Twitter Thread by Sarah 12 Days of Xmas



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Is anyone else having a cocktail and watching the director's cut of ALIENS, the best action movie ever made, tonight?

BUILDING BETTER WORLDS

The Shining came out in 1980, so given that the audience already knows what's going to happen to all these poor colonists, the kid riding around on the Weyland-Yutani bigwheel tricycle has gotta be a reference to little Danny Torrance.

Fun fact: The original ALIEN broke me of my childhood ambitions to be a starship captain, because when 2/3ds of the crew is dead and someone needs to hunt a malevolent acid-blooded alien through the spaceship with a flamethrower? That's you, motherfucker.

SPACE MARINES!!!!!

Fun fact: Jenette Goldstein, who plays Private Vasquez, opened one of the first boutique bra shops in LA, specializing in larger sizes. It's still in business! https://t.co/uGwu3Wjm3S

APONE!

"Day in the Marine Corps is like a day on the farm! Every meal's a banquet! Every paycheck, a fortune! Every formation, a parade! I LOVE THE CORPS!"

"LOOK INTO MY EYE."

Deeply conflicted about who made me realize I was queer. Ripley appears on screen first, and gets more airtime, but VASQUEZ DOING PULLUPS, WOW.

"I prefer the term 'artifical person,' myself."

BISHOP. ■

In the realm of "early examples of strong female characters," Ripley makes a whole squad of fucking space Marines listen to her with just the sound of her voice.

"How do I get out of this chickenshit outfit?"

"You secure that shit, Hudson!"

"Alright sweethearts, you heard the man and you know the drill! Assholes and elbows!"

Al Matthews was an American treasure. Every line delivery is memorable, unique, and deep.

GONE TOO SOON.

THIS MANHATTAN IS FOR YOU, SARGE!

The cigar!

"We're on an express elevator to hell! Goin' DOWN!"

The pilot is perfect--the mirrored glasses, the only lipstick in this whole damn movie, FLY THE FRIENDLY SKIES on her helmet. Absolute power femme.

ALIENS has some great tropes that mimic the horror genre of the original--the descent into increasingly hostile territory, the slow build-up of tension without showing any monsters, the surprisingly deserted colony, the rapid overwhelm of powerful people, etc. etc.

This is an action movie, and maybe the first real military scifi movie? But it has horror bones, and you can tell. The Marines gassing themselves up in the drop ship is totally believable, which makes it so much scarier when they're all dead 25 minutes later.

I gotcher slow circle of the complex right here.

They take it so SERIOUSLY. Even though no one's there, no signs of life in the colony at all, they do a combat deploy, the dropship lifts off right away, they send the heavies out--all this establishes how dead-serious and badass the Marines are, despite their jokes. SO GREAT.

SPACE MARINES!

And then the pointed silence once they get into the colony buildings! The hum of wind, the dripping water, their boots on the metal grate floor... and nothing else. From the howling wind outside to total silence inside. Scary AF.

Here's Ripley pausing outside the colony, but look at her fucking COWBOY UP when they ask her if she's okay. Not someone to share her fears with the class, Mx. Ripley, you hero.

She's SO SCARED when they find the facehuggers too, her body language is so tense and her face is so closed off, Sigourney Weaver is perfect.

It's WILD that the original Ripley was a dude. The original movie would be so boring with a protag who was a dude, and this sequel wouldn't have happened at all--she spends half the movie hiding behind the space marines shouting useful instructions, adopts a kid, etc.

Ripley's gender is a huge part of the social dynamics that add dramatic tension and character building in this movie, it just *would not be interesting* without her.

I just realized Newt's legal name is Becky and will be waiting through the rest of the movie for her to ask to see the aliens' manager.

"Smoking or non-smoking?"

Would they care about people smoking when undoubtedly by 2100 they've invented harmless cigarettes? Like, they spend a lot of time on space stations, I don't wanna be inhaling recycled Camel Crush on a 2 year tour, do you?

"Stop your grinnin' and drop your linen!"

Newt comforting her bodiless doll head as they head back to the colony is such displaced childhood trauma 101.

"I'm not making that out too well, what is that Hudson?"

"You tell me man, I only work here."

When Gorman asks Ripley "What is that?" on seeing the alien hive structure and she says "I don't know," we have another horror movie trope, the shift from a human-controlled environment to a creature-controlled one.

"Nobody touch nothin'!"

"Yeah man, but it's a dry heat!"

"What the hell are we supposed to use man, harsh language?"

I mean I don't want to tell you your business Mr. Space Marine but I've said some VERY naughty things in my day and could almost definitely kill an alien with them.

I think maybe the scariest part of the first entombed colonist we see is that his shoelaces are missing.

Like, what happened to this dude that he thought he could do something to help his situation with his *shoelaces?*

WE'RE STILL MARINES AND WE GOT A JOB TO DO!

"Please.... k-kill me...."

The woman they found to play this colonist even *looks* like Ripley--white, short dark hair, nondescript t-shirt. It makes Ripley's empathetic reaction to her so much stronger, because you can literally see that she's imagining herself in that position.

HOLY SHIT, ALIENS!

OH NO, HE SET THAT MAN ON FIRE

"LET'S ROCK!!!!!"

When Apone goes down that's when shit really gets real for the audience, because 1. the perspective shifts to inside the APC, where the characters are watching through shitty GoPros or whatever, so you can't see what's happening but you *know* what's happening...

and 2. the baddest ass of the badass Space Marines just got eaten by fucking aliens

"The Sarge is gone, let's get the fuck out of here!"

The accelerated elephant noises for the aliens, omg. Perhaps the one effect that doesn't hold up to the test of time.

YEAAAAAAHHHHH RIPLEY'S DRIVIN' THE APC!

This is the part of the soundtrack I describe as the "Doobly-doobly-doo" part.

"MA-REEEEEEENS! WE ARE LEE-VING!"

OH NO! ACID BLOOD!

RUNNING OVER THE ALIEN LIKE A POSSUM ON A COUNTRY ROAD

"Ripley, you've blown the trans axel! You're just grinding metal! Ease down! ...Ease down."

Ripley written as a feminist hero, again: when Vasquez and Hicks get in a brief argument about whether or not to go back and get the dead-but-undead Marines from the colony and Ripley says flatly "You can't help them now," and they JUST LISTEN.

Like, many women have made feminist icons out of delivering neutral to sexist lines in a feminist way, but Ripley's character is explicitly written with a position of authority scripted into it, and YEAH, IT'S GREAT.

"I say we take off and nuke the whole site from orbit."

"Fuckin' A!"

"This installation has a substantial dollar value attached to it."

LOL motherfucker like you're using the dollar in 2100, it's all dogecoin now.

"Well they can bill me!"

Another line that woulda been really different if delivered by a dude.

"Well maybe you ain't been keepin' up on current events but we just got our asses kicked, pal!"

How have I seen this movie AT LEAST a dozen times and my shoulders are still up around my EARS, James Cameron HOW did you go from this to Avatar, HOW

CORPORAL HICKS HAS AUTHORITY HERE!

Man, you know the guy named SPUNKMEYER is not gonna live to the end of the movie, maybe don't put him on the one ship capable of getting you off this planet.

"We better get back, 'cause it's gonna be dark soon, and they mostly come at night. Mostly."

"Game over, man! Game over!"

Fuckin' RIPLEY telling Hudson THE SPACE MARINE to "Relax," I just, I can't, my queen, I die.

So, for the record, if a dude handed me a GPS tracking bracelet, told me to wear it, and added the caveat that "It doesn't mean we're engaged or anything," I would feed him to the aliens at my first opportunity.

"Ripley, she doesn't have bad dreams because she's just a piece of plastic."

Live forever in my heart, Newt.

Ripley promising Newt she won't ever leave her, "cross my heart and hope to die," while lit by the ruddy red heat lamp is such a perfectly grim counterpoint to the lighthearted childhood vow.

Surprising no one, Burke the company man is trying to get facehuggers off the planet.

B gun's down 50%!

They're at the pressure door.

Four hours until the pressure vent blows.

"We got problems!"

"And I was gettin' short! Four more weeks and out!"

Anyone who says any variation of "six more weeks and I'm a civilian again! I'm gonna go help my dad on the farm, he's old and he needs me!" is gonna buy it before the end of the movie. @TanyaHuff taught me that.

Bishop telling the humans "watch your fingers" as they seal him in the tiny tube so he can crawl for a mile out to the satellite dish is such perfect scripting--he doesn't want any humans to be hurt by anything he can prevent, even tiny little skin pinches.

I love the aliens getting wiped by the automatic guns until the guns are almost out of ammo and then falling back--it establishes them as sentient enough to do basic problem-solving, which, SCARY, while also amping up the ambient tension.

"Stay frosty."

Oh and there's the suicide pact, just in case any of us viewers at home doubted how Real and Serious this is.

Right on the heels of that, Hicks teaches Ripley how to use a rifle--establishing that in the face of imminent death she'll use every tool, including violence, to protect herself. This is something Alien didn't do, all her problem solving was about evasion and hiding.

This is the scene that turns Ripley into a predator, not just smart prey.

Lil Newt sleeping under the bunk in the red light of the heat lamp. ■■■■■■■■

empty specimen tank rattles against the floor

RUH ROH.

I love the symbolic power of them being trapped in the medlab. Buffered glass, cameras, lots of furniture and equipment for facehuggers to hide in--reinforces how Burke, the symbol of Establishment and Safety and Order has betrayed and trapped them.

"Ripley, I'm scared!"
"Me too."

I love how Ripley doesn't ever lie to Newt. Ripley gets it--the world is scary and dangerous and she needs to be ready for it.

HUDSON FRAGGING THE FACEHUGGER

"I say we grease this ratFUCK son of a bitch right now!"

"You know, Burke, I don't know which species is worse. You don't see them fucking each other over for a goddamn percentage."

"...They cut the power."

My father, who saw this movie in theaters when he was 37, said this scene specifically was so terrifying he didn't see a movie in theaters for YEARS after this.

THE RED LIIIIIIIIGHT

"It's game time!"

Twelve meters!

Eleven!

Ten!

Nine meters!

Eight!

Seven!

Six!

That's inside the room!

This is another classic horror movie bit, where the aliens use the environment to their advantage better than the humans can--this happened in the first movie too, where the alien basically became the ship as it hunted the crew. Remember the scary wet chains room?

Vasquez switching to grenades!

Gorman going back for Vasquez! The one good thing he's done this entire movie! You're a good Marine, Gorman!