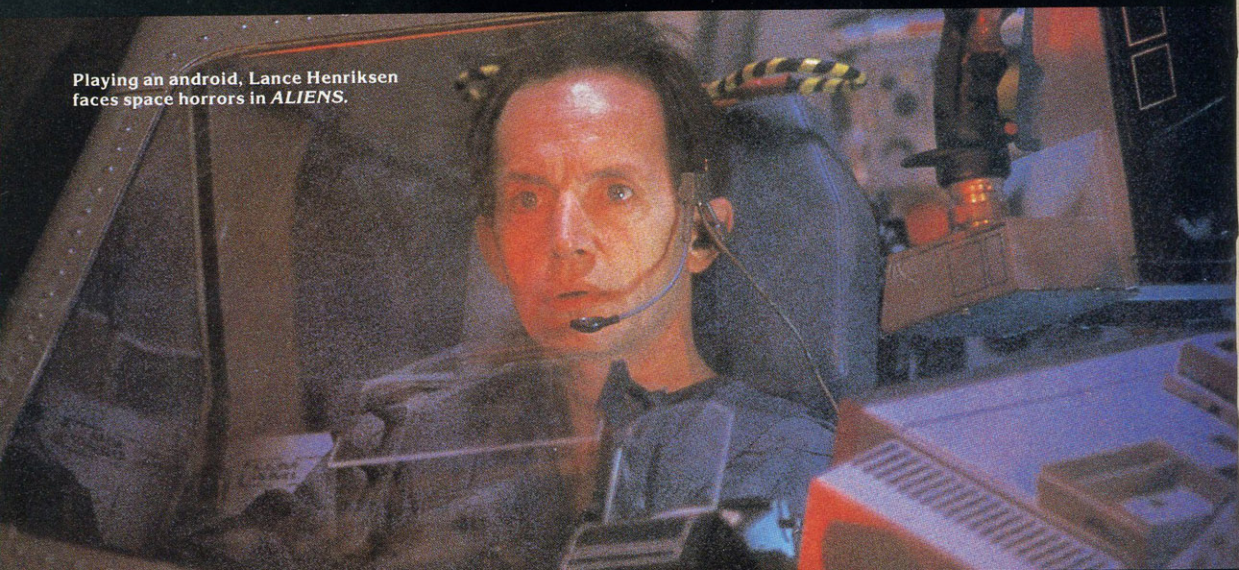


# GUNNING FOR

# ALIENS

Android actor Lance "Omen II" Henriksen takes on a planet of face huggers and chest bursters in James Cameron's explosive sequel!

Playing an android, Lance Henriksen faces space horrors in *ALIENS*.



By ADAM PIRANI

**W**e're all on our own time schedule," says Lance Henriksen, an actor, best known from *Omen II* and *The Right Stuff*, whose time has come. With the role of the android Bishop in *ALIENS*, Henriksen's career path is moving one more step away from typecasting as a "heavy"—and from acting in scenes that end up playing on the cutting room floor.

Watching the filming on the "dropship" set at London's Pinewood Studios, Henriksen has come to the studio even on his day off. He has loved working on *ALIENS*, and he's here to watch rushes from the previous day's shooting.

The actor's involvement with this

In *ALIENS*, Sigourney Weaver returns as *Nostromo*'s sole survivor. She, Henriksen, and well-armed crew return to the earlier film's face-hugger planet and encounter more fearsome extraterrestrials.



ALL ALIENS PHOTOS: BOB PENN/COPYRIGHT 1986 20TH CENTURY FOX



sequel to *ALIEN* began with his relationship with writer/director James Cameron, whose previous movies, *The Terminator* and *Piranha II: The Spawning* also co-starred Henriksen. "We're friends even outside of work," Henriksen explains. "We met at a Chinese restaurant, where Jim gave me the first *ALIENS* treatment. It was an absolute knockout. The treatment was ready to shoot, it was that good. And then, we started talking about various characters."

Henriksen pauses momentarily, recalling an earlier incident that proves the appropriateness of this android role. "Originally, I was going to do *Terminator*—do the robot," he reveals. "In fact, there's a great story there. I went up to Hemdale [the movie's production company], and Jim planned it so I would be there half-an-hour before him, and I went full out dressed as the Terminator."

"I put gold foil on my teeth, waxed my hair back, put cuts on my head, and I wore a punker shirt, a leather jacket, and boots up to my knees. I really looked exciting. I was a pretty scary person to be in a room with."

"I kicked the door open when I came in, and the secretary just about swallowed the typewriter. I then went in to see the producer."

"I sat in the room with him, and I wouldn't talk to him. I just kept looking at him—and he was ready to climb out the window. He would say a few things to me, and I would say something back to him—and everything I said seemed to put him in more trouble."

"Well, Orion needed a name, and they wanted Arnold Schwarzenegger. I never for a second felt as if I had been shortchanged or anything. Because, over the years, I've learned about the business, and I wanted to see Jim get that movie off as much, maybe, as I wanted to be in it. So, it didn't hurt at all. Then, another *Terminator* role came up, and Jim said, 'You want to play one of the cops?' and I said, 'Sure. You bet.'"

"When this android came up in *ALIENS*, Jim and I had taken care of old karma, and I really wanted to play this kind of guy, because I had several ideas about what's going on inside somebody like that."

"If I had done *Terminator*, it would have been a completely different part. It wouldn't have been such a physical character, but more of a mental character: strong and powerful, but it would not have been gigantic. Powerful, because you know how strong hydraulics are."

The loss of the leading role in *Terminator* has not diminished Henriksen's enthusiasm at ap-

proaching the challenge of *ALIENS*. Bishop is part of the group—including 11 U.S. Colonial Marines—who accompany Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) on her return to the alien planet, where a new human colony has lost contact with Earth. In contrast to the android Ash (Ian Holm) in *ALIEN*, who Henriksen notes was limited to being "menacing but nothing else," Bishop is a more advanced model, a character with more dimension.

"I'll put it personally: Bishop's the first time I got a role where I was so aware of what I could learn from it,

with all of his characters, the hero is a side of him."

The rapport he shares with Cameron convinces the actor that "we crossed paths at the right time. I need to do this role right now. I feel fulfilled that I can be seen—even though it's an android—as something more human than characters I was asked to play before. And that's outrageous, isn't it?"

"So, I'm very appreciative of the chance. I've been working my ass off. I got the script three months before we began shooting, and I started working then. I used all that time. I



and how far I could go with it," the actor explains. "I never got a chance to play an innocent before, and I have a streak of that in me. It's a big breakthrough, because I don't like getting typecast. It began to go that way, and suddenly, in the last four movies, I've turned it around."

"On *Dog Day Afternoon* [as a cop] and *Omen II*, I played killers or the hard side of somebody. I have an innocent streak in me, and I never get to play that. I'm not talking Pollyanna innocent, but an innocent vision of life."

Henriksen adds that Cameron had more mechanical visions on his mind. "Jim has always had a fascination with androids. In many ways, Jim would be an actor if he wasn't what he is, a hard working director," Henriksen says. "He's not very expressive at times, not like an actor is—he loves actors because they can do that. In his life, he does it another way. So he has a fascination with androids and robots, because it's a side of him that he's investigating. As

Under the care of devil's emissary Sgt. Neff (Henriksen), Damien Thorn (Jonathan Scott-Taylor) continues his satanic education in *Damien—Omen II*.

came to Jim with ideas that were so off-the-wall, but it did get us thinking in a certain direction. And I don't regret discarding anything."

Henriksen isn't the only actor from *Terminator* who is also appearing in *ALIENS*. Michael (The Fan) Biehn (STARLOG #108) is Corporal Hicks, and Bill Paxton, who played a punk in Cameron's hit, portrays Hudson.

Acting alongside Sigourney Weaver, the sole returning cast member from *ALIEN*, proved to be a rewarding experience as well.

"Sigourney and I were really happy," Henriksen observes. "She has begun to understand more about Ripley from this movie. It's very interesting the way she talks about this movie as if *ALIEN*, the first film, never existed."

"She's discovering new things about Ripley that the first movie didn't give her. Which is outrageous."



For *The Visitor*, a bizarre and confusing Italian horror flick, Henriksen played an evil government man trying to control Joanne Nail's occult powers.

That's a real tribute to her and to Cameron's writing.

"I guess the biggest deal with this whole thing," Henriksen says of *ALIENS*, "is I'm not going to be cut from this movie. I've done many movies in the last 10 years where the cutting has just wiped my parts out. They were, however, not pivotal characters. So, when something has to go, that's going to be it. *ALIENS* is a big, big benefit to an actor like me. I've always known if I just hang on, I'll have the chance—and I'm getting it.

"This is my third film with Jim. I have to audition, it's not like he gives them to me. I have to come up with something that really will serve the

film—otherwise, I don't want to do it, and he doesn't want to do it. So, it has been a great relationship."

Their collaboration essentially began by coincidence, when Cameron was setting up his first feature, the low budget *Piranha II: The Spawning*. "Jim had a producer with whom I had already worked in Italy," Henriksen explains. "I had done a lead in one of his horror films, *The Visitor*, and he was promoting me to Jim. So, then Jim saw that movie and decided that I would be good in his movie."

The cast and crew descended on Jamaica to lense the quickie sequel, which, incidentally, had little to do with Joe Dante's original New World

Pictures hit. Henriksen did not meet with Cameron until he arrived on the tropical location.

"It was Jim's first movie, and at that time, he was pretty much the same way he is now," the actor recalls. "He altered the script and made it worth something. He designed all of the special effects fish. He only got three hours sleep a night. He was obsessed with his work. I never saw anybody like him."

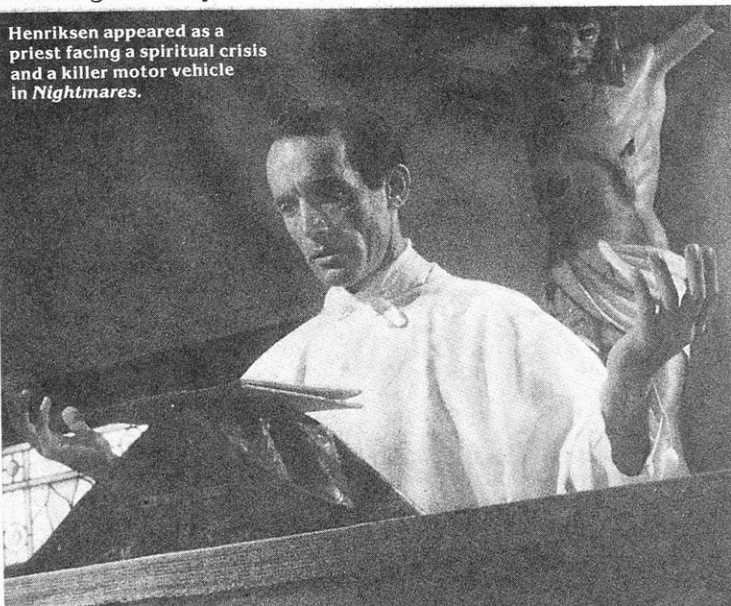
In what is undoubtedly the greatest flying piranha movie ever made, Henriksen had the lead role of Steve, chief law officer of the Caribbean island which falls prey to the airborne, Cameron-designed flesh-eaters. Although the fish weren't real, some of the dangers of shooting were. "I broke my hand jumping out of a helicopter," Henriksen remembers. "I did about a 40 foot jump into the ocean, to save my kids in the movie. They had no stuntmen, so I jumped out of this moving helicopter. My hand hit my knee and it broke. I finished the movie with a busted right hand."

Other aspects of *Piranha II's* production were less physically destructive, but more artistically so. The producers, Henriksen says, kept creating new problems. "They were really getting in the way of everything. They would come to the set with two full new pages of dialogue—monologues and stuff—15 minutes before we were going to shoot. It wasn't Jim's fault, it was really the producer putting a squeeze on him, negotiating: 'I'll give you five more flying fish if you make the actors say this . . . ' It became like that.

"When they were cutting it in Rome, they locked Jim out of the

(continued on page 65)

Henriksen appeared as a priest facing a spiritual crisis and a killer motor vehicle in *Nightmares*.



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