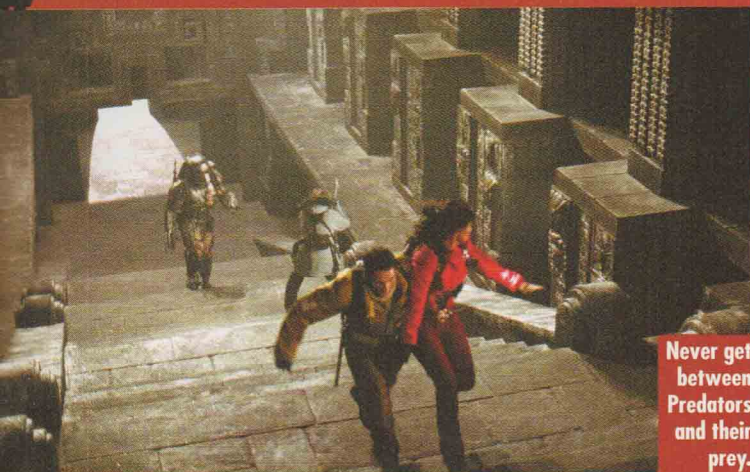


MONSTER INVASION

THE FANGORIA FRIGHT FILE OF UP-TO-THE-MINUTE NEWSBREAKS AND OTHER HORRIBLE HAPPENINGS

"ALIEN VS. PREDATOR"

The battle comes to Earth



Never get between Predators and their prey.

It all began back in 1990 with a throwaway moment at the end of Stephen Hopkins' *Predator 2*: Among the many trophies seen in the visiting Predator's ship was the skull of an Alien warrior. That was all it took to get genre fans salivating at the idea of contemporary horror cinema's two most iconic extraterrestrial monsters duking it out. Soon enough, Dark Horse published the first of its highly successful *Alien vs. Predator* comics, a concept that quickly gained support among fans of both franchises and swiftly mutated into a series of video games. A movie version was, many thought, the next obvious step. And with Fox having produced both franchises, this tantalizing notion seemed a genuine possibility. Alas, much like last year's *Freddy vs. Jason*, the project became mired in development hell for over a decade as countless scripts were written and discarded.

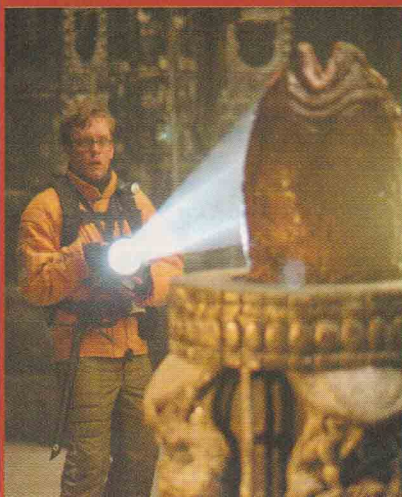
That is, until British filmmaker Paul W.S.

Anderson came on board last year to write and direct, and the long-gestating project finally became a reality. A lifelong fan of Ridley Scott's *Alien*, Anderson had long dreamed of his own *Alien vs. Predator* before being offered his shot at it. "I had the idea for the actual storyline probably nine or 10 years ago," he says, taking a break on *Alien vs. Predator*'s Prague set. "It came out in an organic way, in that you sit around in a pub and talk about what would happen if an Alien took on a Predator. Who's tougher? It's like one of those things you do as a kid. Shark

Weyland, Sanaa (*Blade*) Lathan's explorer Alexa "Lex" Woods and Raoul Bova's archaeologist Sebastian De Rosa, go to investigate it. Once inside, the group, also including Ewen (*Trainspotting*) Bremner, *Resident Evil*'s Colin Salmon and Tommy (*Trauma*) Flanagan, encounter far more than they expected. The pyramid, it transpires, has been used for thousands of years by young Predators to be trained as adult hunters. Their arrival—there are three this time—is meant to trigger the release of a brood of Alien warriors specially reared by a captured Alien Queen.

"She's been in cryo-stasis," explains visual FX supervisor John Bruno, "placed there by

How do you like your eggs? An explorer may soon be breakfast in *Alien vs. Predator*.



vs. tiger? *Alien vs. Predator* is what you do as an adult."

AVP, as Anderson prefers to call it, has been conceived as a sequel to the *Predator* movies and a prequel to the *Alien* franchise. It begins with something sinister (but unseen) happening at an Antarctic whaling station in 1904 before fast-forwarding 100 years to the discovery of a massive pyramid buried deep beneath the Antarctic ice. A team of scientists, led by Lance Henriksen's Charles Bishop

Predators, just to lay eggs to make new Aliens, so they can have their little fights." But it's the humans who set off the game, and with the walls of the pyramid reconfiguring every 10 minutes, they're trapped inside, caught up in a bloody battle between the two killer species. As the ad line states: "Whoever wins, we lose."

Henriksen's presence is no coincidence, nor is his character's name: It's Anderson's way of linking AVP to the *Alien* franchise. Weyland is a billionaire industrialist and one half of the Weyland-Yutani Corporation, the infamous Company that has been pursuing an Alien since Ian Holm was prepared to sacrifice the crew of the *Nostramo* in Scott's original. He's also the physical model for Bishop, the android Henriksen played in *Aliens* and *Alien³*. "He has made his money in shipping, robotics, he's got a giant megacorporation and the thing is, he's dying," Henriksen reveals. "So his last wish is to do something that will leave a mark—something of quality, of essence, as opposed to just money."

Part of what distinguished Anderson's take from those that had gone before was that his is set on Earth, rather than in space. "Most of them took the Predator to the world of the Alien, and I believe it's no coincidence that Fox never made those movies," he says. "For many reasons, they probably felt familiar. It's like, you've seen four *Alien* movies already, now you're going to see another and it's going to be running around in spaceship corridors. People are excited about the idea of the Aliens on Earth."

Indeed, it's a palpable thrill just to stand on the fog-filled snowscape set, watching ADI's Tom Woodruff Jr. and Alec Gillis, longtime members of the *Alien* team, put a fully animatronic Queen through her paces. "It has more points of movement than the T. rex on *Jurassic Park*, and that was an amazing puppet to start with," reveals Woodruff, who, in addition to his FX creation chores, once again steps inside a suit to play a number of warrior Aliens.

As the Queen rears up to her full 16-foot height, facing off against Lex and a Predator known as Scar on account of his facial markings, Anderson can scarcely contain his glee, informing Fango that this is the first time the Alien Queen and a Predator have been together in the same frame. It's an iconic, goosebump-inducing movie moment. But AVP is also a double-edged sword, one that sometimes keeps him awake at night.

"I always wanted to make an *Alien* movie, and now that I am, all I feel is intense pressure because I'm making an *Alien* movie," he notes. "This is really exciting and really worrying."

—Mark Salisbury