

Gamers play Hollywood detectives in 'L.A. Noire'

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The videogame maker behind violence-packed "Grand Theft Auto" has broken new ground with a title starring an honorable detective using wits to solve crime in 1947 Hollywood.

"L.A. Noire" by Rockstar Games and Australian studio Team Bondi was released on Tuesday in the United States and is to be available internationally beginning Friday.

Early reviews raved about cinematic quality of the scenes made using motion-capturing technology to infuse animated characters with performances of real-world actors and ranked "L.A. Noire" as a contender for game of the year.

The videogame "blends realistic performances with gritty action and real detective work," said Rockstar founder Sam Houser.

Players take on the role of Cole Phelps, a decorated [World War II](#) veteran and freshly-promoted Los Angeles police detective.

Along with videogame action, players must interrogate suspects and witnesses, reading expressions and body language to tell truth from lies.

MotionScan technology was used to capture expressions of actors to create "the most lifelike characters ever seen in a videogame" and to turn the art of interrogation into game play, according to Rockstar.

The cinematic approach to the game resulted in the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival taking the unprecedented move of making the videogame an Official Selection at the annual cinema event in New York City.

"Amidst the boom of Hollywood's Golden Age, players must search for clues, interrogate suspects and chase down criminals to solve a series of cases based on real world incidents," Rockstar said.

"Phelps comes face-to-face with the corrupt heart of Los Angeles: from fallen starlets to double-dealing police officers and the vast reaches of the criminal underworld -- and finally, the darkness of his own personal demons."

Versions of the videogame tailored for play on [PlayStation 3](#) or [Xbox 360 consoles](#) were priced at \$60.

Rockstar, which is owned by Take-Two Interactive Software based in New York, scored hits with sometimes brutal realism in "Red Dead Redemption" and the controversial "[Grand Theft Auto](#)" franchise.

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