

## Exclusive new pics, director's comments on "HYPOTHERMIA"

Written by Michael Gingold  
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Fango recently spoke with James Felix McKenney, writer/director of HYPOTHERMIA, who reminisced about the chiller's recently completed shoot. We also got ahold of four exclusive new photos from the movie, so click past the jump to see 'em!

HYPOTHERMIA, which we last reported on [here](#), is a co-production of producer Larry Fessenden's Glass Eye Pix and Dark Sky Films, and is set on and around a frozen lake where two groups of ice fisherpeople are terrorized by an aquatic monster. The cast is headed by Michael Rooker, Blanche Baker, Greg Finley, Don Wood, Ben Forster and Amy Chang, and McKenney says working with the star of HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER was quite the memorable experience. "Michael Rooker is insane," he tells Fango. "He has more energy than he knows what to do with, but turns in an incredible performance. I have to say there was one point in the movie where he actually got me choked up. It was powerful."



McKenney and company shot the movie in upstate New York (substituting for the story's Maine setting), where they got socked by the blizzards that dumped record snow on the region a couple of months back. "That was a two-part storm," McKenney recalls. "We were hit by the first one for two days and our last day was during the second, but luckily we were inside during that. The first one ended up putting about a foot and a half of snow on our lake, and we had been shooting on pristine ice for three weeks previously, so we had some local guys come up with trucks and snowplows to clear it off, and then we swept it with brooms so we could pretend it was still the same, clean surface we had been on the whole time, because the whole movie takes place in one day.

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"Continuity was generally very difficult as far as the weather goes," he continues, but adds, "It actually went really well; we had the best crew in the world. They came from three different sources and a lot of them hadn't worked together before, and there wasn't a single person I wouldn't be delighted to team up with again. Everyone had great spirits and was really excited to come out and be outdoors on the ice in the middle of February, and miss Valentine's Day, the Super Bowl and the Olympics to stand out there and freeze. It was a really, really good shoot."

Perhaps the hardest trouper of the bunch was Asa Liebmann, who played the hungry beast and was thus required to take the plunge into the frigid waters. "Asa Liebmann was one of the guys they based the creatures on in I AM LEGEND," McKenney reveals. "He got wet, he swam, all that stuff. Rooker got in too, and it was funny because due to some crossed wires, he didn't know until the very last minute that he was supposed to do it. Most actors would be like, 'No way!' but he said, 'Ehh, it's just a little water.' He jumped right in without a moment's hesitation and gave us way more than we ever expected. He was so into getting wet and putting his head under. It was pretty impressive."



McKenney's previous films, including OFF SEASON, AUTOMATONS and the upcoming

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SATAN HATES YOU, have all been inspired by different strains of genre filmmaking from the 1950s and '60s, and HYPOTHERMIA is no different. "I guess I'm just very old-fashioned," he says. "When I was a kid in the '70s, the movies of the time were very intense for me to see, so I watched the Universal movies and eventually the Hammer films and Hitchcock. HYPOTHERMIA was very much inspired by CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, but we tried to find a way to do it differently—and what's the opposite of the Amazon? A frozen lake. The trick was getting the creature out from under the ice so it could attack people. You watch CREATURE and it's all about him clambering up onto the boat, and that's what we had to do: figure out a way for our monster to clamber up onto the ice and get at the people."

When it does, McKenney's movie is not as restrained in showing the results as CREATURE and its '50s ilk. "[Makeup FX artist] Brian Spears, who's done a lot of stuff for folks up in the area, brought a few buckets of blood with him. Some people are torn up, there's definitely gore, and it's also a practical effects monster; it is a guy in a suit. There's some CGI in the movie, but the creature itself is an old-fashioned costume made by Chris Bridges from Gaslight Studio."



With HYPOTHERMIA now in postproduction, McKenney has also been busy launching his Channel Midnight DVD/VOD/download label (see details [here](#)) and is looking forward to unleashing his long-in-the-works SATAN HATES YOU, based on vintage Christian scare films and featuring appearances by genre favorites Angus Scrimm, Reggie Bannister and Michael Berryman. "That's a weird movie, and we've been working on it for years," the filmmaker says. "It's been a long road; we did it in pieces while we were shooting other movies. When I finally finished it, there were so many movies coming out of Glass Eye Pix that we kind of had to wait our turn. There was I CAN SEE YOU and HOUSE OF THE DEVIL and I SELL THE DEAD, and also the production chores of doing these films for Dark Sky, including HYPOTHERMIA. The pipeline just got clogged up and we had to wait before SATAN HATES YOU got its turn, but it's our turn now and it'll be hitting very soon." You can find out more about SATAN at its [official website](#)

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