

A.R.G

By

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OVER BLACK: A.R.G Alternate reality games (ARGs), defined by intense player involvement with a story that takes place in real time and evolves according to players' responses. Players interact directly with characters in the game, solve challenges and puzzles, and collaborate as a community to analyze the story and coordinate activities.

The text fades leaving only three letters A.R.G

INT. EVENING

A computer start up chime. The mouse cursor scrolls to a message app and types out a message.

JADUZABLE (VIA TEXT)

Everyone ready?

CICADA (VIA TEXT)

You Know it.

THE ARK

Let's get it going boys.

JADUZABLE opens a video chat app and sends invites to CICADA and ARK and a third name GEMININI. The video chat opens and JADUZABLE, ARK, and CICADA all appear on screen.

ARK

How's it hanging?

CICADA

Same old, same old.

JADUZABLE opens the chat window again and sends a message to GEMINI.

JADUZABLE (VIA TEXT)

you coming tonight?

ARK

What are we getting into tonight?

ARK (CONT'D)

Jad.

ARK (CONT'D)

Jad you there.

JADUZABLE opens the video chat chat again.

JADUZABLE

Has anyone heard from Gemini?

CICADA

Oh my god, get over it already.

ARK

Look man she hasn't been here for weeks. She probably found some cooler friends or something. Now let's getting going.

JADUZABLE

Let's wait just a minute I just messaged her and...

CICADA

Dude. You are the worst. Not only are you whipped but you're cyber whipped. We barely even know this girl.

ARK

I wouldn't put it quite like that but Cic has a point.

A chime from the computer. A new message. From Gemini.

JADUZABLE

Look I just got a message from her she's probably just running a bit late getting home from work or something.

CICADA

What did I tell you whipped.

JADUZABLE clicks on the message.

JADUZABLE

That's weird.

ARK

What?

JADUZABLE

It's just a file link.

CICADA

What does the file say?

CICADA speaks through a series of crunchy chewing noises.

ARK

Come on man we talked about this.
Close your mic if you're eating.

CICADA

Fine. Pansy.

JADUZABLE

Are you two done?

ARK

Yes. Now what does the file say.

The cursor scrolls across the letters as JADUZABLE reads the text.

JADUZABLE

New Game.zip

ARK

Oh my god. That's where she's been.

JADUZABLE

Huh?

ARK

She knew we where running out of cool
games to solve so she made one of her
own. I knew I liked that girl.

CICADA

Still not impressed.

ARK

Download the thing so we can get
started already.

JADUZABLE clicks on the link and a download begins.

JADUZABLE

It's going to take a minute file is
pretty big.

CICADA

That's fine I'm out of chips anyways.

CICADA gets out of his chair.

ARK

Great. I thought my ears were done
being tortured for the night.

JADUZABLE scrolls back over to the chat with GEMINI and begins to type out a message.

JADUZABLE (VIA TEXT)
Thank you for doing this. Would still like to see you back in the video call one of these nights.

CICADA chimes in from off screen and JADUZABLE tabs back over to the video call.

CICADA
Are we getting started or what.

JADUZABLE
Let me check the download.

The download progress finishes.

JADUZABLE
Just finished. Let's see what's in here.

JADUZABLE clicks on the file and the zip file unpacks opening to a screen filled with folders. Dozens of them.

JADUZABLE
This a ton of files it's going to take forever to sift through all of this.

ARK
Email us the zip file so we can all start going through them. It will be faster that way.

JADUZABLE
Right.

JADUZABLE opens an email, attaches the zip file and sends it to ARK and CICADA.

CICADA
Got it.

ARK
Me too.

CICADA
You're right there is hundreds of files here. Where do we even start.

JADUZABLE

One of us should sort by size, another by file type and then date.

ARK

That makes sense we can probably cover the most ground that way.

CICADA

Alright, lads let's get to it. I'll take file type.

ARK

I've got date.

JADUZABLE

Guess that leaves me with file size.

Jaduzable goes back to the clicks sort and then by file size. The files reorganize and Jaduzable clicks the first one. A password pop up appears.

ARK

I think these files are all password protected.

JADUZABLE

Yeah I'm seeing that on my end too.

CICADA

How are we supposed to get anywhere if the only thing we have are a bunch of password protected files.

ARK

You know Gem better than the rest of us Jad you have any ideas.

JADUZABLE

Nothing I can think of. Let me try and message her again.

JADUZABLE brings the chat with GEMINI back up.

JADUZABLE (VIA TEXT)

Hey we're trying to start your game but all the files are password protected. Was that on purpose?

GEMINI (VIA TEXT)

Yes.

GEMINI (VIA TEXT)

This is your first test. The game has begun attempt to contact the owner of this account no further unless you are willing to risk her life.

CICADA

Yo! What's she saying.

JADUZABLE

She's acting kind of weird. Just sent me a message a message saying not to contact her again or her life would be put at risk.

ARK

I don't think this is anything to worry about man. These games do this kind of stuff all the time right.

JADUZABLE

Yeah you're right. I guess I'm just not used to knowing someone involved directly.

CICADA

So we have a bunch of files we can't access and a couple of creppy DM's. What are we supposed to do now?

JADUZABLE

Alright let me think.

Jaduzable pulls up the list of files again and slowly scrolls through them.

JADUZABLE

I think I have something.

ARK

What?

JADUZABLE

Look at the file names a few of them have capital letters in them. They look kind of out of place right. I think if you put them together they might spell something out. I'll read them out and you put them into the password box as I go alright.

CICADA

Sounds nuts but I guess we don't have any better ideas right now.

The cursor scrolls over several files highlighting a capital letter in each

JADUZABLE

C...L...O...U...D...C...H...A...S...E
..R

CICADA

Clo Clou

ARK

Cloudchaser!

CICADA

Dude don't shout into the mic like that.

ARK

Sorry. It's just I remembered something the first ARG was some kind of promotional campaign for a movie but the community who played it who went on to make ARG's what they are today. They called themselves Cloud chasers.

CICADA

Boom!

JADUZABLE

What?

CICADA

It worked. Cloud chaser it unlocks the files.

ARK

Alright. Nice job.

JADUZABLE

Alright I'm going back to sort by file size again.

Jaduzable opens the folder containing the largest file. The file opens and connects to an ongoing live stream.

The video appears to be from the angle of a webcam or similar device. We see a dimly lit small room with only a mattress a small figure lays on the mattress facing the wall. She turns over.

ARK

Some of this stuff is pretty messed up.

CICADA

I mean yeah but it's not the first time we've seen this kind of stuff right. She's just pushing the boundaries a little.

JADUZABLE

That's her!

ARK

What?

JADUZABLE

This link it took me to a stream of this girl locked up in this room. It's her. It's gemini

CICADA

What are you talking about?

JADUZABLE

The biggest file. It's a steam from tiny room and Gemini is locked up in there.

CICADA

Are you sure?

ARK

Oh, crap he's right. What do we do?

JADUZABLE

I'm calling the cops.

CICADA

And telling them what?

JADUZABLE

That our friend has been kidnapped.

CICADA

Look. We don't know where she lives,

where she is now. Hell we don't even know her real name. We have nothing to tell them.

JADUZABLE

What are we supposed to do then?

CICADA

Are we sure that we really know what's going on? She could have set this all up herself to make the game feel more real.

JADUZABLE

She looks really bad man and they have her chained up. Maybe I'm wrong but this seems like a little much for her.

ARK

I'm with Jad.

JADUZABLE

Plus this would explain why she hasn't been showing up fro game night.

ARK

That makes sense. If this creep took her weeks ago then set all this up for us. Her disappearance starts to make a lot more sense.

JADUZABLE

What are we supposed to do guys?

CICADA

We keep playing.

ARK

You can't be serious.

CICADA

Look i'm not sold but let's assume she's in real danger here. We can't call the cops. Someone obviously set this game up for a reason. If we want to help her we have to keep playing.

ARK

I'm just not...

JADUZABLE

He's right. It's up to us now. But we have to work fast she's in really bad shape. I'm not sure how much longer she can hold out.

ARK

Where do we start?

JADUZABLE

Screw the puzzles, focus on the location. If we can find any identifying markers of where she is then we can call the cops. We don't have to win. We just have to save gemini.

CICADA

Alright, focus on image and video files anything that might show us where she is.

ARK

Right.

JAD looks at his camera and begins to lose composure.

JADUZABLE

What if we can't save her guys?

ARK

I mean it wouldn't be our fault.

CICADA

Stop! We can do this. Losing our shit now doesn't help anybody. We will save her just got to buckled down and do it.

JAD wipes his eyes.

JADUZABLE

You're right let's get to it.

Montage of shots of the crew clicking through image after image of Gemini captured in the room and of a man in a mask that appears to be her captor.

A message chime. JADUZABLE clicks on the messaging app. Another message from the man who has control of GEMINI's account.

GEMINI (VIA TEXT)

Tick Tock. I thought you were supposed to be good at these games.

ARK

what is it?

JADUZABLE

The guy is mocking us now. He knows we aren't making any progress.

CICADA

Says him.

ARK

You got something?

CICADA

Check out the file 3301.img

Jad types 3301 into the search bar and pulls up an image of a small house.

ARK

of course.

JADUZABLE

What?

ARK

This guys has some sort of weird obsession with these games. Just like us. He probably even picked our group for a reason I mean look at our screen names. Jaduzable from Ben Drowned, To The Ark from marble hornets, Gemini home entertainment and Cicada

CICADA

3301.

ARK

Exactly. All of this. The game, the clues, targeting us. It's all some weird meta game. He's taking the fiction out of unfiction. He's probably been watching us for a while. Lurking on forums we posted in. Watching us solve these games.

JADUZABLE

Alright so we have a house and a stupid motive. How do we find Gem?

CICADA

He wants us to find him. He wouldn't have made all the clues so easy for us to find unless he did.

ARK

Alright, let's work this out. This house it's probably going to be linked to some other ARG on Unfiction project right?

JADUZABLE

Makes sense I guess.

CICADA

This house has people in it, The Human Pet, Everyman Hybrid. There's too many. I mean every damn one of these things has a house in at some point.

ARK

You're right. We're never going to think of the right one in time.

JAD gives himself a small smack on the forehead.

JADUZABLE

Idiot.

CICADA

What?

JADUZABLE

Anytime you find an important picture in one of these things you are always supposed to check one thing first.

JADUZABLE, CICADA, ARK

(In Unison)

The Metadata.

JAD right clicks on the file pulling up a menu and clicking the option to check the metadata.

ARK

Anything?

JADUZABLE

Give me a sec.

JAD scrolls through the menu and sees a location tag.

JADUZABLE

Chicago.

ARK

Ok, we've narrowed it down to all of Chicago. Super helpful.

JAD pulls up a web browser and types in Chicago Missing Persons. A series of articles on recent missing persons cases in the area come up. One catches his eye.

JADUZABLE

Annie Wilkins.

CICADA

Huh?

JADUZABLE

I found an article about her going missing. It has her picture and everything. Her name is Annie Wilkins.

CICADA

Guess... It is real. We need to finish this, now.

ARK

What about a reverse image search>

JADUZABLE

There's no way this guy is that stupid right?

CICADA

Apparently he is. I've got it. 1337 Vine Chicago Illinois. Time to call the cops I think. Jad you want to do the honors?

JAD pulls out his phone and dials 911. A message chime. He clicks on it.

GEMINI (VIA TEXT)

I wouldn't do that if I were you.

911 OPERATOR
911 What's your emergency?

JAD pauses a moment and considers his options. The operator repeats.

911 OPERATOR
911 What's your emergency.

JADUZABLE types in the chat.

JADUZABLE (VIA TEXT)
Game Over. Sicko.

JADUZABLE
Yes. My friend is in danger. She is
being held captive at 1137 Vine,
Chicago Illinois.

911 OPERATOR
We'll have units there right away.

JAD hangs up.

JADUZABLE
We did it.

ARK
We really did.

CICADA
Kind hits different when it's the real
deal.

A notification appears on the screen. GEMINI has entered the chat. The masked man appears on screen.

KIDNAPPER
I told you not to do that.

CICADA
Too late a-hole cops are on the way.

KIDNAPPER
they'll find your little friend but
I'm already long gone.

JADUZABLE
You're lying.

KIDNAPPER

I am many things. A liar is not one of them. So believe me when I say you may have saved your friend but your game has only just begun.

The Kidnapper hangs up.

ARK

He can't be serious right.

CICADA

You heard him this guy doesn't play around.

JADUZABLE

Cicada's right.

ARK

What are we supposed to do.

At that moment a figure starts to appear from behind around ARK. The man in the mask.

CICADA

Ark!

JADUZABLE

Look Behind you!

The man holds a rag in front of ARK's face as he struggles eventually falling unconscious.

KIDNAPPER

Good Luck. I went easy on you this time. Had to see if you were worthy players. Chapter 2 is going to be on a whole new level.

ARK's laptop slams shut.

CUT TO: BLACK

Credits.