

Criticism of NOT A HERO

NOT A HERO is a game that is basic in gameplay, with very few opportunities for development.

NOT A HERO is a 2D side scroller cover shooter game. It is unique due to its subversion of expectations of 2D games. Every 2D side scroller game is seen as a platformer, but the game doesn't need jumping, so it doesn't have it. You have a gun, can shoot, but you can also slide. Sliding into enemies can put them down on the ground. When enemies are on the ground, you can execute them. Shooting enemies at close range does critical hits, dealing lethal damage as headshots, killing smaller enemies instantly. Big enemies cannot be headshot or knocked down by sliding into them. Touching an enemy makes them push you around. It does the same thing if you shoot an explosive. You have health segments that regenerate at a rapid pace after a while.

The game was a mix of 2 prototypes : one was an arrow shooting game that morphed into a 2D cover shooter and the other was a game that had randomly generated dialogue. Both of these facets ended up being NOT A HERO's identity... but is it enough ?

NOT A HERO's variety comes into unlockable characters that have differing traits. And here is one of its many issues. Many characters you unlock become straight upgrades down the line. Getting Cleetus and Samantha early on allows you to have alternate playstyles, whether it is about getting a shotgun with fewer shots per mag or being able to shoot while moving while having less accuracy. The game curves these expectations with Jesus who by far is way worse than Steve, the base guy. Then, You get Mike. And you can play the whole game without picking anyone else. Mike is the fastest, he is quick at killing with his double barrel shotgun, and he executes so fast and with no ammo requirement, so you can slide execute slide without feeling like the execution interrupted the rhythm. He is ridiculously broken. And the game giving Stanley, a character with slow movement speed in exchange for a middling fast firing smg that doesn't have the satisfaction of burst fire, and that right after Mike feels like a joke. Clive is situational and then Ronald is just better than Steve. He may have less ammo but the hammer dash is good. Then Kimmy. Kimmy is the most broken character in the game, able to outclass anyone else. Straight upgrade, and honestly, it feels gross.

These characters vary in weapons, speed, some have abilities like running and gunning, running and reloading, shooting both sides at once, dashing to get an instant kill, and so on. The health of characters never changes, the mechanics never change. What change is relevant is if the character does one thing or not. Do they have a shotgun ? An assault rifle ? An execution that doesn't take ammo ? A dash to instant kill enemies ? Can they run and shoot ? Run and reload ? Kimmy may not have some of these things, but she has a lot. An SMG with lots of ammo, an execution that is free, fast speed, an instant kill button, she is the best for a reason.

But it's boring. Running the same character over and over and over again isn't cool. It's annoying. If I wanted to have a broken character, I can do that, but if I'm nerfing myself to have fun, I'm not sure I am. I want replayability. I want to have variety. I want to have to trade something for another.

Not to say that NOT A HERO is on the same level as Marfusha in terms of a serious lack of variety, but replaying the same levels again and again with the same character, again and again, isn't variety, especially considering I did that because I had no other games. It gets tiring fast.