



Grand Theft Auto VI

Grand Theft Auto VI is an upcoming action-adventure game in development by Rockstar Games. It is due to be the eighth main *Grand Theft Auto* game, following *Grand Theft Auto V* (2013), and the sixteenth entry overall. Set within the fictional open world state of Leonida—based on Florida—and its Miami-inspired Vice City, the story is expected to follow the criminal duo of Lucia and her male partner.^[a]

Following years of speculation and anticipation, Rockstar confirmed in February 2022 that the game was in development. That September, footage from unfinished versions was leaked online in what journalists described as one of the biggest leaks in the history of the video game industry. The game was formally revealed in December 2023 and is scheduled to be released in late 2025 for the PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X/S.

Setting and characters

Grand Theft Auto VI is an action-adventure game set in the fictional open world state of Leonida—based on Florida—which includes Vice City, a fictionalised version of Miami.^{[1][2][3]} Vice City was previously featured in *Grand Theft Auto* (1997) and as the main setting of *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* (2002) and *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories* (2006).^{[4][5][6]} As with previous titles in the series, the game world parodies contemporary American culture, with satirical depictions of social media and influencer culture, and references to Internet memes such as the Florida Man.^{[7][8][9]} The story follows a criminal duo: Lucia, the series' first female protagonist since 2000,^[b] and her male partner;^[a] the first trailer depicts Lucia as a prison inmate, and later evading custody with her partner.^{[2][16]}

Development

Following *Grand Theft Auto V*'s release in 2013, Rockstar North's then-president Leslie Benzies said the company had "some ideas" for the series' next entry.^[17] In 2018, *The Know* reported that the game, code-named *Project Americas*, would be set primarily in Vice City and partly in South America with a female protagonist.^[18] In 2020, journalist Jason Schreier reported the game was "early in development" as "a moderately sized release" that would expand over time, to avoid its predecessors' developer crunch.^[19] In 2021, Tom Henderson claimed the game's map could evolve akin to *Fortnite Battle Royale*.^{[20][21]} In 2022,

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Artwork depicting Lucia and her partner

Publisher(s)	Rockstar Games
Series	<i>Grand Theft Auto</i>
Platform(s)	PlayStation 5 Xbox Series X/S
Release	Q3/Q4 2025
Genre(s)	Action-adventure

Schreier reported the game entered development in 2014 and would feature two Bonnie and Clyde–inspired protagonists, including a Latina woman, and claimed the developers were cautiously subverting the series' trend of joking about marginalised groups.^{[22][23]}

The game became highly anticipated in the years before its announcement,^{[24][25][26]} and journalists noted some fans became frustrated by Rockstar Games's continued silence, particularly after they announced a re-release of *Grand Theft Auto V* in 2020.^{[27][28][29]} An individual referencing the game received media attention for interrupting several live stage and television shows.^{[30][31][32]} On 4 February 2022, Rockstar confirmed development was "well underway".^[33] In July, Rockstar announced *Red Dead Online* would not receive more major updates as development resources were withdrawn to focus on the upcoming game;^[34] industry sources stated Rockstar reallocated resources after planned remasters of *Grand Theft Auto IV* (2008) and *Red Dead Redemption* (2010) were paused due to the backlash received by *Grand Theft Auto: The Trilogy – The Definitive Edition* (2021).^[35]

In November 2023, Rockstar president Sam Houser announced the first trailer would release in early December to celebrate the company's 25th anniversary.^{[36][37]} Within five hours, the announcement on X (formerly Twitter) surpassed two previous posts about the game to become the platform's most-liked gaming-related post,^{[38][39][40]} later surpassed by Rockstar's post announcing the trailer's 5 December release date, with 1.8 million likes in 24 hours.^[41] Other developers imitated the announcement's formatting to promote their trailers.^{[42][43][15]} On 4 December, a low-quality version of the trailer was leaked on X; in response, Rockstar published the official version on YouTube, revealing the title, protagonists, setting, and release window of 2025 for the PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X/S.^{[44][45][46]}

The trailer broke the record for most first-day views on a non-music YouTube video within 12 hours, with 46 million,^{[47][48]} and, within 24 hours, became the third-most-viewed overall, with 93 million,^{[49][50][51]} and most-liked game trailer, with 8.9 million.^{[52][53]} It surpassed the lifetime viewership of *Grand Theft Auto V*'s 2011 reveal trailer within two days, with 101 million views,^[54] and became the second-most-viewed game trailer by January, with 168 million.^[55] Its featured song, Tom Petty's "Love Is a Long Road", saw a near-37,000% increase in Spotify streams, had almost 250,000 searches on Shazam, and ranked second on the worldwide iTunes chart.^[56] The trailer spawned fan-created recreations in other video games, as a brickfilm, and in live-action by the Hyundai World Rally Team.^{[57][58][59]}

In February 2024, Schreier reported that Rockstar requested employees cease remote work and return to offices full time from 15 April "for productivity and security" as development entered its "final stages".^{[60][61][62]} The Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain criticised the decision for contradicting Rockstar's earlier promise to maintain flexible working conditions, with some employees concerned it could negatively impact staff health and morale and lead to resignations and crunch conditions.^{[62][63]} In March, *Kotaku's* Zack Zwiezen reported the decision was partly to avoid a delay from the internally scheduled early 2025 release window; development "falling behind" meant late 2025 seemed more practical, with a potential delay to 2026 as a "fallback plan".^{[64][65]} Rockstar's parent company Take-Two Interactive's share price consequently dropped by more than five per cent.^[66] Other journalists refuted the report, noting the game remained "on schedule",^[67] and Schreier wrote there was no indication development had been impacted.^[68] In May, Take-Two confirmed the game was scheduled for late 2025.^[69]

September 2022 leak

On 18 September 2022, a user known as "teapotuberhacker"^[c] published 90 videos to *GTAForums* showing 50 minutes of work-in-progress game footage.^[72] Schreier confirmed with sources at Rockstar that the footage was genuine,^[73] and *The Guardian* reported it was from several stages of development,^[72] with some videos about a year old.^[4] The footage revealed a modern-day Vice City setting, contained animation and gameplay tests, level layouts, and character conversations, and depicted player characters Lucia and Jason entering a strip club and robbing a diner.^{[4][14]} The hacker claimed to be behind the Uber security breach from the earlier week.^{[73][74]} They said they downloaded the files directly from Rockstar's internal Slack groups,^[75] and claimed to possess source code, assets, and internal builds of *Grand Theft Auto V* and *VI*, which they threatened to publish.^[73]

Take-Two responded by submitting takedowns of videos showing or discussing the leaks hosted on YouTube,^{[72][76]} and contacted *GTAForums* and Reddit moderators to remove access.^[77] The hacker wrote they were "looking to negotiate a deal" with Rockstar or Take-Two.^[78] Journalists described the event as one of the biggest leaks in video game history;^{[79][80][81]} Schreier called it "a nightmare for Rockstar Games" which could limit employees' remote work flexibility.^{[82][83]} The Jefferies Group analyst Andrew Uerkwitz called it a "PR disaster" that could potentially delay the game and diminish staff morale, but was unlikely to impact reception or sales.^{[84][85]} *The Guardian* noted the leaked footage was being widely criticised "by ill-informed users" due to its quality, despite not being representative of the final product.^[72] Some users erroneously claimed graphics and art assets are finalised early in game development. In solidarity, several developers shared work-in-progress footage of their games^{[86][87][88]} and some, including Cliff Bleszinski, Neil Druckmann, Rami Ismail, and Alanah Pearce, offered sympathies to Rockstar.^{[4][72][89]}

On 19 September, Rockstar confirmed the leak to be a "network intrusion" and lamented how the game was first demonstrated but did not anticipate long-term effects on development.^[90] They disabled comments and replies on their social media accounts in the days following the leak.^[71] Take-Two added that steps had been taken "to isolate and contain this incident".^[84] Take-Two's share price dropped by more than six per cent in pre-market trading that day,^{[84][85]} but recovered during regular trading hours following their statement.^[91] Uber acknowledged the potential links to their security breach and noted they were working with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Department of Justice. They believed the hacker was affiliated with the group Lapsus\$, which was thought to have breached companies such as Microsoft, Nvidia, and Samsung over the preceding year.^{[92][93]} Zelnick said the incident caused the companies to become more vigilant with cybersecurity and had impacted staff emotionally but business remained unaffected.^{[94][95]} Rockstar later claimed the incident cost the company US\$5 million and thousands of staff hours to recover.^[96]

A 17-year-old boy from Oxfordshire—identified as "teapotuberhacker" and a key member of Lapsus\$—was arrested by City of London Police on 22 September as part of an investigation supported by the National Cyber Crime Unit and American federal law enforcement.^{[97][98][99]} While on bail for hacking EE and Nvidia and under police protection at a Travelodge hotel, he breached Rockstar using a mobile phone, television, and Amazon Fire TV Stick and threatened to release the source code in a Slack message to all Rockstar staff.^{[96][99][100]} Appearing before the Highbury Corner Youth Court, he pleaded guilty to two counts of breaching bail conditions and not guilty to two counts of computer misuse.^{[101][102][103]} The case was referred to a higher court while the boy was remanded to a youth detention centre.^{[103][104]} In mid-2023, he stood trial at Southwark Crown Court for twelve offences, including six counts of computer misuse, three of blackmail, and two of fraud.^{[99][105]} He was deemed unfit to stand trial due to his acute

autism;^{[96][100]} instead of assessing his guilt, a jury determined he had committed the acts.^{[99][106]} In December 2023, he was placed under an indefinite hospital order by a judge for being a high public risk as he expressed intent to continue cybercrime.^{[96][100]}

Notes

- a. Rockstar has not confirmed the name of Lucia's partner;^[2] the September 2022 leak suggests his name is Jason.^{[14][15]}
- b. Several sources described Lucia as the series' first female protagonist;^{[2][10][11]} *Grand Theft Auto* (1997), the *Game Boy Color* version of *Grand Theft Auto 2* (2000), and *Grand Theft Auto Online* (2013) featured optional female playable characters.^{[12][13]}
- c. Based on posting behaviour and IP address data, *GTAForums* staff believed "teapotuberhacker" was an account run collaboratively by two people: "Teapot", the original leaker; and "Lily", who offered to sell *Grand Theft Auto V*'s source code in exchange for Ethereum but was not believed to be in possession of any hacked materials.^{[70][71]}

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