## **Contents**

Acknowledgements —— V
List of Abbreviations —— XI
Introduction: The American History of Rockstar Games — 1 Historical Game Studies and the "Developer-Historian" — 4 On "Paratexts" — 7 The Rockstar Brand — 11 The Work of "Authenticity" and Histori(ographi)cal Hegemonies — 18 Book Overview and Structure — 26
Chapter 1
Rockstar's West(s) — 31
Red Dead Redemption (2010) —— 31
L.A. Noire (2011) —— <b>39</b> Connecting Rockstar's Western Histories —— <b>45</b>
Chapter 2
"The True West" and "Real Crime Stories": Constructing a Discourse of
Historical Authenticity —— 47
Paratextual Histories —— 48
Red Dead Redemption's "True West" —— 53
L.A. Noire's "Real" Research —— 60
Conclusions —— 66
Chapter 3
"Rockstar Recommends": Constructing a Discourse of Cinematic
Authenticity —— 68
A Discourse of Cinematic Authenticity —— <b>70</b>
"Rockstar Recommends" —— 72
Red Dead Redemption and the Western —— 73
Reviewing Red Dead — 87
L.A. Noire and the (Neo) Noir History of Los Angeles — 90
"Rockstar Recommends," Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, and the 1980s
According to Rockstar —— 98
Conclusions —— 101



## Chapter 4 Playing Outlaw, Playing Detective: The Limits of Historical Gameplay --- 103 Red Dead Redemption: The "Complete Western Experience"? —— 107 Authenticating the Open World Western Experience --- 110 This is what Life in the West was Like. This is Red Dead Redemption — 116 L.A. Noire: "A New Genre of Video Games" --- 120 The "Real" Space of 1947 Los Angeles — 122 Marketing "Authentic" Detective Work --- 126 Selling Freedom and the Illusion of Choice — 132 Conclusions --- 135 Chapter 5 Women in Rockstar's American History — 137 Women in Red Dead Redemption's "True West" - 140 Women "in a Man's World" --- 144 Making Fun of Masculinity? — 153 L.A. Noire's "Historical" Women - 155 A "Sad Story" of Post-War Womanhood — 161 Women in Hollywood versus Hollywood on Women —— 168 The Femme Fatale --- 174 Conclusions — 178 Chapter 6 Other(ed) Histories --- 182 Revisioning Red Dead Revolver --- 184 "Mr Marston, you truly are a friend of this land" --- 186 Playing Cowboy, "Playing Indian" --- 191 Otherness, Film Noir, L.A. Noire - 198 The Zoot Suit (Riots?) — 201 "White man supplies. Black man buys" --- 203 Conclusion — 213

Epilogue: "Rockstar Games Presents" . . . American History? — 215

Red Dead Redemption 2, and the West as a "Rockstar World" — 220

History and Rockstar's Fictions; or "dreamers in an ever-duller world of facts" — 224

Outlaw (Brand) to the End? — 231

Bibliography —— 233

Index —— 263