

# AVP

*In both comics and games, these sci-fi icons go to war once more*

BY CHRIS M. ARNONE

Throughout their respective franchise histories, the best ways to deal with the Alien and Predator threats were exo-loaders, gigantic freakin' guns and mud baths. But this year, your best defense against these brutal foes will be a controller in one hand and a bag and board in the other.

"I thought I was all finished with AvP," said Randy Stradley, writer of Dark Horse Comics' six-issue miniseries *Aliens vs. Predator: Three World War*

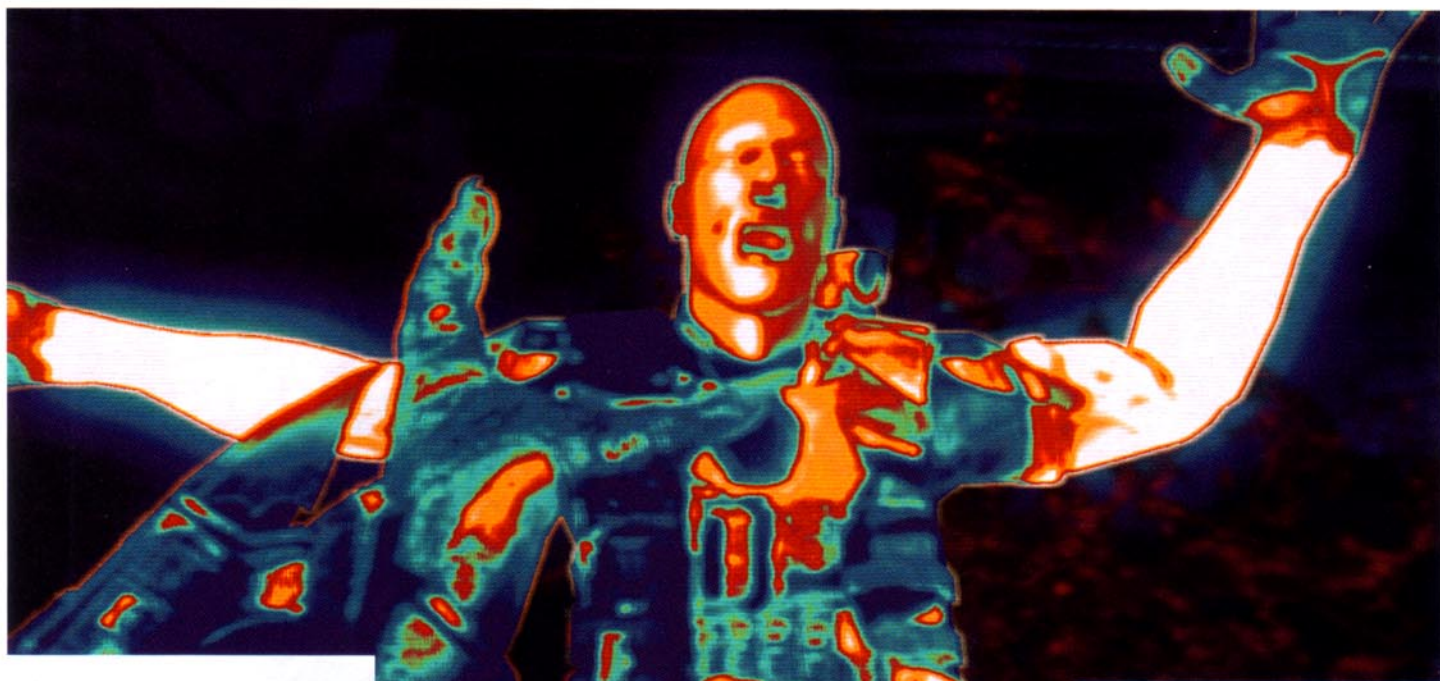
(#2 on sale Feb. 24). "I had nothing further to say on the subject—but coming back to Machiko Noguchi and her turbulent relationship with the Predators, tossing in another character from [1999's] *AvP: War*, and just getting back into the mindset of the Predators themselves revealed some interesting new possibilities. Toss in some of the stuff from the

newest *Aliens* and *Predator* series, and *Three World War* began to seem almost inevitable for me."

Meanwhile, Dark Horse isn't the only one bringing those infamous xenocidal factions to blows again this year. Sega and Rebellion Development are delivering *Aliens vs. Predator* to gamers in February, marking the thirteenth game based on the franchise. However, don't assume the folks at Rebellion won't be upping the ante.

"We worked on the original *AvP* game back in 1999, so we have a history with the franchise," said Tim Jones, head of Art and Design at Rebellion. "With this new game, we've gone back to that classic experience and worked out how to bring it up to date to current-gen





consoles, focusing on what really grabbed people about that game. We've effectively been enabled to make the game that we always wanted to make, and create a truly authentic Aliens and Predator experience."

In Sega/Rebellion's first-person shooter Aliens vs. Predator, fans can take on the role of an Alien, Predator or a Space Marine (or rather, Alien/Predator food).

## REDEMPTION SONG

Dark Horse continues the future-shock with 'Mass Effect: Redemption'

Commander Shepherd, hero of *Mass Effect*, is missing. Before *Mass Effect 2* slides into your Xbox 360 and PC, Dark Horse is bringing you *Mass Effect: Redemption*, bridging the gap between the games.

*Mass Effect*, Bioware's 2007 runaway sci-fi RPG hit, created such a rich universe that novels and fan fictions have abounded. *Redemption*—which kicked off in January; issue #2's on sale Feb. 3—will follow Dr. Liara T'soni as she searches for Shepherd across the *Mass Effect* universe,

including some places we've never seen before.

"We'll get to see some places and characters that have been part of the *Mass Effect* mythos, but which haven't been seen before up close," said *ME:R* scribe John Jackson Miller. "For example, Liara's hunt for Shepard begins at Omega, a space station that's sort of the antithesis of the Citadel—a rough and rowdy place outside civilized space. That was first depicted in one the novels, but this'll be readers' first chance to see it visualized." **CMA**

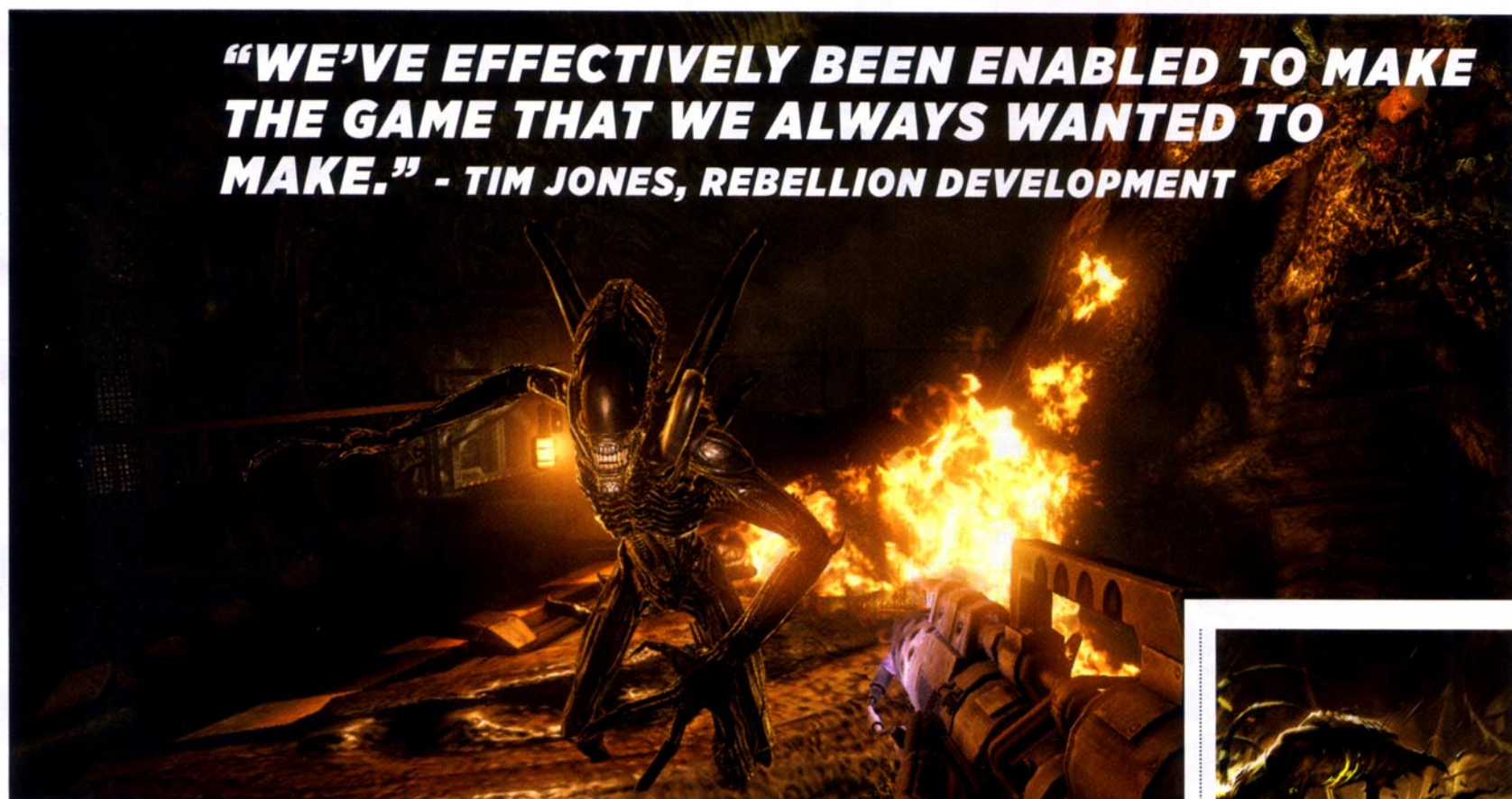
major motion pictures have grossed over \$300 million combined, in addition to three novels, 12 video games and a multitude of comic books to pit the Predators against their most dangerous prey.

Dark Horse recently revisited both the Aliens and Predator franchises with separate titles launching back in May and June of 2009, respectively, and are leading straight from those into *Three World War*. Stradley isn't one to buck the tradition of Aliens facing Predators with humans

stuck in the middle, but fans must be worrying if the guy who's been editor for many of Dark Horse's *Star Wars* titles still has the chops to get down and dirty with *AvP*.

"The two universes aren't so different," explained Stradley. "In the world of *Aliens* and *Predator*, the violence is more intense, more graphic, and in *Star Wars* the emotions are amped-up a bit more. At its most basic level, it comes down to Luke Skywalker trying to thwart the Predators, and Machiko

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will bring dramatically new gameplay to the venerable franchise. For example: "The Predator campaign is very different to other first-person shooters by the very nature of his weapons, abilities and hunting style," explained Jones. "It's about sticking to the shadows with your cloak on, leaping from treetop to treetop, and deciding whether to take out your enemy from afar with a ranged weapon or drop down from the canopy and slaughter them up close."

In contrast, the Alien experience will rely on speed, shadows and the insane climbing abilities of the vicious creatures to sneak up on and annihilate opponents in melee.

Like any good first-person shooter, online is where the game will really begin. With three distinctive factions in *Aliens vs. Predator*, the online play is offering equally distinct

game modes in addition to a standard deathmatch.

"Infestation" sees one player starting as an Alien and the rest as Marines," Jones said. "The Alien then attacks the Marines, and each Marine it kills re-spawns as an Alien, so it becomes a battle to be the very last Marine standing."

Much like the "Infestation" mode, "Predator Hunt" begins one player as a Predator while the others play marines. However, "Predator Hunt" is more akin to playing tag: kill the Predator, and tag, you're it. Be the Predator and take out marines for points.

All in all, it looks like 2010 will be a banner year for man-hunting space beasts...and a very bad year to be human. **W**

Noguchi fighting Darth Vader.

"Oh, jeez. I'm in deep trouble here, aren't I?"

[Laughs]

While Dark Horse gives us a front-row seat to the latest AvP chapter, Rebellion's new game will put players in the driver's seat of all three factions: Aliens, Predators and the Space Marines. While the marine campaign will play much like a standard first-person shooter, the Predator and Alien campaigns

