

E.T. for the Atari 2600 - Every Bad Game Episode 1

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INT. RETRO ROB'S BASEMENT

We see a few panning shots of a typical nerd's basement, complete with VHS collections and BetaMax players.

It's a warm spring day, but we'd never know that here, the basement is always lit with incandescent bulbs, never changing.

It is 2006, the internet is a budding young entertainment platform waiting to be explored.

The soft blue glow of the television envelopes our young entertainment guru.

His name is Retro-Rob, the persona he's adopted on several internet forums and chatrooms. He looks into the camera as he addresses his audience.

RETRO ROB

Greetings, gamers. My name is Retro-Rob of the Classic Game Console Collectors Forum, and I'll tell you what, people are always asking me one question: what's the worst game you've ever played?

He reached over to the table next to him and picks up a beer bottle. He takes a swig and relishes it as it goes down smooth.

We close in on his face.

RETRO ROB

I've played a lot of games in my time and only one has given me the displeasure, the dissatisfaction, the complete fuck me up the backside and not have the common decency to give me the reach-around. That game, is E.T. for the Atari 2600.

He holds up the cartridge as he says the title, then puts the game into the Atari system already hooked up to the television.

He flips a switch on the console and it boots up, the screen glowing with the awful face of E.T.

He looks over the screen with absolute disgust.

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RETRO ROB

Just the sight of that makes me
want to throw up out of my eye
sockets.

He turns again to the audience.

RETRO ROB

Designed in 1982 to coincide with
the release of the popular movie of
the same title-
(con't)

He holds up a VHS copy of E.T.

RETRO ROB

(con't)

The abomination of an interactive
turd machine didn't even come close
to levels of success the movie did.

The movie was a revolutionary,
cinematic hit that revitalized the
sales of a certain Reese's Pieces.
The game single-handedly caused the
video game crash of 1983.

INT. FBI AGENT'S OFFICE

Somewhere in some unknown government building, a tired and
bored FBI Agent sits lazily over his desk, with seemingly
nothing to do.

Suddenly, a small tracking device on his desk starts to beep
and flash a light. The device is covered in dust and clearly
hasn't been turned on like this in many years.

A small late-80's TV sits on the desk and blips to life,
churning out a very outdated map. A black screen with yellow
vector graphics outline the united states where a blip on
the map blinks in sync with the device on his desk.

The images on the screen are reflected onto his face, which
wakes him up from his trance.

The FBI Agent sits up in amazement. This is what he was
trained for, he just never expected after all these years
he'd actually be able to do it. The screen continues to zoom
in on the map of the US as it triangulates the exact
location of the signal.

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He opens a drawer, revealing a dusty walkman with a tape already inserted that is labeled "PLAY IN CASE OF E.T. 2600." He puts on some old headphones and begins to play the tape.

We don't hear what's said on the tape, but the Agent's eyes light up as he understands his instructions, and he gets up to leave. The computer system has finished zooming in on a location (probably in Ohio) with a very low-rez image of our protagonist, Retro Rob, and all of his information.

However, the Agent has already left the office and we end the scene frozen on his computer screen, looking at Rob.

INT. RETRO ROB'S BASEMENT

Meanwhile, Rob has begun his review of the game.

RETRO ROB

(v.o.)

The game is pretty simple: it's an adventure game where you play as the titular E.T. the Extra Terrestrial. Your goal is to traverse the many stages and locate the pieces to your telephone so that you can phone home, much like in the movie.

He looks at the camera.

RETRO ROB

But, of course, it's never actually that simple, is it? Once you find the pieces to this phone, you have to be in an exact spot somewhere on the map to be able to actually use it.

He continues.

RETRO ROB

(v.o.)

But good fucking luck even getting these pieces, because the whole world is littered with pits! Big holes in the ground that swallow you up if you get too close!

EXT. STREET

The FBI Agent races down the street, dodging traffic and speeding past pedestrians.

AGENT
Fuck fuck fuck.

INT. RETRO ROB'S BASEMENT

RETRO ROB
(v.o.)
You go around collecting Reese's
Pieces like in the movie and they
give you more time to complete your
mission.

He looks into the camera.

RETRO ROB
This game is in a way sort of ahead
of its time, trying to push
atmosphere and world building as
the main obstacles and challenges
over just simple score-based
gameplay.

He shows images of Pac-man and Donkey Kong on the 2600.

RETRO ROB
But considering that games of the
time looked mostly like this, why
even bother? It's limited in its
design scope as to what the Atari
was capable of doing.

EXT. RETRO ROB'S FRONT YARD

The FBI Agent has reached Rob's house. He approaches and looks at the location device, it has a time count-down on it that says "TIME UNTIL GAME COMPLETION" and it's quickly counting down towards zero.

AGENT
God, I hope there's still time.

RETRO ROB

There's always this stupid FBI Agent following you around trying to stop you from phoning home! What does he care about you phoning home anyway?

Suddenly the FBI Agent bursts through Rob's door.

AGENT

Because that cartridge is rigged! If you complete the third level and have E.T. phone home, it will contact it's true creators!

RETRO ROB

True creators? This is just a shitty 2600 game, dude. It's not that serious.

AGENT

Rob, I've been monitoring you, you're one of the special few who are in possession of that game cartridge, one of the original runs before Atari had them all banished to a landfill!

RETRO ROB

I don't quite understand what's happening here. Who are you?

AGENT

If that game is completed it will activate a signal that will contact the original developers of the game who were piggy backing on the success of the movie, and ironically, it being about an alien, to conquer our planet and enslave mankind!

RETRO ROB

How did you get into my house?

AGENT

There's no time to explain, just understand that whatever you do, you mustn't complete that game.

RETRO ROB

I was just playing this game for my new review channel on the internet.

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RETRO ROB (cont'd)
And you're a little too late, I
already beat it.