

= The Punisher ( 1993 video game ) =

The Punisher ( Japanese : ?????? , Hepburn : Panissh? ) is a 1993 beat ' em up arcade game developed and released by Capcom . It stars the Marvel Comics ' anti @-@ hero the Punisher and co @-@ stars S.H.I.E.L.D. agent Nick Fury as the second player 's character as they embark on a mission to kill the crime lord the Kingpin and bring down his organization . Whilst following the same general formula as Capcom 's previous beat ' em ups , the game has a range of usable weapons and a comics @-@ style presentation .

The Punisher gained significant popularity in arcades and is widely regarded as one of the best titles in the beat ' em up genre as well as one of the best video game adaptations of comic books . A Mega Drive / Genesis port was developed by Sculptured Software and published by Capcom USA and Marvel Entertainment in 1994 to mixed reviews .

= = Gameplay = =

The Punisher follows the same side @-@ scrolling beat 'em up formula Capcom established in Final Fight and Captain Commando as the protagonists engage foes and stage bosses . As in most beat 'em up games of this kind , progression through the game is achieved by systematically eliminating all common enemies and proceeding to the right ( or left ) , and defeating the bosses met at the end of each stage . Unlike in Final Fight , the player characters Punisher and Nick Fury 's size , abilities and tactics are essentially interchangeable ; they both use the same basic moves , such as punches , kicks and throws , which can be chained chained into combos , as well as similar special attacks . Basic attacks can be combined to cause extra damage to enemies . The game is presented in a comic book @-@ like style , including featuring on @-@ screen onomatopoeias such as " BLAM ! " for gunshots .

Various melee ( including baseball bats and Japanese swords ) and thrown weapons ( including knives and shuriken ) as well as improvised weapons ( such as lead pipes , car tires and a crude flamethrower ) can be picked up during regular combat . Weapons can be dropped by enemies or obtained from smashing various containers throughout the stages . When the player is armed with a weapon , its durability will be displayed alongside the player 's health , showing how much it can be used until it breaks apart . Treasure can also be found in containers , awarding the player with bonus score points once collected ( jewelry also appears after defeating female enemies ) . Health can be replenished by picking up food , which can also give bonus points . The game distinguishes itself by the frequent use of firearms , including an Ingram and a M16 . There are several sections of the game when gun @-@ wielding enemies appear to which the characters draw their handguns , enabling the player to shoot them . Player characters can also pick up and collect hand grenades that can be deployed at a moment of choice .

= = Plot = =

The game begins in an illegal casino and the streets of the New York City , with Frank " the Punisher " Castle ( optionally partnered with Nick Fury ) in pursuit of the Mafia enforcer Bruno Costa ; the chase ends with a fight against Chester Scully ( a minor villain from the comics ) . Still on track of Bruno , the Punisher infiltrates the mob 's Pantaberde resort via a water duct . He breaks into a hotel and corners Bruno ... who is suddenly lasered to death by a massive Guardroid , which Castle must then take on .

The Punisher then raids a major drug @-@ smuggling ring at the local harbor , where he 's pitted against four gorgeous @-@ but @-@ lethal ninja @-@ sisters : Mizuki , in blue ; Misa , in black ; Midori , in green ; and Luna , in red . ( Misa is brunette ; the others are blonde ) . Finally , Castle confronts Bonebreaker in a waterfront warehouse . After that , the Punisher attacks the Kingpin 's poppy field at an underground cave in Arizona . There Castle boards and destroys a freight train which is commanded by Bushwhacker .

At that point , the Kingpin decides that he has lost enough henchmen and money to the Punisher 's

actions . He puts a hefty contract out on Castle , who is chased by assassins from his hideout and through a forest . After defeating another Guardroid , the Punisher in turn assaults the King Building skyscraper . He fights his way through Jigsaw and other enemies to the final showdown against the Kingpin himself . After the Kingpin is defeated , the entire tower collapses ... but he is not found among the many dead criminals in the rubble .

= = Release = =

= = = Arcade = = =

The Punisher for the arcades was released in April 1993 , marking the beginning of the partnership between Marvel Comics and Capcom , which led to the series Marvel vs. Capcom . Artworks from the game were featured in the 2012 art book Marvel vs. Capcom : Official Complete Works by Udon Entertainment .

= = = Genesis = = =

A console port of The Punisher was released for the Genesis in North America in 1994 and for the PAL region Mega Drive in April 1995 . This version , while published by Capcom , was developed by an independent American company Sculptured Software . In addition to the worse graphics and sound , lesser variety of enemies , and a smaller amount of objects on screen than in the original , many of the previously breakable background objects were rendered unbreakable due to the limitations of the Genesis ' hardware .

This version also contains some content censorship , including removing the most explicit violence as well as the animation of Fury smoking his cigar , and female ninja enemies with skimpy outfits becoming fully clothed . The port also comes with three difficulty settings , but the Easy setting ends after only three stages and the game can be properly completed only on Normal or Hard . The PlayStation version was reported in works by Crystal Dynamics , but was never completed .

= = Reception = =

= = = Arcade = = =

Upon its release , GamePower gave the arcade version of The Punisher a 10 out of 10 partial score for the game 's " fun factor " . Its action was praised by GamePro , who remarked that " this game 's outstanding feature is its gorgeous graphics , which capture the dark , somber mood of the Punisher comic books . "

= = = Genesis = = =

Reviewing the Genesis conversion , VideoGames called it " a decent exercise in vigilante mayhem " that is " surprisingly fun , yet fairly standard game . " A preview by Mean Machines Sega opined it " looks good " and features " fantastic weaponry " , but EGM criticized the characters for being too small on the screen , also stating that there was little to no skill involved in defeating the bosses . EGM praised the number of weapons and moves available but nonetheless concluded that " the whole game comes across as routine and bland . "

GamePro outright panned the port , commenting that the special moves are too difficult to pull off , the sound effects are weak , the gameplay is generic and unimaginative beat ' em up fare , and " the graphics never come close to the coin @-@ op game that this cart is based on . " It was also lambasted by Next Generation , who stated that " not much good can be found " in the game and " the person responsible for putting out The Punisher deserves a good spanking . " The May 1995

issue of Hyper even had The Punisher as the worst rated game of the month .

= = = Retrospective = = =

Notwithstanding the flawed home port and limited commercial success , the arcade original has achieved a cult game status . Official Sega Saturn Magazine and Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine both wished for The Punisher to be included in Capcom 's arcade compilation releases for the Sega Saturn and the PlayStation , respectively . According to gamesTM in 2005 , " Capcom 's The Punisher was a brutally violent fighter that perfectly captured the anti @-@ hero it was based on . Featuring buckets of blood , some nasty moves and hordes of enemies , action came thick and fast , and so did the excitement . " The magazine too expressed a wish for it to be included in a compilation re @-@ release for a more modern gaming system , in this case the PlayStation Portable , but noted that the chances of this are slim due to a long @-@ expired license .

Retro Gamer called it " a forgotten gem in Capcom 's back catalogue " that " is bursting with character and is extremely enjoyable , " surmising the game did not sell well because the market was already flooded with beat ' em up games . GamesTM retrospectively described it and the arcade Alien vs. Predator as old " gaming nuggets " that provided a " nirvana for fight fans " as " back in the mid @-@ Nineties , no @-@ one made scrolling beat- ' em @-@ ups like Capcom . " Some media outlets also singled out for a special praise the game 's particular elements , such as with Complex regarding its arcade cabinet and Cracked.com regarding its game over sequence . Crunchyroll 's Patrick Macias wrote : " I 'll confess my heart skipped a beat when I read The Punisher arcade game , the legacy of a misspent youth and countless tokens whittled away at Chuck E. Cheese . "

Some critics regard The Punisher as among the best of the beat ' em up genre , as well as among the best video game adaptations of comic books , especially of Marvel titles . In 2010 , it was ranked as the tenth top greatest superhero game by IGN 's News & Features Team , who noted it " was pretty brutal for its time , " and as the fifth top Marvel arcade game by iFanboy 's Josh Richardson . Nerdist Industries included it among the top ten most iconic Marvel video games in 2013 , calling it " one of the few games that benefits from its cheesiness " and stating that in 1993 the two @-@ player experience " was pretty much what Army of Two wishes it was today . " That same year , it was also listed as one of top beat ' em up games of all time by Heavy.com 's Elton Jones , as well as being included amongst the best looking beat ' em up games from the 16 @-@ bit era by Kotaku Australia 's Gergo Vas . David Hawkins of WhatCulture ! declared it number one best comics @-@ based arcade game in a 2011 ranking , being " above and beyond all other arcade adaptations of comic books and their heroes , " and Jon Ledford of Arcade Sushi opined that " in terms of pure enjoyment , ingenuity , control , and graphics , The Punisher is the Best Retro Beat ' Em Up of all time . "