

## = Controversies surrounding Grand Theft Auto V =

Grand Theft Auto V is an open world , action @-@ adventure video game developed by Rockstar North and published by Rockstar Games . Upon its 17 September 2013 release on PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 , the game generated controversies related to its violence and depiction of women . A mission that requires players to use torture equipment in a hostage interrogation polarised reviewers , who noted its political commentary but felt that the torture sequence was in poor taste . The mission also received criticism from politicians and anti @-@ torture charity groups . The game became subject to widespread online debate over its portrayal of women , particularly in the wake of backlash against GameSpot journalist Carolyn Petit after she claimed the game was misogynistic in her review . After Petit 's review webpage received more than 20 @,@ 000 largely negative comments , many journalists defended her right to an opinion and lamented the gaming community 's defensiveness towards criticism . Television personality Karen Gravano and actress Lindsay Lohan have both filed lawsuits against Rockstar in allegation that characters in the game were based on their likenesses . Target 's Australian division pulled the game from their 300 stores following a Change.org petition against depictions of violence of women in the game .

### = = Depiction of torture = =

The mission " By the Book " generated controversy from reviewers and commentators for its depiction of torture . In the mission , protagonist Trevor Philips interrogates a man , Mr K , to extract information about an Azerbaijani fugitive who poses a threat to the FIB . Trevor uses torture equipment ( such as electricity and pliers ) on the restrained man , which players select from a table . Once Mr K provides the FIB with the information , Trevor is asked to kill him , but instead drives him to the airport , providing him an opportunity to escape . While driving Mr K , Trevor monologues about the ineffectiveness of torture , pointing out Mr K 's readiness to supply the FIB with the information without being tortured , and expressing that torture is used as a power play " to assert ourselves " .

Reviewers echoed that while the mission served as political commentary on the use of torture by the United States government , its use of torture was in poor taste . IGN 's Keza MacDonald felt the torture sequence " pushed the boundaries of taste " and Polygon 's Chris Plante commented : " The script plays it for laughs . I felt nauseated " . Carolyn Petit of GameSpot felt that placing the torture scene in context with the monologue created a hypocrisy in the mission 's function as a commentary device . In an editorial , Tom Bramwell of Eurogamer discussed whether the political commentary was overshadowed by the violent content and compared the mission to Call of Duty : Modern Warfare 2 's " No Russian " controversy . He said that the close @-@ up camera and quick time events accentuated the sequence 's impact beyond the violence depicted in previous Grand Theft Auto games . Summarising its function as " flawed " , he considered the sequence lacking enough context to justify its violence .

Keith Best of Freedom from Torture said that developer Rockstar North " crossed a line " by forcing players into the role of torturer . British Labour Party MP Keith Vaz said he was " astonished " by the mission 's violence , and Alison Sherratt of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers said that parents should be aware of children being exposed to the game because of its realistic graphics and violence . Independent journalist Tom Chick defended the torture sequence , and wrote that unlike the " No Russian " mission or the 2012 film Zero Dark Thirty , the underlying political commentary on torture in " By the Book " necessitated the violent content . Asked about performing the torture sequence , Trevor 's actor Steven Ogg said that he treated it like " just another day at the office " , and was focused more on not making mistakes during filming than the scene 's ethics . In Japanese versions of the game , the torture sequence is censored .

### = = Portrayal of women = =

Some reviewers claim that the game 's portrayal of women is misogynistic . Chris Plante of Polygon

felt that the supporting female characters were constructed on stereotypes , and wrote that the game 's " treatment of women is a relic from the current generation " . Todd Martens of the Los Angeles Times considered the satirical portrayals of women uncreative , and added that violent and sexist themes hurt the game experience . Edge noted that while " every female in the game exists solely to be sneered , leered or laughed at " , it treated its all @-@ male lead characters in a similar vein through their stereotyped tendencies towards violence . Dave Cook of VG247 reinforced the sentiment that the female characters were constructed on stereotypes in an editorial : " They 're either there to be rescued , shouted at , fucked , to be seen fucking , put up with , killed , heard prattling away like dullards on their mobile phones or shopping " . Sam Houser , Rockstar Games co @-@ founder , felt that the development team sometimes overlooked their portrayal of women in Grand Theft Auto games , but that the weight towards male characters " fit with the story we wanted to tell " .

In her review , Petit of GameSpot observed misogynistic undertones in the treatment of women as " strippers , prostitutes , long @-@ suffering wives , humourless girlfriends and goofy , new @-@ age feminists " , and felt that the satirical representation of misogyny legitimises it . Her review was met with backlash as users responded with 20 @,@ 000 largely negative comments on the webpage and a Change.org petition for her firing . Petit 's comments and the backlash against them prompted a wider discussion about the role of women in Grand Theft Auto V and the gaming community 's defensiveness towards criticism . Helen Lewis of The Guardian felt Petit 's observations were valid , but were stigmatised by gamers who have become " hyper @-@ sensitive to criticism " . Tom Hoggins of The Telegraph felt that the backlash against Petit was predicated on an audience that has become accustomed to women being " shallow and sidelined " in the game . Rob Fahey of GamesIndustry.biz felt that debate about games ' thematic concerns could become stigmatised if gamers opposed criticism , writing , " This isn 't just about women ? it 's robbing every single one of us of the opportunity to have intelligent , interesting discussions about how our medium deals with ..... complex topics ..... It 's frustrating , it 's stupid , and it 's downright boring ? and it risks making our games stupid and boring too " . Journalist Tom Bissell agreed with Petit 's " defensible position " , and wrote that gamers respond to game criticism more aggressively than fans of other entertainment mediums . Over a year after publication of her review , Petit stated in her personal blog that the " average straight male player " opposes sociopolitical criticism of video games because Grand Theft Auto V 's satire reinforces their own worldview and " political agenda " . She stated that the prominence of " straight white men " in online forums marginalises women , different ethnic groups and the LGBT community , and that those who attack video game criticism should " put themselves in the shoes of people different from themselves " .

In December 2014 , Australian department store Target removed the game from their 300 stores after customers complained about " depictions of violence against women " and a Change.org petition amassed more than 40 @,@ 000 signatures . In a public statement , Target corporate affairs manager Jim Cooper said that the decision was reached following " extensive community and customer concern about the game " . The same week , another division of Wesfarmers , Kmart Australia , also pulled the game off shelves . Take @-@ Two Interactive CEO Strauss Zelnick publicly expressed the company 's disappointment that the game had been pulled from the retailers , and affirmed that he " stands behind our products , the people who create them , and the consumers who play them " . IGN 's Luke Reilly called the Change.org petition " misinformed " , stating that its complaints about incentives for committing sexual violence in the game are untrue . A focal point of the petition claimed players could earn health and money from having sex with strippers and then killing them . While true , it is in no way exclusive to women only , as the effects for killing a prostitute are the same as killing a regular man or woman . The petition drew much criticism and mockery on the internet . Kotaku 's Mark Serrels said that the depiction of women is inherently " problematic " , and that Target were within their rights to refuse to stock the game and were obligated to respond to the petition 's wide support . David Keogh of ABC News ' The Drum felt that Rockstar depends on controversy and were " burned by the fire they voluntarily decided to play with " since the gaming industry is no longer on the margins of popular culture .

= = Legal actions = =

In October 2013 , hip @-@ hop artist Daz Dillinger issued a cease and desist letter to Rockstar Games and Take Two Interactive for allegedly using two of his songs without authorisation . American television personality Karen Gravano of the reality television programme Mob Wives filed suit against Rockstar Games in February 2014 in allegation that a character in the game is based on her likeness and story and was depicted without her consent . Rockstar filed to dismiss Gravano 's lawsuit in April , and stated that the allegations are foreclosed by the First Amendment . In July , actress Lindsay Lohan also filed a lawsuit , claiming elements in the game were influenced by her image , voice and clothing line without permission . Rockstar responded in court papers that sought a dismissal of the case , saying that the case was frivolous and filed for publicity purposes .