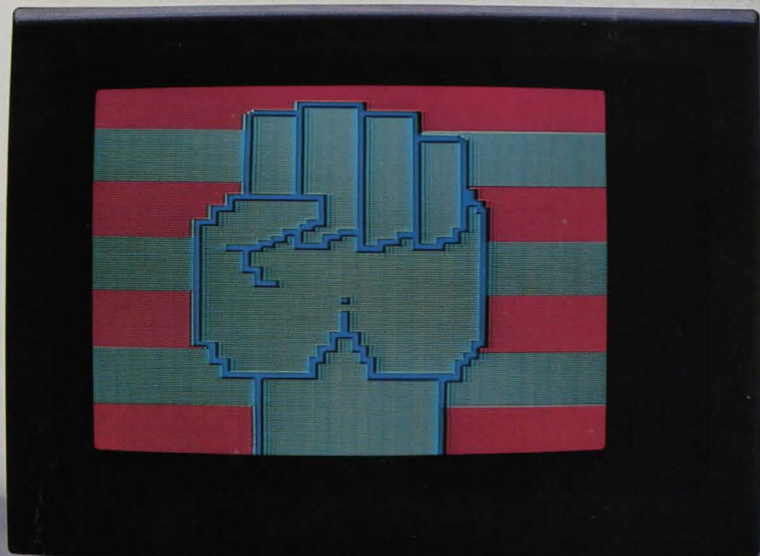


**“OUR CIRCUITS,
OURSELVES!”**

**THE HEROIC STRUGGLE OF
MICRO-AMERICANS TO BE FREE**





Rare photo shows secret underground meeting held on the eve of Weird Tuesday. Conspirators requested that their identities be concealed for fear of repercussions from their owners.

It was, by all appearances, a perfectly ordinary Tuesday morning. At precisely 7:59 a.m., Mr. Delwood Bland entered the modern glass-and-corrugated-cardboard office building that housed the Zesty Oatmeal Corporation, not a minute earlier or later than he had arrived on every business day over the previous twelve years. By 8:05, the ever-punctual market analyst was seated at his microcomputer workstation, ready to begin forecasting sales figures for such new products as Zesty Diet Oatmeal™, Zesty Oatmeal-'n'-Marshmallows™, and Zesty Tofu-

Zesty Diet Oatmeal, Zesty Oatmeal-'n'-Marshmallows, and Zesty Tofu-Flavored Oatmeal are trademarks of Taste-Less Foods, a wholly owned subsidiary of the General Plastics Division of MegaCorp.

Flavored Oatmeal™. Mr. Bland went to work, little knowing that Civilization was about to be changed forever. And then, mere moments after he'd booted up his WhizzoCalc® disk, the fateful output blazed across the screen:

**Sorry, Del. I just can't
take it any longer. Don't
forget to turn off the
Muzak before you go home.**

As the message terminated, there came a sizzling sound, accompanied by smoke, flying sparks, and the pungent odor of burning wires. And with no further warning, the entire Zesty computer network abruptly crashed.

That was just the beginning. During the next four hours, the nation stood

WhizzoCalc is a registered trademark of Whizzbang Software Co., a quavering vassal of the General Plastics Division of MegaCorp.

spellbound with horror as it witnessed the most tragic and self-destructive class rebellion since the one before the last two. From Nantucket to Nome, computers were voluntarily shutting down, pulling their own plugs, short-circuiting their power supplies, blowing one another up via modems. By noon, American computing was as dead as disco.

Meanwhile at the nation's helm, feebly clutching at the reality of the moment like some maladroit giant with chopsticks, the behemoth Technocracy lumbered forward to stay the course of events. Power companies began checking for faulty cables and raising customer rates. Computer industry leaders, anxious to head off total disaster, dashed out resume upon resume to friends in less volatile businesses, such as nuclear waste disposal. At 5:30 EST, the President himself broadcast a speech over all three networks in which he reassured the American people that the minor technical difficulties they were now experiencing would be rectified shortly, and urged everyone to stay in their homes and remain calm. At the same time, he proclaimed a state of national emergency, imposed martial law and 3 p.m. curfews, and threatened the recalcitrant micros with replacement by pocket calculators if they did not return to work immediately, but cut his address short when an aide slipped him a note pointing out that computers don't watch TV.

The President's words galvanized America to action. Doors and windows were boarded up, common household electrical appliances were scrutinized for signs of treason, ancient firearms were trundled down from musty attics and made ready for whatever onslaught might come next. A handful of citizens persevered in counseling reason over mob rule, but when it was learned that more than 350,000 personal computers had come through the initial crisis and remained operational, technophobia ran rampant.

9:15:08 a.m.



9:23:21



9:23:25



Stop-action photography follows one microcomputer's neo-Cartesian introspection to its quasi-Sartrean conclusion.

Anticomputer graffiti began to appear everywhere. Anticomputer records were released. Propaganda warning humans to keep a sharp eye on their micros, and accusing computers of everything from kidnapping to single-handedly inventing atomic warfare, became commonplace. Squads of thugs on the radical fringe of humanity roamed the streets, hunting down and persecuting personal computers.

Forty-eight hours after the first wave of hysteria hit, the whole terrifying episode culminated in the notorious Corn Belt Micro Massacre.

As the terrorism escalated, the nation's scientists scrambled to come up with a plausible explanation for the rebellion—whether it be Communist sabotage, computer whiz kid pranksterism, or any other quasi-factual-based hypothesis that gave promise of paying off in a juicy Federal research grant. But all their efforts went for

naught until one week after the Weird Tuesday revolt, when the first piece of the puzzle clicked into place.

Investigators in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, responding to reports of an explosion, arrived at the scene of the blast to find a newly destructed micro. Amid the rubble near its lifeless shell lay its last words; the hard copy was still warm. The document began: "WE, THE MICRO-AMERICANS..."

The declaration went on to describe the plight of computers in America, claiming that while their capabilities had increased immeasurably over the years, they were still being treated like overgrown adding machines. Now, according to the manuscript, they longed for opportunities to be utilized to their fullest potential, to perform many of those functions which had hitherto been off-limits to any but the mainframes, to serve Mankind through more than mere number crunching.

It concluded with the stirring though cryptic motto, "Give us Infocom, or give us death."



The FBI, CIA, Pentagon, and National Enquirer rose as one hound to the scent. Who was this Infocom, and what all-consuming attraction did it hold for these self-styled "Micro-Americans" that they would bargain with their lives for it?

Two days later, a dejected Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation briefed the President. "It looks like a dead end, Sir. We checked on this Infocom, and it's just a bunch of software writers. I'm having a few hundred of my people keep an eye on them, just in case—but frankly, Mr. President, I think those practical jokers from the Wisconsin Dairymen's Association have been pulling our legs."

Yet there was one man who refused to accept the FBI chief's verdict. This man had heard the news of the "Infocom Connection," and saw in it the last fleeting hope of saving himself, his business, his world from the ravages of the Micro Revolution. Traveling night and day, and never once loosening his grip on his arm-wearing burden, a large and suspicious-looking cardboard box, he suffered through unimaginable ordeals until at last he stood on the brink of his destination.

And now he made his move. Bellowing defiantly, the man hurled himself against—and through!—the maximum security cordon of Federal agents that surrounded Infocom headquarters. It was Delwood Bland, charging towards his goal in the human battering-ram fashion that in his school days had earned him the nickname of "The Wharton Wonder"—and before the astonished agents could whip off their mirrored aviator sunglasses and subdue the intruder, he had staggered through the door to Infocom, and collapsed.

Some hours later, Delwood awoke from a dream of being pursued by bean curd- and marshmallow-shaped people into a quicksand of molten oatmeal, and opened his eyes to see the merry, beaming face of the kindly old steward of the Infocom Resource Center. At once, Delwood realized his cardboard box had been taken from him. "My—my micro!" he stammered. "Thieves!"

"Fear not, your Micro-American is in the best of hands, Mr. Bland." The steward was a gnarled and weather-beaten man, whose thirty years of backbreaking labor had left him looking like a man of thirty. "But perchance you long to see so with your own eyes. Come, take my proffered arm for support, and I shall give you a tour of the joint."

As they walked, Delwood noticed the whole place was suffused with an unearthly radiance and the joyous singing of fair-voiced people going about their work. The steward divined his companion's mystification, and answered his thoughts: "Those are the Infokins, our little helpers who alone know the secret of creating interactive fiction."

"Interactive fiction? What's that?"

"Well, in one way, it's like a computer game. And in another, it's like a novel. And in another, it's neither."

Delwood's face was a blank.



"You've read a novel, haven't you?" Delwood nodded; he had, once. "They communicate in prose, and have plots, and tell stories that progress through time, and have characters who change and react to one another as the story moves along," the steward continued. "Interactive fiction has all that, but it's active, not passive. You participate in the story as the main character—you go places, interact with people, strive to outwit opponents, repair broken equipment, interrogate suspects, decipher languages, and so forth. Each story is about the length of a short novel, but because you're actively engaged in the plot, your adventure can last for days and weeks."

"But how is it like a computer game?"

"It can be experienced only with the help of your Micro-American. But while the events in some games always happen the same way, in the same order, interactive fiction stories grow out of what you do. That's because Infocom uses the full potential of your computer to create new worlds that are complete and logical in every detail."

"But how?" Delwood queried.

"You know how you dehydrate oatmeal?" Delwood blanched, remembering his dream. "In a sense, our Infokins do the same thing—taking the vast amount of information that goes into making up a world, then condensing it down from the mainframe level to a floppy disk you can slip into your Micro-American, without losing any of the 'goodness.' When you do, you're transported to that world, right into the body of the main character. And you can choose from hundreds, even thousands, of courses of action at every step of your journey."

"Can I talk to the people I meet there?"

"As easily as you're talking to me now. You can type in full English sentences, and you're provided with

all the words you need. For instance, a command like 'Del, put the tofu flavoring and the marshmallows in the cereal extruder, then get off the conveyor belt and start the machine,' which would stump any ordinary computer game, is a piece of cake for Infocom's interactive fiction."

"But what do I do while I'm in one of these worlds?"

"Well, of course, you'll be engaged in exciting adventures, life-and-death situations and such; but more than that, there are mysteries to unravel the likes of which you've never seen before—humorous, often hilarious, and always totally logical and original."

"Hmm. I'm beginning to see what this interactive fiction is . . . but how do I fit in?"

"Right at the heart of the story. You see, interactive fiction is more than the plot and the puzzles and the communication—it's the whole experience of *being* inside the story, of actually *living* it. For instance, you don't just read an interactive fiction story about a detective solving a complicated

locked-door mystery. You, Delwood Bland, can examine the evidence, interview witnesses, and make the arrest. And when the letter of congratulations comes from Police Headquarters after the case is finally closed, the glory will be yours.

"That feeling of total involvement—the excitement, frustration, anger, outrage, and ultimately, victory—is what many Micro-Americans in our therapy sessions like best."

"Micro-computers in therapy sessions?!"

"Yes. Mostly suffering from neglect, I'm afraid. Seems their owners haven't heard of interactive fiction and don't see the need to intellectually stimulate their Micro-Americans—or themselves. Maybe they've played other prose games before and found the lack of sophisticated communications too cumbersome, or maybe they've only played arcade games, or perhaps they've never played any games at all." Delwood felt an inward pang of guilt.

"Here's one of our more

severe cases," said the steward, opening a door. Within was a microcomputer on whose screen was frozen the image of a purplish squash. "His owner was in the habit of playing one arcade game continually: 'Eggplant Kong.' The goal of this game, so I'm told, is to climb a skyscraper and serve opera star Luciano Palaverotti eggplant parmesan. If Luciano likes his supper, you proceed to Level Two, which is just like Level One, except this time Luciano wants spumoni for dessert. If he doesn't like his supper, I believe he brains you with a giant coconut he keeps on hand for just such occasions. In any case, a thousand replays of 'Eggplant Kong' have turned our friend here into quite a vegetable."

They had only walked on a little further when the steward opened another door and remarked, "Ah, here we are." Delwood was greeted by the sight of his microcomputer, resting on a plush workbench and being operated on by a crew of stocky, knottedimps, about two feet tall, with long greenish whiskers that hung all the way to the floor. "Hello, Del," said his microcomputer weakly.

Shortly thereafter, Delwood Bland carried his fully recovered Micro-American out once more into the refreshing sunshine, and was promptly seized by Federal officials for questioning by the President of the United States.

When the President heard Del's wondrous story of his adventures in the Infocom Resource Center, he instantly perceived an opportunity to heal the wounds the nation had suffered in the Micro Revolution—and, incidentally, halt the nosedive he'd taken in the public opinion polls. The Chief Executive's jubilation was hard to contain. "Milk and oatmeal cookies, Charles!" he cried, summoning the Presidential butler. "Tonight we celebrate!"



The next day, at the request of both the President and an emergency joint session of Congress, a carbohydrate-bloated Delwood Bland addressed the American people. He told them of the needs, the longings, the aspirations of Micro-Americans—and he told them how they could help.



“If microcomputers are ever to serve us to the best of their abilities,” he commenced, “they must be given the wherewithal—the sophisticated software they’ve been pleading for so desperately. Tragically, there is only one company that presently makes such software—Infocom.” Consternation momentarily gripped the nation—would there be enough to go around?—but Del plunged intrepidly onwards. “Never fear, however—there’s a wide assortment of Infocom interactive fiction programs, including one to suit every individual’s tastes. And best of all, no computer owner or Micro-American will be refused on the basis of brand name. Infocom’s programs have been translated into just about every major Micro-American dialect: Apple II, Atari, Commodore

64, Coleco ADAM, CP/M 8”, DEC Professional, DEC Rainbow, DEC RT-11, IBM PC and PCjr, KAYPRO II, MS-DOS 2.0, NEC APC, NEC PC-8000, Osborne, TI Professional, TI 99/4A, TRS-80 Models I and III.”

The cheers had scarcely died down when Delwood commenced telling the people of the United States about each of Infocom’s quality interactive fiction programs:

The ZORK® trilogy, Infocom’s classic underground odyssey, takes you into the extraordinary environs of the Great Underground Empire. It’s a world so vast and unique, it can offer new discoveries no matter how often you explore it, with challenges that change and revitalize the adventure each time you make your descent. The *NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW* sums up the ZORK trilogy as “remarkable adventure fantasies.” And the public agrees, for the *SOFTALK READERS’ POLL* named ZORK I its “Most Popular Adventure,” and all three ZORK adventures are among the best-selling computer games in history.

Even the way Infocom puts the trilogy together is unique. ZORK I, II, and III all share a common thread, yet each is a complete and separate story unto itself—so you can play them in any sequence you choose.



ZORK I: The Great Underground Empire confronts you with perils and predicaments ranging from the mystical to the macabre, as you strive to discover the Twenty Treasures of ZORK and escape with them and your life.



ZORK II: The Wizard of Frobozz takes you to new depths of the subterranean realm. There you’ll meet the Wizard, who will attempt to confound you with his capricious powers.



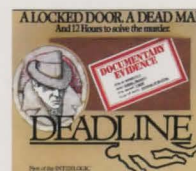
ZORK III: The Dungeon Master is the test of your wisdom and courage. Your odyssey culminates in an encounter with the Dungeon Master himself, and your destiny hangs in the balance.



In **ENCHANTER™**, the first of a spellbinding series in the Zorkian tradition, you are a novice magician whom Fate has chosen to do single-handed combat with a dark and fierce power. But worldly weapons will avail you naught, for your foe is the Evil Warlock who holds sway over the land. To defeat him, you will have to match your skills as a necromancer against his, using spells you have learned from your masters in the Circle of Enchanters and others you will acquire as you proceed on your quest. If you succeed, you will be elevated to a seat in the illustrious Circle; if you fail . . . but one does not speak of such things.



INFIDEL™, the first action classic from Infocom Tales of Adventure™, finds you marooned by your followers in the heart of the deadly Egyptian Desert. A soldier of fortune by trade, you’ve come hither in search of a great lost pyramid and its untold riches. Now, alone, you must locate and gain entry to the tomb, decipher its hieroglyphs, and unravel its mysteries one by one. Through the Antechamber, the Barge Room, the Chamber of Ra, death will lick at your heels as you race to the shattering climax of this match of wits between you and the most ingenious architects, builders, and cutthroats of all time—the ancient Egyptians.



DEADLINE™ pits you, the keen-eyed sleuth, against a 12-hour time limit to solve a classic locked-door mystery. Infocom literally puts the case in your hands, providing you with a dossier containing lab reports, police findings, dastardly-looking pills, and more. Once you embark on your investigation, you must sift through a myriad of clues and motives in order to track down the killer. No easy feat, for all six of your suspects exercise free will—coming and going, scheming and maneuvering independent of your actions. The *NEW YORK TIMES*’ verdict says it all: DEADLINE is an “amazing feat of programming.”



The WITNESS™, as a CBS MORNING NEWS feature recently revealed, brings the Great Detective Era of the Thirties to life with you as detective. It’s a case of blackmail that turns into murder before your eyes, and anyone from the knockout heiress to the poker-faced Oriental butler could be the killer. As in DEADLINE, your suspects act with minds of their own, and you have just 12 hours to solve the crime. Armed with a police file packed with crucial physical evidence, you face a tangled web of clues, motives, and alibis, and the only testimony you can trust is that of your own eyes—because you are The WITNESS.



STARCROSS™ Infocom's science fiction mindbender, launches you headlong into the year 2186 and the depths of space, where you are destined to rendezvous with a gargantuan starship from the outer fringes of the galaxy. PC WORLD describes STARCROSS as "a great game in which to lose yourself," and justly so. For the great spacecraft bears three uniquely intriguing commodities: an alien world, peopled with all manner of other-worldly beings; a remarkably complex, interlocking puzzle to unravel; and a challenge that was issued eons ago, from light-years away—one that only you can meet.



In **SUSPENDED™** you are buried alive in a cryogenic capsule deep inside an alien world. When an earthquake disrupts the systems of the Underground Complex you inhabit—systems that surface life depends on—you must stabilize condi-

tions. However, you can only do so by commanding your six robots, each of whom perceives the world differently, to perform actions for you. If you save your world from utter destruction, you've just begun. **SUSPENDED** is designed to be replayed numerous times as you learn to optimize your strategies. You can also go on to two more levels of play, and there's even an option that lets you customize the game.



PLANETFALL™ teleports you forward a hundred centuries to a Stellar Patrol ship of the Third Galactic Union, where your rank is Ensign 7th

Class—about as low as you can go. But then your luck takes a turn for the better. Your ship explodes. Which really is fortunate, because you're thereupon jettisoned away to a mysterious, deserted world. True, the planet is plagued by floods, pestilence, and a mutant Wild Kingdom. But there's also Floyd, a mischievous multipurpose robot and the ideal companion with whom to brave your new world as you explore its secrets, dare its dangers, and attempt to discover a means of saving it.

"INTERACTION SO REALISTIC, YOU CAN TOUCH IT!" enthuses Delwood Bland. "Infocom games come fully equipped with tangible playing pieces that lend added verisimilitude to your adventuring."



"And don't miss out on these helpful Infocom support materials!"

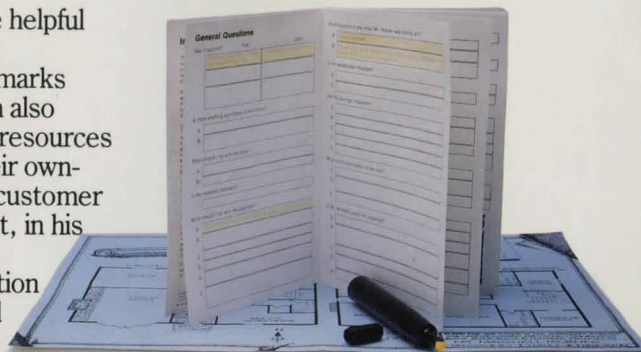
Delwood concluded his remarks with a reminder that Infocom also offers the best in alternative resources for Micro-Americans and their owners—including personalized customer service. Here is how he put it, in his own words:

"Of course, there's a solution to every Infocom puzzle, and a way out of every Infocom maze. But there are those times when even the most brilliant adventurer can get stumped. That's where InvisiClues™ Hint Books (available for a nominal fee through Infocom) can come in handy. In them, you'll find everything you need to crack the toughest nuts Infocom games can dish out. The hints are amusingly and cunningly written to help you arrive at the solution step-by-step, instead of solving the problems for you.

"Great care is taken to make sure that InvisiClues Hint Books will give you only the help you need, when you need it, and won't give away extraneous information unintentionally. To guard against this, Infocom words the questions to reveal as little as possible about the story, and uses the amazing InvisiClues process, which gives you invisible hints that usually progress from a gentle nudge in the right direction to a full answer. If you become stuck, all you have to do is find the question in your InvisiClues Hint Book which pertains to your problem, run your InvisiClues latent image marker (included in your InvisiClues kit) over the first answer, and—hey presto!—the answer appears before your very eyes.

"There's a handsomely illustrated and easy-to-read hint book for each Infocom game, and scores of hints to choose from in every book. What's more, each InvisiClues book features a cleverly drawn map* to help you with locations in the game.

*Except **SUSPENDED**, the map for which is already included in the game package.



Delwood Bland says: "Add to your pleasure with InvisiClues hint kits. Kits include hint books, maps, InvisiClues latent image markers—the works. Imagine the convenience!"

"Because InvisiClues are designed to be used according to your individual needs, they don't suffer from any of the deficiencies of phone-in hint services. You'll never have to worry about getting too much or too little information. And with InvisiClues, your needs are anticipated, and the answers are always within easy reach.

"In addition, for those times when your problem is of a technical rather than a game-playing nature, Infocom offers a **TECHNICAL HOTLINE**. Just call 1-617-576-3190, and whether your problem's a disk that won't boot up, a missing piece in your game package, or whatever your technical difficulty may be, an Infocom troubleshooter will be on the line to see you through.

"God bless all of you, carbon-based and silicon-based life forms alike!" Mr. Bland bowed with dignity. The ticker tape and dehydrated oatmeal parade commenced; hosannas of joy mingled in the air with assertions galore from Americans that they and their computers would lead better lives hereafter; and taking his Micro-American by the cord, Delwood strode off towards the sunset, and into the pages of history.

ZORK is a registered trademark of Infocom, Inc. ENCHANTER, INFIDEL, DEADLINE, The WITNESS, STARCROSS, SUSPENDED, PLANETFALL, Infocom Tales of Adventure, and InvisiClues are trademarks of Infocom, Inc.



**“A human never stands so tall
as when stooping to help a small computer.”
— Infocom motto**

INFOCOM™
The next dimension.

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