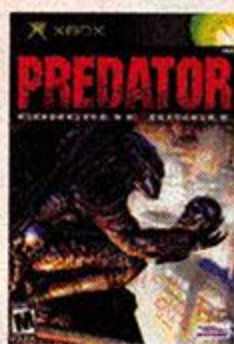


Predator: Concrete Jungle

PS2

Xbox



The irony of the prolific bloodshed in *Predator: Concrete Jungle* is that the game itself lacks a heart. When the protagonist rips out a spine in a beautiful and gory flourish, one wonders why so much thought went into the abundance of finishing moves and so little into the core gameplay.

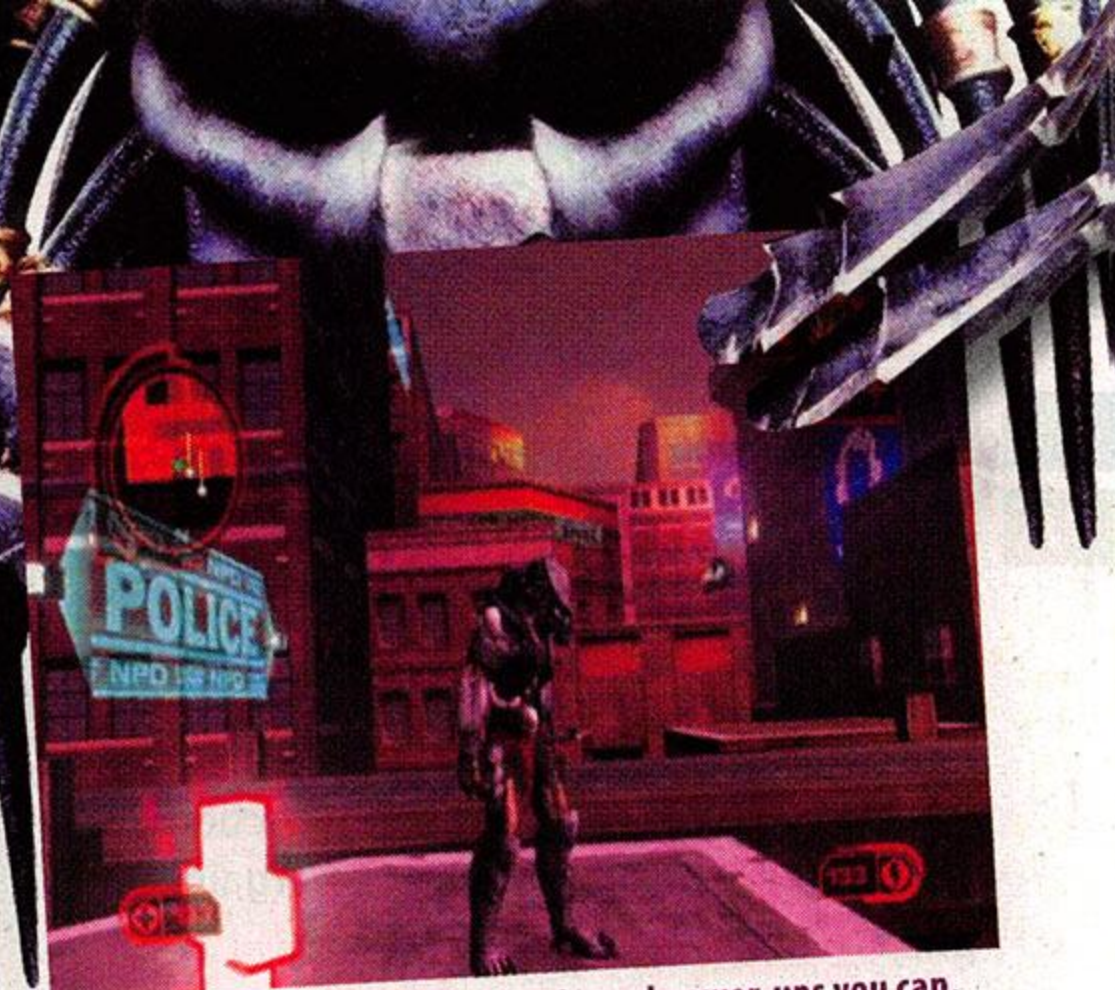
Let Us Prey

You're an alien hunter who disgraces himself in 1930s America only to return a century later on a quest of redemption, which more or less amounts to killing people in brutally creative ways. These over-the-top slaughters are where the fun begins...and ends. You can impale an enemy on your glaive, launch him skyward, and then halve him on the way down. You can also snap a spine over your

knee, or slam a face into brick wall. The violence is inventive, varied, graphic, and profanity laden; *Predator* earns its Mature rating with zeal. But as many deadly attacks as there are, you can perform them only so many times before they grow old, and there's little else to hold your interest.

Face Plants and Face Paint

It seems that the designers couldn't decide whether to make an action/platformer or a stealthy suspensefest, so they did both poorly. Your tools include a programmable smart disc weapon, vocal mimicry, and a mask with three enhanced modes of sight, but these interesting elements go to waste in arbitrary level designs that inflict one non sequitur objective after another, are populated by a witless collection of unfunny stereotypes, and are navigated with strangely limited controls. Jumping 30 feet isn't fun when you can't direct that momentum with any freedom or certainty, thanks in part to a camera that insists



PROTIP: Hit all the question marks and power-ups you can. The former can reveal bonus missions that reward you with upgrades, and the latter gives you vital items for your arsenal.

on getting too close even on manual. Imagine *Super Mario Bros.* with the bottom of your screen missing.

There are probably fanatics out there who will require this game, but even they aren't likely to find much lasting fun beneath *Predator*'s blood-drenched veneer. —*Ouroboros*

KEY MOMENT: Discovering that the humans controlling the police mechs are hard-wired directly into the cockpit

PS2	GRAPHICS	3.0	FUN FACTOR	2.0
	SOUND	3.0		
	CONTROL	2.5		
Xbox	GRAPHICS	3.0	FUN FACTOR	2.0
	SOUND	3.0		
	CONTROL	2.5		

■ Developer: Eurocom ■ Publisher: Vivendi Universal Games
■ \$39.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 1 player ■ ESRB: M



PROTIP: Not all levels have plentiful energy sources, so be careful of how much you rely on your power-draining stealth field.



PROTIP: Change the camera control to manual immediately, or the automatic view will have you executing your TV instead of your enemies.

Metal Slug 4 and 5 Bundle Pack

PS2



In retrospect, there's one side-scrolling arcade shooter series that has withstood the inevitable emergence of console and PC gaming dominance—*Metal Slug*. The series has attained irrefutable success by combining classic SNK 2D-programming quirkiness with utilitarian gaming designs. Old-school side-scrolling shooter fans can rejoice that *Metal Slug 4 and 5 Bundle Pack* accurately ports every little arcade morsel straight into your PS2.

Flame Chop!

The Bundle Pack permeates with SNK's weird stylistic humor—including the silly yet fully functional status ailments and SNK's deliberate syntax faux pas. The games suffer no lag and sport a combined total of 11 levels with a few featuring branching paths.



PROTIP: When your vehicle's health bar is low, simultaneously press Down and R1. This will eject you and send the vehicle forward with explosive results.



PROTIP: Branching paths lead to secret areas with hidden hostages, items, and subbosses.

The only real notable additions to the series are a Dual Machine Gun weapon power-up for both *Metal Slug* titles and the ability to slide by simultaneously pressing Down and Jump in *Metal Slug 5*. Additionally, in *Metal Slug 5*, the tank has been completely redesigned—it can now transform from a tracked tank into a bipedal armored suit with the ability to limitedly boost for added platformability.

"That Man Had a Family..."

Unfortunately, due to the nature of porting an arcade title to a console, both games suffer from stunted gameplay time—less than two hours combined! As the console titles have infinite credits, the goal of these games isn't to complete them through arcade mode but to replay the levels to acquire more hostages, items, and better mission-complete scores. Hostages can

be acquired only if you don't die during the entire level, and items are dropped by various hostages. It is unknown if these scores will unlock any additional material because the goals are virtually impossible to achieve.

The Bundle Pack is an excellent offering but is only recommended for the hardcore side-scrolling shooter fan due to the short gameplay time. —*Rice Burner*

KEY MOMENT: Remembering that when you eat too much food, your character will get fat, which increases your toughness but decreases your maneuverability



PROTIP: Zombie form is one of the more powerful status ailments. Zombie vomit can take out every character onscreen if used correctly.



PS2	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR	4.0
	SOUND	4.0		
	CONTROL	3.5		

■ Developer: BrezzaSoft ■ Publisher: SNK ■ \$39.99
■ Available now ■ Action ■ 2 players ■ ESRB: T ■ Also on the Xbox