

'Grand Theft Auto VI' trailer drops, flagging 2025 release

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Rockstar Games will release GTA VI in 2025.

Millions of video game fans got their first glimpse Tuesday of "Grand Theft Auto VI", after a trailer landed on YouTube promising the first woman lead character and a 2025 release date for the latest installment of one of the world's biggest entertainment franchises.

Fans have waited a decade for news of a follow-up to 2013's GTA V, an industry phenomenon that has sold 190 million units and become the second-biggest game of all time after Minecraft.

The GTA VI trailer focused on a character named Lucia, freshly freed from prison in a Florida-like setting—making her the first playable woman character in a franchise long criticized for its depiction of women, minorities and LGBTQ people.

The video, released earlier than scheduled after a version leaked online, racked up more than 60 million views on YouTube within 12 hours, smashing the site's record for views of a non-music video.

"Our trailer has leaked so please watch the real thing," Rockstar Games, the studio behind GTA posted late on Monday on X, formerly Twitter.

The trailer features an alligator walking into a corner store, a woman twerking on the roof of a moving car, and the usual police raids and criminal goings-on that the game has long depicted.

"I feel like this GTA will lean much more into the absurdity of America, much more than GTA V did," wrote a user on a fan forum on the Reddit platform.

And the forums lit up after the trailer hinted that Lucia will go on a crime spree with a male partner.

"Major Bonnie and Clyde vibes," a Reddit user posted, referencing the bank-robbing couple who revelled in their notoriety in the 1930s.

'Grotesque caricatures'

The GTA franchise has sold a mammoth 410 million units since its

launch in 1997, according to Rockstar parent company Take-Two Interactive.

GTA V and its online multiplayer version have brought in nearly \$10 billion in revenue, estimated analyst Nick McKay at Wedbush Securities, figures that seal its place as one of the most profitable entertainment franchises in the world.

But its wild success has brought waves of controversies.

From the start, critics have accused the series of glorifying violence and encouraging players to engage in criminal behavior—allegations Take-Two executives have denied.

GTA V players can sell drugs, fight and steal to their hearts' content, with gameplay options also including assaulting prostitutes and going to strip clubs.

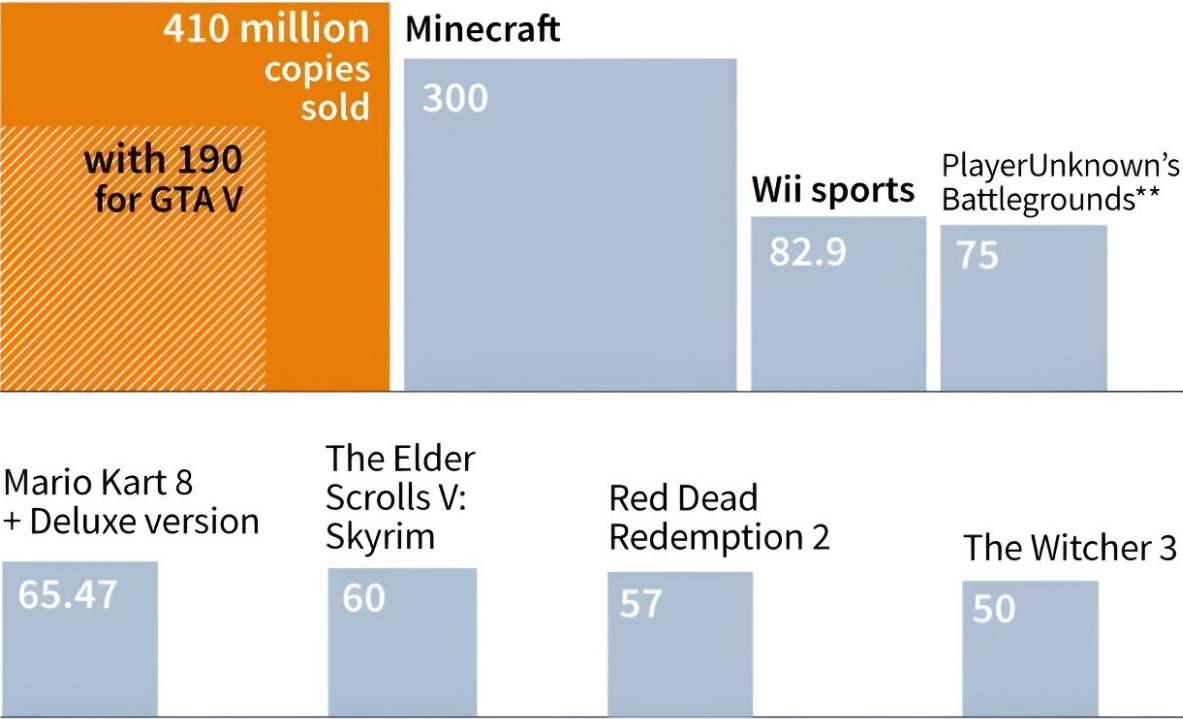
GTA V included transgender characters, but "they were sex workers that were grotesque caricatures of transgender women," said Blair Durkee, associate director of gaming at nonprofit LGBTQ advocacy organization GLAAD.

Videos of players beating trans characters with baseball bats in the game can readily be found online, according to Durkee.

"GTA": a successful franchise

Best-selling video games of all time*

All GTA video games



*excluding Tetris whose sales figures for different versions are hard to estimate

** sales up to the end of 2021, before it became available for free

Source: data released by video game developers or publishers



Sales figures for the franchise "Grand Theft Auto" compared to those of the most popular video games of all time.

"We certainly hope that GTA VI will reflect a more inclusive attitude toward LGBTQ characters and players," Durkee said.

The game has also been hit particularly hard with leaks and hacks.

Some 90 pieces of footage of GTA VI as well as some of the code were stolen and leaked online last year in one of the industry's biggest hacks.

This week, the game makers were keen to stick to the technical achievements rather than controversies, Take-Two announcing in a statement the sixth episode would be the "most immersive evolution of the Grand Theft Auto series yet".

The game will take place in the state of Leonida, Take-Two said, home to the "neon-soaked streets" of Vice City—a stand in for Miami and the main setting of a previous episode of the game.

"Grand Theft Auto VI continues our efforts to push the limits of what's possible in highly immersive, story-driven open-world experiences," Rockstar founder Sam Houser said in a statement.

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