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Predator 1 and 2 - Blu-ray

Will Blu-ray improve this classic?

by Stuart Miles published on 7 November 2008

Predator has always been one of those movies that hovers around in the ITV schedules late at night. It's a classic Schwarzenegger action fest with a bit of sci-fi thrown in for good measure. So can a move to Blu-ray lift it from late night TV hell?

If you aren't familiar with the storyline of Predator it follows Arnie and his merry men going into the jungle to rescue some hostages. However when they find a bunch of Green Berets skinned alive they start to wonder what they're really up against. An 80s gung-ho shootout later and the Predator (an alien from another planet with a good cache of weapons), who has been stalking them all along, starts to slowly pick them off one by one, with Schwarzenegger left to make the last stand and show the alien who's the daddy.

With lines like "I ain't got time to bleed" and "We're just assets" you know you aren't supposed to be doing too much thinking.

21 years later and the action and effects still hold up. That jungle offers an ageless setting and combine that with a wardrobe that features just combat fatigues and waistcoats and this could have easily been shot last year.

Moving to Blu-ray you would hope those hours of watching it on standard definition blurry television would be over. The bad news is that shooting in the thick jungle was obviously not kind on the film stock. You can take back what you said about ITV and its quality. Some of the shots still look terrible, with plenty of noise, poor focusing and just an overall lack of quality and consistency.

For this to really benefit from the Blu-ray experience 20th Century Fox needs to think about re-mastering the footage. You might have thought it was your VHS copy, but alas, some of the same problems crop up here.



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From the dense jungle to the urban jungle, Danny Glover makes an interesting replacement to Schwarzenegger's brawn. Clearly coming off the back of Lethal Weapon 2 and a perhaps a move to position himself as an action hero: he doesn't do himself any favours by sporting a baggy tweed suit for most of the time.

Strangely set in a run down Los Angeles of the future (it was filmed in 1990 but set in 1997), the Predator, now an entire race rather than a single entity, has returned for some more hunting using the carnage of a gang war to pick off people to turn into trophies. Cue some in-house references to Aliens and suddenly you've set-up an entirely new film...

With a city as the backdrop - more potential for carnage - Glover plays the Lethal Weapon cop on his own, trying to figure out who is killing everyone (it's the alien with green blood...). Luckily an early appearance from Bill Paxton (fresh from Aliens) as a slimy detective fails to steal the show.

Clearly with a higher budget than the first, the original filming benefits to some extent from the Blu-ray edition as the quality is markedly better, however the point of view shots from the Predator's perspective are still as ropey as anything. Couple that with Glover soon realising he is in over his head and Gary Busey (Point Break) turning up as the special agent complete with goons in matching outfits, who have been tracking him for weeks and everything seems pretty much on rails.

VERDICT

Like Alien and Aliens, the Predator double pack has the same themes running through the two films, but the films are very different. Schwarzenegger's tight jungle take down is very different from Glover's city sprawl and the better for it even after the poor film quality.

As a Blu-ray offering, it's pretty disappointing.

At a glance

What is it?

Alien vs. Schwarzenegger and Glover

Good

Good action fest with high body count

Bad

Lack of features, quality of Predator is still poor

Verdict

Good "beer with the lads" movies however not necessarily worth the upgrade to Blu-ray if you've already got them on DVD

Price £29.99

Our score

6/10

Your score

?/10

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Predator comes with just the Theatrical Trailer and while Predator 2 features audio commentaries and a documentary, all the extras seem to be stuck on there to say there is at least something.

Good "beer with the lads" movies however not necessarily worth the upgrade to Blu-ray if you've already got them on DVD.

Predator

Rating: 18

Starring: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Carl Weathers

Directed by: John McTiernan

Extras: Trailer

Predator 2

Rating: 18

Staring: Danny Glover, Bill Paxton, Gary Busey

Directed by: Stephen Hopkins

Features: Audio commentary by Director, Audio commentary by writers Jim Thomas and John Thomas, The hunters and the hunted featurette. 3 evolutions segments, 6 weapons of choice segments, 2 hard core segments, 3 promotional galleries.

This Blu-ray was kindly loaned to us by Play.com, the UK's favourite online entertainment retailer.