

# **Anxiously-Awaited Vampire/Heroin Addiction Movie 'Claimed' Set to Premiere Next Week, One Showing is in Hartford**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON - Those anxiously awaiting the premiere of the new vampire/heroin addiction movie "Claimed" will have their opportunity to be satisfied next week around the region.

Elle Mercurio-Cherrier, a St. Louis advocate against opioid abuse, has worked tirelessly to produce, direct, and complete the film, with a host of talented actors and volunteers, over the past year. For several years, Mercurio-Cherrier has been on a mission to raise heroin addiction awareness and in many ways, this is the pinnacle of those tremendous efforts. Elle's movie that is debuting next week is "historical fiction."

"Personally I understand the stigma that comes associated with heroin addiction. My mission is simple, to stand up for the ones that cannot at the moment," she said. Mercurio-Cherrier herself is a recovering addict for several years.

"My other mission is to bring hope to the families who have gaping holes in their lives due to this addiction and to communities so that perhaps, although slow at first we can turn the table on addiction and lower the statistics."

The first two showings of "Claimed" will be from 6 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, at St. Louis County Library and from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, at the Lewis and Clark Historic Site in Hartford, IL.

This movie started out as a horror film turned into a movie about an English colony that arrives in a new world uninvited. The colony suffers from little supplies and are called upon to brave the wilderness. They arrived to claim a new world, and instead the new world might actually claim them.

"This story is relatable," Mercurio-Cherrier said. "In the story, the colonists vanished without a trace, and I believe we are facing something very similar in our modern age with the opioid epidemic. But substance abuse itself is a constant.

"We can all definitely agree that there is a problem and it's not just a problem with heroin, it's a problem with substances, behaviors it all affects that area of the brain."

Mercurio-Cherrier goes on to say most people come in contact with most opioids through pain medicine. While the addiction crisis rages, many surgeons overprescribe opioids. While hundreds of lawsuits have been filed against opioid manufacturers, claiming they engaged in aggressive and misleading marketing of these addictive drugs, the role of physicians in continuing to contribute to a national tragedy has received less scrutiny.

Research shows that a significant portion of people who become addicted to opioids started with a prescription after surgery. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental

Health Services Administration in 2015, nearly 80 percent of heroin users reported using prescription opioids prior to heroin.

Painkillers like OxyContin are classified as opioids because they are synthetic, opiate-like substances activating the same receptors in the brain as heroin."

She currently along with the premieres has an online petition proposing that Missouri and Illinois' doctors should be held responsible when prescribing opioids for only an allotted period of time." (BI-STATE Pain Management Reform).

"Although I am free from opiate/heroin grip now most will not be so fortunate and the undertow of addiction will claim their life, " Mercurio-Cherrier concluded.

**Other Claimed Showings are as follows:**

Jan 22, 2020, 6:30-8 p.m., Jefferson County Library, Mo.

Jan 23, 2020, 6-8 p.m., Jefferson City Library , Mo.

Feb 15, 2020, 2-5 p.m., Carbondale Library, IL.

Feb 29, 2020, 8-2 p.m., Farmington City Hall, Mo.

Feb 6, 2020, 2-5 p.m., Mount Vernon Library, IL.

March 1, 2020, 4-6 p.m., Ann West Lindsey Library - Carterville, IL.

March 5, 2020, 1-3 p.m., Oak Park Public Library - Chicago, IL.









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