

Big 'he's behind you!' energy, like a pantomime with maiming.



ACID TEST

Sound design and discouraging restarts in **ALIEN: ISOLATION**

At first, the analogue tech of *Alien Isolation* doesn't make sense. Some tedious part of my dad-brain can't ignore the fact we have iPads now. But there's a logic to it. Perhaps taking stuff to space you can fix with a wrench is the most sensible option. Computers, speaking from experience, can be murdering, capricious bastards after all.

There are two vivid examples of this in *Alien Isolation*. The Working Joes are the most frustrating part of this otherwise impeccable game. Being hunted by a perfect killing machine is exhilarating; being bludgeoned by Milky Michael Myers less so. The second example is more esoteric. For some reason, I'm having repeated tech issues, from doors refusing to open to walls disappearing. At one point, early on, my doomed-to-die Irvine Welsh-alike companion, Axel, decides to stand and stare at me instead of opening a vent like he's meant to. A wonderful, awkward silence ensues. I eventually fix the problem by running *Alien Isolation* in administrator mode, which I sadly can't do with the game's rogue AI. A mild frustration,

and one that gives me renewed appreciation for the Sevastopol's chunky, fixable machinery.

GIGER SANCTION

There are two things I'm legally obliged to talk about with *Alien Isolation*. The first is the location, which we won't dwell on since cleverer people than I have explained why it's so incredible. But *blimey*. Every dilapidated corner feels like it was hewn from our shared collective

It all knits together into one of the weirdest games I've enjoyed

memory of the film, so much that it's impossible to play it without feeling the constant pull of rewatching all... three films? Two? Four? Whatever. Follow your bliss. The other thing, to be crushingly obvious, is the sound. I'm playing it with headphones, and it's delicious torture. Every creaking

pipe and slamming door is the kind of scary you only really appreciate in the jitteriest moments of a nervous childhood. It's 'getting up at 3.24am to go for a wee' terrifying. However much the sound design team at Creative Assembly were paid, it wasn't enough. We live in a world where people know about Chumbawamba, but not the names of the artists so good at their jobs they can scare me with pretend footsteps. We have failed as a species. Perhaps death by alien is too good for us.

It all knits together into one of the weirdest games I've enjoyed. A game where I'm simultaneously enthralled and horrified by every dripping vent and hissing door: "Yes, I am traumatised by this. But I can appreciate the level of exacting design nonetheless," I scream, internally, as I drag my reluctant frame across the floor of the Sevastopol. "What fun!" ■

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?
The last game you play before you learn to hate vents

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DEVELOPER
Creative Assembly

PUBLISHER
SEGA

REVIEWED ON
Intel Core i7-7700 CPU @ 3.60GHz, 16 GB RAM, NVIDIA GeForce GTX 1070, Windows 10

MULTIPLAYER
No

LINK
feralinteractive.com/en/switch-games/alienisolation

PC GAMER VERDICT

Everybody gangsta until the motion tracker starts vibrating. *Alien Isolation* is the game headphones were invented for.

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