= Darkwatch =

Darkwatch : Curse of the West is a 2005 first @-@ person shooter video game for the PlayStation 2 and Xbox . It was developed by High Moon Studios (formerly Sammy Studios) and published by Capcom in the United States and by Ubisoft in Europe and Australia .

The game mixes western , horror and steampunk genres , telling the story of Jericho Cross , an outlaw gunfighter in the late 19th @-@ century American Frontier who has been turned into a vampire and then forcibly recruited by the titular monster @-@ hunting secret organization to fight against supernatural forces . The gameplay system of Darkwatch is reminiscent of Halo : Combat Evolved .

Darkwatch was met with a generally positive critical reception , acclaimed in particular for its relatively unique Weird West setting and artistic merits . The game was accompanied by an extensive promotional campaign and was planned to be the first installment of a new media franchise , but its sequel got canceled in 2007 and the film adaptation remains in development hell .

= = Gameplay = =

Darkwatch features a reputation system that affects player 's abilities in addition to the player character Jericho 's starting , neutral vampiric powers of " Blood Shield " (a regenerating force field similar to the energy shield from Halo) , " Vampire Jump " (a double jump that can be aborted at any moment) and " Blood Vision " (a system of heat vision highlighting enemies and objects that also acts as a zoom) . Through the game , Jericho is met with multiple choices of a good or evil variety , allowing the player to select morality awarding Jericho new powers , called " Brands " , based on the choices he made . This system was compared to the one used in the role @-@ playing video game Star Wars : KOTOR . The good path powers are " Silver Bullet " (making the player 's weapons cause more damage) , " Fear " (confusing minor enemies) , " Mystic Armor " (an extra shield system) and " Vindicator " (bolts of lightning destroying all nearby enemies) . The evil powers are " Blood Frenzy " (granting an immunity to damage and extremely powerful melee attacks) , " Turn " (turning undead enemies into allies) , " Black Shroud " (stealing life force from nearby enemies) and " Soul Stealer " (destroying nearby enemies and stealing their souls) . The powers can be activated for a limited time when the HUD 's blood bar , which is fueled through collecting souls of the slain enemies , is completely full . Jericho 's health is also restored through collecting the souls .

During the daylight hours , Jericho 's powers are gone , so he has to fight as a normal human , using a wide variety of weaponry , from a Darkwatch 's standard @-@ issue 24 @-@ shot Redeemer handgun to a crossbow firing explosive arrows and a rocket launcher , as well as melee combat . In some missions , Jericho can drive a Gatling gun @-@ equipped Coyote Steamwagon vehicle ; using it or a horse changes perspective to the third @-@ person view . During horse @-@ riding rail shooter sequences , Jericho is granted unlimited ammunition and high attack speed , at the cost of only being able to use the Redeemer .

= = = Multiplayer = = =

The Xbox version has competitive multiplayer for up to 16 players online , although system link is not possible . The PlayStation 2 version does not offer any online connectivity and competitive multiplayer is limited to two players (or four players while using an optional multitap device) via split screen gameplay . In multiplayer matches , the players can pick up the " Silver Bullet " , " Mystic Armor and " Blood Frenzy " powers as floating power @-@ ups that activate immediately . The game 's story mode is also available for split screen cooperative gameplay on the PlayStation 2 , a feature absent from the Xbox version . In the co @-@ op mode , both players play as a rank @-@ and @-@ file Darkwatch Regulators but cutscenes designed for the single @-@ player mode and featuring Jericho as the main character are left unchanged , causing a number of glaring continuity errors .

= = Plot = =

= = = Story = = =

The game 's story (narrated by Peter Jason) follows the exploits of a wanted outlaw named Jericho Cross and his employment in an ancient vampire @-@ hunting order known as the Darkwatch (hence the game 's title) . After unwittingly releasing the Darkwatch 's greatest enemy , a vampire lord named Lazarus Malkoth , Jericho is conscripted into the Darkwatch as an elite operative . Jericho , however , is slowly turning into a vampire himself , as a result of being bitten by Lazarus . The game outlines either Jericho 's struggle for humanity or his descent into darkness , depending on the player 's actions .

The game begins in the Arizona Territory in 1876 with Jericho attempting to rob a Darkwatch train that is transporting the captured Lazarus Malkoth to the Darkwatch Citadel , a frequently mentioned and often visited location in the game . His actions inadvertently release Lazarus into the West . In a seeming bit of mercy , Lazarus bites Jericho and gives him the curse of the vampire , causing him to slowly turn into one . The game continues with the introduction of Darkwatch agent Cassidy Sharp as well as the appearance of Shadow , Jericho 's undead horse whom he fed on and turned in a frenzy after being bitten by Lazarus .

As the game progresses , Jericho finally makes his way to the Darkwatch Citadel , where he meets General Clay Cartwright , the current leader of the order . Cartwright puts him through Torture Maze , the Darkwatch initiation exercise which was designed as a test for Darkwatch Regulators , but Jericho gets a special version specially designed by Cartwright to kill him . When Jericho passes the test anyway , he begins to do missions for the Darkwatch . Missions include tasks ranging from fixing some of the damage he has caused to acquiring Darkwatch equipment , such as the Darklight Prism , a stone that allows vampires within its vicinity to both use their powers and walk in sunlight . On some of his missions Jericho is accompanied by other Darkwatch forces including his new partner , a sultry and vicious temptress named Tala . Eventually , during their night of passion , Tala lures him to bite her and inherits some portion of his power , transforming herself into a half @-@ vampire creature similar to him . She then betrays the Darkwatch from within , allowing hordes of the undead to invade its headquarters .

A final showdown ensues with Lazarus , in which Jericho arises victorious , and a choice is given for him to side with either Cassidy or Tala . Either Jericho rids the West of the Curse of Lazarus , or he becomes the Curse ; the player 's choice determines how the game ends . If the character were to choose the good option , then the final fight will be against the vampiric Tala ; if the player chooses to take Lazarus ' curse for himself , then he must fight the ghost of Cassidy . The bad ending shows the now @-@ monstrous Jericho killing Tala and riding into the night , while the good ending shows Cassidy 's soul being released .

= = = Characters = = =

Jericho Cross (voiced by Christopher Corey Smith) : The protagonist of the game , a jaded American Civil War deserter and drifter who became a gunslinger and train robber . During his " one last job " , he releases Lazarus Malkoth from his prison in a failed attempt to steal the contents . While dueling with Lazarus , Jericho gets bitten and infected by the vampire curse . His already deadly skills are enhanced by his vampire powers that afford him superhuman strength , increased endurance , enhanced agility , and heightened senses , in the form of the bioluminescent red orb that regenerated from his empty eye socket . Shadow is Jericho 's demonic horse that appears at his beckon . According to the developers , they created " deep psychological profiles of every character in the game " with " hope that Jericho 's character arc ? as this desperate lone wolf that 's robbing trains with a subconscious death wish ? makes a believable transition into this half @-@ vampire hybrid gunslinger and will ultimately envelop the player in his destiny : which is a guy that

can be either a hero or a terror . Basically , we just want people to care about this character and what happens to him ? and I can 't think of a first @-@ person shooter that 's really made us do that yet . "

Cassidy Sharp (voiced by Jennifer Hale) : The game 's first female protagonist . Cassidy is the agent who attempts to stop Jericho on the train in the game 's opening sequence . After the explosion of Lazarus ' prison , she joins Jericho but is soon murdered by Lazarus . Cassidy returns as a good ghost and befriends Jericho , aiding him in his mission to stop Lazarus (a role similar to this of Cortana in the Halo series) . As a little girl , Cassidy was orphaned in a vampire attack and then raised as a ward of the Darkwatch . Eventually , she became the most serious and dangerous agent in the organisation , yet really she is also deeply insecure about herself . If fought as the final boss , she turns into an angel .

Tala (meaning " Stalking Wolf ") (voiced by Rose McGowan) : The game 's second female protagonist . Tala is a Native American shaman and a power @-@ hungry Darkwatch agent . When she was young , Tala lost her seer mother and became an outcast from her own tribe , fearful of her mediumship abilities . Her father was then killed by a band of fur traders and she herself was kidnapped and abused by them , until her captors were killed by vampires . Tala was then herself rescued by the Darkwatch troops , who turned her into one of their own . However , her experiences made her extremely bitter , and she began pursuing ever more power at any cost , secretly desiring to get revenge upon the world for the death of her parents . Despite her ruthlessness , Tala quickly rose through the Darkwatch ranks due to her fearless battle efficiency . The developers described her as not evil but " just ambitious " . Tala is the only character who uses kicks in the game , due to the artists deciding that " some of the combat moves the actress performed fit the character so well that we changed the combat system she 's using . " If fought as the final boss , she turns into a demon . According to GameSpy , Tala is " without question , the more difficult boss to battle . "

Lazarus Malkoth (voiced by Keith Szarabajka) : A Roman who first founded the Darkwatch society in 66 AD in order to battle the dark forces responsible for the decline of the Roman Empire . He eventually got possessed by a demon and himself became a powerful vampire and turned on the organization he founded , raising an undead army to aid him in his task . The Darkwatch then pursued Lazarus across Europe and later America . During the game 's development , the villain 's name was Scourge .

Clay Cartwright (voiced by Michael Bell) : The brutal and scheming field commander of the Darkwatch . An American Civil War veteran in the rank of brigadier general , Cartwight snipes Jericho and enslaves him , forcing him to participate in a series of trials before inducting him into the organization .

= = Development = =

= = = Concept = = =

The development of the game began in the summer of 2002 , when Sammy Studios ' first internal development team , informally called " Team 1 " , decided to " bring a refreshing theme to a genre riddled with the stereotypical sci @-@ fi , fantasy , and military themes , " an idea soon approved by the Sammy Corporation president Hajime Satomi . The original game concept was not very dark and the vampires " felt more like a cartoon property " . In the early derivatives of the project , the game " looked more like something from Pixar " and its protagonist was supposed to be Chaz Bartlett , a " vaguely bumbling sort of comic relief character " , described as an " Eastern dude who was a card cheat " similar to Bret Maverick .

The game 's lead designer and writer Paul O 'Connor said that the original ' high concept ' for Darkwatch was " Blade meets Men in Black in the Old West , " but " in the two years that the property has been in development , it has grown in other directions and taken on a life of its own . The game is quite a bit darker than Blade , and we ? ve completely lost the tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek feeling of Men in Black . " He added it " leans toward the Army of Darkness side of things ,

though without the slapstick , " and " with the accessibility of Raiders of the Lost Ark . " The turning point for setting a much darker and mature tone was the final iteration of Jericho 's character design . Tala was originally intended to also be a player character , but the studio 's marketing department " didn ? t think that would fly . "

= = = Production = = =

The game was developed for the PlayStation 2 and Xbox side @-@ by @-@ side , with a PC version initially described as " possible " . Creative director Emmanuel Valdez said that " for the longest time we were debating whether or not to bring it out for GameCube , " before deciding " there 's just not a lot there in the GameCube market right now . " There were also plans to port the game for the PlayStation Portable . The game engine for Darkwatch features middleware engines RenderWare , Havok and Quazal , while Autodesk MotionBuilder was used to create character animation and motion capture .
The game was " intentionally designed as a cross between Halo and Silverado . " O 'Connor said Halo was " of course " an inspiration , comparing Darkwatch to the horror aspects of Halo , and senior designer Brent Disbrow said he expected it to " stand on par with games like Halo 2 . " Other video game inspirations recounted by O 'Connor and Valdez included Half @-@ Life , Medal of Honor , Metroid Prime and TimeSplitters . Lead level designer Matt Tieger said that a creation of one of the game 's bosses was " inspired by all the fun " that he had while playing the Metal Slug 2D shooter series with its " crazy bosses " . O 'Connor said the game 's reputation system was inspired by the contrast between the Old West figures such as Billy the Kid and the likes of Wyatt Earp , who " both were feared gunslingers , but one was a psychopathic killer and the other was a good guy / lawman . "
The developers licensed Ennio Morricone 's main theme from the film The Good , The Bad , and The Ugly which was remixed to fit the horror feel of the game . The remaining music on the soundtrack is completely original , co @-@ composed by Mike Reagan , a veteran film and game music composer , and Asdru Sierra , frontman for the Latin Grammy @-@ winning indie band Ozomatli , who said : " Our goal is to help connect the audience with a conflicted character , one who alternates between moments of providence and misguidance , and accomplish that with a musical score of cinematic proportions . " The game 's title sequence animation was created by Kyle Cooper using a collage of computer graphics images and live @-@ action footage .
Darkwatch was officially unveiled on January 12 , 2004 , its announcement accompanied by a showing of its playable multiplayer deathmatch mode , and was originally slated for a Q4 2004 release . At one point , the game remained in limbo for several months until May 2005 , when High Moon Studios , by then a fully independent development company , found a publisher in Capcom .

= = Release = =

Darkwatch , described as High Moon 's " flagship property " , was released by Capcom in North America on August 16 , 2005 , and by Ubisoft in Europe on October 7 , 2005 . Ubisoft distributed the game in Australia as well .

= = = Promotion = = =

In 2004 , Sammy launched darkwatch.org , an official fan community website allowing fans to win points for prizes through completing various challenges while promoting the game . An interactive game demo of Darkwatch was shown at E3 2005 inside a custom @-@ build Gothic architecture @-@ inspired theatre dubbed " desecrated church " . A trailer for the game , created by Brain Zoo Studios , was nominated for the Golden Trailer Awards and won two Aurora Awards in the categories " Best of Show : Use of Animation " and " Best of Show : Entertainment " .
In August 2005 , Capcom launched a major marketing campaign to support the upcoming release . This included an extensive marketing program in the U.S. television networks , print advertisements

in several leading video game and men 's magazines , radio promotions broadcasts on alternative rock stations in major markets , and pre @-@ order and point of sale purchase campaigns . A Darkwatch music video to Good Charlotte 's song " Predictable " was also featured in MTV2 's Video Mods .

A major part of the game 's promotional campaign was based on using the sex appeal of its female characters . In October 2004 , a picture of Tala " wearing only a feather in her hair " was featured in a spread of the first special edition of Playboy that spotlighted provocative video game characters , also accompanying the article " Gaming Grows Up " . Several more naked pictures of her and Cassidy appeared in Playboy 's " Girls of Gaming " series in October 2005 and again in December 2007 . A few censored topless sketches of Tala were posted alongside a fake interview in an exclusive online gallery by IGN and a pinup picture was featured in IGN 's Hotlist magazine in June 2006 . She was also featured in exclusive pictures on the cover and the pinup poster of play issue # 44 in 2005 and in the 2007 calendar The Art of Heavy Metal .

= = Other media = =

= = = Soundtrack and book = = =

The Art of Darkwatch , a 176 @-@ page art book for the game , was published in August 2005 by Design Studio Press . Darkwatch Original Game Music Score , a 30 @-@ track original soundtrack , was released in November 2006 by Sierra Entertainment .

= = = Comic = = =

A comic titled " Innocence " , published in the July 2005 issue of Heavy Metal , serves as an immediate prequel and expanded introduction to the game . Set in the Nebraska Territory , the story follows them as former partners reuniting for a mission to capture the tomb of Lazarus , an ancient vampire lord and Darkwatch 's original founder . Along the way , they release Jericho when they raid a jail . " Cass " does not hide her current dislike of Tala , but Tala kills Cassidy 's father @-@ turned @-@ vampire , saving her life . The comic was written by the game 's designers Ulm and O 'Connor and illustrated by Philip Tan and Brian Haberlin . The issue 's award @-@ winning cover art was created by Aaron Habibipour and Sergio Paez .

= = Reception = =

Upon its release , Darkwatch received generally favorable reviews from most gaming media . According to review aggregation site GameTab , the PlayStation 2 version scored an averaged rating of 82 % from the gaming press with the Xbox version scoring 85 % . It also won several art direction and visual design awards , including five Davey Awards and a Telly Award .

= = = Reviews = = =

The game received the score of 7 @.@ 9 (" Good ") from both Bob Colayco of GameSpot (" If you 're looking for an intense shooter experience , Darkwatch will not disappoint ") and Jeremy Dunham of IGN (" Cowboys , vampires , and sexy dead girls are fun in parties , but not so much alone ") . According to the review by Cheat Code Central , " just about every aspect of Darkwatch is cool . The environments are cool , the weapons are cool , the characters are cool and while the gameplay is not unique it 's definitely one of the best first @-@ person shooters on the Xbox and PS2 . The controls alone are worth the price of admission . " John Scalzo of Gaming Target wrote that " for anyone looking for something a little different out of their FPS experience , Darkwatch is that game . " The reviewer in GamePro wrote that Darkwatch " mixes its Western Roots with gothic horror and steampunk aesthetics , and the results are uniquely engaging , " adding that if some the game 's "

cooler " concepts " had been explored further , lengthening the game in the process , Darkwatch could 've rivaled the best of the genre . " Official Xbox Magazine called it " a solid and robust blaster that 's tons of fun . Helped no end by the excellent Blood Powers and top multiplayer . "

Several reviews praised the game 's setting . GameSpy 's David Chapman called it " a truly remarkable experience . And , while the game itself may not have broken any new ground , the world it introduces more than makes up for that . It will leave gamers hungry for more . " According to Game Informer , " in terms of gameplay quality , this may be another middle @-@ of @-@ the @-@ road shooter , but the unique premise sets it aside from everything else out there . " Greg Bemis of G4TV wrote that the biggest draw in Darkwatch is the " different enough " setting that " does fall back on tired video game clichés from time to time like big @-@ breasted , leather @-@ clad babes who speak in aggressive sexually suggestive double entendres , but it ? s nice to see something--anything--that ? s a little off the beaten path . " GameShark 's Will Jayson Hill wrote that " about the sharpest criticism that can be leveled at Darkwatch is that it really adds nothing original in the gameplay department . Aside from its extremely well executed western / horror environment , Darkwatch is a pretty generic FPS game with a weaker multiplayer mode . " On the other hand , some reviews thought that the gameplay was actually the strongest part of the game . Official UK PlayStation 2 Magazine stated Darkwatch " has a few neat ideas but wins us over by doing solid shooting well . Fast @-@ paced with cool guns , what 's not to like ? " GameZone 's Mike David wrote that only a " weak plot pacing and that feeling that something is missing " kept it from being given a score of 9 / 10 .

However , some of the reviews were more negative . PALGN 's Jeremy Jastrzab opined that " Darkwatch gives vampires , undead , cowboys and plenty of bullets to fire . But that 's about it . Otherwise , Darkwatch is a fairly standard affair that 's worth a rental . " According to Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine , " Darkwatch doesn 't amount to much more than your run @-@ of @-@ the mill first @-@ person shooter . " Eurogamer 's Martin Coxall called it " a generic and quickly tiresome shooter , with a contrived premise which , unfortunately , does nothing to elevate it . "

= = = Other reception = = =

The game 's characters , especially Tala , received some of the most notable reception . The voice @-@ acting of Rose McGowan in particular was critically acclaimed by numerous gaming outlets . Featured her in the GameDaily gallery Outrageous Boobs , Tala was a runner @-@ up in ActionTrip 's 2007 lists of Top 10 Video Game Chicks , both by staff and by readers ' choice . She was ranked as the 14th " hottest woman " in video games by Complex in 2012 and as the fourth by in Index.hr 2013 . GamesRadar included her in the 2008 list of top seven Native American stereotypes , chosen to represent " the sex object " stereotype , but nevertheless stated that the portrayal of " an empowered female who ? s not afraid to be sexy and go after what she wants " is " a vast improvement over the appalling depiction of Indian women in Custer 's Revenge . " Michael Sheyahshe , author of Native Americans in Comic Books , listed " the continued objectification of the Indigenous female character , Tala , in Darkwatch " among " cultural ? ouchies ? in video games " . She was also discussed in the book Sex in Video Games by Brenda Brathwaite and in Fantasy Women by Amanda Greenslade . Jericho Cross was included among the top five vampires in games by Laurie @-@ Anne Vazquez of 2D @-@ X in 2012 , and on the 2013 list of ten most notable vampire characters in video games by Kotaku 's Gergo Vas , who wrote that " the weird western @-@ steampunk hybrid style , mixed with classic vampire lore made this character (and the game !) really exciting . "

According to a retrospective article by GamesRadar in 2009 , " while it didn ? t innovate much in the gameplay department , Darkwatch was a solid shooter with proficient controls . Its real strength was its unique horror / western setting and bizarre selection of gothy undead characters and enemies . " In 2010 , GamesRadar 's Mikel Raparaz ranked Darkwatch as sixth on the list of the top seven weirdest westerns , commenting that " the gothy trappings overlay a pretty awesome , Halo @-@ inspired shooter . " In a 2012 article about the history of steampunk video games , Mike Mahardy of Game Informer wrote that " although not a widely known shooter , Darkwatch garnered a cult

following with its unique story and unusual setting . " That same year , Robert Workman of Comic Book Resources called Darkwatch " in particular [...] a fantastic effort , a first @-@ person shooter with beautiful , spooky atmosphere and excellent gameplay . " In 2013 , Metro included it among the " games that didn ? t get the love they deserved . " Mark L. Bussler of Classic Game Room said in a retro video review that among many shooters on the PlayStation 2 , " few are as fun as this " , adding that Darkwatch should be " in your collection " alongside Red Faction and TimeSplitters . FEARNET included it among their five favorite vampire games in 2014 .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Cancelled sequel = = =

 Darkwatch was supposed to be first of a series of games that would be set in different time periods , including Ancient Rome , the Crusades era and World War II . O 'Connor said they wanted " to tell not only the story of Jericho Cross but of the Darkwatch as an organization , from its origins in Roman times to its ultimate fate in Earth ? s future . " Darkwatch 2 was in development by High Moon Studios for the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 between 2005 and 2007 , and its technical demo gameplay footage (based on the original game) was shown at the Game Developers Conference 2006 . After the game was canceled , the studio abandoned further attempts to create their own IP and instead concentrated on developing licensed games , such as Transformers and Deadpool .
 In 2009 , GamesRadar ranked Darkwatch as the 22nd top " game with untapped franchise potential " , adding that a sequel could have improved the original game 's supernatural powers and its " anemic " multiplayer mode and " make it shine " . Classic Game Room 's Mark Bussler expressed regret that so many bad games did receive sequels , while Darkwatch did not .

= = = Film project = = =

 In 2006 , it was reported that Roger Avary , who wrote the script for the film adaptation of the Silent Hill video game series , " recently was asked to work on the Darkwatch movie script based on the Capcom vampire Western game of which he is a fan , but his schedule interfered . " In 2011 , it was reported that Glen Morgan and James Wong , the writers / directors / producers behind The X @-@ Files and the Final Destination film series , " have developed a pitch based on the game 's plot and action sequences , and are currently writing a screenplay . " Morgan and Wong 's involvement with the project has been first reported already in 2004 .