



REMATCH

After a mixed reaction to the first monster-mash up, *Aliens Vs Predator: Requiem* promises to be a different beast. But can two untried directors rescue the franchise? James White braved a wintry night on set in Vancouver to find out...



POINT

Phere are three things to worry about as *SPX* stands on the middle of a small line of shops in early November 2006 being used largely so slightly ahead by the production team of *Aliens Vs Predator Requiem*. One is the presence of several deadly Xenomorphs hunting a group of humans. Another is that it's midweek, and the near-flooding rain is making us worry that we'll see no exposure before the marauding monsters get close. And finally – most dangerous of all – the studio publicists are barking, making sure no one spills too much juicy detail.

Welcome to Garrison, Colorado Co., as the locals prefer to call it, Vancouver, British Columbia. Yet, the Canadian city is once again holding for small town Americans and it's here that first-time director Colin and Greg Strause have decided to bring the iconic extraterrestrial battles for a second bite at a battle royale. They do an uphill battle; the first *Aliens Vs Predator* arrived to extremely mixed reviews and scorn for the numerous changes that director Paul W.S. Anderson inflicted on the franchise. And that was nothing compared to the furor over the disclosed, horrendously rating. But it took in the franchise's biggest box office haul to date... Hence, a sequel.

HARDCORE GORE

This time, we're promised, things will be very different. Co-director Greg Strause takes a few minutes off from his hectic schedule to stand in the bone-chilling rain with his co-star (lucky bastard) and tell *SPX* why he thinks *Requiem* has a fighting chance. "Our take on this movie is to get back to the gritty horror roots of the *Alien* property while still keeping the classic mission movie elements of *Predator*, which we really liked," he says. "So we had to have both those in an *AFP* film. And we can't stress how corn gore quite enough. That's what we're bringing to this."

Anytime softening the name-warped down violence from the first film is an for a pleasant, blood-splattered surprise. [Fox Chairman Tom Rothman had an interview where he announced the movie is going to be rated R. That's going to really set the film apart from the last one. And Daniel Peacock, our



EVOLVING THE ALIEN

HOW THE BIG BAD'S CHANGED

Creatures experts Ross Wiggins and Alan Collier have been with the Paleontologists since working on *Aliens*. We got them to talk about the changes for each film.

ALIENS 1986



Alan Collier

"We started on *Aliens* 20 years ago [back when we were just] sculptors and painters. We sculpted the alien... Companion

ended up to receive [Roger] Corman phone up that he could see the bone structure. This was the way he was shooting, he wanted the head to catch the light, so he actually made interesting things in terms of light and shadow. So we had to really do it complicated for the performers to move around [so they were] basically just suspended there with raised bone sections."

ALIEN 3 1992



Alan Collier

"When we did *Alien 3*, we put the stone back on [the] David [Fincher] took the idea of that, and it was kind of a state, something

that's full, inflated body sort, you know like... It was indicating [the] alien's original form. He said to me 'we don't do anything we could do more [so] we were being true to the design of the alien, just the becoming [entity].' David was never going to take it home in person."

ALIEN RESURRECTION 1997



Ross Wiggins

"For *Alien Resurrection*, we took [the] original [alien] design and kept them [but] we added some [more] detail to it. We added a few extra sections and stuff [and] just fleshed [them] out a bit."



Inside it was now a pale, fragile-looking creature in its watery environment, with its mouth open in a silent scream.

AVP: ALIEN PREDATOR 2004



part was very [hard]. Predator would [have] come in and a crew [would] go [to] quickly turn [it] into [what] it was. That's the [Predator] that [came] from [the] first [one]. [It] was [an] attempt [to] do [as] CG of any of the [aliens] we had [from] the original [stuff] and [they] didn't

AVP: ALIEN PREDATOR REQUIEM 2007



presenting [the] [aliens] in [a] more [realistic] way... [It] is [a] CG [stuff]. [It] has [a] lot [of] [aliens], which can [be] quite [expensive] for an [entire] [film]. [It] took [a] [lot] [of] [time] [and] [effort] to [make] [it] look [as] [good] as [it] did [in] the [original].

cinematographer is bringing an incredible look and style to the film, which will also set it apart. There are a few other surprises...

One of those surprises, apart from having hired the man who shot the original *Titanic* (James Cameron), is that for a pair of directors used to working on big effects movies like *Terminator 2* and *Predator*, the brothers are making heavy use of practical effects. "Colin and I come from a visual effects background – we own a CG company – but to bring it down to its horror roots, nothing beats doing stuff in-camera. A lot of effort has been put into doing the creature effects, and all the effects in general for real where it's possible and practical. We've said over and over again that less is more and what you don't see scares you more. Some of

that is done by what we're looking at and what lenses we choose, lighting... It's whatever plays in the shadows and sometimes your imagination can frighten you more than any creature can. Every situation requires us to pull out one or two of those tricks to achieve the result we want."

BACK TO BASICS

Strasser assures us the decisions are strict about following established law, even in the ever-shifting world of the Xenomorph. "Colin and I are very respectful of the canon. We have to adhere to the rules as they're very important." The approach comes from the brothers' love of the early *Alien* movies – specifically Ridley Scott and James Cameron's takes on the unseaworthy creatures. Rather than glory in empty spectacle as the original *AVP* was accused of doing, the Strassers' back-to-



Levi Strasser left and Greg Strasser

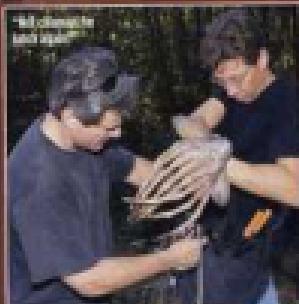


Go easy, guys! It's a head, remember!



What ya looking at?

"Our take is to get back to *Alien's* gritty horror while still keeping *Predator's* classic mission movie elements" *Chris Mowatt*



basic approach stretches to the characters as well as the tone. "I've heard what Ridley said about *Alien*, in that they took an 'A' movie approach to what would have been a 'B' monster movie. He's talked about his movie as "Texas Chainsaw In Space", or truck drivers in space and set our own as the equivalent on Earth. There are so many things about *Alien*, so many classic elements - the environment, the nature of the people and how they get whisked down to one vulnerable woman running around in her underwear. There are just so many things about it that are captivating. *Aliens* we love because it has the mission movie aspects to it. In *Aliens*, the most amazing thing about it is that it's really a love story between a mom and her teenage daughter. People don't think about the film that way. It's not the martians and the lighting, it's Sigourney adopting this young girl. We're stressing the fact that we have great characters that people are going to want to get to know and have feelings for. We want to get back to having a strong, human struggle."

Unfortunately, what they also have is a binding contract not to reveal specifics. Ask about any specific plot point and – as Greg jokes – "the shield goes up" and we see our anti-policeman start searching for a spiky Predator staff. Moving swiftly on, we move up with one of the movie's ensemble cast, Barbara Arkowski. A veteran of TV show *24*, she's putting her CTU background to good use playing a soldier returning from war who finds the home front is a little more violent than the conflict she's just left. And if you've seen the trailer and thought, "Hm... Sigourney Weaver... you're not alone. "I think they are drawing on some of that," admits Arkowski as a member of the costume department wraps her soldier form in a



Joey T. Vettese
Barbara Arkowski plays the take-charge doctor.

Instead of watching Kiefer Sutherland have all the gun fun, "It's a childhood fantasy, seriously. Because as much as I wouldn't want to have to defend my life, we all have war games in us and playing those out is so much fun. I had some gun training and some helicopter training with an amazing ex-Army Ranger. They're letting me have a field day."

Like her director, she's also wrapped in a cloak of secrecy ("I don't know what I can say! I swear my whole career has been about secrecy and photobombs! We have *Aliens* and *Predators*, they basically"). But she at least seems to enjoy the fact that this new movie has

more depth. "It does have a lot to do with government and a government's responsibility and what would happen in this situation. It takes it on a level that you can say that... It's *Aliens* and *Predators*, but also it does talk about something like this happened and would the government react to that? We actually are planning to do that, so if it would happen to us, we treat it as a metaphor."

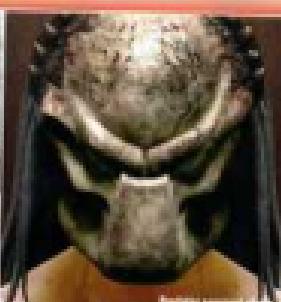
Arkwoski might be all about

"We can't stress hardcore gore quite enough!" *Requiem*

subtext, but it's fellow shop Lewis who cuts to the core of the type of movie – whether you're the camera or in the audience – truly appealing. "It's fucking gaudy in a space monstrosity sort of take. "There's a part of you that takes your stuff very seriously, studies the various film schools, there's a part of yourself that's like 'I'm gonna pull out a gun and kill shit.'



Working on the *Requiem* prop.



Master puppetry





"Our hero Predator is almost like James Bond – he's got gadgets, he's got an attitude" **MARK GUNN**



Brilliant creation of lots of different interchangeable parts.

Who are you waiting for?



Always interested with his inventiveness in making the movie, perfect!



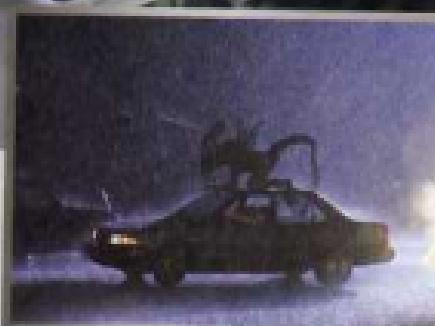
"It looks like I'm not going home."

like his cast mates, he's afflicted with contract clauses... "There's definitely a lot of toddler in this movie. I can't say who lives, but they're not pulling any punches." He gives when we prod him to spill on whether he makes it to the final reel.

PREDATOR EODD

Thank goodness, then, for insurance experts Alex Callis and Tom Woodruff Jr., who have been with the *Alien* franchise almost from the start (see box on page 40). The joint houses at Amalgamated Dynamics are providing all the practical special effects for the film - a heavy workload, given the number of shots the brothers Steens are completing on set instead of shooting for CG. Callis and Woodruff are only too happy to chat away about the beasts they love so much, including the brand-new Predator character we'll get to meet. "Because he's damaged - here are the details... Our hero Predator is his own character - not quite exactly the type you've seen before. This is a stealth Predator. He comes in to cover the situation, he's a Jason-like James Bond. He's got gadgets, he's got an attitude and

he's a veteran Alien fighter. So you won't see him walking into a corridor and getting trounced by these Aliens - he's a lot smarter than that. We refer to him as 'The Wolf,' like Harvey Keitel in *Pulp Fiction*. ... He's much more fluid. Ian, the guy who plays him has been working out and doing yoga and martial arts so he can move better. He won't be like the American football types of stuff; he's more fluidic and stealthy." And he's got some wonderful new toys to boot. "The Predator has a chestnut case that he pulls his great gear out of. He has some automatic knives he can place to outwit the Aliens. He's also eradicating evidence of dead humans and Aliens. And he has a cool medical device to fix himself." Uh-oh, here comes that plot twist again... **SFX**

Let's see how the *Aliens* cope with that.

SECOND OUT

OTHER COSTUME CRITTER FACES



JABBA THE HUTT
"I'm not a real Jabba," says costume designer Michael Cerveris. "We had to make sure he was a real Jabba. A real space alien."



THE CAT FROM OUT
VS. THE HORROR FROM
After a three-hour roll of the dice,
and the ingenuity of model
makers, director John Landis
has victory with one such crea-



HAIRY ATTACKER
VS. SPOCK

"It's a mixture of live action and the animation which gives you another dimension," says Landis. "Spock gets after a spore head in a helmet because he's



GODZILLA VS. MU

"The monster is a combination of live action and computer-generated imagery," says director Roland Emmerich. "Godzilla will be the leading star of the movie, but it's a movie that's really about the people who are trying to stop him."



TOMMY WOODRUFF JR.

