

# DESTINATION TWIN PEAKS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SHOW'S RETURN



THE  
WORLD'S  
**No.1**  
SCI-FI  
MAGAZINE

287

**20-PAGE  
CELEBRATION**  
OF THE GREATEST SCI-FI HORROR  
SERIES OF ALL TIME!

**12 MONKEYS**  
SEASON 3  
NEWS!

# ALIEN

FEATURING

## ALIEN COVENANT

ON SET FOR RIDLEY SCOTT'S NEW MOVIE!



WHY RIPLEY  
ROCKS

THE GREATEST  
MOMENTS

THE DARK  
HORSE COMICS

XENOMORPH  
SCIENCE

## MASSIVE MOVIE EXCLUSIVES!



### PIRATES!

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Future  
ISSUE 287



# ACID REIGN



AS **ALIEN: COVENANT** HATCHES THE HORROR YET AGAIN, *SFX*  
CELEBRATES FOUR DECADES OF CINEMA'S ULTIMATE SCI-FI NIGHTMARE.

IN SPACE, NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM... AND SCREAM... AND SCREAM...



ALIEN CELEBRATION  
COVENANT

# THE TALENTED



# MR RIDLEY

RIDLEY SCOTT IS BRINGING HR GIGER'S ACID-BLOODED XENOMORPH BACK TO THE BIG SCREEN  
IN **ALIEN: COVENANT**. JORDAN FARLEY REPORTS FROM THE FRIGHT-FILLED SET





## IT'S JUNE 2016,

and in a decommissioned reservoir just outside Sydney the crew of *Alien: Covenant* has constructed Paradise. But a paradise this ain't. At one end of the drizzly basin, giant stone steps are littered with immolated Engineers, the porcelain-smooth old gods perfectly preserved in their chargrilled final moments like the haunting spectres of Pompeii. At the other end of the vast, open-air space stands a blue screen so big it's being held up by cranes and a wall of shipping containers stacked three high. The centre of gravity around which everything orbits: Ridley Scott – the eclectic Brit filmmaker and 79-year-old workhorse who's presiding over sets as staggeringly huge as *SFX* has ever seen. And it all started with a flaky pastry. Sort of.

"It came out of me thinking about the croissant – what I call the beautiful croissant – that was on the ground in *Alien*, and what was inside it," says Scott, who sidles up to *SFX* during a break from filming on the *Prometheus* sequel/*Alien* prequel. "Throughout the series no one ever asked the question: 'Who would want to make such a thing?' *Prometheus* started to ask that question. *Covenant* will tell you who made the *Alien*, and why."

But before we get to the who and why (dear god, why?) there's a *Prometheus*-shaped space elephant to address. Scott's much-hyped return to the *Alien*-verse in 2012 was the victim of a publicity campaign so irresistibly enticing it was almost inevitable the finished product wouldn't, or rather couldn't, live up to stratospheric expectations. Part of the problem: *Prometheus* was an *Alien* prequel that wasn't an *Alien* prequel. For starters, it was missing the most important ingredient – the razor-tailed, pharyngeal-jawed Xenomorph. Bringing Giger's beautiful biomechanoid back in *Alien: Covenant* was "essential" according to Scott, and was in part born out of the damning reaction to the killer critter's absence from *Prometheus*. "What was clear was the hardcore *Alien* audience wanted a bit more of [the *Alien*]," says producer Mark Huffman, Scott's right hand man on *Prometheus* and *The Martian*. "I couldn't say at the time of making *Prometheus* we weren't going to go there anyway, but if that's where we're going why shy away from being *Alien*? Fans definitely aren't going to feel robbed on this occasion."

Set a decade after the events on LV-223, *Covenant* centres on the crew of the titular colony ship. Like an interstellar Noah's Ark, the colossal vessel is carrying a cargo of 1,000 couples, currently in hypersleep, across the galaxy to terraform and repopulate a new world. After receiving a distress signal, the 15-strong crew (including Michael Fassbender's new android model Walter) dispatch a landing party to investigate and discover paradise – a Goldilocks planet with breathable air, clean water and edible food, but no signs of life. While Iceland and Jordan doubled for LV-223's inhospitable plains in *Prometheus*, Scott sought more verdant environs for the Engineer homeworld. "We filmed at a place called Milford Sound in New Zealand," Huffman says. "It's much lush, much greener, much more friendly... at first glance. So very different from what we've seen before. But when they get there things start going a bit wrong for them."

Things going a "bit" wrong for them is a "bit" of an understatement. Though the remote planet is seemingly devoid of organic life, there's one artificial lifeform causing all manner of mayhem – David (Michael Fassbender, pulling double duties). The peroxide blond bot was last seen without a

body en route to meet his maker's maker alongside Noomi Rapace's Shaw. While Shaw's whereabouts in *Covenant* are unknown, it's safe to assume David hasn't been playing happy families in their decade together. "Essentially, he's 10 years without maintenance," Fassbender says of David, with his Walter head on (literally, his hair is a chestnut brown). "So,

**"WHAT WAS CLEAR WAS THE  
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ALIEN"**







whatever that does to computers here, it might have a similar effect on him.” David’s degradation and continued curiosity with the Engineers’ DNA-altering black goo doesn’t bode well for the crew of the *Covenant*. Among their ranks: Katherine Waterston’s terraforming specialist Daniels, James Franco’s Captain, Billy Crudup’s first mate, Danny McBride’s pilot and Demián Bichir’s head of security. There’s also a threat even deadlier than a paranoid android and his pet Xenomorph to contend with – the Neomorph.

## TERRIFYING TEASE

Fast forward to February 2017. In an LA hotel Ridley Scott has prepared 10 minutes of nightmare fuel from *Alien: Covenant* for *SFX*’s “enjoyment”. The highlight (if never sleeping again is your bag) is the Neomorph’s horrific entrance. With a life cycle similar to the Xeno, *Covenant*’s creepy new creation is first incubated in a human host. But instead of the



Ridley Scott instructs Katherine Waterston in the way of fighting terror.

He’s been doing this job for a few years now...



chest, the neo bursts through the *back* of its unfortunate victim in a sequence so gut-wrenchingly grotesque it very nearly matches the shock of John Hurt’s unforgettable demise in 1979. Though clearly sharing similar DNA to the original *Alien*, the pale-skinned quadruped is aggressive and athletic from birth, tearing out another crew member’s jugular seconds into its bloody life. If this sequence is anything to go by Scott is putting philosophical musings about the origin of man on the back burner in favour of a return to nerve-shredding, arse-clenching terror. “In terms of horror, we definitely move closer to *Alien*. I have to keep walking out of rushes because I get too scared!” Huffman laughs. “We’ve gone for an R [rating]. So, full-on scary.” ➔



# ALIEN QUEEN

Katherine Waterston has  
Ripley-sized shoes to fill



## WHO IS DANIELS?

She's the chief terraformist on this colonising mission. Once we get there, we're pioneers setting up a new world. So when they get to the planet, she's in charge of making things grow there. There's a massive section of the ship where all of the little plants grow in space greenhouses. So she's in charge of all of that.

## HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR THE ROLE?

There's two things that keep her from getting killed for most of the film, and they are courage and good fortune. She's not a soldier. She's not a martial artist. She's a terraformist. So I kept trying to get the guys to teach me: how do I use this stick like an axe? How do I use the tools that I would use when we get to the planet to help grow things?

They were making me too good, I thought, at holding the gun, and fighting the aliens. I tried to make the movements a little bit more pedestrian.

## DO YOU FEEL MUCH PRESSURE FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SIGOURNEY WEAVER?

Only when journalists ask me that! I spend my whole day trying to not think about things like that and then you guys come in and are like, "What are you freaking out about?" [laughs] But truly, you can't think about these things when you're working, because the job, the task at hand, is important to me.

## THERE'S A RUMOUR THAT YOU PLAY A CHARACTER RELATED TO RIPLEY...

Yeah... I'm aware of the rumour. There's this episode of *Fawlty Towers* where John Cleese tells Manuel he has to lie about something. "Whenever anyone asks you, you say, 'I know nothing.'" So, that's what plays on my mind whenever people ask me these spoiler questions.



Daniels gets to do more than grow plants on the new planet.

Scott is also returning to his roots in another key regard – by embracing practical effects, with the Xenomorph once again played by a man in a suit. "The guy who does the make-up effects – Conor [O'Sullivan] – is excellent," Scott enthuses. "I was able to put a nice hard shell on [the Xenomorph]. He had it before, but he was kind of restricted by his costume. Now, I had a guy do most of the costume work with a shell and a helmet. And it's pretty good." CGI has been used to "enhance" the Xeno throughout, particularly in moments where the gravity-defying monstrosity moves like no human could, but having a physical presence on set was essential. "Sometimes the physicality of an actor doing something odd that you haven't thought of or you don't want to do digitally, is useful," says Scott, a man who knows a thing or two about shooting Xenomorphs effectively. "So whenever you can, always shoot the monster." During *SFX*'s tour around *Covenant*'s incredible creature workshop we see the fruits of this emphasis on practical effects, with Alien eggs, Neomorph maquettes and, yes, an animatronic Xenomorph head all

proudly displayed. And, of course, there will be blood. Lots of it. "If you like blood, we're not going to leave you unsatisfied," smiles Huffman. "Our blood comes in 40-gallon drums, rather than 5-gallon containers."

The Xenomorph will be created through a combination of two performances: ballet dancer Andrew Crawford was the man in the suit, while Javier Botet was brought in for post production motion capture. Though everything

**"THE PLAN  
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Will they get to use that camping mat?



Nastier than ever before?

we've seen hints that *Covenant's* Xenomorph will bring screams back to the series, when we first glimpse Giger's perfect organism in the dull Australian

daylight it's under faintly silly circumstances. Surrounded by a giant bluescreen, Daniels (Waterston) is fighting for her life on top of a spaceship platform 20 feet in the air. Harness around her waist, a 30-tonne gimbal does its best to throw her off like a bucking bronco. After falling and clinging on for dear life three, four, five times another crew member joins her on the platform... holding the disembodied head of a Xenomorph on a stick. Hardly the stuff of nightmares, but the implication is clear: Daniels' situation just went from bad to, well, game over, man.

"We're shooting a scene which is in the final act of the movie," Huffman says of the day's stunt-heavy sequence. "It's a rescue attempt from the planet surface. We call this craft the lifter because it's a bit of heavy lifting terraforming equipment they've had to adapt at the last minute to rescue some of the crew from the planet surface. There's a lot of wire work in it. Our leading lady's been doing quite a lot of the wire work herself. We've got to be careful about safety because she's flying through the air." Waterston has enormous Reebok-branded

boots to fill as *Alien's* latest kick-ass femme, and she's doing everything possible to live up to Sigourney Weaver's legacy. "In this particular sequence, Katherine has done a lot of it, and has the bruises to prove it," Huffman laughs. "We can't hold her back. We keep showing her the stunt person doing it first, thinking she'll go, 'That's fine. I don't want to do it.' And she'll say, 'No, I'll have a go.' She's done 80% of all the wire work on this sequence so far."

## BODY COUNT

While it's safe to assume that Daniels and most of the human cast won't be making it out of *Covenant* alive, with hopes high of a return to form for the ailing *Alien* series, the Xenomorph isn't going away anytime soon. In fact, Scott and Huffman already have another sequel written. "Everybody always looks at what the box office is, and decides. But yes, very much the plan would be that there's another film to go before we get back to the original *Alien*," Huffman reveals. "Everything's been designed to fit between *Prometheus* and the original world of *Alien*. The belly of the story will carry on to *Prometheus 3* – whatever you want to call it – because we've got a long-range plan as to how this evolves. How this one ends will definitely take you on to the next one. It leaves lots of big questions." ●

*Alien: Covenant* is released on 19 May.

## SEEING DOUBLE

Michael Fassbender returns as David, and new android Walter



LAWRENCE OF ARABIA WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR DAVID, WHAT INSPIRED WALTER?

For Walter, there's no vanity to him. He doesn't have feelings of inferiority, or any of those human traits present in David. And that ambiguity present in David in *Prometheus* – Walter wouldn't have that. He's more like Leonard Nimoy's Spock. He just operates under logic and whatever's necessary to keep the crew and the ship safe.

DO YOU REMEMBER WATCHING *ALIEN* FOR THE FIRST TIME?

Yeah, I was about 11 or so. I remember very clearly that image of the alien bursting out of John Hurt's stomach. And I remember it affected me in a different way. There was just something different about *Alien*. It was a new world introduced to me; that idea of sci-fi and horror movies mixed into one. I was used to science fiction and *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*. But not on a horror level like that.

DOES IT FEEL SPECIAL TO BE ON THE SET OF A RIDLEY SCOTT *ALIEN* FILM?

Yeah. Ridley is a master at creating an environment. His attention to detail, especially in this day and age when a lot of that sort of stuff is shot with just complete greenscreen or bluescreen... It's a very visceral experience, being on this set.

DO YOU ENJOY WORKING IN SCI-FI?

I do, yeah. I especially enjoy working with Ridley. I'm a big fan of *Alien* and what he achieved with that film. This one's going to be a lot scarier than *Prometheus*. It sort of has that edge which was achieved very much in *Alien*. Of course, in *Alien*, we stay within the ship. This time, we do enter into a bigger universe by leaving the ship and exploring a different planet.



# CHEST IN SHOW

IN SPACE NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM, SOB OR TIGHTEN YOUR SPHINCTER... STEVE O'BRIEN REMEMBERS THE GREATEST MOMENTS OF THE *ALIEN* FRANCHISE

## TOP 5 SCARIEST MOMENTS

01



### THE CHESTBURSTER (*Alien*)

Back in 1979, nobody had yet heard of the word “chestbuster”. So when audiences first saw Kane (John Hurt) writhing in agony after wolfing down noodles, they might have figured it was just indigestion. Then, all of a sudden, that baby alien spits out of his chest, spraying red-hot blood onto his panicked crewmates in what would become the franchise’s most searingly iconic scene.

### THE SADDEST MOMENT



### RIPLEY DIES (*Alien 3*)

In an often maddeningly uneven film, the final moments of *Alien 3* still pack a hefty emotional wallop, as Ripley sacrifices herself rather than let the corrupt Weyland Corp get their capitalist mitts on the alien inside her. The shots of her plunging to her fiery death are both weirdly graceful and powerfully poignant, even down to the last-minute chestburst.

### THE “WHY DID THEY DO THAT?!” MOMENT



### KILLING NEWT (*Alien 3*)

With Ripley’s real daughter having perished before the events of *Aliens*, her relationship with the 12-year-old orphan Newt was the emotional heart of the second film. So it was devastating to see the kid killed off so suddenly in the opening scenes of *Alien 3*. No wonder Neill Blomkamp wanted to retcon it out of existence with his mooted *Alien 5*...

REX (1)



02



### THE BOTCHED RIPLEY CLONES (Alien: Resurrection)

The story for Jean-Pierre Jeunet's Joss Whedon-authored reboot saw Ellen Ripley cloned back into existence 200 years after her self-slaughter in *Alien 3*. But the Ripley here was, we discover, the eighth attempt, and the scene where she encounters one of the other failed clones, a mangled cross-breed of Xenomorph and human, begging Ripley to kill her, is major-league creepy.

03



### THE COCOONED COLONISTS (Aliens)

After arriving on a seemingly deserted LV-426, the cocksure marines venture into the nuclear-powered atmosphere processing station, where they discover a nest filled with the bodies of the colonists, cocooned as hosts for more Xenomorphs. One of the bodies suddenly opens its eyes and pleads to be killed, before a baby Alien slashes its way out of her chest...

04



### RIPLEY AND NEWT UNDER ATTACK (Aliens)

Thinking that they're finally safe, Ripley and Newt fall asleep in the medical laboratory, only to be awoken by two frisky facehuggers which have been let out of their tanks by company slimeball Carter Burke. We'd seen people being chased by Xenomorphs before, but never a skittery facehugger scuttling around looking for a mouth to jump on (shudders).

05



### JONESY CAT LURES BRETT TO HIS DEATH (Alien)

...Where Harry Dean Stanton's engineer Brett goes in search of the Nostromo's ginger moggie Jones – “here, kitty-kitty!” – *at the same time as there's an acid-blooded alien loose on the ship!* With director Ridley Scott amping up the sound effects and dialling back the music, it's one of the first movie's most reliably nerve-shredding scenes.

### THE MOST NERVE-WRACKING MOMENT



#### BISHOP'S KNIFETRICK (Aliens)

Despite being a series that boasts the deadliest predators ever committed to screen, the tensest scene has to be when the android Bishop (Lance Henriksen) shows off his party trick by darting a knife between his and a terrified Hudson's (Bill Paxton) fingers. Knowing that Henriksen really did nick Paxton's pinky only makes it harder to watch.

### THE “WTF” MOMENT



#### THE ALIEN HYBRID (Alien: Resurrection)

With scientists having cloned a human Ripley with a giant strain of alien DNA inside her, it also meant that their cloned Xenomorphs had a dollop of human DNA. So, a hybrid alien is born, one that recognises Ripley as its mother... For all its many blunders, *Resurrection* really did offer up something new for the franchise.

### THE COOLEST MOMENT



#### THE BASKETBALL THROW (Alien: Resurrection)

Despite having a catalogue of coolness behind her, nothing is as high-five-able as this in-one basketball hurl from *Alien: Resurrection*. This being an alien-hybrid Ripley, she naturally has enhanced abilities so, as she hoofs it off the basketball court, she lobs the ball behind her and... bang!



**1979**

*Alien* opens 25 May in America and 6 September in the UK. Xenomorph costumes are already on sale for Halloween.



**1986**

Militarised sequel *Aliens* is released 18 July in the US and 29 August in the UK.



**1989**

Franchise collision *Alien Vs Predator* commences in the pages of *Dark Horse Presents*.



**1992**

*Alien 3* arrives 22 May in the US and 21 August in the UK. *Aliens: Special Edition* is released on laserdisc and VHS, restoring 17 minutes of cut footage.

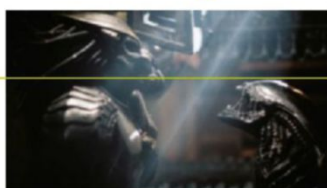


**1995**

DC and Dark Horse team on two-issue miniseries *Superman/Aliens*. *Batman/Aliens* follows in 1998.

**2002**

*Alien* is declared "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant" by the US Library of Congress and preserved for posterity.



**2004**

*Alien Vs Predator* becomes a movie, helmed by Paul WS Anderson.



**2007**

More Hollywood franchise-splicing in *Aliens Vs Predator: Requiem*.



**1982**

The first *Alien* game is a *Pac-Man* knock-off for the Atari 2600.

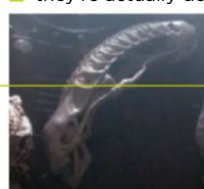
**1988**

Dark Horse launches the *Aliens* comic book with the further adventures of Newt and Hicks. They're renamed in reprints once *Alien 3* reveals they're actually dead.



**1990**

On the big screen, an Alien skull can be glimpsed in *Predator 2*.



**1993**

Bowel-bullying immersive experience *Alien War* opens at London's Trocadero.



**1997**

Ripley gets cloned in Joss Whedon-scripted sequel *Alien: Resurrection*, released in the UK and US in November.

**2003**

A Director's Cut of *Alien* gets a cinematic release while extended cuts of *Alien 3* and *Resurrection* are included in the *Alien Quadrilogy* box set. In *2000 AD Judge Dredd* goes jaw-to-jaw with Alien.



**2005**

Dark Horse kicks off a line of original novels with *Original Sin* by Michael Jan Friedman.



**2012**

Ridley Scott returns to the universe he created with *Prometheus*, part of a new prequel saga continued with this year's *Alien: Covenant*.

# XENOCHRONOLOGY

A TIMELINE OF TERROR



# THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT RIPLEY

LOUISE BLAIN LOOKS BACK AT THE  
HEROINE WHO DEFINED A GENERATION

**I** wish I could say Ellen Louise Ripley is my namesake but I'm proud to just share a few organised vowels with the first lady of sci-fi cinema. Sigourney Weaver's Ripley is the *Alien* franchise. She epitomises the fight against the Xenomorphs like no one else. There's a reason *Aliens* is often listed as one of the great films and no coincidence that Weaver earned a Best Actress Oscar nomination at the same time. Since when has the Academy ever cared about a movie where *spit makes the floor melt*?

She'd already survived in spectacular form before James Cameron even got his hands on a camera but *Aliens* is where Ripley is defined for me. A fighter who has lost everything, who

wakes screaming drenched in sweat from night terrors and then, of her own volition, returns to the fray to literally slay her demons. In *Aliens*, Ripley is a calm contrast to the fist-bumping, bullet-heavy bravado and corporate slimeballs. She knows she's being played to return to LV-426 but

she has to do it anyway, weighed down by the grim knowledge that she's lost everything already, and might just be able to save *something*.

And that something turns out to be Newt. While usually a surrogate mother daughter relationship will send you reaching for the exposition-heavy sick bucket, there's nothing like Ripley's bond with the little girl who turned the word "mostly" into myth. There is a perfect moment where the pair are trapped in the same room as two scuttling facehuggers. "I'm scared," squeaks Newt. "I'm scared too," replies Ripley before flicking a lighter under the sprinklers. She might be afraid but she's still Ripley. Her later spectacular face-off with the Queen alien only cements a will and a character that cannot be beaten. ●

"RIPLEY IS A  
CALM CONTRAST  
TO THE FIST  
BUMPING AND  
BULLET-HEAVY  
BRAVADO"





ALIEN CELEBRATION  
SPECIAL EFFECTS

# ALIEN ENCOUNTERS

TOM WOODRUFF AND ALEC GILLIS OF EFFECTS COMPANY AMALGAMATED DYNAMICS WORKED THEIR MAGIC ON ALL THREE OFFICIAL *ALIEN* SEQUELS. THEY GIVE CALUM WADDELL THEIR THOUGHTS ON XENOMORPHIC FRANCHISE-BUILDING



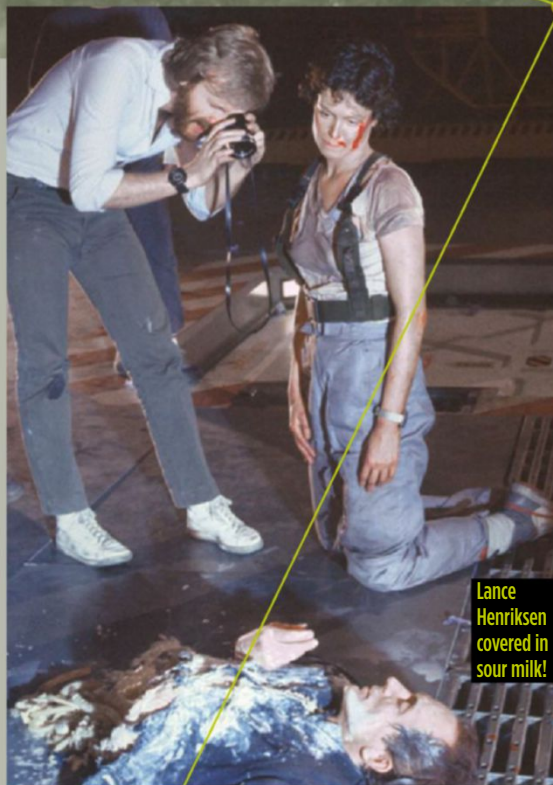
The queen was 14 feet tall, far larger than her drones.







The cocooned woman, played by Barbara Coles.



Lance Henriksen covered in sour milk!



Sigourney Weaver does her Alien queen impression.

**In 1986 Hollywood lore held that sequels** routinely fell short of their predecessor.

Aside from the shining exceptions of *The Godfather Part II* (1974) and *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) follow-up films were generally seen as opportunistic cash-grabs. No wonder *Aliens* was such a revelation – a thrill-ride of splatter, suspense and slime that, arguably, even improved on the visual motifs and intergalactic horror of Ridley Scott's original.

"I was working at Stan Winston's shop out in Los Angeles at the time," explains Tom Woodruff. "I was quite new to the business but I was a big James Cameron fan and I knew we were going to embark on something really exciting. I think what made *Aliens* great is that it was an all-out action film. James kept the sci-fi trappings but it was non-stop from the start. You even saw that with the characters – it was not a John Wayne film or anything but the marines were played with just enough in the way of exaggeration to indicate that this was a different kind of sequel."

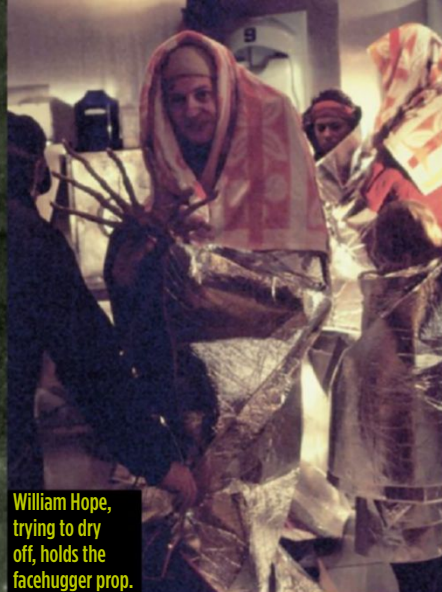
For Alec Gillis, part of the appeal of the later *Alien* films was simply that the groundwork was already established and there was plenty of opportunity to get down and dirty...

"If you go back and watch that first *Alien*, they take a long time to get to the planet and to encounter the lifeform," he tells *SFX*. "Well, with *Aliens* we just went totally kickass [laughs]. Maybe that was not for the best because by the time we had the third film we had to slow down again but Cameron's

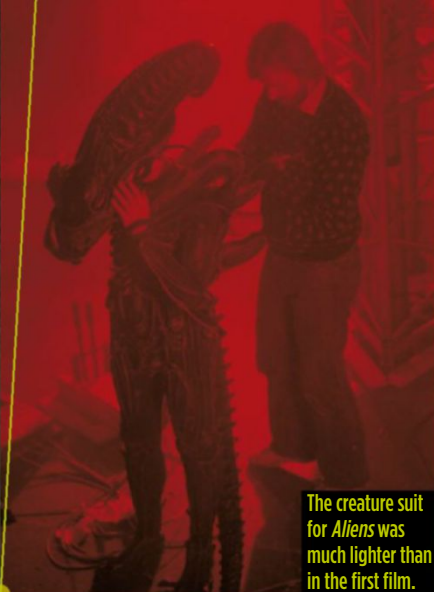




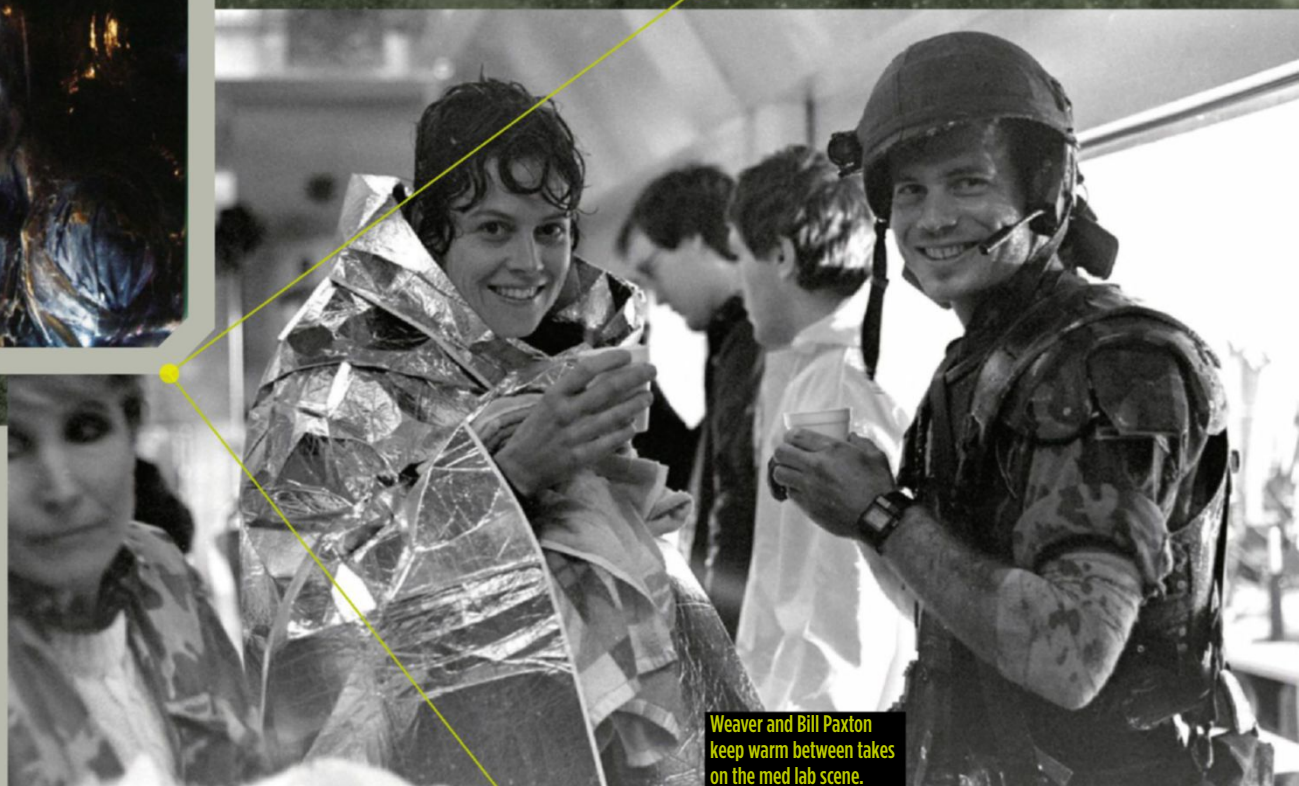
The gruesome discovery of human survivors cocooned by the Aliens.



William Hope, trying to dry off, holds the facehugger prop.



The creature suit for *Aliens* was much lighter than in the first film.



Weaver and Bill Paxton keep warm between takes on the med lab scene.



genius was to take this sci-fi horror movie and adapt it into a huge action blockbuster with incredible production values. It was a daunting task for Cameron to come in and make that sequel because *Alien* was an accepted classic – but he really understood the world that Ridley Scott has established. Even though you go from horror movie to war film I think the DNA between these first two pictures is absolutely connected.”

### THIRD TIME

When it came to David Fincher’s *Alien 3* (1992), however, audiences who were expecting more of the same were in for a shock...

“I think *Alien 3* is a good movie but it should not have been the third film,” maintains Gillis. “Ideally *Alien 3* should have been the second one and set up the action of *Aliens*. It went backwards instead of forwards – we went from blowing everything up and shooting aliens through the skull to no guns at all [laughs]. *Alien 3* also

revealed some new aspects of the creatures which was not really current with what we had seen before.”

Woodruff also admits that, in retrospect, there are things to admire and to criticise in not just *Alien 3* but the Ripley swansong *Alien Resurrection* (1997).

“Killing the other characters from *Aliens* was an impactful decision and I understood it at the time,” he argues. “But looking back it probably took her character in an arc that was not so good. *Alien 3* left her very remote and solitary. However, then you went from this very dark and sombre movie to the fourth film which was a lot more fun. I think that is one of the coolest things about this series. Each of the four movies is so different in their tone. Every director, for better or worse, was bringing something new to the

sequels. It was more of a director’s medium in those days. They took each follow-up and, building on Ridley Scott’s original one, they put a different spin and point of view on each one.” ●

*Photos taken from Aliens: The Set Photography, out now from Titan Books.*

**“I THINK *ALIEN 3* IS A GOOD MOVIE BUT IT SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE THIRD FILM”**





# EXOBIOLOGY

JUST HOW PLAUSIBLE IS XENOMORPH ANATOMY? PAOLO VISCARDI, CURATOR OF ZOOLOGY AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND, GIVES AN EXPERT'S VIEW

## THE COMPLEX LIFECYCLE

"It's not uncommon for species to have multiple hosts in the real-world. The lancet liver fluke, for example, goes from snails to ants, then the ants get ingested by cattle or sometimes people, who then poo out the eggs. The flukes can't do anything [to procreate] without the hosts - it's an essential part of their developmental process."

## EGGS LAYING DORMANT INDEFINITELY

"Seeds can last hundreds of years for some species of plants, but for eggs in animals, longevity isn't quite so extreme - generally you wouldn't be looking at years. Certain species can actually stay dormant for reasonably long periods of time, and you will find some waiting for certain conditions before the developmental process gets started - nature's quite good at developing mechanisms that get things to coordinate to have a better chance of survival. It's not unrealistic to expect something to allow a species to have eggs with a very long lifespan, that are then triggered by an external influence."

## THE SECOND SET OF JAWS

"There are quite a few species that have mouth parts which kind of open and hinge outwards. Dragonfly larvae, for example, have this big hinged plate that sits under their mouths and shoots forward and grabs prey - the Alien's mouth is actually very similar to that. Anything which increases your ability to increase your reach and your ability to grab prey unexpectedly is a bonus."

## THE VISIBLE EXOSKELETON

"The trouble with an exoskeleton is you can't grow in it. You can't add new material to it without basically growing a new one underneath, shedding the old one, inflating the new one and then letting it harden off - it's how lobsters and insects grow. Once you get to a larger size [like a Xenomorph], however, it gets quite difficult to do all that. This is one that might be more problematic."

## GROWING FROM CHESTBURSTER TO ADULT IN A MATTER OF HOURS

"You need a source of material that you're able to metabolise and pull into the growth process. The metabolic processes would just take too long, so I don't think this would work."

## THE CONCENTRATED ACID BLOOD

"There are certainly species that use blood as a defence mechanism, but that's generally things like lizards, which squirt acid blood to deter predators. The whole acidic blood is problematic for other reasons, because generally if your blood's that acidic it'll probably denature

any nutrients around your system. But stomach acid's a great example that very strong acids can be made in nature. Something as acidic as alien blood is not impossible to make - it's very difficult and requires quite involved manufacturing processes, but that doesn't mean that nature couldn't do it. Nature's pretty amazing."

Richard Edwards



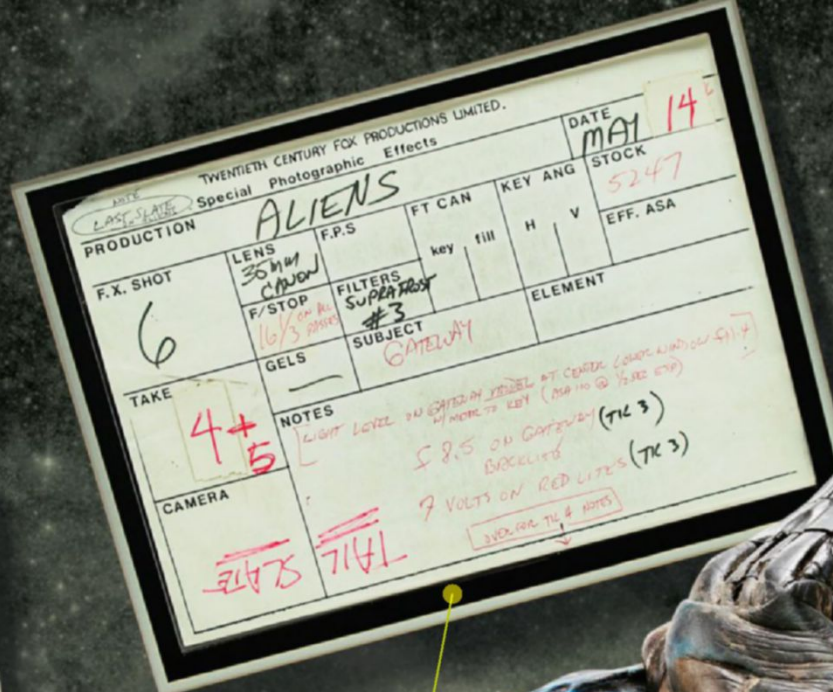
ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CEMMICK





**SGT APONE'S  
ARMOUR**  
ALIENS (1986)

Apone doesn't stay on screen for too long but he makes his presence known – and this armour has become truly representative of the Jim Cameron film. We've moved past the period of fantasy costuming that was more about the aesthetic wow than the practical necessity behind it. [Armourer] Terry English did an incredible job of building something that looked like it was specifically made for the purpose they were using it for in the story.



**GATEWAY  
MINIATURE FX  
CLAPPERBOARD  
INSERT DISPLAY**  
ALIENS (1986)

Clapperboards have become incredibly collectable over the last five years or so. This was created for a miniature effects shot so they would work up a more detailed and comprehensive paper insert slate. There's so much going on in a miniature shot. You're talking about which camera is being used, what type of film, what kind of exposure. Some of the miniature work in these films is outstanding, in way before the digital era we know today. You were mesmerised by it, wondering how it was done.



# ALIEN ARTEFACTS

STEPHEN LANE FROM MOVIE COLLECTABLE  
SPECIALISTS PROP STORE SHARES TREASURES  
FROM THE FRANCHISE



## ALIEN QUEEN LEG ALIENS (1986)

For prop and costume collectors it's an opportunity to own a highly treasured artefact, something that's part of cinema history. Clearly it's derived from Giger's original work - he was just a master of originating surreal imagery that then inspired later creature designers to take that one step further from the Alien design to something like the Alien Queen. That's one of the reasons for the films' success: every time a creature has been brought to the screen it's been beautifully executed.

## HYPERSLEEP CHAMBER PROMETHEUS (2012)

The whole concept of a hypersleep chamber has been with us right from the very first film. I love the way we've seen them developed through the franchise. If you do want to own one of these things, you do need a reasonable amount of room - it's about the size of a small bed. Of course I wouldn't advise people actually sleep in it. There has to be a degree of respect for the prop. A lot of these things are only meant to live for the duration of the production. So look, but don't sleep in it!

## SHOOTING SCHEDULES ALIENS (1986)

These give such a great behind-the-scenes insight into the production process. They were created in very limited numbers, hand-typed and photocopied. Not many crew personnel kept them. They'd get to the end of the day's filming and throw them away, so they're very scarce. Nowadays everything is emailed - nobody prints it and far fewer people actually have access to that information because of the sensitive nature of film production today.

## KANE'S SPACESUIT ALIEN (1979)

It's significant because it's John Hurt's spacesuit, and he was obviously such a pivotal character. But for me the appeal is as much about the design of the costume itself, inspired by [French artist] Moebius. Costume designer John Mollo had military experience and there's a huge amount of believable practicality to it. It was such an emotive sequence as John Hurt was lowered into the egg chamber. They really thought about how something would need to function in that sort of environment.

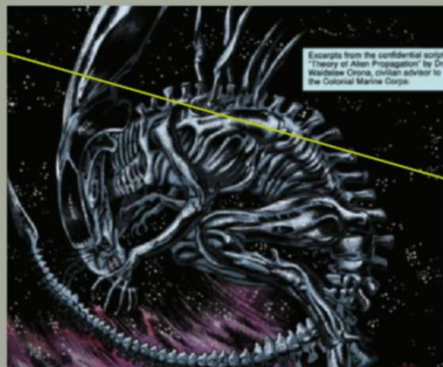
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## HOW THE FRANCHISE BACKED A DARK HORSE

# ALIENS vs COMICS



**W**hile Archie Goodwin and Walt Simonson teamed up on an excellent adaptation of Ridley Scott's original film in *Alien: The Illustrated Story* for *Heavy Metal*, the franchise has since found a more regular comic book home at Dark Horse Comics.

Appearing in the pages of *Dark Horse Presents*, Mark Verheiden and Mark A Nelson's *Outbreak* was groundbreaking when it made its debut in 1988. Marking the then-fledgling independent publishers' first foray into licensed comics based on film and television properties, it and subsequent miniseries *Nightmare World* and *Female War* followed on from the events of James Cameron's epic sequel, chronicling what Newt and Hicks did next.

Since then Dark Horse has continued to release *Aliens* comics on an almost monthly basis, keeping the ominous legacy of the Weyland-Yutani Corporation alive in the sometimes 15-year gap between cinematic instalments. Ranging from Jim Woodring and Kilian Plunkett's 1995 four-parter *Labyrinth* to Chuck Dixon and Henry Flint's 1997 offbeat one-shot *Pigs*, a whole host of creators of different artistic styles and backgrounds have brought their unique talents to the Xenomorphs.

Later to become a first-person shooter videogame, the initially Chris Warner-written and Tony Akins-drawn *Aliens: Colonial Marines* focused on an Alien infestation of Earth. Serialised in *Dark Horse Presents* in 1993 and

1994, it was one of the first *Alien* comics read by James Stokoe, who is writing and drawing this month's *Aliens: Orbit* miniseries. "There were lots of good gory panels in that for a young kid to obsess over," he laughs. "I also really liked John Arcudi and Doug Mahnke's *Stronghold* 1994 miniseries, and *45 Seconds*, the short story Frank Teran drew from the *Aliens: Special* in 1997, also had an enormous impact on me as a comics artist. Growing up, I used to redraw panels from that constantly, and it still blows my mind every time I see it."

From Judge Dredd to caped crusaders like Batman, Green Lantern and Superman, Dark Horse has also been able to pit *Aliens* against a wide range of colourful protagonists that might not have always been possible in the cinema. Most significantly, they first crossed paths with Fox's other extraterrestrial menace in 1989's comic book crossover *Aliens V Predator* 15 years before they first clashed on the big screen. More recently, they both crash-landed in the Cursed Earth in *Predator Vs Judge Dredd Vs Aliens*, and with *Star Trek: The Next Generation Vs Aliens* due later this year, the future is bright for *Aliens*, if not humanity.

Stephen Jewell

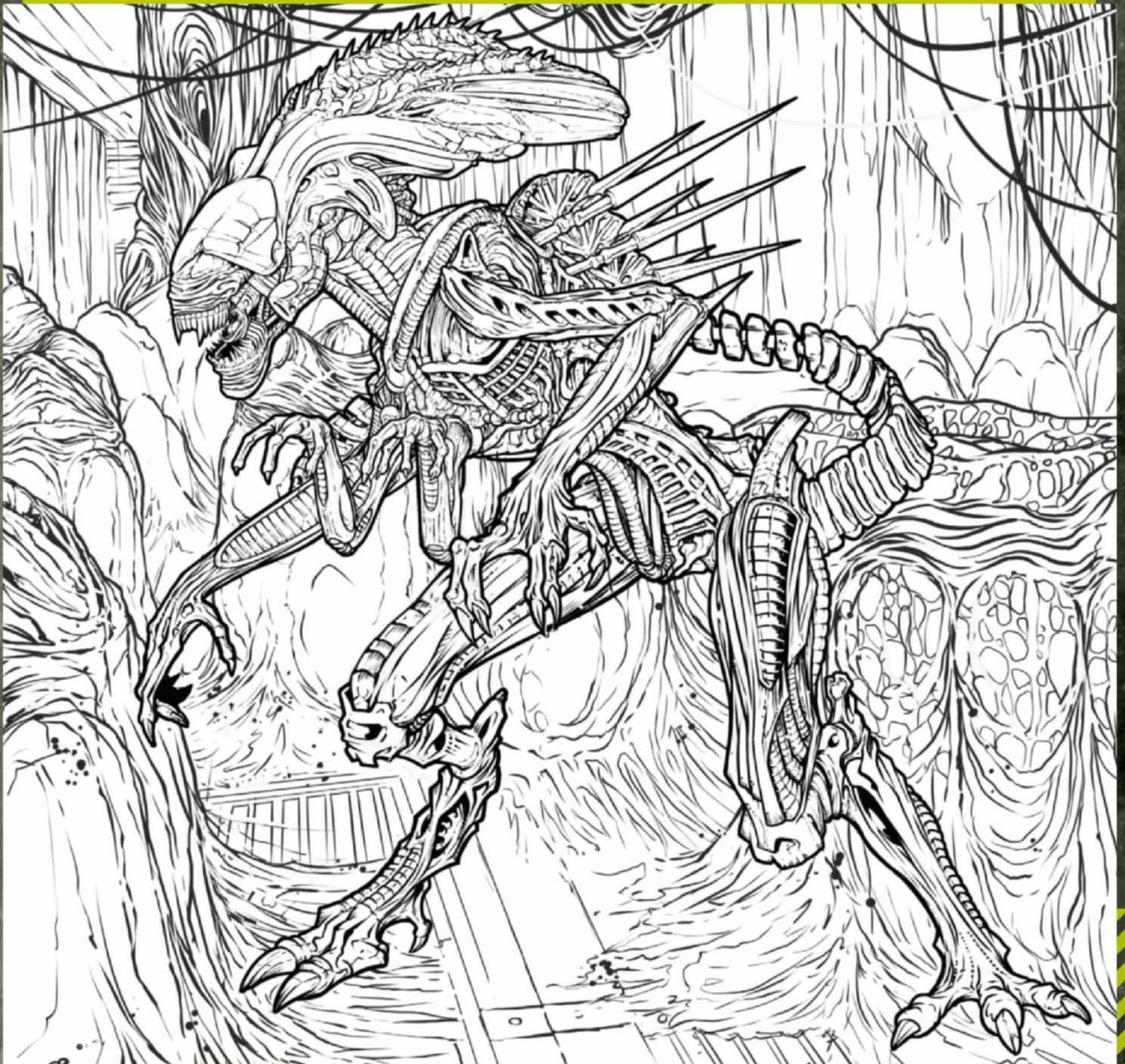


"THERE WERE A LOT OF GOOD GORY PANELS IN COLONIAL MARINES FOR A CHILD TO OBSESS OVER"



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