

= L.A. Noire =

L.A. Noire (pronounced / ˈnw??r /) is a neo @-@ noir detective video game developed by Team Bondi and published by Rockstar Games . It was initially released for the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 platforms on 17 May 2011 ; a Microsoft Windows port was later released on 8 November 2011 . L.A. Noire is set in Los Angeles in 1947 and challenges the player , controlling a Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officer , to solve a range of cases across five divisions . Players must investigate crime scenes for clues , follow up leads , and interrogate suspects , and the player 's success at these activities will impact how much of each case 's story is revealed .

The game draws heavily from both the plot and aesthetic elements of film noir - stylistic films made popular in the 1940s and 1950s that share similar visual styles and themes , including crime and moral ambiguity - along with drawing inspiration from real @-@ life crimes for its in @-@ game cases , based upon what was reported by the Los Angeles media in 1947 . The game uses a distinctive colour palette , but in homage to film noir it includes the option to play the game in black and white . Various plot elements reference the major themes of detective and mobster stories such as The Naked City , Chinatown , The Untouchables , The Black Dahlia , and L.A. Confidential .

L.A. Noire is notable for using Depth Analysis 's newly developed technology MotionScan , whereby the actors portraying the game 's characters were recorded by 32 surrounding cameras to capture facial expressions from every angle . The technology is central to the game 's interrogation mechanic , as players must use the suspects ' reactions to questioning to judge whether or not they are lying . L.A. Noire was the first video game to be shown at the Tribeca Film Festival . Upon release , the game received wide acclaim for its advances in storytelling and facial animation technology . As of February 2012 , both PC and console versions had shipped nearly 5 million copies combined .

= = Gameplay = =

L.A. Noire is an action @-@ adventure neo @-@ noir crime game played from a third @-@ person perspective . Players complete cases ? linear scenarios with set objectives ? to progress through the story . The game also features a mode which allows players to freely roam the open world . In this mode , players can also engage in optional activities . The world features multiple landmarks , which are all based on real monuments from 1940s Los Angeles .

The game takes place in the city of Los Angeles , in the year 1947 , with players assuming the role of Los Angeles Police Department officer , and later detective , Cole Phelps . The game starts with Phelps as a uniformed patrolman , and follows his career as he advances through the police department bureaus (desks) of Traffic , Homicide , Vice and Arson . Each desk gives players a new partner who will help Phelps in his investigation of a number of cases based on a specific type of crime . The game assigns players with cases that they must solve . After each case , players receive a rating of 1 ? 5 stars depending on their performance in both interrogations and searching for clues . In some cases , when searching an area for clues to the crime , players can also find newspapers . Besides reading the story , the newspapers give access to a short cinematic that either covers a part of the game 's overarching plot or a flashback to Phelps ' war memories . Near the end of the final desk , players assume control of private investigator Jack Kelso , who becomes the player character for most of the rest of the game ; although different in appearance and personality , he controls identically to Phelps .

The game blends investigative elements with fast @-@ paced action sequences , including chases , combat , interrogations and gunfights . Players use melee attacks and firearms to fight enemies , and may run , jump or use vehicles to navigate the world . In combat , auto @-@ aim and a cover system can be used as assistance against enemies . Should player characters take damage , the character 's health will gradually regenerate . Weapons can only be used in appropriate circumstances , such as during firefights . When driving vehicles , players have the option to skip directly to the destination by nominating their partner as the driver . Players can also ask the partner for directions . In addition to storyline cases , players may engage in an optional 40 side @-@

investigations , known as Street Crimes , that are not related to the case that they are working on .

Suspects and witnesses in a case can be interrogated for information , when the interviewee responds , players are given the option to either believe them , doubt them , or accuse them of lying . If players accuse them of lying , they must submit evidence to prove it . When interrogating two suspects at the police station , players may decide who to charge with the crime ; charging the wrong suspect affects players ' end rating . Players have the option to skip past an action sequence and continue through the narrative if they fail it three times . There is also a free roam mode called " The Streets of L.A. " , which is unlocked after each crime desk is completed , except for the Patrol desk . In this mode , the player and his partner are allowed to free roam the city of Los Angeles . The player can replay Street Crimes , find Golden Film Reels , discover Landmarks , collect Hidden Vehicles , find Badges or just cruise around and listen to the radio .

= = Plot = =

Following the end of World War II , Cole Phelps (Aaron Staton) , a decorated USMC veteran of the Pacific Campaign , returns to Los Angeles , California to live with his family while taking on work as a Patrol Officer of the LAPD . In 1947 , working with his partner , Officer Ralph Dunn (Rodney Scott) , Phelps successfully solves a major murder case and impresses his superiors , who make him into a police detective . Working alongside Stefan Bekowsky (Sean McGowan) in Traffic , and then Finbarr " Rusty " Galloway (Michael McGrady) in Homicide , Phelps earns a reputation for solving difficult cases that eventually land him a promotion into Vice . During this time , he begins falling for German lounge singer Elsa Lichtmann (Erika Heynatz) and soon has an affair with her . Unknown to him , Roy Earle (Adam J. Harrington) , his partner in Vice and a corrupt cop , uses this information to help several prominent figures in the city , including the Chief of Police , cover up a major scandal by making him a media scapegoat , in exchange for a place in a syndicate known as " The Suburban Redevelopment Fund " (SRF) - a development program that supplies homes for homecoming WWII veterans . When his adultery is exposed , Phelps becomes disgraced in the LAPD , while his wife ends their marriage .

Prior to his demotion to Arson , Phelps had found that several Marines of his former unit had been selling morphine syrettes stolen from the ship that had taken them home , the SS Coolridge , which had later led to most being assassinated by mobsters working for Mickey Cohen (Patrick Fischler) , who controlled the drug trade and had resented the competition ; most of the stolen drugs remains unaccounted for by the time he is demoted . While investigating a pair of suspicious house fires with his partner in Arson , Herschel Biggs (Keith Szarabajka) , Phelps notes a connection between them and a recent housing development , known as " Elysian Fields " , but is warned by Earle to back off from tycoon developer , Leland Monroe (John Noble) . Seeking help to investigate the development , Phelps advises Elsa to refuse a life insurance payout in order to prompt his old comrade , Jack Kelso (Gil McKinney) , now an investigator for the California Fire & Life insurance company , to look into the matter . Kelso quickly discovers that the development is using unsuitable building materials , and after nearly being killed , becomes an investigator for the Assistant D.A. whereupon he soon learn that Monroe and his former employer , the owner of Fire & Life , are involved in the SRF syndicate .

Kelso and Phelps eventually learn from their investigations that the Fund is merely a front to conceal its true purpose - to defraud the US Federal Government . Run by several local businessmen , dignitaries , as well as Monroe and even the Chief of Police , the syndicate had learnt about the proposed route for the Whitnall Parkway through the Wilshire district of the city , and thus bought the land it would run through . Monroe then built communities of " matchstick " houses , while Fire & Life falsely claimed the land was a higher value , knowing that the government would pay whatever the land was worth in order to gain eminent domain over it . Further investigations reveals that Courtney Sheldon (Chad Todhunter) , a headstrong corpsman of Phelps and Kelso 's former unit , had been involved in the theft of the morphine , of which the remainder of it had been given to his mentor and pop @-@ psychiatrist , Harlan Fontaine (Peter Blomquist) , who sold it on to finance the Fund , while murdering Sheldon after he began questioning the syndicate 's plans .

Following a shoot @-@ out at Monroe 's mansion , Kelso quickly learns that the SRF had used a former flamethrower operator from Phelps ' and Kelso 's unit , named Ira Hogeboom , to help them with their plans . Hogeboom , who was suffering from PTSD and schizophrenia after inadvertently killing a large number of civilians on Phelps ' orders during the Battle of Okinawa , had been unknowingly manipulated by Fontaine to torch the houses of holdouts who refused to sell out to the SRF , until eventually going insane after he inadvertently incinerates a house with an entire family inside .

After learning that Hogeboom had murdered Fontaine and kidnapped Elsa , Phelps and Kelso pursue him into the Los Angeles River Tunnels as a heavy rain begins , fighting their way through corrupt policemen and thugs trying to stop them from exposing the SRF scam . To help them , the Assistant D.A. brokers a deal with the Chief of Police to keep his corruption silent , in exchange for his testimony against the other Fund conspirators and a promise that no more police officers will pursue Phelps . Eventually the pair rescue Elsa , with Kelso killing Hogeboom to put him out of his mental anguish . With the water level rising , the group struggle to find a way out of the tunnels before soon using an open manhole to escape . Phelps quickly volunteers to lift Kelso up through the manhole , but upon realising he cannot escape the rising water , bids his comrade a final goodbye before the current sweeps him away . Whilst the SRF scam is exposed , several members escape justice to attend Phelps 's funeral , each delivering eulogies to his memory , much to the disgust of Elsa , who walks out in a huff as Earle gives his eulogy . As Biggs prepares to go after her , he remarks to Kelso that Phelps was never his friend , to which Kelso agrees but responds that he was never Phelps ' enemy .

An epilogue flashback scene soon reveals that Kelso had known about the stolen morphine and Sheldon 's involvement , after they and their other fellow Marines found the surplus supply on their ship home . However , Kelso refused to be involved in Sheldon 's scheme to sell the drugs along with the other Marines , telling them all that they will lose his respect for them as Marines if they go through with the drug profiting , setting in motion the events of the game .

= = Development = =

Team Bondi began to develop L.A. Noire following their founding in 2004 . Initially due to be published by Sony Computer Entertainment , the publishing rights were later handed over to Rockstar Games in September 2006 . Though Team Bondi oversaw development , the work was shared between Team Bondi and multiple Rockstar studios around the world . Unlike other games by Rockstar , which run on their proprietary Rockstar Advanced Game Engine , L.A. Noire uses a custom engine , which includes a combination of facial motion capture and animation software . The game is notable for being the first to use MotionScan , developed by Depth Analysis . MotionScan functions by recording actors with 32 surrounding cameras to capture facial expressions from every angle , resulting in a highly realistic recreation of a human face . The technology is central to the game 's interrogation mechanic , as players are required to use the suspects ' reactions to questioning to judge whether or not they are lying . Analyst estimations place the game 's combined development and marketing budget at more than US \$ 50 million , which would make it one of the most expensive video games ever made .

The game is set in 1947 Los Angeles , and the open world was modelled accordingly . To model the city , the developers used aerial photographs taken by photographer Robert Spence . The team also used the photographs to create traffic patterns and public transport routes , as well as the location and condition of buildings . While striving to recreate an accurate model of 1947 Los Angeles , the team also took some artistic license , such as including the appearance of the film set for D. W. Griffith 's Intolerance ; the set had actually been dismantled in 1919 . In addition to recreating the city as it was in 1947 , all of the in @-@ game cases that the developers worked upon were each inspired in some part by the actual real @-@ life crimes that the city 's media reported on during that year . Each of the game 's cases features at least a few of the real @-@ life elements that were reported in newspaper articles of that time , with one example of a case that developers found inspiration for being the " Red Lipstick Murder " . The case , part of the game 's Homicide

Desk , is based upon the facts and elements that were mentioned in articles about the real @-@ life , unsolved murder of Jeanne French , a woman who was found dead in exactly the same conditions as the victim of the in @-@ game case is found in , including the M.O. used on the victim , the state the body was left in , the lipstick message found on the body , and the initial suspect being the victim 's husband , yet the in @-@ game case differs from this in that it is closed by the main protagonist and not becoming a cold case towards the end of its investigation .

After a secretive audition process , Aaron Staton and Gil McKinney were selected to portray protagonists Cole Phelps and Jack Kelso , respectively . Their performances were mostly recorded using motion capture technology .

In October 2003 , Team Bondi announced their first project , for " a next @-@ generation Sony platform " . In 2004 , McNamara said that the project was wholly funded by Sony Computer Entertainment America . The title of the game was not revealed until 2005 , when they announced that L.A. Noire was to be released exclusively to the PlayStation 3 . In September 2006 , it was announced that Rockstar Games would be handling the publishing of the game . The debut trailer was released in November 2010 , followed by a behind @-@ the @-@ scenes development video the next month . The game missed its original projected " fiscal 2008 " release date , pushed back to September 2010 to allow for further polishing . This was later pushed to the first half of 2011 , and then narrowed down to March 2011 . Later , the final release date of 17 May 2011 was confirmed . To spur pre @-@ order game sales , Rockstar collaborated with several retail outlets to provide pre @-@ order bonuses .

= = = Music production = = =

L.A. Noire features an original score . The game 's score accompanies the gameplay , alerting players at specific times . Like other games published by Rockstar , L.A. Noire also contains licensed music tracks provided by an in @-@ game radio . Over thirty songs , from artists such as Billie Holiday , Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald , feature in the game . To work on the score , the team engaged Andrew Hale and Simon Hale , as well as Woody Jackson , who had previously collaborated with the team on Red Dead Redemption (2010) . Recorded at Abbey Road Studios , the score was inspired by orchestral scores from 1940s films . In addition to the original score and licensed tracks , the game also features original vocal recordings in order to create an authentic sound to suit the musical identity of the period . When The Real Tuesday Weld were commissioned to compose the original compositions , they sought vocals that could " evoke the period " , ultimately falling upon Claudia Brücken . Three vocal tracks were produced : " (I Always Kill) The Things I Love " , " Guilty " , and " Torched Song " .

The game 's score won the award for Best Original Score at the 2012 Bafta Video Games Awards .

= = = Additional content = = =

Several standalone cases , collectibles and challenges for the game were released as downloadable content in the months following its release . " The Naked City " , released on 31 May 2011 , is a standalone Administrative Vice case that follows the murder of a model . It is based on Jules Dassin 's 1948 film of the same name . " A Slip of the Tongue " , released on 31 May 2011 , is a Traffic case that focuses on a grand theft auto . " Nicholson Electroplating " , released on 21 June 2011 , is an Arson case based on the 1947 explosion of the O 'Connor Electro @-@ Plating company . " Reefer Madness " , released on 12 July 2011 , is a Vice case that leads the detectives to further conspiracies about illegal reefer operations . " The Consul 's Car " , released on 26 July 2011 , is a Traffic case that follows a grand theft auto ; initially released exclusively for North American PlayStation 3 versions , " The Consul 's Car " was later made purchasable in Europe , and eventually included in The Complete Edition . All in @-@ game items initially available as pre @-@ order content were also made available as downloadable content on 31 May 2011 : two suits , the Broderick and the Sharpshooter ; two guns , the Nickel Plated Pistol and the Chicago Piano Gun ; and the Badge Pursuit Challenge , challenging players to collect badges placed around the game

world .

On 28 September 2011 , Rockstar announced the PC version of the game , subtitled The Complete Edition , which was released on 8 November 2011 . It contained all downloadable content from the original versions . Enhancements include keyboard remapping and gamepad functionality , increased fidelity , graphical enhancements , and stereoscopic 3D support . The Complete Edition was made available for consoles shortly afterwards .

= = Reception = =

L.A. Noire received " generally favorable " reviews , according to video game review aggregator Metacritic . L.A. Noire has been widely praised for its advances in storytelling and facial animation technology .

The first review was published by UK newspaper The Guardian , which awarded the game a perfect score , and stated " Ever since it first worked out how to assemble pixels so that they resembled something more recognisable than aliens , the games industry has dreamed of creating one thing above all else ? a game that is indistinguishable from a film , except that you can control the lead character . With L.A. Noire , it just might , finally , have found the embodiment of that particular holy grail . "

IGN gave the game 8 @. @ 5 out of 10 , stating " L.A. Noire may not reach the emotional heights of a game like Heavy Rain , but it 's something everyone must try out . It reaches high and almost succeeds as a brilliant new type of video game narrative . " GameTrailers gave the game a 9 @. @ 1 out of 10 , concluding that " L.A. Noire floors you out of the gate , loses some steam due to repetition , but eventually wins the day thanks to its subtlety , attention to detail , and stunning character interaction . " Gamespot 's Carolyn Petit awarded the game a 9 out of 10 , concluding that " L.A. Noire 's absorbing investigations and intoxicating sense of style make it an unforgettable journey through the seamy side of the City of Angels . " GameZone gave the game an 8 @. @ 5 / 10 , stating " The story is intriguing , albeit a little slow at first . L.A. Noire takes an old school approach toward its storytelling . It ? s a much slower approach , similar to older movies , with a heavy emphasis on detail . It is that attention to detail that sets L.A. Noire apart from other games and makes it enjoyable to play . "

Edge praised the facial technology , and pointed out that while there are no other major aspects of the game that had not been done better elsewhere , the fact that Team Bondi had brought together such a wide range of game genres in such a stylish , atmospheric , and cohesive manner was an achievement that few developers had managed . Joystiq gave the game a score of 9 , and stated that " L.A. Noire may not always be ' fun ' in the traditional sense , but it 's also unsatisfied with being ' merely fun , ' and the result of that aspiration is something that no one who cares about video games should miss . "

Official PlayStation Magazine gave it 9 out of 10 , and stated that " In many ways , L.A. Noire is similar to an AMC series ... It 's a slow build , but once hooked , we couldn 't get enough of this provocative adventure , with its compelling characters and innovative gameplay . It 's not perfect , but it 's also unlike anything else on the PS3 right now . " Official Xbox Magazine gave it 8 out of 10 , and concluded with " Yes , it 's flawed , but L.A. Noire is an honest @-@ to @-@ goodness detective crime thriller ? a genuine breath of fresh air that values narrative and story above all else in an age where scripted action sequences and online deathmatch rule the day . It 's the closest thing Xbox has to PlayStation 's unique adventurer Heavy Rain . " GamesMaster gave the game 92 % , and concluded that L.A. Noire is " Rockstar 's most mature take on open @-@ world fun to date , brought to life with incredible tech . "

Despite the overall positive reception , some reviewers thought that the game had too many redundancies in the cases and left too little control to the player , leading to the game being boring at times . Although 1UP gave it a perfect score , they also warned that the extended cut @-@ scenes in the game could make some players feel they lost control of the action .

Responding to criticism that accused the character 's bodies of being lifeless , despite the game 's use of motion capture , Brendan McNamara , the game 's director and writer , stated in an interview

with Eurogamer , " People were saying people were dead from the neck down . That 's because we had all this animation in the neck and all this animation in the face , but the clothes don 't move . Once you get to the level that people can actually see that level of realism , then people expect to see clothes moving and the rest of the body moving in a way we can 't replicate in video games . " In the same interview McNamara also responded to queries about why Phelps sometimes responds with particularly aggressive lines of dialogue during interrogation scenes . " It 's funny . A lot of people say Aaron turns into a psycho . When we originally wrote the game the questions you asked were coax , force and lie . It was actually force because it was a more aggressive answer . That 's the way we recorded it . But when the game came out it was truth , doubt or lie . Everyone always says Aaron on the second question is a psycho . So that 's not his fault . "

At the BAFTA Video Game Awards 2012 , L.A. Noire won the award for Best Original Score , the game was also nominated in seven other categories .

= = = Sales = = =

On the day of the game 's U.S. release , shares in Take @-@ Two Interactive , Rockstar Games ' parent company , closed up 7 @. @ 75 % on the day ; a three @-@ year high for the company . The rise was attributed to the positive reviews that L.A. Noire had been receiving . In the last available figures from February 2012 , the game had shipped almost 5 million copies .

According to NPD Group , L.A. Noire was the best @-@ selling game in the United States in May 2011 , at 899 @, @ 000 copies across the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 .

L.A. Noire went straight to top of the UK games chart and became the fastest selling new intellectual property in the UK (a record it held until the 2014 release of Watch Dogs) . It stayed top of the UK game chart for three weeks . In Australia , video game stores in major cities reported that the game was going out of stock after a week . L.A. Noire debuted in Japan for the week of 4 ? 10 July and sold a combined 71 @, @ 057 units on PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 . The PlayStation 3 version topped the chart , with 58 @, @ 436 units sold , and the Xbox 360 version moved 12 @, @ 621 units .

= = Possible sequel = =

On 22 May 2011 , McNamara said that a sequel to L.A. Noire would take less than the five years it took to develop the first as the technology already exists . He also stated that they are considering using the MotionScan technology for full body performances rather than only faces . The same week , in an investor conference call , Take @-@ Two Interactive CEO Strauss Zelnick said that L.A. Noire was " a very successful release " and that they " have every reason to believe that L.A. Noire is another strong franchise for this company " . He reiterated that they " do see L.A. Noire as a powerful new franchise " .

During an investor call in November 2011 , Zelnick re @-@ iterated the importance of the game to Take @-@ Two , stating that the game " has become an important franchise for the company . " He announced that the game was Take @-@ Two 's " most successful new release " in the past fiscal year and has become a key property in its portfolio . Also in November 2011 , it was announced that McNamara 's next game would be titled Whore of the Orient , described as " one of the great untold stories of the 20th century " . It was to be published by KMM Studios , but was confirmed to be cancelled in June 2016 .

On 13 February 2012 , Rockstar Games answered numerous fan questions about their games , including a question regarding the future of the L.A. Noire franchise . Rockstar said that they are " considering what the future may hold for L.A. Noire as a series " , adding that they " don 't always rush to make sequels " . They also announced that no further DLC or additional content would be developed for the current edition . In March 2013 , Karl Slatoff , chief operating officer of Take @-@ Two Interactive , revealed that the company has an " extensive pipeline of unannounced titles in development " and mentioned that the L.A. Noire franchise was important to the company .