted average score of 6 @. @ 4 / 10 . By comparison , Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating to reviews from mainstream critics , calculated an average score of 68 out of 100 from the 37 reviews it collected , indicating " generally favorable reviews . "

Stephanie Zacharek , writing for Salon.com , liked the reinvention of the plot and the style and execution of the action sequences , specifically those involving the trio of Mini Coopers , which she wrote were the stars of the film . BBC reviewer Stella Papamichael gave The Italian Job 4 stars out of 5 , and wrote that the " revenge plot adds wallop lacking in the original " . Los Angeles Times reviewer Kevin Thomas praised the opening Venice heist sequence and the characterization of each of the thieves , but felt that the Los Angeles heist sequence was " arguably stretched out a little too long " . Roger Ebert gave the film 3 stars out of 4 , writing that the film was " two hours of mindless escapism on a relatively skilled professional level . " Mick LaSalle of the San Francisco Chronicle concurred , describing The Italian Job as pure but smart entertainment " plotted and executed with invention and humor " . Reviewer James Berardinelli also gave the film 3 stars out of 4 , and said that Gray had discovered the right recipe to do a heist movie : " keep things moving , develop a nice rapport between the leads , toss in the occasional surprise , and top with a sprinkling of panache . " Variety 's Robert Koehler compared The Italian Job to The Score (2001) , another " finely tuned heist pic " which also featured Edward Norton in a similar role .

David Denby , writing for The New Yorker , praised Norton 's performance , as well as those of Seth Green and Mos Def , and the lack of digital effects in the action sequences . Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly gave the film a B ? grade , comparing it positively to the 2000 remake of Gone in 60 Seconds , as well as the 2001 remake of Ocean 's Eleven . New York Daily News reviewer Jack Mathews gave The Italian Job 2 @. @ 5 stars out of 4 , writing that the action sequences and plot twists were a " vast improvement " from the original , and that the Los Angeles heist sequence was " clever and preposterous " . Mike Clark of USA Today also questioned the probability of the Los Angeles heist sequence and wrote that the film was " a lazy and in @-@ name @-@ only remake " , giving it 2 stars out of 4 . Peter Travers , writing for Rolling Stone , gave The Italian Job 1 star out of 4 , describing the film as " a tricked @-@ out remake of a heist flick that was already flat and formulaic in 1969 . " Travers enjoyed the comic relief in Green 's and Def 's

characters , and added that Norton 's was " [t] he most perversely magnetic performance " outside of the Mini Coopers , but felt that there was a lack of logic in the film .

= = = Home media = = =

The Italian Job was released on DVD by Paramount Home Entertainment October 7 , 2003 , and includes five bonus features on different aspects of the film 's production , in addition to six deleted scenes . It was released on HD DVD August 8 , 2006 and on Blu @-@ ray Disc October 24 , 2006 .

= = = Accolades = = =

F. Gary Gray won a Film Life Movie Award for Best Director at the 2004 American Black Film Festival . Clay Cullen , Michael Caines , Jean Paul Ruggiero and Mike Massa won an award for Best Specialty Stunt at the 2004 Taurus World Stunt Awards for the boat chase through the canals of Venice . The Italian Job was nominated for the 2003 Saturn Award for Best Action / Adventure / Thriller Film , but lost to Kill Bill . In April 2009 , IGN named the film 's Los Angeles chase sequence one of the top 10 car chases of the 21st Century .

= = = Analysis = = =

Criminologist Nicole Rafter saw The Italian Job as part of a revival of the heist film around the start of the 21st century , along with The Thomas Crown Affair (1999) and Ocean 's Eleven (2001) , both of which were also remakes of 1960s heist films . In describing his theory of a " team film " genre , film scholar Dr. Jeremy Strong writes that The Italian Job could be categorized as such , along with The Magnificent Seven (1960) , The Great Escape (1963) , The Dirty Dozen (1967) , and more recently The Usual Suspects (1995) and Mission : Impossible (1996) . He states that a team film involves a group working towards a particular objective . However , goal @-@ orientation is a widely shared plot attribute of many texts and genres and it is also the case that the overwhelming majority of films involve a plurality of interacting characters . An element that distinguishes the team film then is that a heightened significance is afforded to the group as the means by which a given objective is attempted . [...] From film to film there is variation in the extent to which particular central characters may determine events and take up screen time but team films are recognizable by their insistence upon the relationship between group and goal .

Strong additionally makes a direct comparison between The Italian Job and Mission : Impossible , citing the plot device of " a first task that elucidates the roles and skills of team members but which is sabotaged by betrayal , necessitating a re @-@ constitution of the team . "

The use of BMW 's then @-@ new line of retro @-@ styled Minis in the film was mentioned by critics and business analysts alike as a prime example of modern product placement , or more specifically " brand integration " . Film critic Joe Morgenstern called The Italian Job " the best car commercial ever " . Zacharek and Mathews both noted the cars ' prominence in their reviews of the film , also writing that their presence served as a connection to the 1969 film upon which it was based . BusinessWeek reported in April 2004 that sales of the Mini in 2003 ? the year in which The Italian Job was theatrically released ? had increased 22 percent over the previous year .

= = Possible sequel = =

A sequel to The Italian Job , tentatively titled The Brazilian Job , was in development by the summer of 2004 , but has since faced multiple delays . Principal photography was initially slated to begin in March 2005 , with a projected release date in November or December 2005 . However , the script was never finalized , and the release date was pushed back to sometime in 2006 , and later summer 2007 .

Writer David Twohy approached Paramount Pictures with an original screenplay entitled The Wrecking Crew , and though the studio reportedly liked the idea , they thought it would work better

as a sequel to *The Italian Job* . Gray was slated to return as director , as well as most , if not all , of the original cast . At least two drafts of the script had been written by August 2007 , but the project had not been greenlit .

In March 2008 , in an interview , Jason Statham said that " somebody should just erase it from IMDb and put it back on there when it 's fully due and ready . [...] It 's one of those things that 's just sitting around . " Producer Donald De Line revealed in June that a script for *The Brazilian Job* had been developed and budgeted , but " a lot of things were happening with various management changes and it got tabled . " Describing its story , he said it " starts in Brazil , the set up is in Rio and the picture moves to Belgium where there ? s something involving diamonds . " However , Green stated that September that the sequel was unlikely in the near future .

On March 9 , 2009 , De Line said that " [we] have a version at Paramount that we 're talking very serious about " , additionally mentioning that the cast was interested in the project . Neal Purvis and Robert Wade had been working on a draft of the sequel that year . The *Daily Record* reported in September that Theron was signed up for the film . That October , Gray said that he enjoyed making *The Italian Job* and hoped that he would still be interested in directing the sequel if the script became finalized and mentioned that it would be dependent upon scheduling .

In January 2010 , Twohy was quoted in an interview as saying " *The Brazilian Job* probably isn 't happening . I wrote it years ago , and they just keep rolling it over on IMDb . Paramount ? what can I say ? " When asked about the sequel that June , Green said " *The Brazilian Job* doesn 't exist actually " and called it a " wonderful myth of IMDb . " However , the next month , Mark Wahlberg said that sequel production was " active " again .