



MEGA TECH

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MEGADRIVE DEDICATED INFORMATION SYSTEM

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- CADASH
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ALIEN 3 PREDATOR 2 ACCLAIM'S MEGADRIVE MONSTERS PREVIEWED!

**100%
MEGADRIVE!**





MT 6
STATUS:
PREVIEW

ALIEN³

PUBLISHER
ACCLAIM

PRICE
£39.99

FORMAT
8M-BIT ROM

DEVELOPERS
PROBE

RELEASE DATE
NOVEMBER 1992

After the disappointment of Terminator, all eyes are on the year's other great movie licence, Acclaim's Alien 3. Ironically both games were programmed by the same team, Probe Software, but from what we've seen Alien 3 is the better game.

Alien 3 boasts fifteen levels of action in which Warrant Officer Ellen Ripley once more has to face her alien adversaries after crash-landing her space-craft on penal planet Fury 161. In the movie, she has a group of unarmed prisoners to help her to destroy the alien, but there are no weapons at all anywhere in the colony. How can she deal with a creature that can't be fought hand to hand before it totals everyone on the planet? And does it make for a good Megadrive game?

ALIEN

THE ALIENS SYNDROME

Following a one-on-one battle with an alien at the end of the first film, Warrant Officer Ellen Ripley escaped the carnage that left her crew dead and her ship scattered in tiny pieces over several million miles of space by bailing out in an escape pod. Thus ended the Ridley Scott film.

For its sequel James Cameron took the helm, and produced a guns and death visual assault which went down very well with the cinema-going public. It's now six years later and Ripley has still failed to shed the bad karma that's made her a magnet for those creatures that gestate in the human body and have concentrated acid for blood, and once more has to go against her insectoid foes.

At the end of Aliens we saw Ripley, Newt (a girl she found on a colony devastated by the aliens), Hicks, who was the only surviving member of a marine platoon sent to kill the aliens, and Bishop the android, or at least what's left of him, going into hibernation for the voyage home. It seems as though the queen alien Ripley blasted out of the airlock wasn't the only stowaway though; one of her workers also dodged ticket inspection to make it on board. While our battered heroes are deep in cryogenic sleep it sets to work setting fires and attempting to crack open their chambers and put an end to any future Alien movies.

Fortunately Ripley wakes up in time—that is in time to fail to prevent the ship crashing into a nearby planet, killing her Aliens co-stars. She's not alone though. It turns out there's a prison colony there populated by the worst kind of criminal scum, and, following Ripley's arrival, an alien. The alien quickly sets to work, killing off the prisoners in a variety of gruesome ways, and generally settling down to make a home for itself where it can raise a few hundred kids.

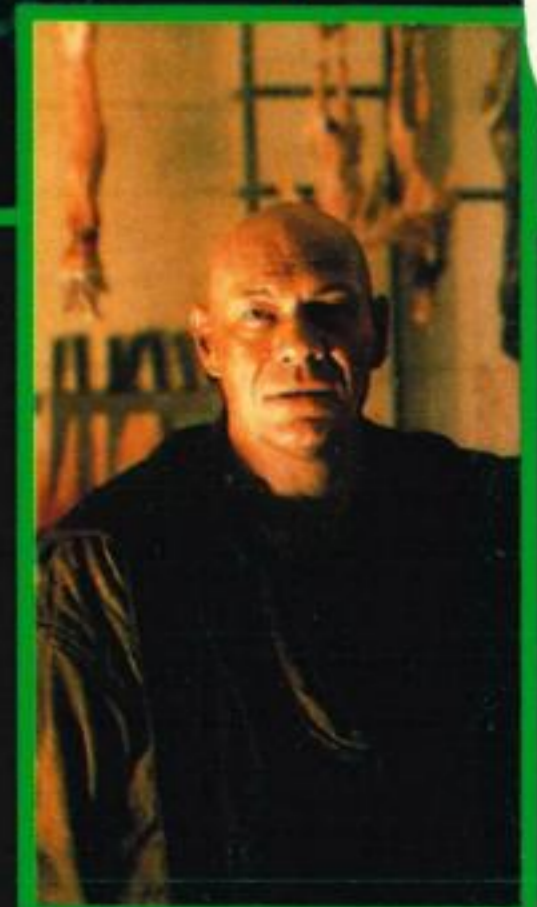
Now obviously this isn't a healthy situation for the human colonists. In fact, it's probably not understating things to say that they're in deep ka-ka, not least because they have absolutely no weapons in the colony with which to defend themselves.



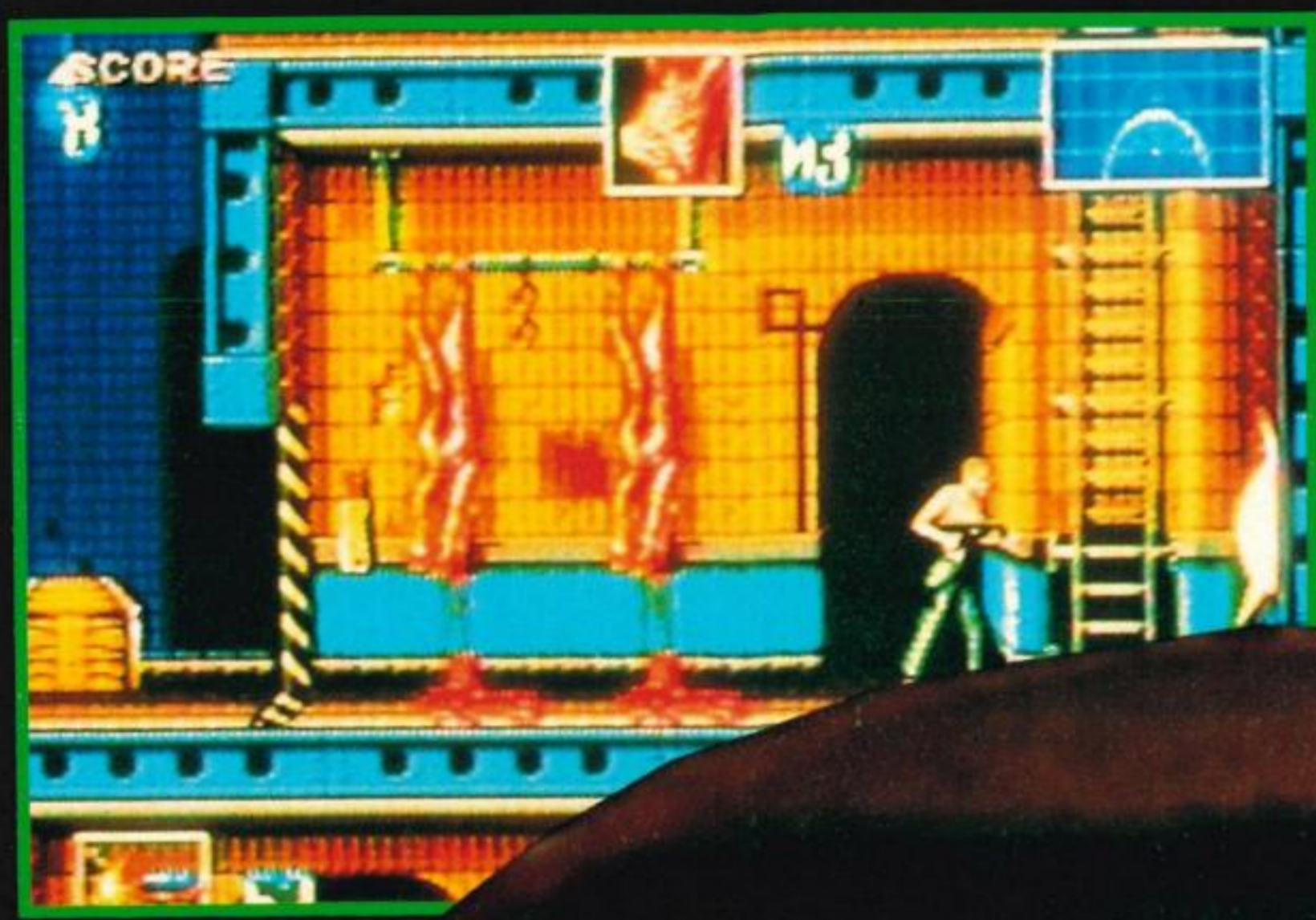
▲ This is Dillon, the prisoners' leader. The axe won't help him much, as the alien will bleed acid all over him if he hits it.



▲ The ventilation system is a key element in the game. Linking together the levels and acting as the aliens' main hang-out.



ALIEN 3



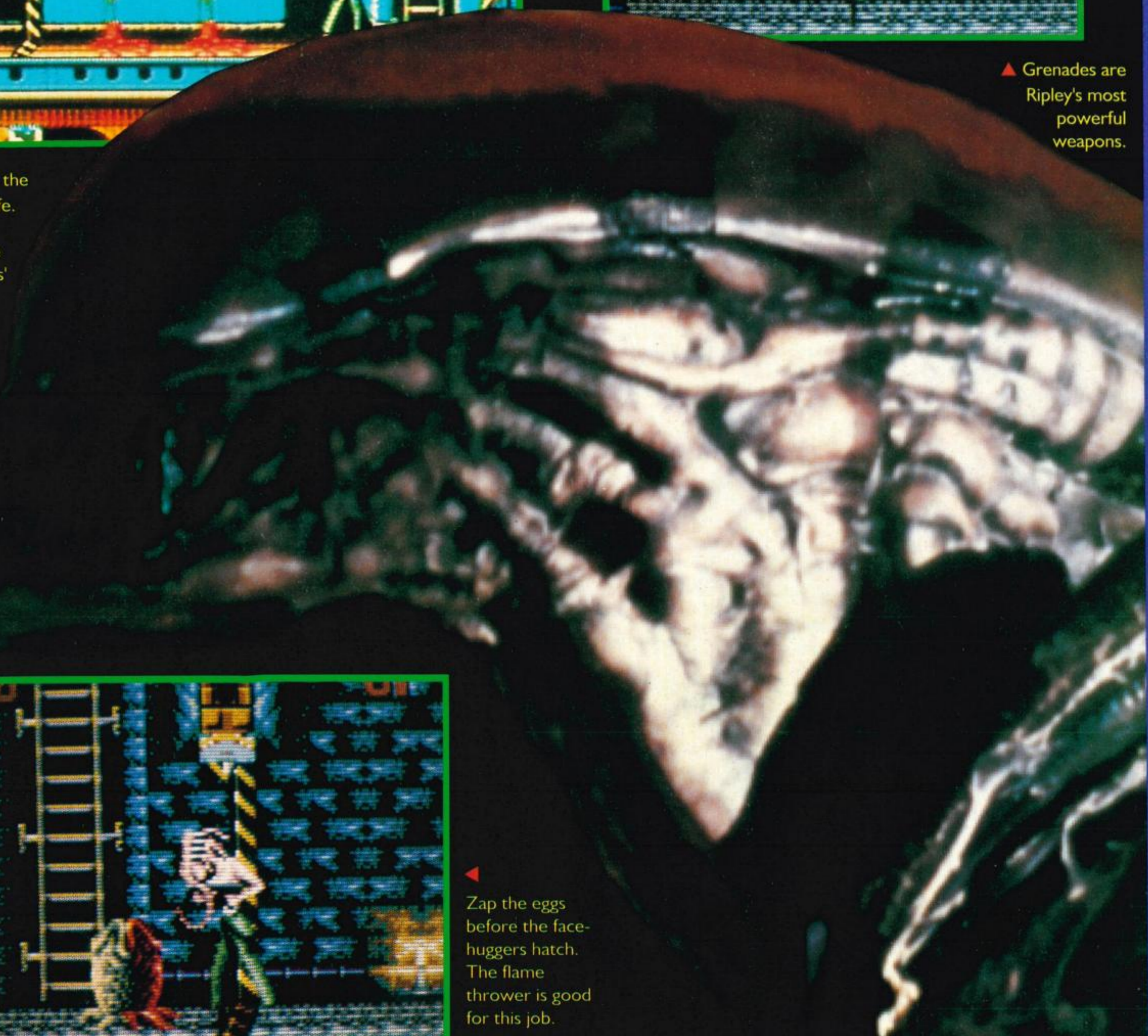
▲ Not even the kitchen is safe. Ripley has to search there for the aliens' captives.



▲ Grenades are Ripley's most powerful weapons.



▲ Zap the eggs before the face-huggers hatch. The flame thrower is good for this job.





THE GAME

Unlike in *Aliens* (the second film in the series), the drama in *Alien 3* relies on keeping the audience in suspense rather than dazzling them with death-a-second action. Now, as it stands, this is not the ideal basis for an action-packed Megadrive game, and so the programmers at Probe have taken a few liberties with the plot.

Not surprisingly you control Ripley on her bug hunt, but instead of there being one alien and a dozen prisoners helping her out, there are dozens of aliens and Ripley has to dash around the prison's 15 levels, freeing trapped prisoners before they are impregnated by face-hugger aliens.

Another licence 'addition' is the inclusion of heavy artillery. In the movie the alien is driven away with home-made weapons and fire, while in the game Ripley is equipped with a pulse rifle (like those in *Aliens*), a grenade launcher, a flame thrower and hand grenades. She has a limited supply of ammunition, and refills are few and far between. The pulse rifle is the fastest firing weapon, and it's possible to empty it in a couple of seconds. The flame thrower last much longer though, and can be fired at several different angles, which makes it far more useful but, again, it has a limited amount of uses. Naturally the grenades have far more destructive power than the other weapons, and Ripley has good a supply of both types. Hand grenades are thrown in an arc and explode a few seconds after hitting the ground, while the grenade launcher fires in a straight line with the projectile blowing up on impact.

In the game the aliens come in two types, the face-huggers, and the fully-fledged workers. Face-huggers are easy to spot as they start off in eggs and only hatch when Ripley comes near. This lets her blast them before she gets close enough to rouse them. If one catches her unawares it'll jump at her face and slowly drain her energy.

The worker aliens are a different matter. They spring out from corridors and leap teeth-first at Ripley. Her only way of knowing they're about is by checking the motion tracker in the top-right of the screen. It shows any aliens in the vicinity so she can ready the best available weapon.



▲ The aliens die in a completely over the top manner when shot with the pulse rifle or hit with a grenade.



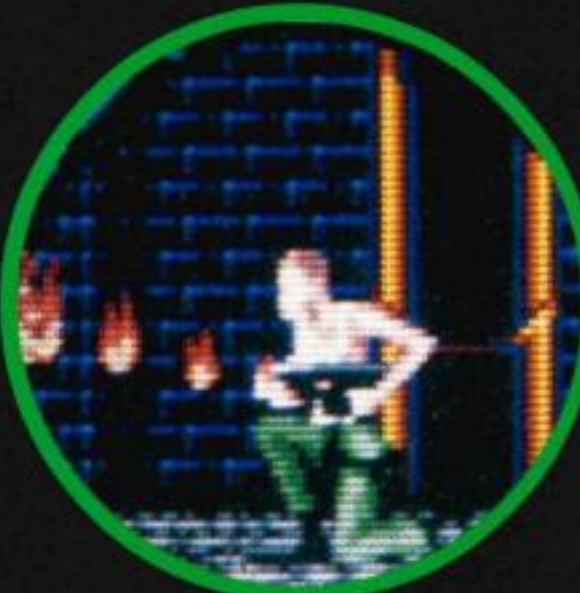
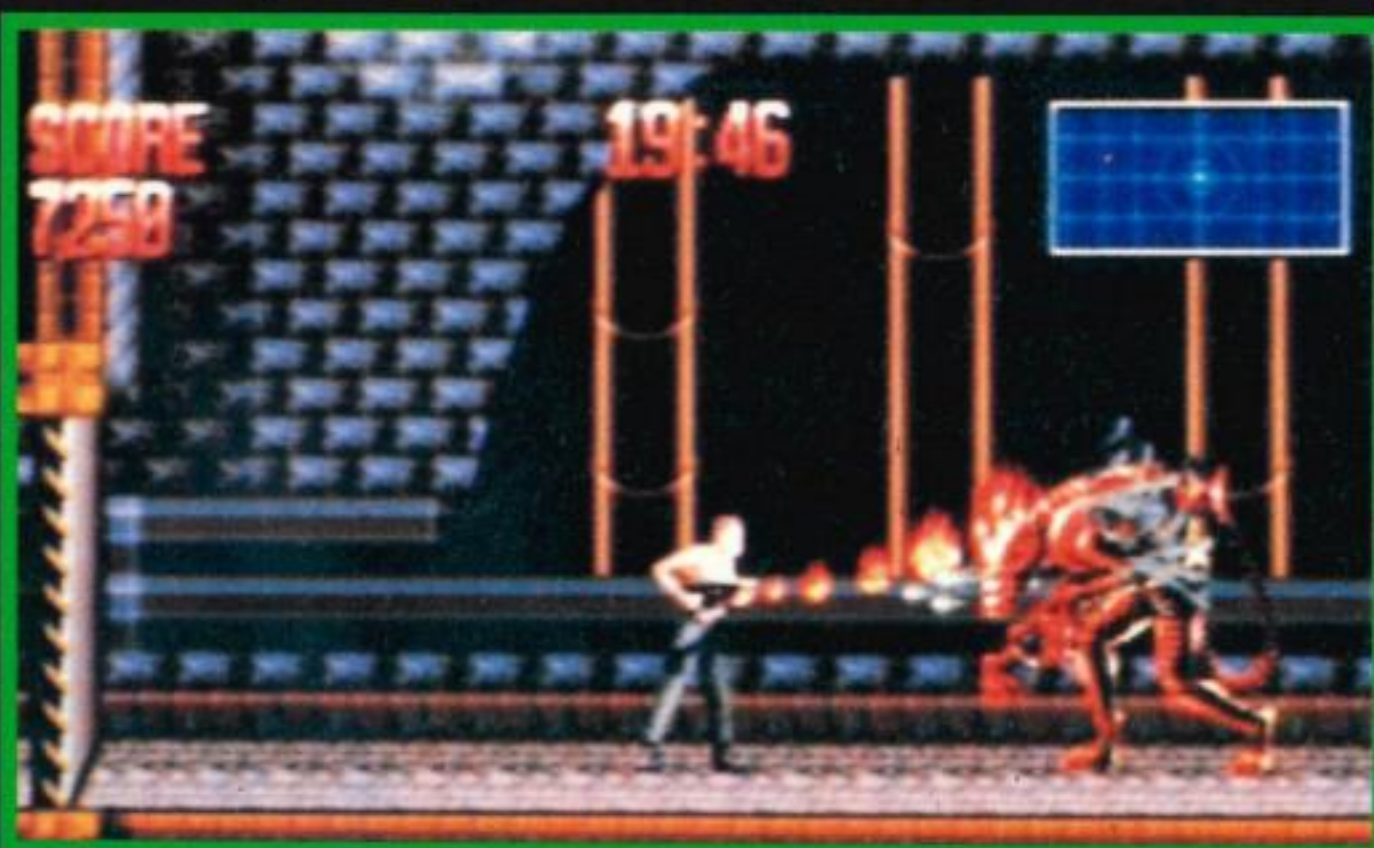
▲ Keep an eye out for worker aliens. Or else!



▲ The pulse rifle in action.

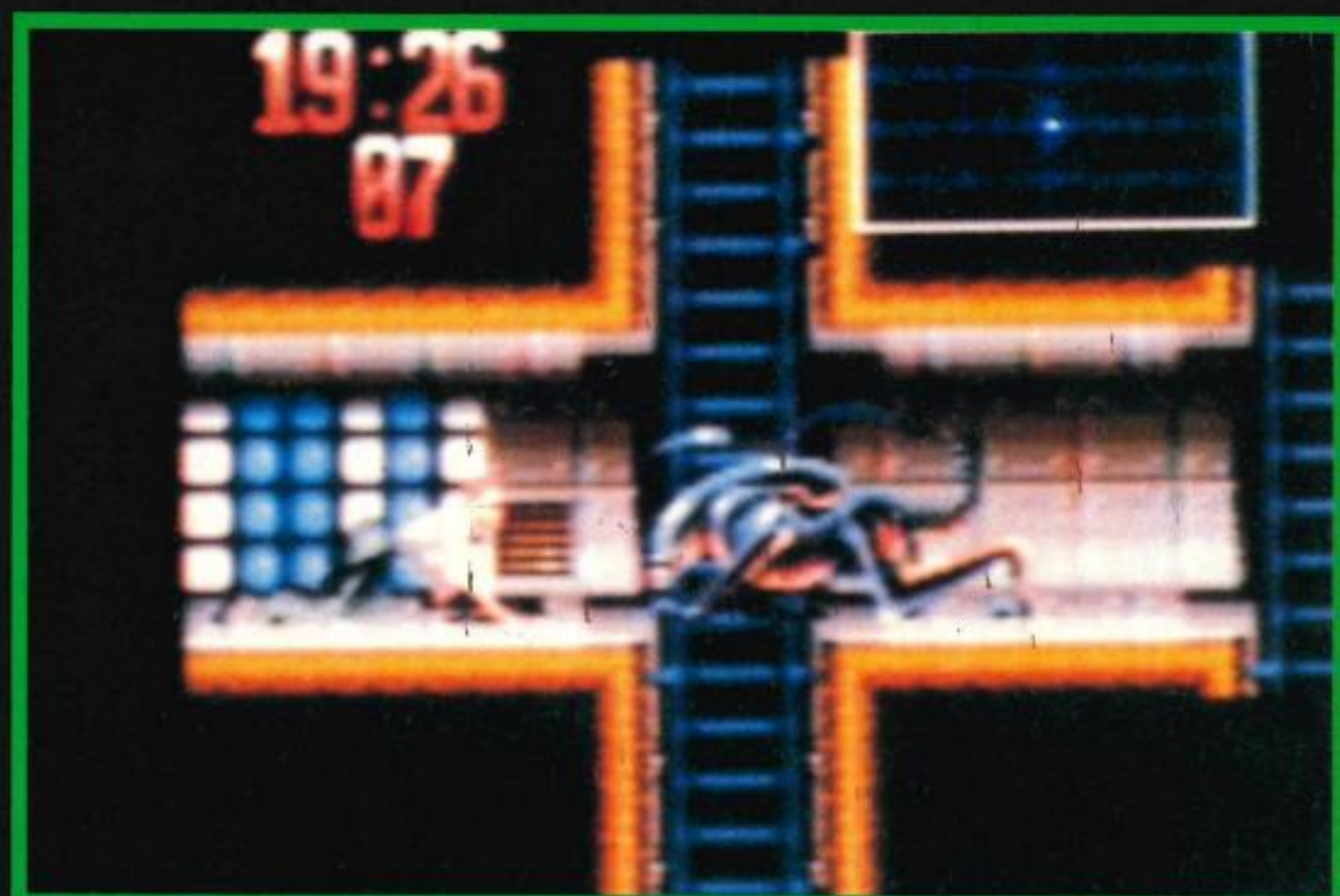


▲ Ripley fires off a grenade.



▲ Flame on!

▲ The ventilation shaft is very restrictive which prevents Ripley from using her rifle and flame thrower, and because of the twists and turns it's impossible to spot any hidden aliens, so you constantly need to keep an eye on the motion tracker. Many of the aliens lurk around corners, and the only way to deal with them is by lobbing a grenade in their general direction and hoping they get caught in the blast.



XENOMORPH FAX

Alien 3 made a staggering \$56,000,000 in its opening week in the USA, although its earnings dropped off drastically after just two weeks. Cinemas blamed it on lack of word-of-mouth publicity, producers 20th Century Fox blamed it on overly-harsh reviews, and a joint view is that it just didn't have enough appeal when put against the other two summer sequels Lethal Weapon 3 and Batman 2. You can check it out for yourself when it's released on August 14th. It's an 18 certificate, though, so no naughty under-age viewing!

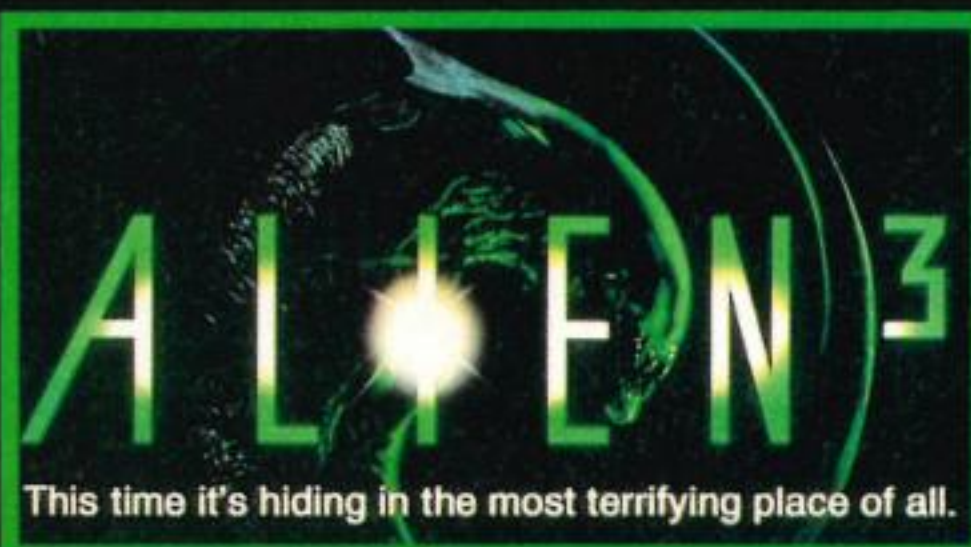


▲ Proof that even aliens need to go to the toilet.

It's been alleged that scripts and ideas have been drawn up for Aliens 4, 5 and 6, but with smaller a cast survival rate than any series of films in history, will people be able to overcome the lack of heroic continuity and remain faithful to the big picture?

THE DIRECTOR

Alien 3 marks the movie debut of director David Fincher. His previous work includes pop-videos for George Michael, Aerosmith, Madonna and Paula Abdul, as well as commercials for Nike, Pepsi and Levis, so he seems a bit of a surprise choice to direct one of the biggest sequels of the year. One of his more surprising 'improvements' over the previous movies was to shake the science fiction look. To do this he's tried to keep the sets and costumes black and brown with as little white as possible, to make a change from gleaming metal space-ship surfaces. The end result is the look of an ancient mine rather than a hi-tech future.



▲ Walk over to the prisoner to free him.

PROBING THE PAST

Alien 3 is being programmed by Probe software, who are one of the largest development houses in the country. They were also the people behind Virgin's Terminator, reviewed in issue six, which shows in the similarity of graphic styles between the two games. Probe have recently decided to stop producing games for home computers and concentrate solely on consoles, which is bad news for Amiga, ST, and PC owners. Next on the list for them after Alien 3 is a conversion of the Williams coin-op Smash TV, which is due out just before Christmas. We'll have more news of that in a future issue.

