

# TEASERS

— COMING ATTRACTIONS —

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**EXCLUSIVE**

## DEATH IN PARADISE

**ALIEN: COVENANT** | Ridley Scott resurrects H.R. Giger's perfect organism and introduces the next evolution in structural perfection.

**I**t starts with a scream. Sitting on a sterile medical bay table, a man drained of colour and drenched in sweat violently convulses, on the verge of some unspeakably horrible demise. Anyone with a passing knowledge of the *Alien* series will immediately find their eyes drawn to the man's chest in anticipation of a gruesome evacuation. It never comes. What does is much, much worse.

"I thought, 'Cut the shit, and just go for it,'" says Ridley Scott, cutting the shit as he talks to *Teasers* shortly after screening around 10 minutes of trouser-filling footage from the *Prometheus*/*Alien* interquel. "I was thinking, 'Should I go there again?

I can't do the front... but what about the back?" Lo and behold, the backbuster was born.

First, two dorsal spikes pierce the skin – bad news for Carmen Ejogo's *Covenant* crewmate who has picked an inopportune moment to give the dying

man a last hug. Blood squirts turn into a sudden gush of crimson as the man's upper back is aggressively pushed open from the inside. He falls, his spine snapping over the edge of the table on the way down, blood and viscera slopping onto the floor out of the fresh cavity. The pool of blood starts to move. Enter the neomorph.

A sequence of almost unbearable intensity, the blood-caked debut of *Alien: Covenant*'s newest nasty is the stuff of true terror. It may lack the stomach-in-throat shock of *Alien*'s

**BACK TO BASICS**  
*Covenant* looks set to be the scariest *Alien* film since 1979.



iconic chestbuster sequence, but there's no question this is the scariest an *Alien* film has been since 1979. Back inside the claustrophobic medical bay things go from bad to are-you-fucking-kidding-me? Aggressive, agile and lethal from birth, the neo stands awkwardly on all fours before finding its feet and pouncing on Ejogo's terrified crewmember with a screech. She fends it off with a boot, but the second strike fails and the neomorph makes short work of its second victim in barely 30 seconds of life.

The sequence doesn't end there. After bursting out of quarantine, another unfortunate crew member's attempt to kill the neo ends in disaster (let's just say fuel and firearms don't mix well), leaving the landing crew of the *Covenant* stranded on Paradise – the Engineer homeworld. The sequence ends with a grisly grace note as another unfortunate soul suffering the same unnatural spasms meets an even more disgusting end than the neo's first victim.

Needless to say, Ridley Scott is not pulling his punches. "It gets even worse," Scott teases, with a devilish smile. "I like doing that.

Once you start stirring the pot, it's kind of fun. Good horror fun. It's not cannibalism and shit like that."

Good horror fun is one way of putting it. Another: pure pant-wetting terror. Another still: redemption, after *Prometheus* was greeted with box-office success but a pervading air of disappointment. *Alien: Covenant*, understandably, comes with cautious expectations, but the 'Alien' in that title is the clearest indicator yet that *Covenant* could mark a return to the series' glory days. That's right, the xenomorph is back, and it turns out Giger's biomechanical beauty was engineered to kill from birth. "From *Prometheus*, you find out who's got idle hands," says Scott. "And then you find out where they get to. And then: what do they do? What were they up to? That's what [*Covenant*] is about."

The smart money's on Michael Fassbender's homicidal android David playing a pivotal role in the xenomorph's unholy creation. David

is one of two roles Fassbender plays in *Covenant*, alongside new artificial person Walter. "There's no vanity to Walter," Fassbender says of the *Covenant*'s resident robot. "There's no pride to him. He doesn't have feelings of inferiority, or any of those human traits that might have been present in David. And that ambiguity, which was very much present in David in *Prometheus*, Walter doesn't have that. So he's more like Leonard Nimoy's Spock. He just operates under logic and whatever's necessary to keep the crew and ship safe. He's like a super butler."

If previous *Alien* movies are anything to go by, the rest of the *Covenant*'s crew have grim fates to look forward to, but Katherine Waterston's Daniels will be hoping to follow in the footsteps of Ripley and Noomi Rapace's Shaw (who's also set to make an appearance in *Covenant*) by becoming a bona fide alien-slayer. "Like Ripley she starts at the beginning of the film third-in-command, and

maybe things change that promote her, in a sense..." Waterston laughs, while tip-toeing around spoiler mines. "She's kind of the classic reluctant

hero. She has clarity in a crisis. But she's not overly confident or cocky."

Also along for the descent into hell: Danny McBride's pilot, James Franco's captain, Billy Crudup's second-in-command, Demián Bichir's military man and 2,000 colonists, currently in hypersleep. They're all bound for a new homeworld until a distress beacon puts them on a fateful collision course with the seemingly serene planet.

With current plans for one more film after *Covenant* to bridge the gap with the first *Alien*, Scott isn't done with his horror opus just yet. "This will answer any questions left unanswered by *Prometheus*, and anything that is unanswered in this one will be answered in one more [film] we're having written right now," Scott reveals. "*Covenant* will tell you who made the Alien, and why." **JF**

ETA | 19 MAY / *ALIEN: COVENANT* OPENS IN TWO MONTHS.







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**TOP LEFT**  
Fassbender plays David and new android Walter.

**TOP**  
The new Ripley? Daniels is played by Katherine Waterston.

**ABOVE/LEFT**  
The cast and Ridley Scott on the Covenant set.