TWO EXCITING NEW PRODUCTS!

You're not sure who's who. But one thing is certain — someone is dead. And now they're pointing fingers at you.

INFOCOM INTRODUCES SUSPECT™

In Suspect, Infocom's newest mystery game, you'll attend a murderously grand party that you'll never forget.

The butler is dressed in a gorilla suit. Scores of outrageously costumed dancers waltz and two-step elegantly in the grand ballroom. A masked bartender mixes tasty and potent drinks. All around you are the cream of society — senators, blue-blooded gentry, power brokers, and the idle rich — dressed as no one has seen them before. Someone has come as a vampire; someone else as a short, cuddly robot; someone has even come dressed as a peanut butter sandwich! What a party!

If you walk around the mansion, you'll be impressed by the richness everywhere. The Sitting Room, the Library, the Morning Room, the Sun Room — all are impecably furnished, bespeaking the wealth and fine taste of the owners. But the most striking thing you'll see here tonight is not the crystal chandelier, nor the valuable oriental rug, nor the most striking thing you'll see here tonight, at this party. Strangled, curiously, with a piece of your costume. You don't know who the murderer is — you suspect everyone — but one thing is certain.

You are the prime suspect!

In Suspect, you are a newspaper reporter and an old friend of Veronica Ashcroft, the party's hostess. You looked forward to this Hallowe'en bash and to rubbing elbows with the movers and shakers of Maryland's hunt country. Little did you know that you would also be framed for a murder you didn't commit!

Like Deadline™ and The Witness™ (Infocom's other games in the mystery genre), you'll have lots of clues and false leads to wade through, and alibis and denials to consider. In Suspect, though, you're not the detective (assisted by the able Sergeant Duffy) looking for the killer. Instead, you're the police's number-one suspect, and you've got

. . . more Suspect on page 3

DON'T PANIC!

Now you can see the universe the safe, sure, money-saving way with THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY™

Here at Infocom, it would ordinarily not be too surprising for some random hanger-on, crackpot, or sycophant to get past the Guardians of Zork and venture forth with the magic words "I have this great idea for a game...." Such gratuitous input would generally not be parsed by the gate keepers who make the decisions around here.

However, if the proposition came from someone with a little writing experience — say, with the authorship of some funny books selling in the millions — then this would be quite a different story, indeed. And so it was when Douglas Adams, who for years had smiled upon Infocom's work, put out a transatlantic feeler, as it were, to take the pulse of the giant in interactive fiction. The diagnosis was very favorable. Dr. Marc Blank, the company's vice president, assigned implementor S. Eric Meretzky to act as midwife for a brand new creation: Infocom's The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, which is based only loosely on the novel of the same title.

With the teaming up of "best-selling author" Adams and "award-winning game designer" Meretzky (Planetfall™, Sorcerer™) you would expect, well, at least a halfway decent game, wouldn't you? (See Footnote.)

Actually, if this hilarious and doomsday vision of the future were to come to pass, who knows? A Hitchhiker's Guide disk might improbably be recovered among the space junk by some alien race. These beings, besides possibly recognizing themselves in the story, would (if the disk would still boot)

. . . more Hitchhiker's on page 3

(Footnote: To say the least.... Here we illustrate just two of the features new to Infocom games, first appearing in The Hitchhiker's Guide game. The first is the occurrence of footnotes — accessed by typing FOOTNOTE (number) — sprinkled throughout the story to enlighten, clarify, amuse. The second is the player's ability to respond to the sometimes rhetorical questions posed by the narrative, as seen above.)
I had my first encounter with a professional play-tester two years ago, when I was writing Starcross. As I worked, every so often my concentration would be broken by a horrible cackling laugh from a few doors down the hall. Jerry had found another bug.

Infocom's Quality Control Department (informally, play-testers) makes sure our stories are bug-free before they get published. From the first, horrifically buggy version "thrown in the swimming pool," to the final, perfect (hah!) version that we ship, the play-testers pound away, searching for flaws.

It starts out very simply. Let's take Suspect for a victim ... oops, I mean an example. When a game first enters testing, it's a delicate thing, easily upset:

> BARTENDER, GIVE ME A DRINK
"Sorry, I've been hired to mix drinks and that's all."

> DANCE WITH ALICIA
Which Alicia do you mean, Alicia or the overcoat?

Veronica's body is slumped behind the desk, strangled with a lariat.

> TALK TO VERONICA
Veronica's body is listening.

Little bugs, you know? Things no one would notice. At this point the tester's job is fairly easy. The story is like a house of cards — it looks pretty solid but the slightest touch collapses it:

Media Room

> ENTER
**FATAL ERROR: Pushdown Overflow**

Mysteries have a lot of scope for truly odd bugs, since they have so many characters running around. Throughout the testing process, I would get reports like:

"Duffy is having serious problems...."
"Alicia isn't functioning too well...."
"The detective seems stuck in the North Hallway...."

Suspect has thirteen characters (counting you) and a few bit players, so at times it resembled a Marx brothers movie.

Testers are relentless. Once they find out they can talk to a corpse, you can confidently expect a list of all the other things that will listen to them: cars, tables, chairs, waste baskets, anything. This is sometimes called "rubbing it in."

They had a particularly gleeful time with poor Veronica's body. It's not enough that she's been murdered. No, first they decide to hide the body. Then, to make things worse, they carry her around, presumably slung over the shoulder.

> SHOW CORPSE TO MICHAEL
Michael doesn't appear interested.

Of course, Michael is only Veronica's husband; why would he be interested? After that, it was open season! Bodies everywhere:

"I carried Veronica's body into the Ballroom. No one noticed."
"Sergeant Duffy walked right by while I was carrying the body. He didn't notice it."
"I put the body in the chair in the Library. Col. Marston came and went without seeing it."
"I picked up the body right in front of the detective."

That wasn't enough:

> THROW CORPSE IN FIREPLACE
Veronica's body is now in the fireplace.

> ATTACK CORPSE WITH CROWBAR
Veronica's body jumps out of the way.

Eventually, that all got sorted out: Veronica stayed safely dead, and her party guests got less blasé about corpses.

Producing a piece of interactive fiction is an odd combination of debugging a program and writing a story. Bug reports can concern anything from a stack overflow to a misplaced comma. There was a running battle (finally settled by Fowler's English Usage) over when a comma goes inside a quotation mark and when outside. By the same token, bugs can concern something as microcomputer-oriented as the stack size on the Atari implementation of the story.

Some comments from testers would not be out of place in a report from an editor at a major book publisher:

"Alicia is acting out of character."

"Why would Michael react that way when told about the murder?"
"Ostmann's motivations seem too obscure."

Some comments are directly keyed off of programming bugs that would make a BASIC programmer blush:

"Game prints garbage when Duffy enters room."
"You can drop Veronica's pulse on the floor."

There are several stages in implementing one of our stories. During the first stage, the author is so pleased that it works at all that any bug reports are welcomed. During this stage the typical bug concerns two rooms that connect in only one direction (you can go east from the first to the second but there is no way to go back).

During the second stage, all of the testers and several other game authors have had a chance to play it, and the really nasty comments come in. During this stage, bugs cause serious changes in the plot, and sub-plots are added or removed. This is when "debugging" is more like writing another draft of a novel than debugging a program. The plot is hardened into its final form, and outside testers are given their first crack at the story.

Finally comes the stage in which every bug is seen by the author as an imposition. I can always tell when a story is almost finished by my rising level of frustration at seeing new bugs in my mailbox. At some point, coming to the office in the morning becomes an exercise in procrastination. You see, at Infocom there is a hall with all the mailboxes in it, and you have to walk past the mailboxes to get to the coffee machine. The question becomes, "How much do I really want my first cup of coffee this morning?" You can always avert your eyes as you walk by the mailboxes, but that's almost too obvious. Better is to make a casual appraisal as you walk by. "Hmm. Looks like a fairly small stack this morning...."

Then you can walk to the coffee machine with a clear conscience. Even a cup of yummy coffee won't improve things when you see "page 1 of 12" on the first bug report form.

Amazingly enough, it all works out in the end. Sometimes a full-page bug report will turn out to be caused by a simple little error, and you can check off three or four subsidiary bugs with one stroke. Sometimes a simple little thing you've glossed over three times as unimportant will be re-reported, and you realize it's more like the last six inches of a dragon's tail.

Best of all are the final few days before a story is shipped, when the volume of bugs drops to almost zero, and you realize that even the testers are reaching for things to report. Then, at long last you look in your mailbox and nothing's there! You say hello to the testers in the halls without terror, and there's nothing whatsoever to worry about.

Until the next game!

CALL THE EXTERMINATOR

Despite ruthless testing by our Quality Control Department, every now and then some embarrassing bug escapes the watchful eyes of the Infocom Exterminators and creeps onto your disk. Most people never see these bugs, but they can be jarring when they rear their ugly little heads.

Take, for instance, an early version of Deadline. Somewhere outside the house, you are told

The gardener is here, talking to himself.

You could then have the following interaction with the computer:

> LISTEN TO THE GARDENER

The roses make no sound.

Not exactly a breakthrough in your investigation.

Your living quarters in Starcross are Spartan: when you start the story, there's nothing in the room but you, a bunk, and a tape library. Not much can go wrong, right? Wrong.

> PUT THE TAPE LIBRARY ON THE BUNK

The bunk isn't open.

Needless to say, the bunk in Starcross opens about as often as the roses in Deadline talk. A bug in early versions of Sorcerer makes you look like a better magician than you really are. If you know the name of a spell (FWEEP, for instance), you can take it even if you are nowhere near the spell scroll. Don't know where you left a spell scroll? Can't get there from here? No problem! Just type "TAKE FWEEP" and hey, presto! There you have it!

Fortunately, the command SOLVE THE GAME isn't so obliging.

Usually, if you mention an object that you don't have or can't see, you'll be told "You don't have that" or "You can't see that." A bug in some
Suspect continued from page 1

to prove your innocence to Duffy
and his boss to stay out of prison.

In every Suspect package comes a
story disk, the booklet Murder and
Modern Manners (describing murder
eтикету), your party invitation, your
costume receipt, a note from your
editor, an article from The Maryland
County Times (a tony magazine for the
upper class), and a business card
with a suspicious message on it.
Suspect was written by Dave
Lebling, author of Starcross and
co-author of Zork I, Zork II, Zork
III, and Enchanter. It is an
advanced-level game and will sell
for $44.95 on most systems.

Hitchhiker's continued from page 1

discover humans to have been highly
skilled in the interactive arts; and,
contingent on the physiology to do
so, they would laugh.

In every Hitchhiker's Guide story
the player must overcome bewildering
circumstances – which have
encroached on his pastoral home in
Galaxy. But since you are the
author, with the mellifluous name of
Arthur Dent. Henceforth, you'll encounter
characters and locations from the
book appearing in a variety of
adventures written by Adams
expressly for this game. For instance,
in the novel there is one fanciful item
of great utility which, however, in
the game can be obtained only by
maddeningly humorous Rube
Goldberg methods.

In exploring virgin parts of the
galaxy, accessing the actual
Hitchhiker's Guide will be essential.
The Guide, an electronic device
similar in appearance to a large
calculator, is consulted to enlighten
its user on a wide variety of topics
ranging from the Ravenous Bugblattber Beast of Traal to pocket fluff.

Throughout your knocking about
the galaxy, it is as if the unique
persona of Adams were lurking in
the nether regions of disk accessing,
anticipating your every move and
miscue, and delivering the appropriate
rejoinder.

The game packaging provides a
number of items to assist the galactic
hitchhiker. A pair of peril-sensitive
sunglasses warns you of impending
doom. Copies of the demolition
orders for your house and planet
Earth remind you why you're out
there in the first place. You're given
a piece of fluff and a microscopic
space fleet, as well as the Megadodo
Publications sales brochure for the
latest model of the actual
Hitchhiker's Guide. And in case things
get out of hand, there's a Don't Panic
button.

The front of The Hitchhiker's
Guide package says it's a standard
level game; as such, it will sell for
$39.95 on most systems.
NEW ZORK TIMES PUZZLE

ACROSS
1. Startcross activity
2. A_______ of light
3. Number of wrenches in Zork I
4. Not don't
5. Common keyboard abbreviation
6. The parrot's in Cutthroats is wooden
7. Item inside Enchanter's Shack
8. Initiats of person in charge of Sorcerer's Coal Mine
9. Hard, as said by the Wizard of Frobozz
10. Shape of hole in box in Dusty Room
11. Twelve squares, when rearranged, spell something you want to be. Write this something in the answer box below. (Note the hyphen and the space!) Only the answer placed in the answer box will be used to judge your entry.
12. Infidel
13. Common pronoun
14. ME____ ("wilts plants")
15. Type of reactor that powers the Leviathan
16. Dir. from Armory to cannon
17. Type of IBM PC
18. Dir. from Systems Corridor West to red spool
19. From the North End of Garden to the Gazebo
20. Johnny
21. This is gray and purple and black and white
22. Type of phobia no Starcross player should have
23. One of the komplekses
24. Angus Mc______
25. Hard, as said by the Wizard of Frobozz
26. Common pronoun
27. Mrs. Robner, to Baxter
28. Dir. from Systems Corridor West to red spool
29. Has one grasping extension
30. LoBlo owner
31. Pete
32. From Bathroom to Tub Room
33. Pete
34. Mrs. Robner, to Baxter
35. From Galley to Wheelhouse
36. From Creepy Crawl to Tight Squeeze
37. Dir. from Turret to Torture Chamber
38. Dir. from Engravings Cave to Round Room
39. S___ (word on manila folder)
40. From Galley to Wheelhouse
41. Liquid that mutants love to lap up
42. Most windows have one
43. You're a reporter in this game
44. Seastalker's companion
45. From the North End of Garden to the Gazebo
46. S____ (word on manila folder)
47. Type of stick that Floyd might like
48. Dir. from Engravings Cave to Round Room
49. TAKE ____
50. Number of bumps at Red Aurolock
51. Mrs. Robner is one
52. Response is sometimes "Aaaaarrgh!"
53. From the North End of Garden to the Gazebo
54. Dir. from Circular Room to ruby cluster
55. Like Monica's car

DOWN
1. Shape of hole in box in Dusty Room (abbrev.)
2. Dir. from Meadow to turtle
3. Tip is one
4. Item in Infidel
5. 6. GNUS____ ("writes magic")
7. The Red Boar is one
8. Dir. from Armory to cannon
9. Type of stick that Floyd might like
10. Lots of these in Infidel
11. Auda isn't this
12. From Bathroom to Tub Room
13. From Creepy Crawl to Tight Squeeze
14. ME____ ("wilts plants")
15. Jewel
16. Evil force in Sorcerer
17. Item on trophy case
18. This is gray and purple and black and gray and white
19. Type of IBM PC
20. Played the heavy in Enchanter
21. Dir. from Engravings Cave to Round Room
22. From the North End of Garden to the Gazebo
23. From Creepy Crawl to Tight Squeeze
24. Angus Mc______
25. Common pronoun
26. Separates the Thin Forest and the Repair Room
27. Between Deck Eight and Deck Nine
28. From Bathroom to Tab Room
29. From Creepy Crawl to Tight Squeeze
30. From Bathroom to Tab Room
31. Dir. from Turret to Torture Chamber
32. Dir. from Turret to Torture Chamber
33. From Galley to Wheelhouse
34. Liquid that mutants love to lap up
35. Most windows have one
36. Seastalker's universal
37. S____ (word on manila folder)
38. Dir. from Engravings Cave to Round Room
39. From the North End of Garden to the Gazebo
40. From the North End of Garden to the Gazebo
41. From the North End of Garden to the Gazebo
42. From the North End of Garden to the Gazebo
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55. From the North End of Garden to the Gazebo

CONTEST RULES:
1. All entries must be submitted on this form. No copies accepted.
2. All entries must be received by February 1, 1985.
3. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded for correct answers. If more than 25 correct answers are received, a drawing will be held to determine the winners. Void where prohibited by law.

PRIZE: 100%-cotton New Zork Times Puzzle Winner T-Shirt.

Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________
Phone Number: ________________________ T-Shirt Size (S, M, L, XL): ________________________