

# Suspended Animation

by David W. Thompson

**S**YNOPSIS: Shot on Sony's 24P HD, *Suspended Animation* is a full-length feature based on the riveting novel by Dorothy Tristan. In this edge-of-your seat suspense thriller, Thomas Kempton is a successful Hollywood animator. His hit movies are of the grand tradition of fairytales replete with evil witches, dark forests, and innocent victims. On a much-needed vacation, Tom takes a snowmobile trip with some pals to get away from his work for a while. The relaxing weekend takes an unexpected turn when he gets lost in the woods and finds himself in a real-life "grim" fairytale of his own. At the hands of psychotic sisters his nightmare begins. Barely escaping with his life, his unsettling brush with death leaves him obsessed by the experience and one of his captors. His twisted psychological journey on the dark side eventually leads him into the life of his captor's estranged daughter and her psychotic son. Trying to turn his bizarre experience into a hit animated feature only endangers him and his family by luring his captor back to her original prey.

HighDef.Org recently interviewed John Hancock at FilmAcres, his studio and home, located in LaPorte, Indiana.

**HighDef.Org: (HD)** What are the advantages and disadvantages of being located in Indiana instead of LA/Hollywood?

**John Hancock: (JH)** You get so much more for the dollar here - location fees are very cheap and salaries are smaller, you can put more up on the screen per dollar. I run my studio, FilmAcres, from my home. This is another advantage. My parents were in the fruit business here for 60 years. That's where the farm-oriented

name, FilmAcres, comes from.

**HD:** Your background has mainly been in film, having directed many features, who or what finally sold you on using electronic cinema, 24P HD, specifically, to shoot *Suspended Animation*?

**JH:** A couple of years ago at Cannes I saw the Sony demo. I followed that with a visit at Fletcher/Chicago and saw some of the same clips as well as additional footage and I just liked the quality of it. It worked out so well, the relief of not having to pay for the film up front and being able to shoot all you want is a big advantage for me, because I tend to shoot a lot. The people at Fletcher were helpful. Mainly it was just looking at the demos.

**HD:** I also understand that this was the first time that Misha Suslov, Director of Photography, shot with 24P HD?

**JH:** We both had certain trepidation about a new thing. It seemed to work out. Fletcher was helpful in showing Misha how to use the equipment.

**HD:** What was Misha's experience using the 24P HD camera?

**JH:** He'd do it again in a minute. I think he would rather do that than go back to film at this point. Misha liked the fact it took less time in lighting and how responsive it was at low light levels. He also likes the look of it... it's beautiful.

**HD:** What concerns did you have going in?

**JH:** Well, I was concerned, since we have a very physical picture with a lot of snowmobile mounts and working in the cold. We were concerned that the equipment would malfunction or fall apart from vibration. But

it proved to be quite rugged.

**HD:** What disadvantages, if any, did you experience while shooting in 24P HD?

**JH:** The monitoring system is still fairly elaborate and difficult to move around in the snow. But, you'd have that with video assist on film too. You just don't have to be cabled quite so much. You also don't get a good image through the eyepiece, yet.

**HD:** Would you say that the 24P HD format proved itself to you?

**JH:** Absolutely. By being able to see what you're actually getting, right away. And the cost savings out front is so big. To not have to worry about how much you're shooting is a big factor for me.

**HD:** What do you feel the future of electronic cinema is?

**JH:** I think it is going to take over the world, I really do. I think it has so many advantages.

**HD:** Do you plan on using 24p HD on future projects?

**JH:** Yes, absolutely. It is my preference.

**HD:** Will you use film again?

**JH:** I doubt it. I will use film only if someone insisted.

**HD:** Do you think you would be limited with 24P HD on certain projects versus film?

**JH:** I can't think of any.

**HD:** It sounds like you have been converted?

**JH:** Absolutely. You know a lot of things are not all they're cracked up to be, but this one is.

**HD:** Let's assume that some of your colleagues are