

= Spec Ops : The Line =

Spec Ops : The Line is a 2012 third @-@ person shooter video game developed by the German studio Yager Development and published by 2K Games . It was released on June 26 , 2012 in North America and June 29 , 2012 internationally for Microsoft Windows , as well as the Xbox 360 , and PlayStation 3 consoles . It was later released for OS X and Linux in 2013 and 2015 , respectively . It is the 10th title , and a reboot , of the Spec Ops series , and the first entry since Spec Ops : Airborne Commando in 2002 . The game is powered by Unreal Engine 3 .

In the game , the player controls Captain Martin Walker , who is sent into a post @-@ catastrophe Dubai with an elite Delta Force team on a reconnaissance mission . As the game progresses , Walker begins experiencing hallucinations and slowly realizes the horror of war . In the game , players can hide behind cover , vault over obstacles , and shoot enemies with a variety of gadgets . Sand is a key gameplay mechanic and can be manipulated to defeat enemies . Throughout the game , players are tasked to make various morally grey decisions . An online multiplayer mode , developed by Darkside Game Studios , is included with the game , allowing players to engage in both co @-@ operative and competitive gameplay .

Yager started the game 's development in 2007 taking inspiration for its setting and story framework from various media including Heart of Darkness and Apocalypse Now . The game was designed to be " physically opposing " causing players to question their thoughts about treating war in a video game as entertainment . The game suffered from multiple delays as the team used this period of time to refine the story and increase gameplay 's pace . The game 's soundtrack is a mix of licensed music and an original music composed by Elia Cmíral .

Video game critics gave Spec Ops : The Line generally positive reviews . Praise focused on its narrative and themes , while criticism was targeted particularly at the online multiplayer mode and generic third person gameplay . Spec Ops : The Line was a commercial failure and did not garner the attention publisher 2K Games hoped for , but it was awarded and nominated for several end @-@ of @-@ the year accolades particularly for its story . Yager declared that there would not be a sequel to the game . The game was banned in United Arab Emirates for its depiction of Dubai in a state of destruction .

= = Gameplay = =

Spec Ops : The Line is a third @-@ person shooter that follows Captain Martin Walker , who is on a mission to rescue the citizens of Dubai , which has been overrun by sandstorms . The player can select from four difficulty levels : Walk on the Beach , Combat Op , Suicide Mission , and FUBAR . A player only gain access to the FUBAR level after completing the game with the Suicide Mission difficulty . Various new weapons and equipment become available as the game progresses , some dropped by downed enemies . These include several different rifles , handguns , and machine guns . Some offer alternate firing modes , like attaching a suppressor or using a telescopic sight . As well , there are grenade launchers , hand grenades , and turrets . However , the player can only carry two weapons at a time . Supply caches can be found in different parts of the game , allowing the player to refill their ammo and grenades . Whenever the player successfully shoots an enemy in the head , the game enters a slow @-@ motion mode for a short period of time . The player can also defeat enemies at close range via melee combat . Dying enemies can be executed , which grants the player additional ammo . Hiding behind cover can provide protection and prevents the player from being shot , as well as providing opportunities to blindfire or lean out to shoot enemies .

While players can only play as Walker throughout the game , they can issue commands to Sergeant Lugo and Lieutenant Adams , who accompany the player for most of the game . Available commands include focusing fire on one particular target and ordering medical attention for an injured squad member . Adams can defeat enemies by using heavy gadgets or throwing grenades , while Lugo provides sniping assistance . As the game is set in Dubai , sand becomes one of the game 's gameplay mechanics and players can manipulate it at scripted moments in the game , such as triggering a sand avalanche to bury enemies alive . When a grenade explodes on sand , dust clouds

that can blind enemies are formed . Sand sometimes opens up new paths to allow players to progress . Environmental hazards like sandstorms occasionally occur , drastically reducing a player 's visibility .

The player needs to make moral decisions at certain points during the game , including making choices that determine the fate of both soldiers and civilians . These decisions affect the relationship between Walker and his squad mates , and will cause them to react differently . The game has several subtle effects as the team loses their sanity ; Walker has visual and auditory hallucinations , and his executions of enemies become more violent . As well , the orders and shouts to his team become increasingly angry and ragged in contrast to his original stern command voice . His kill confirmations of enemies degrades from professional in the beginning to psychotic . Similarly , loading screens initially display helpful gameplay hints for the player , but as the game progresses , the text becomes increasingly hostile towards Walker 's actions , and sometimes breaks the fourth wall addressing the player directly . The game features collectibles known as Intel , which are audio logs that provide additional backstory for players .

= = = Multiplayer = = =

Spec Ops : The Line features both co @-@ operative multiplayer and competitive multiplayer mode . Set before the events of the campaign , the competitive multiplayer divides players into two different teams : The Exiles and The Damned . Both teams have their respective perks . Six classes are available for players to choose : Gunner , Medic , Scavenger , Breacher , Sniper and Officer . Each have their own upgrades and advantages . Environmental hazards , including sandstorms , may also occur during a multiplayer match . The game modes featured in the game include :

Chaos : A free @-@ for @-@ all mode , in which players eliminate other players .

Mutiny : A team deathmatch mode which a team of players eliminates the opposing team .

Rally Point : A " King of the Hill " -styled match , in which players secure a rally point and accumulate score for their team .

Uplink : Both teams are tasked to capture a central rally point , and disable the opposing team 's COM Station to prevent them from receiving points .

Attrition : Players engage in three team elimination rounds with only one life per round and no respawning until the round is over .

Buried : A team of players is tasked to destroy the opposing team 's Vital Points , which reveal their High Value Target upon destruction . Players are tasked to eliminate the opposing team 's target in order to win the match .

A co @-@ operative mode was added to the game upon its launch . It supports two players and features four missions . Players are tasked to defeat waves of enemies and complete a series of objectives , similar to a horde mode . Similar to the competitive multiplayer mode , the cooperative mode also served as a prequel to the main campaign .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting = = =

Six months prior to the game 's events the worst series of sandstorms in recorded history began across Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) . Dubai 's politicians and wealthy elite downplayed the situation before evacuating secretly , leaving countless Emiratis and foreign migrant workers behind . Colonel John Konrad (Bruce Boxleitner) , the decorated but post @-@ traumatic stress disorder @-@ troubled commander of the fictional " Damned 33rd " Infantry Battalion of the United States Army , was returning home with his unit from Afghanistan when the storms struck . Konrad volunteered the Damned 33rd to help relief efforts , then deserted with the entire unit when ordered to abandon the city and its refugees . As the storms intensified , a massive storm wall engulfed Dubai for miles , disrupting surveillance and communication , air travel , and all but the strongest

radio broadcasts . The 33rd later returned to Dubai as an occupying force and committed atrocities against the civilian population with the intent of maintaining order . Aggrieved by this , elements of the 33rd staged a coup d ' etat against Konrad and became exiles . While this was happening , the CIA black ops unit had organized the insurgents to attack both Konrad ' s loyalist 33rd and the exiles . The 33rd declared martial law , and struggled to maintain order amid 80 mph (128 km) winds , riots , and dwindling resources . The last communication from Dubai stated that the 33rd was attempting to lead a caravan out of the city . The caravan never arrived , and soon afterward , the UAE declared Dubai a no @-@ man ' s @-@ land . All travel to the city was barred , the 33rd was publicly disavowed for treason , and no further news left the city .

Two weeks before the beginning of the game , a looped radio signal penetrated the wall . Its message was brief : " This is Colonel John Konrad , United States Army . Attempted evacuation of Dubai ended in complete failure . Death toll : too many . " The United States military decides to covertly send in a three @-@ man Delta Force team to carry out reconnaissance . The team , consisting of Captain Martin Walker (Nolan North) , Lieutenant Alphonso Adams (Christopher Reid) , and Staff Sergeant John Lugo (Omid Abtahi) , are told to confirm the status of Konrad and any survivors , then radio for extraction .

= = = Plot = = =

The game begins in medias res with Walker , Adams , and Lugo aboard a helicopter piloted by Adams , flying over a half @-@ buried Dubai . Other helicopters begin to chase them . Walker attempts to dispatch them with the helicopter ' s minigun , however , a sudden sandstorm forms and one of the pursuing helicopters goes out of control and crashes into Adams ' helicopter .

The story jumps back to the beginning . Walker , Adams , and Lugo traverse the storm wall to the outskirts of a mostly @-@ buried Dubai on foot . They come in contact with a group of hostile armed survivors , referred to as " insurgents " , who have captured a squad of 33rd soldiers . Contradicting his orders , Walker elects to find out what has happened in the city . Throughout most of their journey , the team hears broadcasts on homemade speakers by the Radioman (Jake Busey) , a former journalist turned DJ who speaks on behalf of the 33rd . Walker and the team then learn of the 33rd ' s and Konrad ' s atrocities . Despite there being clear evidence of Konrad ' s unacceptable behavior , Walker is inclined to trust him as he once saved his life in Kabul during a war .

The team attempts to intervene peacefully when they come across refugees being rounded up by loyalist 33rd soldiers . However , the soldiers mistake them for CIA operatives and start a firefight . The team then learns that a CIA agent , Daniels (Rick Pasqualone) , has been captured by the 33rd and is being interrogated . Arriving to rescue him , they discover that he is dead and that it was a trap set for Gould (Chris Cox) , another CIA agent . Gould is later captured and killed , but the team learns that they may get more information at a location called the Gate . Arriving at the Gate , the team uses a mortar loaded with white phosphorus to attack the 33rd , disregarding Lugo ' s objection . The team later realizes that the 33rd were only providing shelter for civilians and the mortar accidentally killed 47 civilians . Walker vows revenge on the 33rd , claiming that they forced him to fire the phosphorus .

Walker finds a small handheld radio and begins to communicate with whom he believes to be none other than Konrad . Throughout the story , Konrad questions the morality of Walker ' s actions over the radio . Shortly afterward , Konrad forces Walker to choose between executing an Emirati survivor or a 33rd soldier , both of whom committed serious crimes . Subsequently , Delta finds CIA agent Jeff Riggs (Patrick Quinn) , who is leading a raid on the Underwater Aquatic Coliseum , the city ' s last water supply . Learning that destroying it will cripple the 33rd ' s operations , the team aids Riggs . However , Riggs destroys the water trucks and reveals that he wanted to wipe out the remaining population of Dubai so that no one would learn of the 33rd ' s atrocities , which he feared would cause a full @-@ scale war in the whole region . Riggs , injured and trapped after destroying the water supplies , dies .

At this point , the city ' s residents face the prospect of dying from dehydration within four days . To organize an evacuation , the team , which is now becoming increasingly hostile toward each other ,

heads to the Trans @-@ Emirates Building to silence the Radioman and warn the city of the evacuation using the radio . The Radioman surrenders and is shot dead by Lugo . To leave the building , Adams commandeers a UH @-@ 60 Black Hawk helicopter and is tasked by Walker to circle around the radio tower , allowing him to destroy it in hopes of making his intentions clear to Konrad . Other helicopters give chase , leading to the helicopter sequence from the opening of the game (which Walker seems to remember) , after which the helicopter crashes in the desert after a sudden sandstorm and one of the pursuing helicopters crashing into the Black Hawk .

Waking after the crash , Walker experiences a hallucination of the Burj Khalifa on fire . Reuniting with Adams , Lugo is found lynched by a mob of civilians . When attempts to resuscitate him fail , Walker and Adams either scare the crowd away or kill them in retribution . Walker 's hallucinations became nearly constant , and Adams becomes openly distrustful of his command . Walker and Adams make their way to Burj Khalifa to confront Konrad , but Walker hallucinates Lugo as a Heavy . The two are soon surrounded by the last of Konrad 's men . Walker attempts to surrender to get inside , but an enraged Adams insists on fighting to the death . Walker escapes at the last moment before falling unconscious in gunfire .

Awaking , he stumbles to the entrance of the tower and meets Konrad in his penthouse . At first , Konrad appears to be the paranoid , charismatic force behind the atrocities Walker was hoping for , until Walker finds his decaying corpse on the penthouse deck . It is revealed that Walker had been suffering from a dissociative disorder that allowed him to rationalize the actions he had witnessed and carried out . The real Konrad had committed suicide before their arrival in Dubai , while the Konrad that Walker had been in contact with was actually a traumatic hallucination that none of his team saw or heard . This mental projection of Konrad appears to Walker , explaining to him that he had the opportunity to stop , but pushed ahead out of a desire to be a hero . To maintain his ' sanity ' after the white phosphorus strike , many subsequent events in the game were distorted by Walker 's mind to make Konrad look like the villain . With the truth in front of Walker , ' Konrad ' tells him that he must confront the lie he has been living . Pointing a gun at Walker 's head , ' Konrad ' orders Walker to decide who is to blame for events in Dubai , or he will shoot .

= = = Endings = = =

There are four possible endings .

If Walker allows ' Konrad ' to shoot him or shoots himself , his corpse is shown next to Konrad 's . Konrad 's original broadcast then plays as the camera pans over the burning remnants of Dubai and the screen fades to black .

However , if Walker shoots ' Konrad ' , he disappears , telling Walker that he can still return home . The remnants of the 33rd who surrendered are shown to be a figment of Walker 's imagination . Walker then uses Konrad 's radio to request an immediate evacuation of Dubai . A post @-@ credits epilogue shows a convoy of Army rescue Humvees locating a shellshocked Walker , who is sitting on steps near the Burj Khalifa wearing Konrad 's uniform and brandishing an AA @-@ 12 . Walker can either drop the weapon or open fire .

If Walker drops his weapon , he then evacuates with the patrol . The screen then fades to white (indicating a hallucination) as a soldier remarks that the unit has driven through the entire city looking for Walker and seen the devastation of Dubai . When questioned about how he survived , Walker wearily replies , " Who said I did ... ? "

If Walker is killed by the patrol , he is shown dying in a pool of blood while the patrol watches . Walker recalls a conversation between himself and the real Konrad during the War in Afghanistan where he casually remarked about returning home , to which Konrad replied : " Home ? We can 't go home . There 's a line men like us have to cross . If we 're lucky , we do what 's necessary , and then we die . No ... all I really want , Captain , is peace . "

If Walker manages to kill the entire patrol , he will pick up and use the patrol 's radio saying , " Gentlemen , welcome to Dubai " , which is one of the first statements Walker said to his team as well as one of the first statements ' Konrad ' said to Walker . Walker then returns to the remains of the Burj Khalifa as the camera pans to a wide shot of the ruined city .

= = Development = =

= = = Background = = =

Following the release of several Spec Ops games in the late 1990s and early 2000s , the series was met with low sales and poor reviews , causing a halt to production of successive games . In 2003 , Take @-@ Two mentioned in their financial results that Rockstar Games was working on the franchise but in 2004 the project was canceled . It was later revealed that Rockstar Vancouver was the developer of the canned project with Queens of the Stone Age frontman Josh Homme developing the soundtrack for the game .

From 2005 to 2009 , the series remained largely unmentioned , with the rights belonging to Take @-@ Two Interactive . In 2006 , German @-@ based Yager Development pitched a cover @-@ based shooter concept for publisher 2K Games who rejected the original concept which featured futuristic soldiers and did not have Dubai as a setting , and offered them a chance to develop a reboot for the Spec Ops series , promising that they would have a lot of creative freedom . Development of the game began in early 2007 , with most elements of the initial game intact . While the game is an installment in the Spec Ops series , the team intentionally avoided using the existing elements of the franchise and chose to use new ideas .

= = = Narrative design = = =

The developers drew inspiration from multiple media . The set @-@ up and the game 's foundation was inspired by Heart of Darkness , whose story reveals the changes a person undergoes in chaotic times . The relationship between Walker and his squad mates was inspired by HBO 's Generation Kill , and the post @-@ war traumatic experience suffered by Walker was inspired by Jacob 's Ladder . The story of the Tower of Babel was also an inspiration for the game . The story was originally set to be written by several German writers , but they were later replaced by American writers Richard Pearsey , who had worked on TimeGate Studios ' Section 8 , and Walt Williams , who had previously worked on other 2K projects including BioShock 2 and Mafia II . One of the game 's core features is violence , but the team hoped that it would not be " cheesy " or excessive . This led the team to focus on creating the game 's storyline to motivate players to take the actions they choose . According to Williams , writing the story became uncomfortable and rough for him as time progressed due to the game 's dark themes .

The game was designed to be a third @-@ person shooter so that players can see the three characters ' changes and " evolution " as it progresses , and that the perspective differentiates the game from others shooters in the market . According to Williams , the game was meant to feature narrative gameplay , in which the game was to be played without any cutscene , and the entire story would be told through gameplay sequences only . However , the idea was scrapped as the team realized that having cut scenes helps players to be more emotionally connected and allowed the team to create dramatic scripted sequences .

Although the lead player character , Martin Walker , was designed to be as simple as possible in order to help players to engage in the game , and relate to the character , the team gave him some personality which was expressed through his body language and his reactions during the game 's battles . It was felt that by reflecting his emotions to players , they would share them . The squad was designed so that room was left for character development . The transformation of the squad 's mentality serves as an important plot device during the game and has a significant narrative context . The changes in the cleanliness of their clothing , and their reactions toward each other , help to illustrate the story . According to Williams , the hope was that players would start the game with relatively low expectations , or they would consider the game another typical heroic war shooter , then by seeing the transformation of the characters , would be shocked by the game 's narrative and be " engulfed by the darkness " . To make the transformation process clear , the team found it

necessary to show the characters ' personality at the beginning of the game in order to create a strong contrast . Gameplay is also a plot device and is tied to the game 's narrative , as players can choose whether or not to execute enemies , which reflects the brutality and horror of war .

According to Williams , he believed that most games on the market failed to create a correct representation of the war experience , or express the psychological changes that some combatants experience after participating in a war . He added that a war is not as straightforward and immature as it is portrayed in various shooters . As a result , the game 's theme centers around the moral aspect of war . By using this theme , the team hoped to tell a story and provide an experience that feels realistic , covering the combatants ' mental changes during and after a military conflict , similar to how movies in the 1970s and 1980s , such as Platoon , Full Metal Jacket and Apocalypse Now convey these messages . The team had the intention to give players the opportunity to show that a shooter can also have a decent story capable of invoking emotions . To achieve this , the team simplified their original story setting of having Konrad as a " megalomaniac with messianic delusions " to a setting that is more similar to Heart of Darkness .

Spec Ops : The Line features choices for players to make . According to Williams , it was the game 's key concept from the beginning of the game 's development . The game does not feature a morality system , but instead has " moments " and " situations " that give players some freedom . The consequences of some choices were made unclear in an attempt to make them more realistic and to encourage players to explore the other potential options , and to think about the consequences that these choices might bring . According to Williams , these choices were inspired by Fallout 3 and are often between : " what the character knows and what the player would maybe try and do " . To make choices more realistic , and to increase the impact of the story , the team put in a lot of morally grey choices and " bad or worse " decisions . Williams added that absolute good choices are not practical and sometimes may not exist in real @-@ world situations . Combat sequences forced players to make split @-@ second decisions and accept the consequences of their choices . According to Williams , this is something that people frequently do in real @-@ world scenarios , and they must " live with it " after their decision . Williams added that they hoped that the game 's players would have different feelings after making these choices , as this would show that they had created an opportunity for players to examine their own inner emotions , and that they had successfully provided different experiences for players without having a branching storyline . Replay value was also considered when the development team was designing these choices .

The game 's moral choices do not have any connection to gameplay , as the team feared that players would view them as gameplay mechanics and disconnect them from the story . The consequences of each choice were designed to be unpredictable to create tension for the player . Both approaches are applied to let players make decisions based on their own will instead of " gaming the system " . Williams also added that they attempted to make violence in the game " meaningful " . While the game 's basic premise is to have the Delta Squad rescue civilians in Dubai , the game by its nature tasks players to kill with their firearms . Therefore , the team added a lot of dialogue to justify and rationalize the characters ' violent actions , creating complex plot points , drama and climaxes . The team also developed banter between enemies in an attempt to humanize them .

The game 's theme is heroism , where being a hero may bring more harm than help . During development , there was a point at the beginning of the game where players could choose to leave Dubai . This was cut from the game , as the team found it not effective enough , and it broke a player 's immersion in the game . According to Williams , the choice system was originally similar to Fable II , after a player makes a decision , they cannot reload the game and choose again unless they start a new game . This was later removed due to the game 's structure as a shooter as the team feared that it might cause players to feel frustrated , being stuck in an endless cycle of killing and dying . Williams later added that adding achievements to the game was a mistake , as it disrupts the game 's narrative .

One of the main goals of the narrative was to depict war in a manner unlike it is portrayed in media such as TV and books . Another goal was to use the scenarios presented to cause players to raise questions about their thoughts of killing people in a video game as a form of entertainment . To

achieve this , the team made the hints at the game 's loading screen increasingly aggressive , while the game 's overall narrative was designed with the aim of being " physically opposing " , so that players could project themselves into the protagonist 's position , especially when making choices that involve the killing of innocents . They hoped that players would be able to feel angry at the developers who " forced " players into killing civilians in the game . The development team had a lot of debates regarding the imagery used in depicting violence towards civilians , as many considered it excessive and unnecessary . However , 2K approved their vision even when the team thought they had pushed the narrative to extremes .

Williams has stated that the game 's events are open to interpretation . Many other theories and interpretations had been discussed by the development staff . The game 's pacing is described as " deliberate " by Davis , but he added that there are moments where the pacing slows down significantly and allows the player to learn more about the game 's story through inspecting environmental objects . The city of Dubai is filled with graffiti , which is used to give players information regarding the factions and the backstory . According to Yager , the graffiti was designed to give players a perspective that is different from the main game , and to help make the location more realistic . The team also hoped to make players feel lost when playing the game . As a result , the team added hallucination to the game . The team hoped that by using hallucination as a plot device , they could create a snowball effect and engage players more fully in the story as they complete the game . These hallucinations sometimes occur through the subtext , in which players may not realize their presence . Williams added that having subtext is important , and that the " best stories are the ones that have stuff hidden in them " . According to Williams , the game fades to white when the game transitions from one scene to another when the latter is a hallucination created by Walker .

= = = General design = = =

The game is set in Dubai , which has been ravaged by sandstorms , a story set @-@ up inspired by Davis ' and Williams ' personal experience with heat waves , hurricanes , and sandstorms in Louisiana and Lubbock , as well as a story about a Persian army that vanished in an Egyptian desert in a sandstorm . The two found that the chaotic forces behind sandstorms would help them to convey the message of how fragile humans are , as well as the harshness of war . The team believed that the location provided them with a " fantastic " real @-@ world environment allowing them to produce great visuals . Using Dubai as a setting allowed the game 's levels to have verticality and variety . The development team sent their art directors to Dubai to inspect the local environment . To prevent the game from featuring the typical " dirty , grungy brown environment " , the team added more colors to the game , as well as objects such as glass , marble , gold , and crystals to make the location look vivid and vibrant .

Using Dubai as a setting allowed them to incorporate sand as part of the game 's key mechanics . Davis described the Dubai in the game as " a mix of fantasy and real @-@ world environment " . To prevent the sand mechanics from turning gimmicky , the team introduced multiple ways for players to use sand as a weapon , such as the player 's ability to trigger dust clouds by throwing grenades on sand and cause a sand avalanche by shooting weak structures and supports . In addition , the team added several scripted sequences regarding sand to keep the game dynamic . The occurrence of these moments were decided based on the game 's production value . The team also consulted Wil Makeneole for military advice .

The game featured advanced artificial intelligence due to the inclusion of the game 's squad command system . Adams and Lugo will assist Walker in battles and react to the battle situation accordingly even if they are not given any orders . They will also analyse the situation when instructed and decide the best approach to defeat enemies . The battle command system was designed to be accessible and easy to use , so that players would not have to spend a lot of time managing the squad . Lugo and Adams may get severely injured and if both of them die , the game ends . This mechanic prompts the player to rescue them as quickly as possible , and the system is designed to create tense situations . The AI for enemies is affected by various factors , including

visibility and hearing .

== Audio ==

The team did research on weapon sounds by consulting several military experts . The team spent a lot of time dealing with the audio mixing , so that the resulting sounds would not interfere with the narrative . To make the game 's script unique , the team added more variety to character lines during gameplay moments , and had these lines correspond to scenarios the characters were facing in the game . Elia Cmíral was hired to compose the music for the game , and the soundtrack was described as " unearthly " and " rock @-@ orientated " . To establish the character of the Radioman , the team added licensed music , including Martha and the Vandellas ' " Nowhere to Run " and Mogwai 's " Glasgow Mega @-@ Snake " .

== Multiplayer ==

Although Spec Ops : The Line has a strong single @-@ player focus , it also features multiplayer components . Yager was only responsible for the game 's single @-@ player ; the multiplayer was outsourced to Darkside Game Studios . The multiplayer team at 2K Games , which previously developed the multiplayer of BioShock 2 , also assisted in creating multiplayer classes .

According to Davis , while 2K Games was supportive of Yager and its campaign , they insisted that the game must have multiplayer components to boost its sales . This was a decision that Yager thought would hurt the game . Davis described the project as a " waste of money " , and a " low @-@ quality Call of Duty clone " . The president of Darkside Game Studios , Hugh Falk , responded by calling Davis ' opinion " outlying " . He added that Darkside participated in the project towards the end of the game 's development cycle and that they had to revamp the entire multiplayer system within tight deadlines . Davis later claimed that his comments were not directed to Darkside Game Studios and that he is satisfied with their final product after a long and troubled development cycle .

The game originally did not have a cooperative multiplayer mode , as the team thought that it would cause distractions when players are playing the game 's tonally darker levels , and that it did not match the game 's narrative " . However , a cooperative mode was added to the game in August 2012 as free downloadable content ; it does not follow the storyline of the campaign .

== Release and marketing ==

On December 12 , 2009 , a ninth game in the series was announced at the Spike Video Game Awards ; a trailer depicted several minutes of gameplay and showed off the setting . A subsequent press release detailed the premise , other game features , and a possible 2011 release date . An official site was soon launched , and a new trailer was released in November 2011 . The game was later delayed to the first or second quarter of 2012 , before the fixed release date was announced . Spec Ops : The Line was released on June 26 , 2012 for Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 . It was released on March 13 , 2014 for OS X. This version of the game was developed by Digital Tribe Games .

No more news about the game was made available for 18 months during the game 's development cycle . Davis thought the game was announced too early , which caused excitement for it to die down . The developer carried out focus tests during this period and the gameplay was found to be too slow @-@ paced which would lower its competitiveness with other shooters such as Call of Duty . As a result , the team spent time to speed up the game 's action .

In addition to the game 's standard edition , players could purchase a Premium Edition at a higher price . Players who pre @-@ ordered the game at selected retailers were able to have their games upgraded to the Premium Edition at no additional cost . The Premium Edition grants players additional advantages in the multiplayer segment of the game , including experience points boost and early access to the Officer class . A multiplayer beta for selected applicants on the Xbox 360 platform was held in 2010 . A playable demo of the game , which featured two chapters from the

beginning of the campaign , was released for PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 on May 8 , 2012 .

According to Williams , the game was difficult to market , as the team wanted to prevent spoiling the its story and narrative while encouraging people to buy the game . He added that the demo they had created was unrepresentative of the final game . Williams expected the game to be sold through word of mouth promotion and that it would become a cult classic .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

Reviews of Spec Ops : The Line were mostly positive , with many critics praising the narrative , themes , and the provocative take on violence in video games , but noted that it failed to innovate or present a strong multiplayer component . The game was considered to be underrated by many critics . Previews of the game , and the final game was banned in United Arab Emirates for its depiction of Dubai in a state of destruction .

The overall gameplay received mixed reviews . Some critics believed that the game 's gameplay was enjoyable , serviceable and acceptable by modern standards , but most agreed that some of the gameplay mechanics , such as the cover system , lacked polish and was flawed . Some critics considered the gameplay generic due to its inclusion of typical shooter elements such as on @-@ rail and turret segments , and stated that such mechanics are unable to help the game differentiate itself from other shooters such as Gears of War , and give the game an identity crisis . Some critics lamented that gameplay occasionally disconnects players from the story , creating annoyance . Many criticized the game for not having a roll mechanic . The artificial intelligence system was criticized for not being strong enough to make the game more gratifying , though some critics thought that the AI system for Adams and Lugo was well @-@ crafted and did not suffer from severe or frequent technical problems , although they may not be able to carry out player 's commands . Some critics criticized the game 's low replay value , unbalanced difficulty level , and sudden difficulty spike .

The graphics and art design of the game was praised . Brandon Justice from Electronic Gaming Monthly stated that he expected the game to look " bland " due to the its setting , but he was surprised at how much variety and color there was in the game . The game 's level design and vibrant colors were also praised . Critics agreed that the game 's setting , Dubai , was excellent and well @-@ realized ; some critics praised Yager for adding different details to the game 's world . The terrain and landscape was praised for being interesting , unique , and creating " fantastic set piece battles " . Some commented that the sand mechanic sometimes became gimmicky . Many criticized the game 's poor textures and the poor rendering of cutscenes .

The game 's overall narrative was praised by critics ; many considered it compelling , engaging , riveting , and mature , and viewed it as the standout feature of the game . Some believed that the story had an excellent presentation with decent voice @-@ acting , memorable characters , and atmospheric soundtracks . Many critics thought it was a bold attempt by Yager and that the story about mistakes and consequences allowed the game 's narrative to exceed its competitors in terms of quality . Some critics believed that Yager should be respected for successfully creating a message through the story and delivering it to the player , and trying to do something different . Mitch Dyer of IGN thought that the game 's narrative made violence " meaningful " , and that the story was unexpectedly good and personal . Some believed the story is impactful and at times shocking , and that the plot would make " Modern Warfare 2 's nefarious No Russian look pretty tame " . The game 's choices were praised for being " powerful " despite not offering a branching storyline . Some critics believed that these choices are provocative , organic , impactful , upsetting , and thematically correct though unsatisfying and sometimes hollow and binary . The endings of the game were praised , though some felt that there are some plot holes in the story . Some critics noted that emotionally Spec Ops : The Line is not a pleasant game .

The multiplayer received mixed reviews . Justice appreciated the upgrade system , as he thought

that it had successfully encouraged teamwork . Dyer added that the multiplayer is unremarkable and uninspiring , despite saying that the Buried mode created a tense experience . Many critics believed that this mode is not worthwhile , and can only served as a distraction . Arthur Gies from Polygon noted that the multiplayer component suffers from technical issues such as freezing and glitches , as well as issues with player 's conduct such as cheating in matches .

Critics have pointed out that the " mechanics " of the game ? the actions available to the player , and the responses resulting from said actions ? contrast pointedly with many mechanics of popular FPS games , and that the game deliberately used shooter genre clichés in order to illustrate how ludicrous they are in comparison to real warfare . In particular contrast to other games of its kind , some critics believe that Spec Ops : The Line does not intend the combat to be a fun experience for the player , but rather aims to engage the player through its narrative which critiques the shooter genre for being removed from reality and providing players with an unrealistic , morally dichotomous , escapist fantasy . The white phosphorus strike scene has been the subject of much scrutiny and was described as " troubling " due to images such as the corpse of a mother clutching her child . In response to complaints that the massacre was unnecessary or exploitative , Williams justified the scene by saying that the plot device was intended to evoke players ' anger , and that one of the game 's endings is simply for the player to put the controller down and stop playing .

= = = Sales = = =

The game debuted in No. 3 in the UK retail chart during the game 's first week of release , behind Lego Batman 2 : DC Super Heroes and The Amazing Spider @-@ Man . Spec Ops : The Line was a commercial failure , selling less than anticipated . The sales of Spec Ops : The Line , combined with Max Payne 3 , was lower than the combined sales of L.A. Noire and Duke Nukem Forever . The low sales of the title contributed to Take @-@ Two 's disappointing financial results in fiscal year 2013 .

= = = Accolades = = =

Spec Ops : The Line was nominated for Best Shooter , and the White Phosphorus scene was nominated for Best Gaming Moments at the Golden Joystick Awards . At the 2012 Inside Gaming Awards , the game won for Best Narrative and was nominated for Best Game Cinematography . At IGN 's Best of 2012 Awards , the game won for Best PC Story and Best PS3 Story , and also received nominations for Best Overall Story , Best PS3 Action Game , Best Xbox 360 Shooter Game , and Best Xbox 360 Story . It was nominated for Outstanding Achievement in Story at the 16th D.I.C.E. Awards .

= = Future = =

According to Yager Development , 2K never discussed the chance of developing a sequel during the game 's development . Timo Ullman , managing director of Yager stated that the game failed to compete with other shooters , and that market for games like Spec Ops : The Line is too small . As a result , the team would not return to the franchise . Team members expressed a desire to move on and develop a game that has a much lighter tone .