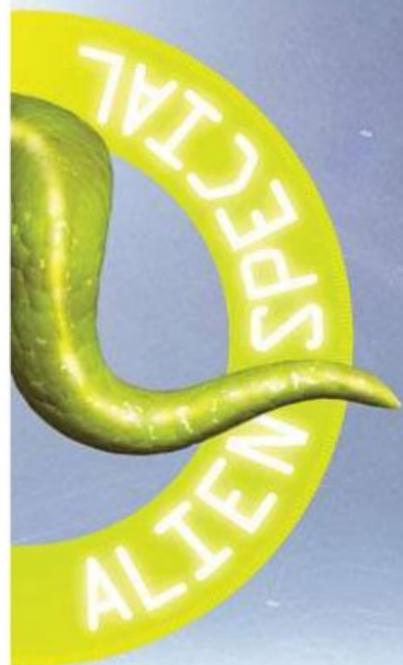


G O D S A N D



I T'S FITTING THAT *Prometheus*, a film dealing with no less a mystery than mankind's origins, should itself come cloaked in intrigue and wrapped in a thick blanket of speculation. But when the man behind it is responsible for two of the most groundbreaking science fiction films in history – *Alien* and *Blade Runner* – well, synapses should prepare to fire. Yes, after 30 years away from our sandbox, Sir Ridley Scott has come back to play. But what prompted the acclaimed director's return? Does *Prometheus* pick up where Scott's exploration of science fiction's possibilities left off? And is it a prequel to *Alien* or something... more?

Our search for answers begins with the man Scott enlisted to bring his vision to fruition, screenwriter-producer Damon Lindelof, who claims his own work is indebted to android dreams and xenomorphic nightmares.

"When I first saw the original *Alien*," Lindelof tells *SFX*, "I think it was on HBO or something like that – I must have been eight or nine at the time. I was terrified. I did not eat for a couple of days. There was a correlation between eating – I think it was because John Hurt was eating breakfast when the chest-bursting occurred. My brain said, 'As long I don't eat, that will not happen to me.' I don't think I quite understood that you first had to have something stuck to your face for a period of time to be in any kind of danger... Suffice to say the movie had a lasting impact on me.

"I think I saw *Blade Runner* maybe a year later. And in my head it was in the same world

as *Alien*. Maybe it was a sequel. I don't know. But I was like, 'Oh, there's robots in this that look exactly like people and they're kind of crazy, just like Ash was in *Alien*.' These movies looked and felt the same. They're kind of moody, they're dark, they're gritty. So it was easy for me to imagine the *Nostromo* had actually taken off from the same Earth that Deckard was now inhabiting. So I just drew a correlation between these movies without realising I was drawing that correlation because they were both directed by the same guy."

Decades later, in the wake of his success in co-creating *Lost*, Lindelof received a call from "that guy," after writer Jon Spaihts (*The Darkest Hour*) completed his draft of *Prometheus's* script.

"I had heard that Ridley was going to direct an *Alien* prequel, and then six months later my phone rang and a voice said, 'Are you available to talk to Ridley Scott?' And then I crashed into a telephone pole [laughs]. I answered the call. Ridley was like, 'Hey man, I'm gonna send you a script tonight.' He doesn't know he's Ridley Scott... So I read this thing and we went in and we had a meeting, and he was already very clearly saying, 'I want to come back to this genre. I want to do sci-fi again. I feel like this movie is just a little bit too close to *Alien*.' →



Girl With The Dragon Tattoo star Noomi Rapace plays Elizabeth Shaw.

MONSTERS

THE ALIEN IS BACK. OR IS IT? JOSEPH McCABE SHINES A LIGHT ON RIDLEY SCOTT'S POTENTIAL NEW CLASSIC, PROMETHEUS



A SHAW THING

NOOMI RAPACE ON PLAYING THE GIRL WITH THE NIFTY SPACE SUIT



Prometheus has been shrouded in secrecy. What can you actually tell us?

Well, not anything, really! It's hard. I got this... almost like a script... of what I can't say from Fox. I started to read and I was like, "What *can* I really say?"

In the trailer we see Shaw praying. Is she religious?

Me and Logan Marshall Green, Doctor Holloway, are the two team leaders, the scientists, the brains and the two who convinced other people to go on this mission. My character, Elizabeth Shaw, is a scientist and an archaeologist. But she's religious so she has this strange combination of being a scientist and still believing in God - he doesn't, so we have this funny conflict.

Do you consider the film a prequel to *Alien*?

When I first met Ridley they were calling it a prequel to *Alien*. But when the script came he said, "It's not a prequel to *Alien*. This movie stands on its own." And then "It's not Ripley, and you're not related to her, but it's in the same landscape, it's in the same universe." All the *Alien* fans will be able to see strains, and they can probably connect things from our movie to the original.

When *Alien* was made they couldn't fall back on CGI to create that alien landscape - how much of this film exists in a computer?

The amazing thing is we only used green screen maybe five or six times, because they built all those amazing sets. Ridley came to me one day after we finished on another stage and he said, "Come on, I'm going to show you something." And then we went onto that set [with the big stone face], and he opened the doors and I was like, "Wow!" I got tears in my eyes because it was so powerful.

Jordan Farley



"It's not really my job to say, 'Here's what I think you should do.' The perspective that I was able to bring to it though was that I'm a fanboy. So my attitude was like, 'Look, for what it's worth, Ridley, whether you choose to ignore me or not, that's your prerogative. You *should* ignore me - you're Ridley Scott. That being said, as a fan, these are some of the things that I might want to see in this movie. I'm not saying that the movie should be about these things. But I think if I waited 30 years for you to do another sci-fi film and I did not see these things, I may be a little disappointed. So let me just offer up that perspective and do with it what you will.' And he'd say, 'Oh, that's interesting. Like what for example?' Then that sort of catalysed a number of conversations."

"Of course he didn't want to do anything that he'd already done before," says Lindelof. "I've done this stuff before," he said, 'but there are big ideas in it that are unique in and of themselves. Is there a way to do that?' I said, 'Well, I think that's what we have to do. Because if there were a sequel to this movie that we're working on' - which eventually became *Prometheus* - 'it would not be *Alien*.'

"Normally that's the definition of a prequel, that it precede the other movie. But if the ending to this movie is just going to be the room that John Hurt walks into that's full of eggs, there's nothing interesting in that, because we know where it's going to end. Good stories, you *don't* know where they're gonna end. So this movie will hopefully contextualise the original *Alien* so that when you watch it again, maybe you know a little bit more. But you don't fuck around with that movie. It has to stand on its own. It's a classic."

SATISFYING THE FANS

Lindelof is quick to point out that although *Alien* and *Prometheus* diverge at a certain point, fans of Scott's earlier work won't walk away from the latter film disappointed.

"When you go to the concert that is this movie, you want the Stones to play 'Satisfaction'. So there is this sense that 'We want you to do something new, Ridley, but just

The ship's basketball game fell foul of some green goo.



give us a *little* bit of space jockey. C'mon, just play it! Even in the encore!' And he's given us the movie that we all want to see."

In giving the fans what they want, Scott retained such details from *Alien* as the Nostromo crew members' space helmets; a design some may consider dated, but one Scott believes is just practical.

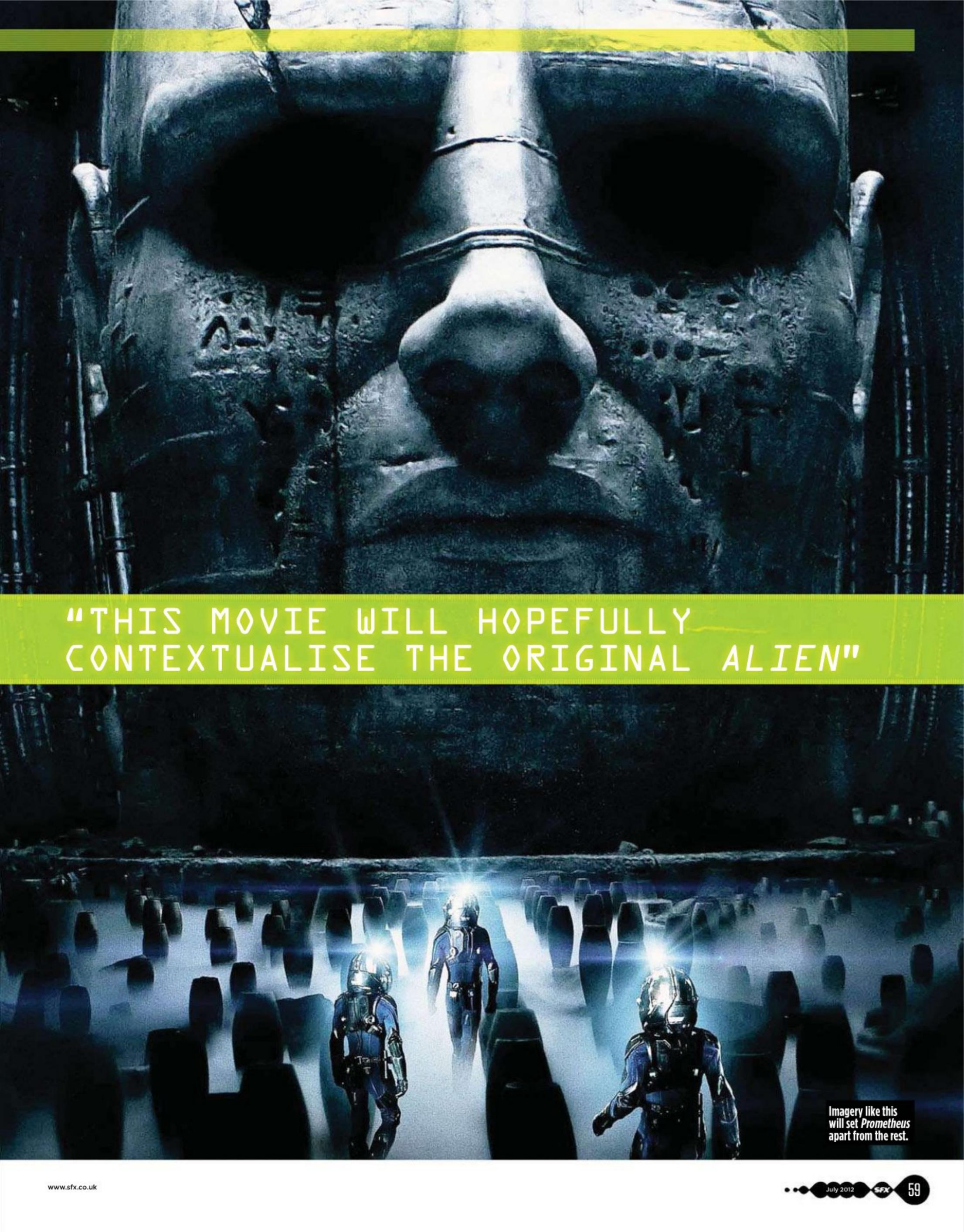
"I wanted the fully spherical glass helmet," Scott explains to us. "In fact I read in this Steve Jobs biography that he wanted to make his entire office of this glass which is called gorilla glass. And they said, 'We don't make it any more.' So Steve Jobs actually reopened the factory and started to remake gorilla glass... If I'm in 2083 and I'm going into space, why would I design a helmet that has blind spots when what I want is a globe where I've got 360 [vision]. Glass by then would be light and you wouldn't be able to break it with a bullet."

Scott's ease with technology - both on screen and off - is particularly evident in the character of David (played by Michael Fassbenber), the android assigned to the crew of *Prometheus's* titular spaceship, who spends years in solitude, as the ship's crew is in cryogenic sleep en route to a distant planet that may hold the key to mankind's beginnings.

"I think what's important is the story thing," says Scott. "There's nothing new about an android or a robot. In fact, it's a hundred years old, that idea. So embrace who it is, and by embracing it he becomes that much more interesting, because he's just part of the ship. In a sense, he's not just butler - he's →



In space no one can see that you've got a silly haircut.

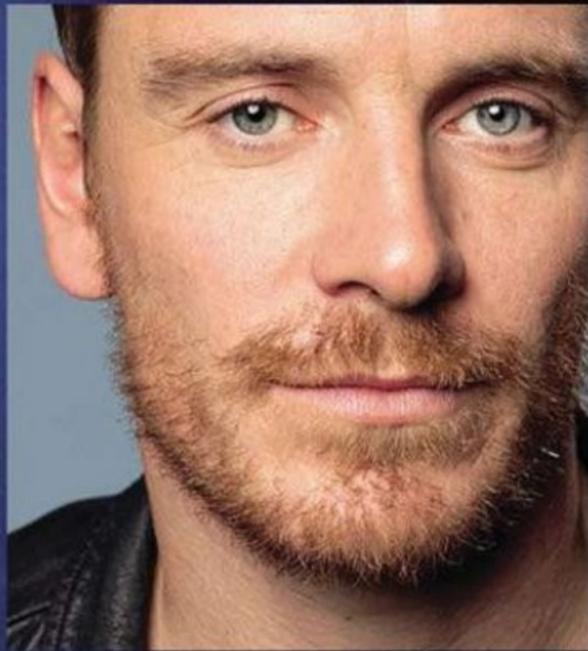


"THIS MOVIE WILL HOPEFULLY
CONTEXTUALISE THE ORIGINAL ALIEN"

Imagery like this
will set *Prometheus*
apart from the rest.

HE, ROBOT

THE PROLIFIC MICHAEL FASSBENDER ON PLAYING THE ANDROID DAVID



How did you prepare for playing a robot? Did you look at what Ian Holm did in *Alien*?

► I didn't watch what Ian Holm did, but I watched *Blade Runner*, and read the script a lot of times. I definitely wanted to have a robot element to him. Greg Louganis, the Olympic diver, came into my head for some reason. The way he walked was my starting point with the physicality. There was an economy of movement, so you know that if he moves a muscle it's to do something. Otherwise he remains kind of in neutral.

Does David have human characteristics?

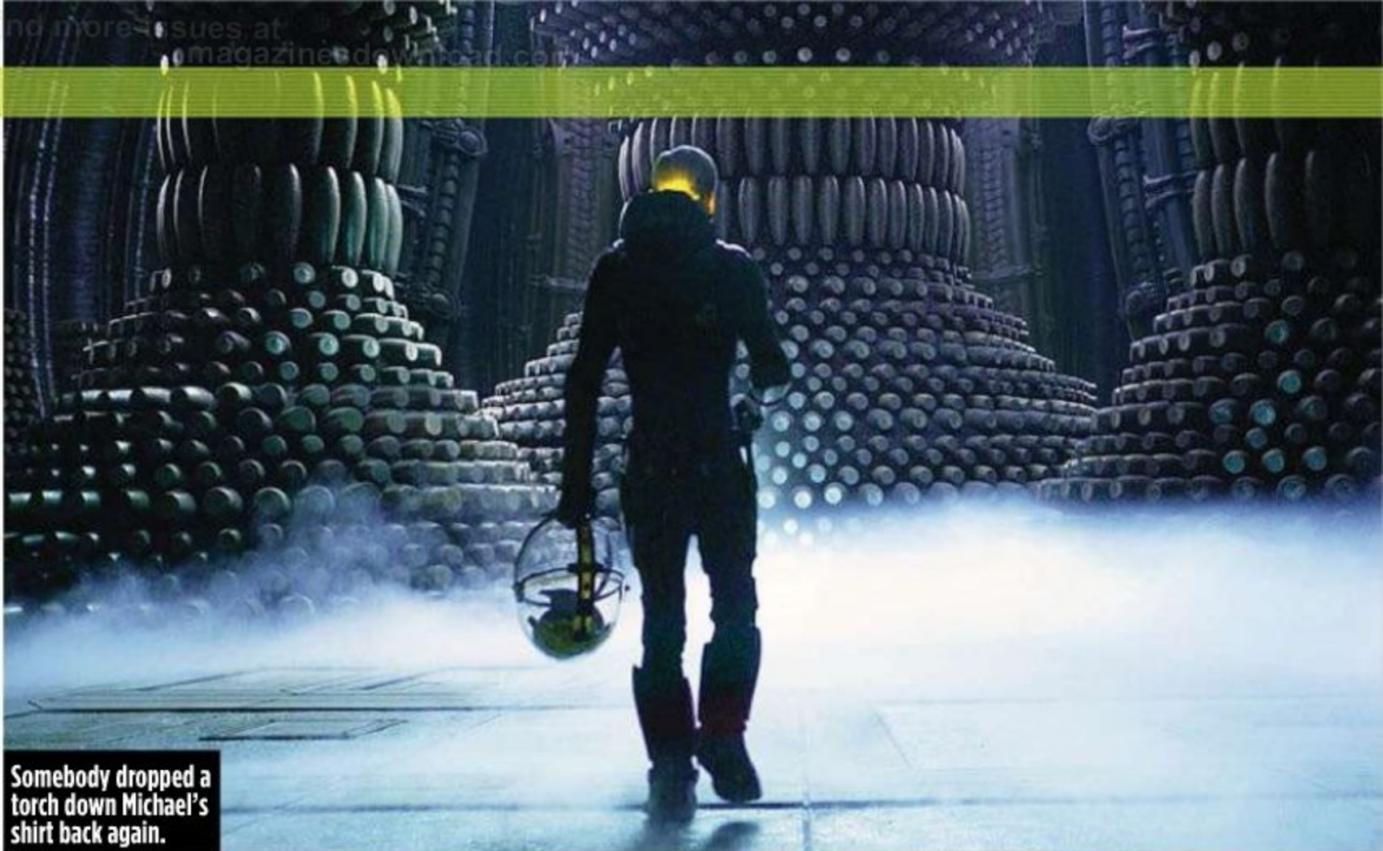
► You look for the moments where maybe a human personality trait is bleeding into this robot. They've designed this robot to have certain reactions but perhaps not with the logic of those reactions in terms of emotions. I thought, "Would the emotions bleed in at certain moments, and would the robot start to develop their own sort of personality because of it?"

How does the Greek myth of Prometheus tie in with the movie?

► Prometheus is the name of the spaceship, and there is a philosophical kind of core to the film, this idea that we're trying to not only find our creators, but sometimes challenge them - and then, what are the consequences of that? The essence of the film is like, where have we come from? Why did we evolve over this section of time? Was there an interference?

It's been teased that *Prometheus* has strands of *Alien* DNA. How deep does that DNA go?

► It's a total revelation, in terms of the world that we're entering into with *Prometheus*, that what we realise in the *Alien* films is just a tiny particle of it. But what's cool about it is that the *Alien* fans will recognise things. There will be enough tributary factors that *Prometheus* will satisfy that element for sure. **Richard Edwards**



Somebody dropped a torch down Michael's shirt back again.

housekeeper, maintenance man, everything. He's the only one who legitimately doesn't need to sleep. From that, he also becomes extremely useful during the story as it evolves.

"There's a great scene there where Holloway [Logan Marshall-Green] - who's actually a bit of a bitch occasionally - says to [David], 'Hey you, boy...' which I thought was real cheeky. Then he says to him, 'Why are you wearing one of those suits? You don't have to breathe... Ah, we're making you guys just like us.' The android retorts with a great sense of humour, 'Not too close I hope.' You don't know who's insulting who there."

"A familiar theme in robotic storytelling," adds Lindelof, "and you see it in *Blade Runner* and *AI* - is the Pinocchio story, which is the robots that want to be human, or robots that are developing souls. I think that the idea behind David - and that idea started with John Spaihts, and it definitely held a tremendous amount of interest for Ridley, and so we pushed it even further - is that he doesn't want to be a human at all. He doesn't care about humans. In fact, what was most interesting about him is that the mission appears to be a human-led mission to determine the origin of the species. And here you have this robot amongst them, who is amongst his creators. So he has a unique perspective in terms of what it is like to be in the company of your creators that the humans do not yet have. And he can use that perspective to inform everything he says and does in the movie. That felt like something that I hadn't seen before."

UNUSUAL APPROACH

Scott displays his own unique perspective when describing his approach to filming as complex a movie as *Prometheus*: "You create the parameters early on in your drama box. A three-act play is a drama box. You create your ground rules, stay within that, and then the chances are you've got quite a good play. As soon as anything goes, it doesn't work. It's bullshit. Some writers work on it with a board, moving things about, literally moving everything around like chess pieces. Some people just start at the beginning and then end, and then read it and go,

'Christ, that doesn't work' or 'It does' or 'I have to do that and that...' Everything's always on the move."

Lindelof explains his own approach to storytelling in the context of Scott's long-awaited film, and its inspirations.

"If the question is, 'Did we talk about *2001*?' - of course we did. That is a seminal movie in the genre. It preceded *Alien* by a decade, and just in terms of the ideas advanced in that movie... Obviously it was an adaptation of the Arthur C Clarke story, but Kubrick really changed the game there, and I think defined an entire aesthetic and inspired a number of filmmakers, including Ridley. So yes, it's part of the conversation. I think that there's no such thing - and maybe this is just because I'm not talented enough to discover it - as an original sci-fi movie. All those ideas are sort of out there. So really what it's about at this point now is creating mash-ups. Taking interesting ideas that have not necessarily been paired together before. And putting them together in a hopefully new way that feels familiar, because we're comfortable with some of the tropes of the genre, for lack of a better word. We've all seen ships moving through space or landing on planets, and people in spacesuits walking across that terrain, discovering things there that perhaps mean them harm. Those are all familiar ideas in sci-fi..."

"But perhaps," teases the scribe, "if the people in those suits are informed or driven by slightly different motives, then you bring a different bandwidth to it." **SFX**

Prometheus is released by Twentieth Century Fox on Friday 1 June.



Ridley Scott's still going strong at 74 years of age.

THINGS T

THE FUTURE HISTORY OF THE ALIEN/PROMETHEUS UNIVERSE - AND A FEW ALIEN-SHAPED CONUNDRUMS

2996 BC

The Predators come to Earth and make contact with early humans, using their shiny, glowy technology to impress locals who think they're slimy, snarling gods. A century later, the Predators bring the xenomorphs to Earth for regular hunting.

1987

A Predator attacks a crack team of US commandos in the Guatemalan jungle. He proves no match for commanding officer's one-liners.



1997

Another Predator's hunting holiday in LA cut short when he messes with the wrong guy from *Lethal Weapon*. He does, however, have a xenomorph head as a souvenir on the wall of his spaceship.



2004

Parallel universe alert! Charles Weyland Bishop (who bears an uncanny resemblance to future Sulaco synthetic person Bishop) funds an expedition to Antarctica to investigate a pyramid buried in the ice where Predators hunt xenomorphs for sport. Seeing as the Peter Weyland in *Prometheus* was born in 1990, that his parents were professors, and Weyland Industries was founded years later on, we think it's safe to say that the events of *AVP* do not exist in the *Prometheus* timeline.



2065

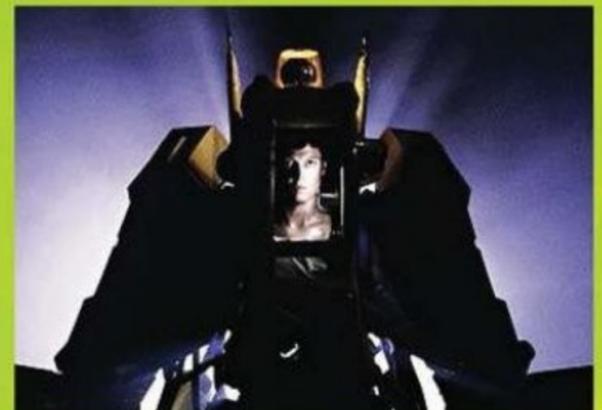
Weyland Industries teams up with the US government to put together a military peacekeeping force. "Colonial Marines" has a nice ring to it...

2065

The Sir Peter Weyland Memorial Library is built in Washington, DC. Does this quash rumours that the old guy in the *Prometheus* trailers is Weyland? Did he build his memorial before he died? Or, can he add the ability to beat death to a CV that already features reversing global warming, a knighthood at 25, being a Nobel laureate several times over, running a multiplanetary corporation with some 837 million employees, and inventing pretty much everything that might turn out useful in the *Alien* universe?

2056

Weyland gets patent on "Method and Apparatus for a mechanised exo-skeleton used for lifting and moving heavy objects" - but we'll just call it a Power Loader, shall we?



2089

Doctors Holloway and Shaw discover signs of alien life (with a small "a") on the Isle Of Skye.



2091 (22 JUNE)

A Weyland research vessel named *Prometheus* embarks on a mission to discover the origins of sentient life. We have a feeling things are going to go very, very wrong.



2093 (21 DECEMBER)

Crew wake up from hypersleep (after two years, four months) leading to events of *Prometheus*.

2122

Commercial towing vessel *Nostromo* responds to a "distress beacon" on LV-426, and takes on an unwanted passenger who wipes out the entire crew, with the exception of Warrant Officer Ripley.



ALIEN SPESCTAL

O C C O M M E . . .

SPOILER WARNING!

THERE'S WILD SPECULATION HERE, BUT WE MIGHT HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD BY CHANCE

2004

All species too embarrassed to talk about what happens when a xenomorph-carrying Predator ship crash-lands in Nowheresville USA.



2015

Peter Weyland makes his first billion in the solar panel business. His future is bright.

2023

Peter Weyland (now Sir Peter Weyland) delivers a famous TED talk outlining his plans for the future. It subsequently goes viral.



2025

First android prototype, known as David, built by Weyland Industries. (The version that looks like Michael Fassbender is the eighth "David" iteration.)



2039

Future planet of doom Acheron LV-426 is discovered. The astronomer responsible is probably sent for tea with no supper in anticipation of the trouble it'll later cause.

2032

Weyland Industries discovers the principle behind faster-than-light space travel, putting it to practical use on a spaceship two years later.

2029

Ditto Weyland Industries' patent on an atmospheric processor. That "Building Better Worlds" tagline is starting to look somewhat less boastful.



2028

Humans' ability to hypersleep is discovered. We have a feeling this might come in useful later on.

2179

Sole Nostromo survivor Ripley wakes from a record period of hypersleep, and agrees to go back to LV-426 where a terraforming colony has been overrun with a nasty breed of ETs with phallic heads.



2179

Ripley's life continues to suck when her survival pod crash lands on the prison colony of Fiorina 161 with a bunch of British character actors - and she finds she has a xenomorph queen in her belly.



2380

A clone of Ripley - with a shot of acidic xenomorph blood - is created on the USM Auriga. Trouble ensues when a group of mercenaries find themselves on the run from some xenomorphs. There's also the small matter of an abomination known as the "Newborn".



ALIEN AUTOPSY

ALIEN/PROMETHEUS
QUESTIONS THAT
ARE TROUBLING OUR
TWITCHY BRAINS



- Is this chap mutating? And if so, what is he mutating into?
- Who sent the "stay away" message picked up by the Nostromo in *Alien*? A member of the *Prometheus* crew?



- Are these baby aliens?
- Will we see the xenomorph? Ridley Scott has said, "The *Alien* in a sense, as a shape, is worn out", but this sculpture uncovered by the *Prometheus* crew suggests they're involved somehow.
- How did the Space Jockey get that hole in his chest?



- Is the Space Jockey acting alone? Or does he have friends? (It does look like he has a pair of stasis pods.)
- Why did he have a hold full of Facehugger eggs?



- Is this a proto-Facehugger?