

Notes on Potential Info-Games

MEDIAGENIC

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

"CONFIDENTIAL"

DATE: August 19, 1988
TO: C. Garske, S. Whiteley, M. Dornbrook, J. Ybarra, R. Cousens
cc: B. Davis, G. Mulligan
FROM: R. S. F. Lehrberg
RE: "THE ABYSS"

We have just won the computer and videogame rights to this movie. As we have discussed, it is Fox's major summer '89 release in the U.S. and late fall release in Europe.

The budget is substantial -- \$35 million in production and \$15 for promotion (North America).

The attached preliminary synopsis is confidential. Please do not pass it around freely. Fox is VERY concerned about secrecy.

The script will only be available for reading in their presence; I can arrange that in both L.A and London. I am currently arranging for more detailed descriptions of the action scenes.

The set is in a new underwater facility in North (or South) Carolina. I can arrange a visit as necessary. Principal photography has begun.

The production team is James Cameron, Director and Gai Ann Hurd, Producer. This is the team responsible for Aliens and Terminator.

Ed Harris (John Glenn in "The Right Stuff"), Michael Biehn (Hicks in "Aliens"; also in "Terminator"), and Mary Elizabeth Mastroantonio ("Scarface" and "The Color of Money" . . . she was the girl) have been cast.

I will be speaking to each of you next week in regard to your thoughts for the property.

RSFL/cmc

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"THE ABYSS"
Synopsis - NOT FOR PUBLICATION - July 1988

Smack in the middle of the hottest zone in the Caribbean theater, less than one hundred miles south of Cuba, the "Montana", a US nuclear submarine, encounters an unidentified underwater craft moving faster than anything known to the crew. The mysterious object accelerates over one hundred knots, causing great turbulence and slamming the Montana into a cliff, tearing open the pressure hull. The huge sub is wedged 1800 feet down the 23,000 wall of the Cayman Trench. The Abyss.

Ten miles off shore from Grand Cayman island, just a dot on the horizon, is the "Benthic Explorer". The Explorer is a sophisticated surface support ship for "Deepcore", an underwater manned drilling station. This habitat is comprised of living modules linked to an exposed drilling platform. Deepcore is augmented by three submersibles. "Cab One" and "Cab Three", bug-like manned mini subs and "Flatbed" which is used to transport drill pipe and supplies on its open platform.

Benthic Petroleum's corporate owners have authorized the government's use of the Explorer, Deepcore and its crew to assist in the Navy Seal's rescue and salvage mission to the sunken sub.

The rescue mission begins. Deepcore, Flatbed and Cab One descend into darkness. The sub's single massive propeller screw dwarfs Flatbed. Seeing the enormous hull of the sub, with rents big enough to drive a Volkswagen through, we realize how many men the sub carried.

There are no survivors. An Explorer crew member comes upon

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the floating body of a seaman. He backs out of the room and is met with an eerie glare, pulsating hypnotically. SOMETHING is moving, casting a strange inhuman shadow across the wall. The crew member melts into terror.

Cab One approaches the hull in response to the distress call. Suddenly a bright corona breaks around the bulk and SOMETHING appears right in front of the mini-sub. A glowing object not much bigger than the submersible is moving like a bat out of hell. It's obvious to the crew member that this "thing" wasn't built by "us", wasn't built by humans.

Deepcore's inhabitants have diverse theories about the sighting. The Navy Seals believe it to be a Soviet-made prototype of some sort. Some of Deepcore's crew members feel it is a non-terrestrial intelligence operating in the deep, perhaps with an affinity for the darkness, cold, and pressure, which may resemble the environment on their home world.

Meanwhile, the true reason behind the Navy Seal dive team "rescue" mission is revealed. The Montana is a specialized ship, carrying enough classified information and multiple nuclear warheads to give the Soviets a field day. The Seals have procured an armed thermonuclear missile from the sub, planning to replace and activate the bomb by remote, causing an "accidental" and illegal explosion.

A vicious gale rocks the Explorer up on the ocean's surface. All hell breaks loose as the Explorer crew attempts to give the support cable attaching them to Deepcore some slack. The cord

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pulls taut and snaps, freeing some thirty tons of steel cable which crashes down toward Deepcore. Totally cut off in the freezing blackness, 2,000 feet beneath the surface, Deepcore's inhabitants organize salvage work-dives to one of the flooded modules housing equipment and supplies. On one of these dives, a female crew member, LINDSAY, is surprised by a mass, possibly a hundred feet in diameter, faintly glowing. A blinding light plays across the manta-ray-like object's surface.

On the mainland, international relations are strained to the limit. Our government believes the Russians were involved in the Montana's demise. A US Navy ship has downed a Russian helicopter in retaliation.

While the crew sleeps that night, the moon-pool surface opening (which allows submersibles to travel in and out of Deepcore) is suddenly breached. The water itself rises, forming into a shifting, shimmering pseudopod as big around as a man's body. The transparent form pulses...an amoebic mass shivering in the air. Like a glass python, it weaves across the room, stretching out of the moon-pool. The head of this shimmering tentacle seems somehow to be scanning and "seeing" where it is going and heads straight for the missile. The transparent tendrils move towards the warhead and lift it off its cart. The Navy Seal commander hefts a piece of sheetmetal and swings at the pseudopod, cutting effortlessly through it. The pseudopod splashes, drops the warhead to the floor, and becomes nothing more than a long puddle of seawater.

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All of Deepcore's inhabitants now realize they have encountered something more than a Soviet prototype. The Navy Seal commander blames the demise of the Montana on the NTIs. He decides they are the enemy and must be destroyed using the thermonuclear device. The Seals rig up the bomb to an ROV, a remote operated vehicle, and program it to travel to the aliens' habitat, at the bottom of the Abyss.

Deepcore's crew is stunned that the Navy Seal commander would immediately ascribe the worst motives to these creatures on their first tentative contact with mankind. A fight ensues, but the commander escapes on the Flatbed submersible. Deepcore's crew leader, BUD, outfitted in a dive suit, chases him down, but is losing in the uneven matchup. Suddenly, Cab One is there, operated by Lindsay, who happens to be Bud's estranged wife. Cab One slams into Flatbed. The two vehicles fight in the dark, murky waters. Operated by Lindsay, Cab One succeeds in blasting Flatbed and the Navy Seal commander into churning water, glass and oblivion.

Cab One is totalled in the melee. The submersible is flooding quickly. Lindsay and Bud review the dilemma - there's only one dive suit, and it's a ten minute swim to Deepcore. Lindsay convinces Bud that he must let her drown. Drowning victims have been revived successfully up to thirty minutes after death. The colder the water, the better. The water here is 6 degrees above freezing. Time is ticking away. Lindsay has to literally drown and Bud must tow her to Deepcore's medical

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quarters for revival. Back at Deepcore, Bud refuses to give up on Lindsay even though she seems to be lost to him for good. His fellow crew members tell him it's over, he should give up, but Bud essentially wills Lindsay back to life.

Now the bomb must be defused. Cab One and Flatbed are out of action. A Navy Seal who doesn't feel the NTIs can be blamed for the Montana's wreck tells the crew of an experimental procedure - the Ultra Deep Escape System. A diver breathes oxygenated liquid into his lungs and because equalization is then not necessary, he could theoretically swim to the bottom of the ocean. However, it has only been tested to depths of about three thousand feet.

Bud volunteers for the mission. He undergoes the painful procedure of breathing liquid and heads down into the abyss with a diver propulsion vehicle (a sort of advanced underwater scooter), communicating with the crew through a computerized keyboard. He soon picks up the ROV's tracking beacon and maneuvers toward it. Glowing organisms dot the darkness like remote stars. He closes in on the ROV and the warhead it carries. Tension builds as Bud's gloved fingers fumble the disarming process. The contact is removed. The bomb is defused!

"STILL HERE", he types. Lindsay realizes it took Bud over an hour to make the descent. There's only ten minutes of oxygenated liquid left! Lindsay yells into the mike - "Start back...maybe you can stretch it!" "NO. WE KNEW THIS WAS A ONE WAY TICKET, BUT YOU KNEW I HAD TO COME", Bud types back.

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Her voice turns into a sob as she reads his last message,
"LOVE YOU WIFE."

At the bottom of the abyss, Bud's eyelids close. A strange illumination bathes his face. A glowing figure hovers before him, like a vision. It is a fantastically beautiful bio-luminescent creature. The NTI takes Bud's hand and leads him into an area where the world's events are being broadcast on a gigantic underwater screen. The screen explodes into a series of searing images - US soldiers fighting in Vietnam, street warfare in Beirut, the crying and forlorn children of war.

And a new development is reported. Enormous 2,000 foot waves have crested and are poised to destroy each one of the world's coastal areas. Everywhere, people watch in awe and terror as the multiple waves reach their peaks - and freeze in place.

Bud beseeches the NTIs - "You can control the water, but how do you know we won't make peace in this world?" He watches the world's terror on the screen. Suddenly another message appears on the gigantic screen - "WE KNEW THIS WAS A ONE WAY TICKET, BUT YOU KNEW I HAD TO COME." He stares at his message of self-sacrifice. Bud watches the screen in silence as the gigantic waves recede and their destructive threat dissipates.

Back on Deepcore, Lindsay snaps out of her grief as a new message is received. "BACK ON THE AIR/HAVE SOME NEW FRIENDS DOWN HERE/GUESS THEY SENT A MESSAGE/HOPE YOU GOT IT."

Bud and Lindsay's love has saved the world!

CHALLENGE, INC

8244-A Old Courthouse Plaza
Vienna, Virginia 22180
703 356-2802

September 12, 1988

Mr. Joseph Ybarra
Vice President, Product Development
Infocom, Inc.
125 CambridgePark Drive
Cambridge, MA 02140

Dear Joe:

Enclosed is the proposal for the sequel to LGOP, tentatively entitled "The Invasion of the Leather Goddesses." The goal is to produce an off-the-wall comedy with a side order of sex. It looks like a product with enormous potential, and I look forward to hearing reactions and suggestions from you and your crew as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,



Robert A. Bates
President

cc: Mike Dornbrook
Chris Erhardt ✓
Rob Sears
Stu Galley

Program Description - Program III

THE INVASION OF THE LEATHER GODDESSES

The Story:

All the men on Phobos have died. Nobody knows why, but they were all buried with smiles on their faces.

Desperate for men, the Leather Goddesses launch an invasion of earth. Even as we speak, their ships are invisibly circling the planet, awaiting the report from their advance team that will tell them when and where to attack.

When the game starts, it is night. The player is driving down a lonely road deep in the Hollywood hills, idly humming the theme from the Twilight Zone. Rounding a curve, his headlights pick up a metallic gleam coming from a haystack in a deserted field. He stops the car to investigate. He walks toward the haystack and discovers that it conceals a small spaceship. He goes inside.

The scout ship has no one on board, and it has been empty for some time. In it the player discovers documents revealing that the ship belongs to a special infiltration force of the Leather Goddesses. There are 5 or 6 women in the group. Their task is to melt into earth's society, study it, and then beam back up to the invasion fleet with a report. The documents contain a list of addresses and a warning to the women to refrain from intimate contact with earthmen, as the men would surely die and the agents' cover would be blown.

When the player goes to the addresses, he finds places like a tanning salon, a health club, a hot-tubbery, a punk-rock club, etc. Each contains a drop-dead gorgeous woman. If he attempts any intimacy (anything from a kiss to whatever the parser can handle without blushing), each woman complies in a half-hearted way and then says she can't really get interested unless he brings her a special object.

Each of the 5 or 6 special objects is either made of leather or has something to do with leather. Acquiring each is a puzzle in itself. When the player presents each woman with the correct object, she grabs him and (tame level) kisses him furiously, or (lewd level) quickly rouses him to a level of sexual frenzy that approximates the energy output of a small thermo-nuclear device. At the height of passion, she unknowingly blurts out a secret location. When they recover, there are scorch-marks on the walls and an unexplained dent in the ceiling. The woman is unaware of her verbal indiscretion. She is also so shocked that the player actually survived the experience that she clings to him and begs to become his love-slave.

At each of the secret locations is a part of a machine. Recovering each is a separate puzzle. When the player has found all the parts and put them together, the machine sends a signal up into the sky. Suddenly a teleportation beam appears and beams the player up to the mother-ship of the invasion force.

The end-game is played on the mother-ship, with the player either defeating the Leather Queen, or persuading her to seek other worlds to conquer.

A list of possibilities for the special leather objects follows. I will try to use more items from the "interesting" list than the "boring" list.

Boring:

- Leather jacket
- Leather wallet or purse
- Leather book binding
- Leather briefcase
- Leather gloves

Interesting:

- Catcher's mitt
- Chrysler car seats of rich Corinthian leather
- Leather Saddle
- English Leather Cologne
- Rugby ball
- Lederhosen
- Leather boots

The Title:

Other potential titles that could convey the flavor of the game:

- The Attack of the Leather Goddesses
- The Revenge of the Leather Goddesses
- The Leather Goddesses of Hollywood.
- The Leather Goddesses invade Hollywood
- The Killer Nymphos of Phobos
- Leather II: The Killer Nymphos of Phobos

The Game:

The game's emphasis will be on the same off-the-wall humor that characterized LGOP I. Sex will play a greater role than in the first game, but still not a dominant one. Overall, it is to be a spoof of contemporary life in the 80's, and especially the life-style of southern California.

I can easily envision keeping the three levels of naughtiness from LGOP I. However, because of the graphics, I don't think we will be able to allow the player to choose his sex.

In the game package, I would like to include a National Exaggerator tabloid full of stories about UFO's, Elvis sightings, two-headed men, children possessed by demons, weight-loss tips, and horoscopes. In addition, we may be able to find some topics to make fun of.

The "rooms" in the game will be locales in and around Hollywood that afford good opportunities for lampooning the people and culture of Southern California.

Some interior locations under consideration are:

- Mall (Upper & lower levels)
- Massage parlor
- Tanning salon
- Punk club
- Hairdresser's
- Singles bar
- Health-food store
- Junk-food restaurant
- Hot tub palace
- Gym/health club (pool, sauna, locker rooms)
- Tattoo parlor
- Game Show studio
- Strip Joint
- Frederick's of Hollywood
- Cinemaplex Theatres (Maze opportunity)
- Sushi Bar
- Palm Reader's Place
- Astrologer's Place
- Fake Swami's Place
- Leather shop

Some exterior locations under consideration are:

- Valley (as in valley-girl)
- Muscle Beach
- Disneyland
- Club Med
- Rodeo Drive
- Hollywood and Vine
- Labrea Tar Pits
- Hollywood Hills
- Beverly Hills
- Hollywood Wax Museum
- Hollywood walk of fame
- Playboy Mansion

TO: Distribution

FROM: Christopher Erhardt

SUBJECT: Chainsaw.

During Friday's meeting there was general confusion over what "Chainsaw Warrior" is all about. Attached is my rough outline of the proposal. Please feel free to return comments to me
Thank You.

DISTRIBUTION

Steve M.

Dave L.

Stu G.

Tim A.

Dave A.

Mike D.

Joe Y.

Chainsaw Warrior (8/29/88)

HIGH CONCEPT

'Maniac Mansion' meets 'Neuromancer' with a cleaner user interface, faster animation, and lots of bit mapped monsters to graphically kill.

CAPSULE SYNOPSIS

Black comedy/satire of splatter movies with numerous graphic puzzles.
Play time estimate= 25- 40 hours.
Pacing= 80% real-time, 20% animation.

FINANCIAL PROJECTION

Game would initially come out on the three standard S.K.U.'s (C-64,Apple 2,IBM). Memory requirements are as follows (games to be released in this sequence):

C64-64k RAM, (3) commodore disks (utilizing both sides)
Ap.2-128k RAM, (3) 128k floppy disks (utilizing both sides)
IBM- 384k RAM, (3) 360k floppy disks(MCGA/VGA/EGA/TGA/CGA)

OUTSIDE DEVELOPMENT:

Initial development period is projected to be approx. 8 months to alpha test on C-64 S.K.U., 11 months for apple and I.B.M. respectively. 2-GS and Amiga S.K.U.'s would be projected at 5 months after request for alpha. Goal would be for Christmas-89 release to coordinate with Games Workshop re-release of boardgame (and tie- in to 'Dark Future' mythos).

Cost requirements are projected to be as follows:

IBM- Advances of \$50,000.00 at 12% royalty.

Ap2- Advances of \$35,000.00 at 12%.

C64-Advances of \$35,000.00 at 12%.

Amiga would be at above percentage and 25,000.00 advance.

INSIDE DEVELOPMENT:

Initial development period would be same as above (8 months) for C-64, but Apple 2 would be able to come out over same period. I.B.M. would be farmed outside if required. Inside development would be contingent on acquiring a full-time contract programmer (6500 series assembler) to design engine which would then be owned by Infocom.

Cost requirements are projected to be as follows:

C64 and Apple2-\$37,500.00 for engine,\$10,000 for graphics.
IBM-unknown in house: projected at approx.\$41,000 (@\$40.00/hr qume).

STORYBOARD OUTLINE

An action packed graphic adventure using leading edge in nuclear powered weapons of excessive violence to destroy the zombie invasion.

-Graphic Adventure

+Sierra On-Line perspective

+Joystick/arrow interface with Icon bar for goodies.

+**LOTS** of monster shapes (? on bitmap or vector)

*Storyline

-(Name:Yourself), a black sheep from within the military, (ala. 'Snake Plisken') is transformed into "Chainsaw Warrior"; basically because there was no one who would volunteer for this rather intense chemical procedure. You have 24 real-time hours to clear (city) of the dreaded zombie menace which has taken over (city). The procedure is causing you to decay at a rather quick pace and the only known remedy is to return you to dweeb status within 24 hours.

-Entire 24 hour period is being televised (ala. 'Running Man') , to the populus at large (within the "Dark Future" mythos) and your next of kin are getting substantial residuals from your participation, so 'Smile for the camera, sonny...'

-Out-Takes of interviews with cameraman:

"Well, Howard, thing's were pretty tough on the 5th level, but I'm confident about going into the 6th. This new nuke-chainsaw that 'ALLIANCE INDUSTRIES' (small plug there) puts out really mows through them little nasties like butter".

-Real time clock counts down the 24 hours till midnight (story takes place on Oct 30, 2032). At the end of this time you will be dead from radiation poisoning (thank your chain saw) even if you aren't mutated past the point of being human anymore.

Success is measured by wading through successive levels of zombies/mutant thingies to the Chaos factory at (city:center): and there manipulating the combination to cause a meltdown (a nihilistic happy ending, unless marketing convinces *otherwise*).

-Suggested feelies might range from ~~like~~ vacu-form chain saws to plastic body parts. A map is also recommended as a feelie (makes development of the inside of the building easier and allows tie in with board game). Project will require coordination with Games Workshop (to develop feelies in conjunction with the board game). Another idea is to include a cassette single of the 'Chainsaw Rap' as performed by some satanical heavy metal band.

-Game will be sound intensive, with plenty of cutting noises, monster noises, etc. Consideration will be given to disk storage. Disk space will be almost entirely bit maps and sound F/X: with about 35k being allocated to the engine itself. This also leans us strongly towards an ST Sku.

-Tribute to Tobe Hooper, John Carpenter (et. al.)

-Lots of puzzles to complement the excessive violence.

-GUARANTEED exploding body parts.

-Must determine difference between trick-or-treeters and zombies (notice date). Killing civilians is bad for ratings...

RISKS

-This is a adolescent game with no redeeming social value. It will be a shock for traditional Infocom-ers.

-Games Workshop line demographics for U.S. have still not been determined high enough to totally justify a tie-in product on name recognition alone.

-Short life cycle: product will not have the lifecycle of a R.P.G..

-Two lead Sku's (C-64 and Apple) might have short lifespans in 1989 within the U.S.

WEAPONS OUTLINE OVERVIEW:

- Randomly selected set of 4 of first part of attached list are given at beginning to player (chainsaw is always one piece).
- Teleport implant and Gieger counter are hidden in (City).
- Monsters never carry goodies. Various nasties can also pack weapons, however. (Question on search and seizure after killing).
- Weapons have limited charges/ammo to require inventory management.
- Weapons will not require tricky hand/eye coordination to utilize. This is going to be a very forgiving game for bad aim.

WEAPONS OUTLINE

Flash Bombs	
1st aid kit (limited doses).	Man-to-Man rockets
Grenades	Flamethrower
Immobilization Nets	Dynamite
Poison coated metal needles	Sub-Machine guns
Blaster	Steel Gloves
I/R goggles	Body Armour
Helmet	Sonic Amplifier
Lazer Lance	Rope and Launcher
Anti-RAD capsules	Full auto. rifle and L.A.W.

- Nuke powered pistol grip chainsaw (required by Sponsor).
- Electron scrambler (kills them, damages you).
- Radiation Suit (1/2 damage from RADS)
- Samurai implosion waistcoat(kills you and 1 square block around you)
- Remote cameras (tie into broadcast for a look ahead).
- Zombie detector (seperates trick-or-treeters).
- Heat Detector ("" "" "").
- Gieger counter (to find end).
- Acid (melt-ern.).
- Teleport implant (to escape end in one peace).

Christmas Infocomic plot synopsis -- 7/5/88 -- please comment to Elizabeth ASAP

A ZORKIAN CHRISTMAS

One day when the trees of Quendor were turning to red and gold, the Sailor returned from a long journey with news of a wonderful celebration in the Lands Beyond.

The celebration, which was called Christmas, came at the closing of the year. It was a time when people thought of others rather than themselves, honoring those around them with gifts and compassion. To this end, a fellow named Saint Nicholas brought presents for all on Christmas Night.

The people of Quendor thought this was a marvelous idea. They wanted to have Christmas, too. Soon the kingdom was aflurry with preparations for their Christmas celebration. Of course, they would have their own whimsical interpretation of it, but it would nonetheless have all the characteristics of the season that we wish to include (wine, women, song, snowmen...). Believing that it would be impossible to reach the real Saint Nicholas, they plan a contest to choose who will take the role on Christmas Night.

Here's where we start branching into different storylines. A certain elfin or dwarfish creature very much wants to be Saint Nick. He's a lovable chap in his late teens, and he's always looking through the Christmas books the Sailor brought back to find out what St. Nick should look and be like. We see that this lad is already a kindly type who looks out for others. Of course, as background, there are plenty of other entrants.

Then we also have the villain who could be any type of fantasy bad guy, from an evil magician to a Grinch. He sees his opportunity here to make some kind of potion that he'd distribute as a Christmas gift to everyone. Once they took it, they would be under his power! So he has an interest in winning this contest, too, or in somehow enchanting the presents to be distributed by the winner to attain the same malevolent ends.

Another character (a friend of the good guy or someone entirely unrelated who just thinks the good guy deserves a break) finds out about the evil plot. But s/he is powerless to do anything about it because the bad guy is too powerful or too well-protected. S/he goes off with our hero to find the one person they think can help them --the real Saint Nick.

They get the Sailor to take them to the Lands Beyond in

search of the mythic North Pole mentioned in the books.. They sail away through the strait at the end of the Great Sea and through various places where they have plenty of adventures. At last they reach the North Pole, and there they find Saint Nicholas. He's the classic Victorian St. Nick, rather than the modern day Santa Claus. But he's still there with his elves and his workshop, making toys.

By now it is Christmas Eve. They've gotten there just in time! If we followed the Quendor storylines rather than going to the North Pole, we'd have seen winter come to Quendor, with charming snow-covered huts and holiday celebrations. From the bad guy's viewpoint, we'd see that he diabolically wins the contest and is plotting his horrible conquest.

Now that St. Nick has found out about Quendor, the names of all its citizens have been magically entered on his list. Looking up our villain, he finds that the fiend has won the contest (because the list knows whether something is naughty or nice, this is recorded as a bad deed).

They've got to act fast! St. Nick has a plan. He'll go to Quendor and visit everyone, hot on the tail of the bad guy, replacing all the bad things with good. Or he'll magically change all the bad things to good. But whichever he does, because he knows nothing about Quendor, he often misses the mark with his choice of gifts, wrapping up a new table lamp for the grue family, etc. etc.

Meanwhile, in Quendor, everyone is peacefully sleeping. We could have a Mary Lou Who type who sees the bad guy and thinks he's St. Nick. She plays with the toy/takes the potion and falls under his spell. She would then have to be saved. (Maybe this could happen to a couple of kids, who end up in his lair.)

While the bad guy is fulfilling his evil destiny, the sleigh with St. Nick, the good guys, and the Sailor is whizzing to the rescue. They are pulling the Sailor's vessel behind the sleigh and will gently set it down in the Great Sea before going on to rescue the kingdom.

After saving everyone from their terrible fate by switching the presents and rescuing the kids, St. Nick (with the help of our hero, of course) manages to defeat the bad guy in some classic Christmas way (like Scrooge or the Grinch, he realizes the true meaning of Christmas). As for our little hero, he goes back with Nick to the North Pole to be his assistant, working with the other elves.

At the end, it's Christmas morning. Snow is falling, bells are ringing, etc. Quendor awakens to its festivities, little knowing what went on during the night. The only one who knows is

the best friend of the hero, who witnessed what happened and who not too long ago waved goodbye to the sleigh as it went off to spread Christmas joy to other parts of the world.

[OZ.TXT]

June 17, 1988

Joel Berez
President
Infocom, Inc.
125 Cambridge Park Drive
Cambridge, MA 02140

Dear Joel:

Enclosed is the proposed outline of our third game. The game currently has no title, but it is to be a parody of the movie "The Wizard of Oz." The goal is to produce a hilarious and wacky, off-the-wall comedy.

The underpinnings of the game rely on the same principle as the other games in the "Immortal Legends" series. It deals with a character who is already firmly established in the popular mind, who comes complete with an already-identified supporting cast, and whose actions take place in an evocative environment.

The subject matter is delicate in that the treatment must be wacky enough to be genuinely enjoyable, but not so satirical or biting that it creates a negative reaction. I think that your people have good radar in this area, and that our relationship with them is close enough to keep the game on the right track.

I look forward to hearing your reactions as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Bates
President

cc: Jon Palace
Mike Dornbrook
Stu Galley

Program Description - Program III

OZ

Plot Notes

The game opens with the player, Dorothy, on her farm in Kansas. Dorothy's daily routine is dull, tedious and degrading. Every five moves or so, the game hauls her away from whatever she is doing to muck out the horse stall, shovel the droppings out of the goat pen, scrub the floor of the chicken coop, or clean out the privy.

Needless to say, Dorothy is eager to get away from all this. So eager, in fact, that for the rest of the game, a "jigs-up" results not in death, but a fate worse than death - a return to her odiferous duties at the farm.

Dorothy leaves the farm and comes across Professor Marvel. He offers her various snake-oil products, and one in particular catches her eye. He sees this and touts it to her, saying, "What do you do when you've got to go to school but there's a test you haven't studied for? It's no use hoping for a snow storm. Why, what you need is 'Tornado-in-a-Bottle.' Just open up this little fella and you'll have a Texas twister faster than you can say atmospheric disturbance. But when you open the bottle, be careful where you stand. I guarantee that as soon as you release it, that tornado will head right for the nearest mobile home park."

Dorothy buys the bottle, Toto bites Marvel on the ankle, and the enraged professor chases them back to her house where she opens the bottle. The ensuing tornado whisks her and Toto off to Oz. Dorothy has to steer the house as it falls so that it lands on the Wicked Witch of the East. But the Oz they land in is different from the one we are used to. It is more like Southern California - sort of Oz-gone-commercial. You can buy Oz-burgers and Oz-dogs at fast-food stands; bumper stickers say "I (heart) Oz" and "Honk if you like Glinda." The Munchkins talk in Valley-girl-speak, fer sure.

Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, floats in on a bubble and says, "Now that you have killed the Wicked Witch of the East, the only evil person left in Oz is the Wicked Witch of the West. Of course, there is the Fairly Bad Witch of the North-by-northwest, but she's getting old and doesn't amount to much."

Glinda keeps the ruby slippers for herself, giving Dorothy instead the striped socks that the dead witch was wearing. "Don't take them off," Glinda says. "The longer you wear them, the more powerful they will become."

Then Glinda says that although Dorothy has done everyone a good service by dropping a house on the wicked witch, still, she did break the law in doing so. She's guilty not only of witch-slaughter, but of flying without a pilot's license, littering, and re-locating a residential structure without filing an environmental impact study.

Glinda thinks about a punishment for Dorothy. She considers making her play a year in the Munchkin NBA, or locking her in a small room with an Oz-way distributor. But she finally decides that only the Wizard of Oz can choose the appropriate punishment, so she selects a "trial date" and says that Dorothy must appear before Oz by then. If Dorothy fails to get to the Emerald City by the appointed time, she gets sent back to Kansas.

Once Glinda has pronounced sentence she says, "I'm sorry, I have to go now. The next bubble is coming, and if I miss it there won't be another one along for 2 hours. Service has gotten so poor since the budget cuts." She floats out of sight.

When Dorothy starts off down the yellow brick road, she quickly comes to a crossroads. The direction she chooses determines which of her companions she will meet first. (This should help reduce some of the linearity of the game)

Each of the people she comes to decides to join her in her journey. Each of them wants something from the wizard. The possibilities for the scarecrow include:

1) He's tired of being unable to do his job because he has no brains, and so what he wants is a new job that doesn't require brains - such as politician, clerk at the department of motor vehicles, or senior executive at a large corporation.

2) He's afraid the farmers will get mad at him for not being able to scare away the crows, and so what he wants is liability insurance (which, being a con man, Oz will be only too happy to sell him).

When Dorothy finds the tin man, she also has to find the oil can and oil him down. Once she does this she discovers that either:

1) He thinks of himself as a walking lightning rod, and what he really wants are rubber galoshes for insulation.

2) He wants to be Ziebarted (rust-proofed).

The lion could

1) Be an effeminate character whose burning desire in life is to get a species-change operation. "Inside me there is a gentle lamb just waiting to get out. A few hours on the table, and a couple weeks in the Bahamas, and I'll be a new creature."

2) Be a hypochondriac who is afraid that eating raw meat every day is too unhealthy. What he wants from the wizard is either a barbecue grill, 10 hours of psycho-analysis to get over his fears, or a good diet program.

The four of them (five, counting Toto) start off for Oz. Along the way, they have to survive the poppy field, deal with the flying monkeys, gain entrance to the castle of the Wicked Witch of the West, and kill her.

Once they have killed the witch, they gain entrance to Emerald City and have their audience with Oz. They discover the wizard is a fraud. The wizard gives each of Dorothy's companions some totally useless object that he claims will solve each of their problems. He then sneaks off without helping Dorothy at all. Glinda floats in on the 7:28 bubble and says that Dorothy could have used her socks all along to get what she wanted. (How, I'm not yet sure, because I'm not yet sure what will represent success for Dorothy.) Dorothy follows Glinda's instructions and wins the game.

Alternative Possibilities

The following are a couple of even more off-the-wall ideas, which may be worth incorporating into the above story, or developing on their own.

LEATHER GODDESS OF OZ

Essentially the same story as above, but with more suggestive language, racier insinuations, and a sub-stratum of sex running throughout. We could substitute a whip for the striped socks and dress Dorothy in leather.

ASSAULT ON OZ

Dorothy arrives in Oz and learns either that

- 1) The wicked witch is holding the wizard captive or,
- 2) The wizard is a drug kingpin (he controls the poppy fields) who is a tyrannical despot and who has enslaved the inhabitants of Emerald City.

In either case, Dorothy assembles her swat team. The tin man is a hopeless-romantic ex-mercenary, like Rick in Casablanca. He handles infiltration and reconnaissance. The scarecrow is a Marxist radical intellectual who is also an expert in communications. The lion is a wild-eyed extremist who specializes in explosives & demolitions.

In the course of this action-packed adventure game, they collect the various items they need to assault the fortress, including plastic explosives, blasting caps, a grappling hook, gun, radio, etc.

The game culminates with the storming of the fortress and either the release of the wizard, (scenario 1) or his downfall (scenario 2).

MOVIE WITHIN A GAME

The game would as described in the main proposal. But at some point soon after Dorothy gets to Oz, the player learns that the people in the game - including Dorothy - have a dual reality. They are not only characters within the story, but also actors playing those characters.

This could be used sparingly - just a few scattered complaints about how hot the make-up is under the lights, for example - or we could make the whole game a dual-level experience, with separate puzzles for each level and a final victory that cannot be achieved unless all the puzzles in both levels have been completed.

This approach has some very practical uses.

- 1) Default winner handlers:

Wicked Witch of the West: "Forget it, kid. I just get paid to laugh maniacally and give you a hard time."

Auntie Em and Uncle Henry: "I'm sorry, honey. We do love you, but they made us such bland, boring characters that we can't do anything but say we love you."

- 2) Responding to reasonable inputs that the author doesn't want to handle:

The Director yells, "Cut! Dorry...Baby. We can't have you doing that, OK honey? I know the script calls for you to improvise, but L.B. would go nuts over the figures if we tried to include everything in the budget. So be a doll, OK? Stick to what's reasonable."

- 3) Limiting the amount of "game damage" that can be done with certain objects. If a player acquires a certain object in the game and decides to return to a previous location to try to use it, then the Director can yell,

"Cut! Look, honey. We've already struck that set. I know no one told you, but we're trying to save a few bucks, OK? Look at it this way: on the one hand, you can't go back. But on the other hand, you don't need to. So whaddya say. Let's go with the flow. Roll 'em!"

- 4) The Director can also be used as the hint giver.

"Well, kid. We really want you to improvise. But we are over budget and behind schedule, so I guess it wouldn't hurt to give you a little push in the right direction."

If we pursue this option, the Director would inform Dorothy at the beginning that he wants her to improvise the script as she goes along. We need to have him encourage improvisation so that the player doesn't get the sense that there is only one way to do things.

If the two-level game is rejected as too complicated, it still might be interesting at the end of a one-level game to have a Director yell, "Cut! That's a wrap. Good job, people. The movie will hit the theaters in six months."

New Project
6 November 1987

Basic Assumptions

1. True to corporate philosophy, the design should embody the concept of "interactive storytelling."
2. The design should employ a simple, intuitive user interface unlike the one used in our traditional IF games.
3. The design is intended for use on existing home computers. However, it should be readily adaptable to other interactive media, such as CD-I, DVI, Nintendo, etc. Relevant criteria include:
 - Compatibility with a point-and-click input device.
 - Significant use of graphics and/or sound.
 - Minimal (or optional) use of text.

Space Role-Playing Game

Genre

SRPG is a hybrid of many genres of gaming. It combines the exploration, role-playing and resource management aspects of Wizardry and Ultima with the replay value of Rogue, all controlled by a real-time, graphics-oriented interface that resembles a flight simulator.

Scenario

The story begins in the 22nd century. Civilization has spread throughout our solar system. The nearby stars are being explored; the conquest of the galaxy is at hand.

Only one obstacle stands between Man and the universe: the light barrier. Despite great advances in propulsion technology, no method has been found to move objects or information faster than the speed of light. Unless this limit is somehow transcended, Man's advance into deep space will be discouragingly slow and expensive.

You play the role of a lone space explorer, en route to the colonial outpost on Centauri III. An unspecified catastrophe sends your scoutship careening off course at .99c. You manage to regain control, but too late: relativity has flung you far into Earth's future. Your home and family are long gone, replaced by a hostile society that will blow you out of the sky if you attempt a landing.

You have no weapons, limited resources, and no friends except your cranky onboard computer. But the limitless reaches of deep space lie before you. Any one of those billions of stars may possess the secret of translight speed, the only technology that can send you home. So you aim your scoutship at a promising star, grit your teeth and fling yourself into the unknown.

Objective

The object of the story is to discover the secret of translight speed and use it to return to Earth. To achieve this, the player must scour the galaxy,

exploring new solar systems, encountering alien civilizations and acquiring strange artifacts and technology.

Interaction

The player interacts with the story by manipulating control icons (sliders, buttons, etc.), using a point-and-click input device. Little or no typing will be required. Control icons will be intuitive enough not to require labels. Part of the fun will be exploring the effects of each control; the program will prevent novices from doing something dumb or deadly.

All spacecraft controls are monitored by an onboard computer. Like 2001 and Starcross, this computer is endowed with artificial intelligence, and interacts with the player by "talking." As the player adds features to his spacecraft, the computer's features and personality will change.

Capable machines (such as Macintosh, Amiga, Atari ST and Apple //gs) could use digitized speech to represent the computer's voice. Lesser machines (IBM, C128) could use a text window.

Randomness

Like Rogue (and parts of Beyond Zork), the layout and contents of each solar system will be randomly generated, according to current theories of stellar formation. No two systems would be exactly the same; planets, moons, artifacts and life forms will appear in unpredictable (but statistically "correct") ways. In effect, each visit to a solar system becomes a new "episode" in the player's ongoing adventure.

It may be possible to extend the randomness to an even lower level, such that the story could synthesize new types of objects with unexpected appearances and attributes.

William Proxmire
HWD

Kerry	SR 362	Russellson	O.B.
Kennedy	SR 113	Russell	O.B.
	DC		20510

access → 9/8

John Stennis
appropriations comm.
SR 205

Notes toward a game: ALL MY SINS REMEMBERED

You are Otto McGavin, a "prime operator" for the Terran Bureau of Investigation and Interference. A spy whose powers of disguise are almost supernatural: with futuristic plastic surgery and "personality overlay," you actually become whoever you are impersonating.

Deep background (not all to be used explicitly)

The TBII is an arm of the Confederacion, a rather strong central governing body responsible for the fortunes of 148 human-inhabited worlds. Only a very few higher-ups are aware of the TBII's existence -- most people who have heard of it dismiss it as a transparent myth.

The most powerful governing principle of the Confederacion is that under no circumstances will war between member planets be tolerated. (Wars limited to one planet are none of their concern.) It was to prevent or divert war that the TBII was created, though after a while its concerns became more general -- that is, protecting the interests of the Confederacion whenever those interests conflicted with mere ~~pla~~ national or planetary ones.

McGavin is one of twelve prime operators, spies whose track record is good enough to justify the tremendous expense of personality overlay. They are very valuable but also disposable; it's not a profession from which many people peacefully retire.

McGavin himself has almost ceased to exist as an individual. Brought up as a peaceful Anglo-Buddhist, he signed up for service in a sort of "State Department" bureau of the Confederacion, and was pre-empted by the TBII, who put him through an intense, ~~intense~~ irresistible depatterning program -- turning him finally into a remorseless killer whose only allegiance is ^{to} the TBII. When he is on an assignment, his personality is about 90% that of the ~~person~~ man he's impersonating and 10% McGavin -- [though in times of extreme stress the percentages are reversed, and the superspy/expert killer comes to the fore.] (In the book, there is always a residue of the "real" McGavin, an existentially tortured pacifist.)

maybe
not...

The game takes the form of a quest-mission. (Perhaps additional disks could be ordered for new missions.) Included with the game are fairly extensive dossiers of six people: McGavin's potential disguises. There might also be a terse manual -- BURN AFTER READING -- that describes the personality overlay process and its ^{own} limitations. (This belongs on the previous page ... the PO slowly decays in effectiveness, so McGavin has a limited time period in which to complete his mission. After X hours he has to start "acting" consciously, which might not be too effective.)

The six people are higher-ups in the military and the almost medieval court of Selva, a jungle planet ruled by constantly bickering monarchs and oligarchies.

Selva has a moon, Selene, that is large enough to hold an atmosphere and support life, and the people who live there, Selenites, are fabulously wealthy. It's the only place in the Confederacion where the plant ~~ix~~ lengavia grows -- a plant whose sap can be processed to make a drug that nearly doubles ^{the} human life span. The moon hanging hugely in the sky has always been a bitter mockery of the Selvans' relative poverty.

Now, incredibly, they plan to do something about it. Rumor has reached the Confederacion that Clan Juarez, the most powerful family on the planet, is putting together a primitive missile fleet, with atomic weapons, to attack Selene and blackmail it.

Interplanetary warfare is absolutely forbidden, but the Selvans could argue that the Selva/Selene system is actually one entity, and there would be historical precedent. Nuclear weapons are tightly controlled, though, and can only be used -- indeed, can only be manufactured -- with the express approval of the Confederacion.

Clan Juarez has formally denied that they plan anything so dastardly. It's Otto's job to infiltrate the castle and find the hidden labs where the bombs are being manufactured.

Castile Juarez is actually a huge walled city, as are all of the human habitations on the planet. The Selvan jungle is full of weird and hungry monsters. (It's reasonably safe during the daytime, but even a heavily armed human would be unlikely to survive the night.) Its labyrinths hold a curious mixture of the primitive and the futuristic. People there fight with swords -- there's a code duello honor system -- but some people have access to lasers, ^unetanglers, stunners, and so forth.

(One particularly interesting weapon, that of course will be used on Otto, is the synesthesia dart. It injects a small quantity of a drug that temporarily mixes up neural patterns -- you see smells, hear sights, feel; sounds. For several minutes you're a hallucinating basket case.)

Otto chooses which of the six he will impersonate; TBII agents will then kidnap and sequester the real person, or kill him if necessary. His choices:

MAYOR TUEME-- a major in Juarez's secret service, he is the only person in the power structure who will knowingly cooperate with the TBII. A double agent, it might be to McGavin's advantage to leave him in place as a potential ally.

PARACELCUS-- the court astrologer. He is probably the closest person to Juarez himself, who can be safely abducted and replaced. But he's a very old man, crippled with arthritis, which could put a cramp in McGavin's style.

SEÑOR CONGERO-- a senior scientist, probably involved in the manufacture of the bombs. If Otto takes over his persona, he might be able to walk right into the lab and sabotage the effort. But Congero is closely guarded, and probably has strong hypnotic injunctions against spilling the beans.

DON DURANGO-- a playboy prince, lover or ex-lover of the queen. He has free run of Castile Juarez, and is not taken seriously by anybody -- except perhaps Juarez, who might like to see his head on a pike.

DON CORTEZ-- fastest sword in the Castile. A cruel man who enjoys setting up duels to keep in practice, he has dispatched more than thirty men in his bloody career. Juarez tolerates this excess because Cortez is an expert tactician and fearless officer.

QUASIMODO-- the court jester, a clever ~~stuntman~~ hunchback. He can go anywhere without arousing suspicion, but if push came to shove his physical liabilities could prove fatal to McGavin.

The computer records these people's personalities as a matrix of fractions that correspond to physical strength, intellectual ability, courage, fighting experience, whatever. The player doesn't see these fractions, but has to deduce the chance of each persona's success from the dossier. (Each important character encountered in the quest also has a personality matrix associated with his characterization; conflicts will be resolved by a consideration of the appropriate factors modified by random number generation.)

SOME IDEAS FOR OTHER TYPES OF COMPUTER GAMES

1.0 OTHER GENRES (tm) OF ADVENTURE GAMES

- * westerns
- * spy/espionage
- * x-rated
- * comedy
- * horror
- * historical (such as Stu.s idea about Paul Revere)
- * classical (imagine adventure games based on Beowulf or The Wizard of Oz)

2.0 TWO-PLAYER OR MULTI-PLAYER ADVENTURE GAMES

In all our games, only one character (the adventurer) is controlled by external input. Imagine a scenario in which more than one character is controlled by external input, either by the same player, or by several players sharing the same keyboard. The "winner" could switch between the various characters in a rotating basis. The characters could fight, co-operate, ignore each other, do things to keep the other from solving a problem first, etc.

3.0 ADVENTURES WITH GRAPHICS

- * Hi-res
- * Animated

4.0 ARCADE GAMES

5.0 ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

- * Fantasy
- * Real-life

6.0 STRATEGIC GAMES

Strategic/warfare games, from chess/Feudal/go to Diplomacy/Risk to any of a zillion hexagon games are pretty popular. Many involve tedious and complex calculations of probabilities, relative strengths, etc. They would seem like ideal computer game applications, and could utilize simple graphics of maps, terrain, etc.

7.0 SPORTS SIMULATIONS

There are a number of games that allow players to simulate baseball games or other sports, in effect "managing" the teams. The best of these games are very complicated and statistically-oriented. Computerizing this sort of game would allow for a greater level of complexity and detail but remove the manual statistical manipulation.

8.0 INTER-ACTIVE VIDEO

9.0 EDUCATIONALLY-ORIENTED GAMES

10.0 MAKE-YOU-OWN-ADVENTURE ADVENTURE

A number of people have suggested things like this in letters, phone calls, or in person at the Applefest. Imagine a system where people could create their own little universe by writing their own room descriptions, objects, geography, simple characters and simple problems. They would have the joy of creation, and friends could challenge each other with the games they have designed.

SCENARIO FOR A "HAUNTED HOUSE" ADVENTURE GAME

It was a dark and stormy night (of course). You are on a bus trip from Toledo to Hartford. There are perhaps six people on the bus besides the driver. On a secluded country road, an axle breaks, and the bus crashes off the road and into a deep gully. The bus begins to slowly sink, but you and the others are able to get safely out.

The driver leads the small party of soggy passengers to a building lying a few hundred yards from the road. As you get closer, flashes of lightning reveal a large and ancient house, run down and presumably deserted. One of the people, a middle-aged professorial-type man, is becoming agitated. When you reach the steps of the house, he asks the driver if they are near Scarbridge, and the driver says that they passed through Scarbridge about six miles ago. The middle-aged man becomes panicky, starts to run away from the house, slips on the wet ground, and knocks himself out.

You, the driver, and a few of the others carry the unconscious man into the house, placing him on a musty couch in the parlor. The front door creaks shut behind you. The house is indeed deserted, the floors thick with dust and the rooms filled with cobwebs. Amazingly, the electricity is still on, although some lights are out and others flicker ominously. Everyone introduces themselves: the bus driver, Barney; Lola Hart, a haughty woman of about thirty; Maxwell Franklin, a nervous traveling salesman; and finally, Fred and Lisa Bellweather, a newlywed couple on their way to their honeymoon at Niagra Falls. That leaves only you and the unconscious man.

Leaving the Bellweathers to look after the injured man, you and the others begin to explore the house. It has many large rooms, all very run down. The floors creak, and the hallways take many sudden twists and turns. Somehow, Barney gets separated from the rest of you.

The living room contains several fading paintings, depicting a family of military men. Under each painting is a notation telling the year of birth and death of the person depicted in the painting ... (1842-1896) ... (1871-1932) ... (1892-) ...The last painting alone has no date of death, the portrait of Colonel William Morbane.

In the library, among the crumbling books, you find the diary of Colonel Morbane. You put it aside to read when you get the chance.

You, Lola, and Maxwell arrive back at the parlor, but Barney has not shown up. However, the injured man has revived, introducing himself as Professor Roland Wilson. He explains his earlier panic: He hobby is research into the supernatural. This house, the homestead of the Morbane family, is one of the most famous haunted locations in the world. A party of eight supernatural phenomenae researchers once came here to spend the weekend, and none of them were ever seen again...

Suddenly, there is a scream in the distance. It is the voice of Barney, the driver...

HAUNTED HOUSE: A spooky INTERLOGIC adventure game

The house turns out to be built on the foundations of a ruined castle and fortress. It is full of secret passageways, trap doors, dumbwaiters, spiral staircases, dark closets, secluded towers, a widow's walk, a torture chamber, and more. Ghosts and apparitions lie around every corner. Objects levitate without warning. Strange lights and sounds appear from nowhere. Skeletons, decaying bodies, disgusting bugs, and other gore abound.

Many deadly fates await unwary members of the party, including you if you're not careful. One by one, with increasing frequency as the night wears on, the other members of the party vanish in all sorts of horrible ways. Your task: figure out the legends and secrets of the Morbane mansion, and put the tortured spirits that dwell there to rest --- and do it before morning, or you could become one of those tortured spirits yourself.

SEM

Is there still interest in Steve's "viable idea"? Would you be interested in writing a short story — of any genre, of any tone — that starts in a given room, with some given objects? Do any of the attached "beginnings" appeal to you and/or get you thinking? Let's discuss this Friday morning.

Elevator

You're standing in a small, dark elevator. Both the elevator door, leading south, and a recessed panel in the ceiling are shut. Above a small voice box in the wall is a red button marked "Emergency."

Garage

You're in a one-car garage, though there's no car here now. An oil stain is in the middle of the floor. A birdbath and a rake are in a corner. The garage door to the south is closed.

Hammock

You're lying in a hammock. You can't see much, since your panama hat is pulled down over your eyes; but you can feel a tall cold glass in your hand.

West of House

You are standing in an open field west of a black house, with an inviting front door. There is a mailbox here.

The game plan for

Frat House

Hollywood Dave Anderson

Concept

Frat House is a text adventure game in which the player assumes the role of a college freshman pledging a campus fraternity.

Game structure

The game will be structured in chapters as in a book. Each chapter will be one night of Hell Week. The game opens on the first night of Hell Week. You are in the main room of the frat house where all the frat members and pledges are assembled. In a ceremony with much pomp, circumstance and beer, the pledge master will offer each pledge one of seven envelopes especially for that pledge, one for each night of the week. The pledge master will also pin seven "badges" (ribbons) on you.

Next he will lecture on the theory and practice of pledging. Here he will mention that too much drinking can have an adverse affect on your tasks. He also outlines the spirit of the tasks you will be performing. He explains the tasks will: 1) Be humorous -- to someone. 2) Be unique, with an unusual twist. 3) Never injure persons or property (permanently). 4) Further the goals of brotherhood. He also reminds you of how the reputation of the frat rests on the shoulders of the pledges.

Then he tells you about the "Barf Badge." Anyone who throws-up during Hell Week gets a barf badge, an additional badge. (The plot thickens: For the sake of drama and through no fault of your own you will end up throwing-up and getting a barf badge. This will put extra pressure on you. On the last night you will have two tasks to perform instead of just one.)

The player may select any one of the seven envelopes. This will allow the player to proceed in any one of seven directions. Each envelope contains instructions for a specific task to be performed by the pledge. The task must be completed in one night. Upon completing the task, the pledge returns to the frat house where each night a party is in progress. When all the pledges have returned from their tasks the pledge master will assemble the pledges.

If you have successfully completed your task he will congratulate you and remove one of your seven badges while the rest of the frat showers you in beer. If you arrive late or return without finishing your task, you will be kicked out of the frat and have all your body hair shaved off and glued to the side of the frat house (The Wall of Shame) along with your name printed above it.

Task definition

Tasks will consist of several puzzles which must be solved in order to successfully complete the task. Using the car-in-the-dorm-room task as an example you would do something like: Get inside a locked dorm room, locate small auto, move it into the room (without it going through the wall or without starting the car), find the keys and start the car then escape.

Some typical tasks

- Move a car into a dorm room.
- Sabotage intra-fraternity sports final.
- Steal the mascot of your rival school. Some large animal you must take from their campus before the big game.
- Take a picture of the Tees in their temple. (The Tees are a jock fraternity who are taking it one step further. When they assemble for official frat business (in their basement party room known as "The Temple") they wear dresses.)
- Steal the "composite" (A collection of pictures of all the frat members) from the engineering frat house known as "The Fortress." Lots of sophisticated gadgets guard their house a la senior ditch day at Cal Tech.

Your frat

Your once proud frat has fallen on hard times. Once upon a time it was THE frat. Best parties and best pranks. But in the last few years the preppie frat with all the bucks has stolen your frat's thunder. If your frat doesn't regain its proper place in campus society soon, its membership will dry up and the frat will blow away.

So this year the pledge master is determined to pull off the best, most unique pranks in order to show that your frat is on the mend.

Feelies possibilities

- Task envelope. Do one task envelope in lemon juice. This would also be for anti-piracy.

- School newspaper with feature on pledging. Would give school background and traditions. Could be the "Welcome Freshmen" edition.
- Colorforms. Plastic cut-outs you would put on the screen when instructed to do so in the game. Cut-outs might include a beer mug or Hawaiian shirt. College necessities. Has nothing to do with game, just fun.
- Barf Badge. A copy of one of your fraternity's barf badges.
- History of Frat. A book that each pledge must memorize. Pledges must be prepared to answer any question about the book asked of them by any member of his frat at anytime. Possible anti-piracy device.

MINUTE MYSTERIES / MENU OF SHORT STORIES

Set aboard Orient Express

4 different "times" 1914
1974
1984
2014

Much of the same geography, but
some difference from story to story

- * "Hitchcock"
- * "You are guilty (amnesia)"
- * And then there were none
- * fall in love and "turn in" lover
- * dead man not really dead

MYSTERY SCENARIO

4 "short stories"

1910 - 1943 - 1985 - 2006

All set on the same cruise ship

THE BOAT

Top Deck - small, two rooms, roof of enclosed section of Boat Deck

~~Boat Deck~~
Boat Deck - lifeboats, central area enclosed

Promenade Deck - open but completely roofed, some cabins

Lower Deck - mostly cabins

Lowest Deck - "

Casino - Boat Deck

Purser's Office

Dining Room - Promenade

Shop(s)

Kitchen - Promenade Galley?

Bank

Bridges - Boat Deck

one? { Ballroom - Boat Deck

{ Bar - Boat Deck

Lounge - Promenade

Pool - Boat Deck? Lower Deck?

Gym - Lower Deck?

Theatre/Chapel

Engine Room

Store Room(s)

Seth
Myles
Jed

Sergio
Daniel
Miguel
Jarvis

1985

A group of writers go on a boat trip to research... a tall shambling one, a high-strung chain-smoking one, etc.

A murder is to be staged as an entertainment/puzzle/plot test. Something goes wrong as the mock corpse becomes a real corpse.

You get a detective brought along as an advisor.

~~The~~ deceased was the group's editor.

Every one of the writers has a motive; though some are more obvious.

A number of false deaths (choking @ dinner; falling down steps, etc). leading to discovery of the body. Writers begin examining the scene & suddenly realize the body is really dead.

Shortly thereafter the store room where the body was found is torched. Later, the burned corpse vanishes (as does a lifeboat anchor).

To: Joe Ybarra
From: Marc Blank
Date: April 10, 1989
Re: Thoughts on a New Product

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I see this game as a variant of traditional FRP games in which the predominant activity is combat on the battlefield level, as opposed to the hand-to-hand level. The player controls the movements and activities of a number of combat units (battalion to division strength, in general.) The strategy that the player uses in each battle, in addition to the strength of his forces, determines its outcome.

The game is won when the enemy is utterly defeated at a final, ultimate battle, which will be a sort of endgame, with numerous fronts and a tremendous amount of activity. Naturally, the endgame can only be reached if the player has succeeded in the body of the game.

The goal is to merge what I believe to be the best elements of Journey (simple, yet powerful interface, narrative flow, and story context) with the strategic elements of FRP games (combat, management of resources).

Interface

A single player-character variant of Journey's dynamic menu system. The goal, as with Journey, is to make a complex game simple to use and learn, and to use the dynamics of the menus to help provide a narrative force to the unfolding of the war.

Geography/Setting

Your land, Kelnor, is a loose confederation of city-states which share a common language and many traditions. However, each of these [8-12?] has a distinct personality, which is reflected in its attitudes, especially toward its neighbors.

In the years prior to the start of the war, the bad guys [whoever they are] have been gathering near the borders of the Kelnorian city-states and skirmishes have become commonplace. The enemy has made some minor gains, and not only in battle, as many of his neighboring city-states have preferred appeasement to armed conflict. As the WAR opens, the diplomatic approach is at the brink of absolute failure.

Activities

At each city-state, there will be a variety of activities, in addition to either some number of battles [0-2] which will be fought by the people of that city-state. These activities will all be related to the prosecution of the war effort, and will include: raising an army (or gaining additional forces,) gaining information (whether from spies, locals, or whatever,) obtaining money and armaments, convincing/coercing the local authorities to take proper actions, etc, etc... The activities are quite puzzle-oriented.

In addition, it will be possible to reposition forces, transfer them between city-states (within political constraints, of course - nobody will allow you to transfer his defensive forces to a faraway place without damned good reasons...), etc.

The "feel" of the non-battle activities will be similar to that of Journey - exploration, decision-making, etc. told in narrative form, and illustrated with appropriate graphics.

Battles

There will be somewhere in the range of 20 battles, coming in two general classes: offensive and defensive. Each battle has a variety of types of results, from the very good to the very, very bad. Many battles simply cannot be won, and the crucial decision will be those related to an orderly withdrawal of forces. Taking the analogy of duplicate bridge, it is possible to do exceedingly well when dealt a horrible hand; likewise, it is possible to fail utterly with an excellent hand - it's all in the playing of the cards.

Battle takes place in rounds, much as in other FRP games. The player can command each of his units from among the options available to that unit. As in Journey, only "reasonable" options will be allowed; this narrowing of options will allow for richer descriptions of battle results and a better story "flow". Among the various battle options for units would be: Attack [direction], Defend, Move [somewhere], Transfer Forces [somewhere], Feint [direction], Flank [direction], Scout [strength of scouting party], Withdraw [direction], Surrender, Engage, Status, etc....

Unlike traditional battlefield games, the choices for each unit are relatively few in number and straightforward in meaning. The goal is that the player concentrate on the strategy of fighting each battle, rather than on the lower-level details. Therefore, one need not be a fanatical strategy gamer to get what I believe to be the major gratification of those games: formulating a strategy and watching its execution (for good or ill.)

The opponent in each battle will have his own strategy, which it will be possible to deduce and, perhaps, utilize to the player's advantage. This, in sharp contrast to the zero-dimensional NPC opponents in FRP games.

Difficulty/Play Time

Most of the time in the game will be spent fighting battles, each of which I would estimate at 1-2 hours of play time to master. In addition, I expect the endgame battle to take 4-5 hours to "solve." Total play time, in this case, would be 30-40 hours. It would certainly be possible to "tweak" this either up or down.

Screen Layout

As with Journey, I envision the bottom portion of the screen used for command input. I expect that the graphic window will be larger (say, 60% of the screen in width as opposed to about 35% in Journey) and will contain illustrations, battle maps, etc. as appropriate in the story. A text window, on the right, will provide the narrative. Depending on the context, the relative size of graphics and text windows will change dynamically (e.g. during the giving of battle commands the entire width of the screen will be a graphical display of the battlefield.)

One nifty feature of battle graphics will be the ability to generate an "animated" version of the battle maps (e.g. dissolving between situation maps), so that the player can "replay" the battle, step by step, watching the flow of events. I believe this to be unique and potentially fascinating. I also expect to use illustrations during battles as "specials."

Technology Issues

I believe that the product can be implemented with rather minor changes to the graphical operations of the ZIP system (perhaps 2-3 new opcodes.) Therefore, I do not foresee any major obstacle to the schedule that we discussed in Boston (code release in July, 1990 for Mac/IBM.) Some sound effects would be desirable; however, I do not at the moment foresee the necessity for any significant changes to the ZIP system in this arena.

Next Steps

I have been loath to set any of this in stone (i.e. begin implementation) until we can agree that the concept is worthy of further consideration. Clearly, the direction and emphasis of the product's execution are open for discussion, and I would hope to get some high-quality input from you, Joe, and your associates.

Once the concept is set, I will begin construction of a prototype of 1-2 of the city-states (with battles and associated puzzles.) From there, we should be able to run with the product.

- Marc

"Timesync" , copyright 1988, Infocom

Treatment - 12/88

It is sometime in the mid-70's. The Greybacks: the most deadly and vicious race in the known galaxy (or any other galaxy for that matter), have poisoned our atmosphere in order to exterminate the population and turn Earth into a prison planet of their own. If an antidote to the poison isn't found soon, Earth is doomed.

As one of the planet's leading biochemists, and all around happening kind of person, the leaders of the world turn to you to undertake the dangerous mission of traveling into space to find the antidote. Your only tool -- your wits and an experimental ship not quite yet out of the testing phase. The danger to Earth is so great, however, that you are asked to risk this ship anyway in order to make use of it's radical design concept and state-of-the-art technology. You blast off immediately.

As you leave the planet you know nothing of where you will travel, who you will meet or even how to operate your strange new ship, which for some reason resembles a 1972 AMC Gremlin (abysmal cars' but make a fairly passable space ship design). You randomly begin pressing buttons on your dashboard -- what will they do? Thus begins your journey into the unknown galaxy in a mad race against time.

Along the way you will encounter strange, alien races like the Spudlians, addicted to 70's Earth Sitcoms; the Larrys, slug-like salesman wearing Polyester sports jackets; the Deltoids, muscle bound idiots only interested in their own reflection; and the dreaded Wabbitechs, nasty rabbit-like creatures upon whose intelligence you will depend for survival. And of course there is always the threat of a dreaded Greybackian battle cruiser turning you and your ship into modern art.

For it seems that Earth has perfected one of the most difficult pieces of technology in known space; the Television transmitter. Apparently, reception gear is easily manufactured, however Earth has a monopoly on transmissions in known space. Therefore much of our culture is known by the rest of the universe: through our broadcasts.

Accompanied by "Clyde," your space probe and robot partner, you will visit strange planets and negotiate trades with alien races in a desperate effort at inter-galactic diplomacy. You will encounter funny and unusual objects like "Space Jello", Brady Bunch dolls, Black Holes and baseball paraphenalia as you figure out which race is desperate for what in an effort to trade for what you need. It won't be easy.

But don't despair -- rumor has it that there is a all-knowing Oracle who can provide the hints you will need in order to survive -- all you must do is figure out how to summon him. But you must hurry -- time is running out.

Handling of treatment:

Sex of character is determined by which space suit they choose (one for setters, one for pointers).

Title screen, followed by scrolling text of paragraph one. Embellish with faded in out-takes of earth in the 70's (out-take of two people wearing smily face buttons, turtlenecks and bell bottoms), (out-take of billboard advertisement for platform shoes for men).

Animated out-take of astronaut (in Apollo suit which covers body and includes bubble helmet) climbing into automobile on top of Apollo rocket (like shuttle).

Ship blasts off into space: fade out and fade into the window used for the rest of the game. At this point there will be a tie-in to the first copy protection scheme: the wiring diagrams for Clyde and Mom. Determine with marketing which baseball plays mean what on the baseball diamond schematic.

Since the glove compartment is the cargo hold the following is what we will give the player in the cargo hold to start the game.

-Clyde: Discription is as follows...One mass of tangled wires with some metal attached (looks like a squat torpedo with Mickey Mouse ears).

-(6) Acme Probe repair kits.

-(4) servings of freeze-dried fettucini alfredo.

-One street map of downtown Des Moines, Iowa.

-(7) Silver packages labeled "Food Thing".

-(7) Silver packages labeled "Drink Thing".

-A plastic tic-tac-toe frame (the brady matrix:without dolls).

-A issue of T.V. Guide dated for the early 70's.

Several other objects I haven't figured out yet.

When glove compartment is clicked on, a text window appears which lists contents. Contents can be chosen by arrow keys and return key.

Determine (randomly) location where ship will blast towards upon pilot successfully locating warp icon on dashboard. Force seed that location with a planet populated with a benevolent race which will inform player of the Greybacks, the Spudlians and the amount of time left before the game ends. This race will give character a digital countdown clock which sit's on the dashboard. Character will also be told about galaxy they are in being in the shape of a dodecahedron (giving us another chance to use

the dodec. feelie, Stella).

The reasoning for the baseball theme is as follows: Greybacks absolutely abhor anything to do with baseball, and have consequently never bothered to learn anything about the game, much less baseball lingo. Therefore, every intelligent race in space uses baseball speak as a method of coded communication.

The game is divided into innings. The task, therefore, is to make it 'home' (Earth) before the end of the 9th inning (countdown clock should count innings only: not outs). Player should be unaware of what triggers the end of an inning (let them think it's whimsey on the part of the Producer).

An inning can be changed if any of the following action occurs:

- Greybackian Battle Cruiser test is failed.
- First Contact is made with the Spudlians.
- Second contact is made with the Wabbittechs.
- The planet Chara 4 is located.
- The 5th part of the Brady Matrix is located.
- The player is put to sleep (due to food poisoning or other).
- The computer is overtaken by a hallucination virus.

etc.

Certain races should be given the ability to give the player 'extra innings' (perhaps as tokens for doing a service above and beyond the call of duty). Perhaps the yuppie rabbitech's (whom are only interested in carrots which begin with a 'K'), or the deltoids if you give them mirrors, etc.

Dashboard needs to be bigger to facilitate icon's and LOTS of buttons to play with. What follows is a database of what the buttons do. Shuffle these each time the game is restarted.

- Ejector seat (for when probe gets too obnoxious).
- Hyperspace button.
- Save Earth button.

etc.

As a contingency, we should maintain the code for the old user window somewhere as back-up. Make sure the ash tray and glove compartment are in prominent locations.

Interactions with different alien races will be handled through the uses of a Universal Translator (also made by Acme). This will allow us to continue to experiment with ways of abusing the actual dialog the user types in

by forcing them to structure their sentences prior to transmittal (also, as Steve pointed out, it justify's the textual interaction within the context of the game).

Code needs to be in location for Lasorda oracle to appear if pasta (from glove compartment) is placed in ashtray. Icon of a Dodger batter with one of those bouncing heads should appear on dashboard whenever Lasorda is called upon for tips. If player is wearing a Dodger cap then hints/tips are given: if player is wearing another cap (found randomly throughout known space) then text states that Lasorda frowns and disappears.

Planetary, satellite and 3-space movement code needs to be in place for beta. This will allow for not only what was approved on the pre-alpha (12/13/88) but also the following:

- Ship moving from planet to planet.
- Textual dialog with alien races.
- Graphic for virus debugging in Clyde.
- Graphic window for Universal Language Translator.

We should also be prepared to utilize several (3-5) different graphics within the game. These will be dungeon-type mazes which will take place on 3-5 particular worlds where you must leave your ship and actually traverse on the planet. This also justify's why the Rabbitech's might find you edible (after all, all human's look like Elmer Fudd to them, espically through your space helmet). Model the worlds as being 4*4 in size, biggger if you can get it. Within the game this will be justified as spaceport facilities.

Animated graphics (can use bards tale cludge whereby only parts of the body are animated) of at least 40% of alien graphics need to be in place.

I would expect that at least half (if not more) of the races you come into contact with would have a graphic associated with them. Allow for text to communicate to user reasons why other races cannot be viewed (malfunction in Clydes camera, atmosphere too dense for video to pass through, etc.).

This game is huge. I will expect over 200 different interactions will be able to take place with alien cultures. This will mean we need about 100 graphics:35-50 of which will be done by beta test time.

Planetary graphics can be pulled from a shape table: I will not expect

planets to rotate while you are in orbit.

Greybachian battle cruiser puzzle must be implemented in time for beta test. Graphic is static, and therefore simple. However 5-7 different trivia questions should be seeded to the database to test out the scenario.

If I have to choose: C-64 should be done first. But obviously I need both done on time.

Jackie Fuchs 12-30-88

Timesync Milestone Requirement #2

Timesync Quarantine Planet

This is the first location all travelers go to after discovering the "warp" icon. After the button(icon) is pressed, a text message comes up "Access denied:quarantine procedure engaged" and they are warped to the planet of Spleen and greeted by the Spleen-oids (kidney shaped creatures with legs and stalks with eyeballs on the ends). This is the location for the eye-level maze perspective.

At specific points within the maze (see attached diagram) one will find a door with a planetary icon symbol on it. Alongside the door will be an intercom button (after all, this is a quarantine planet: germs, you know). By communicating via the intercom one can gain information from the various intelligent races about the following:

The Greybacks

The Spudlians

Reason for baseball lingo as interspecies code

Why everybody has a T.V. set

Reason for planets to be along T.V. themes

Way to summon Lasorda Oracle

T.V.Guides as monetary system of the galaxy

Msg. that earth has been visited before

The Nature of the Galaxy

The Brady Matrix

The player is also able to (if they locate it) obtain the 'fuzzy dice' navigational aid, with which they can go through the dodec. galaxy.

Timesync Navigational System

A pair of 12 sided fuzzy dice which hang from your rear view mirror. Seeing as how the galaxy 'Timesync' is set in is a dodehedron, this 12 sided philosophy works well.

The left die will signify the section of the galaxy you are in, the right side will be the planet you are in orbit around within that area. Not all areas will have 12 planets, obviously, so the right die will vary from 1-12.

Navigation is therefore a simple process of turning (via either mouse or arrow keys) the die to the appropriate facing (note: player must discover this themselves; no instruction books supplied). There is also the possibility of a virus being able to inhabit the system and randomly shuffle the dice.

There will be about 20 inhabited planets and 15 lifeless planets the player can visit out of a possible 144 to keep boredom down.

List of Races discovered within the Game

1-Danoes(Icon=wave): Everyone on this planet looks like 'Hawaiian Vice': bermuda shorts, Aloha shirts, CIA glasses, etc. Their big boss is named McGarrett. This is a race which prides themselves on diplomacy and tact. If Clyde is not muted they throw you in jail due to his rudeness. If Clyde is muted he makes inappropriate noises which also get you throw into Jail (this is basically a lose-lose planet). Only way out is a 'get out of jail free' card.

2-Deltoids(icon=barbell): Totally buff race whom are also characterized by their unbelievable stupidity, arrogance, and conceit. They resemble Charles Atlas (or think they do, anyway.). Squarish shaped heads and jaws. They like to kick sand in your face. They will trade you for a mirrored surface or windex (to clean their mirrored surfaces) and will give you suntan lotion.

3-Generic(icon=white square with lt. blue stripe and black block letters "ICON" and a barcode): The planet is a plain white planet (apparently featureless except for landmasses of blue striped lines) named 'Planet'. All the inhabitants wander around in white jumpsuits with the word 'Alien' written across the front and a bar code on the back. They trade generic items (detergent, potato chips, peanut butter, and replacement bags) for food or drink things. They will also give you generic T.V. Guides (which no other race will accept).

4-Jets(icon=swiss cheese): West Side Story planet. This race looks like giant grey rat gangsters whom stand on their back legs wearing hats and long trench coats carrying Thompson Submachine guns. They battle white cats who wear Don Johnson outfits with sunglasses. Both races are being studied by large white rats in lab smocks with clipboards (for reasons unknown). They are addicted to "Happy Days" episodes which feature 'fonzie', along with rebroadcasts of 'The Wild Ones'. They will trade you the danny partridge doll for weapons (a useless doll which is a red herring for the matrix).

5-Izuzans(icon=smiley face): All named Joe. This race resembles humanoids with antenna. They are consummate liars and resemble used car salesman (or computer game Producers). They will accept anything in trade and give you in return computer programs with viruses in them. If, however, you give them an alibi they will give you the dad Brady doll for the matrix.

6-Uncle Festers(icon=light bulb): Race of entirely bald humanoids who are jolly and known for their practical jokes. They will take bottles of Mr. Clean, lolly pops (Kojak tie-in). In return they will give you baseball caps or pasta.

7-Woodys(icon=eyeglass frames): A terribly neurotic race who are constantly convinced they are coming down with a cold. Clyde's visual camera only works in letterbox format and black & white while here. will accept health food items in trade for vitamins. You can also get an alibi here in exchange for some bananas.

8-Carbonzoids(icon=): Race which looks like chick peas with legs and large sombreros. They will give you fuel for your ship in exchange for real T.V. guides only. As they know they have a monopoly on the only fuel source in the galaxy they are not really interested in how they are received by other races (everybody is nice to them, anyway).

9-Wabbitechs(icon=no carrot circle): Look like nasty Bugs Bunnys with large, sharp teeth. Extremely violent race who think all humans look like Elmer Fudd. They react violently to offers of carrots (they are carnivorous). They will give you probe repair kits(made by Acme) in exachnge for meat. If given a duck however, they will praise your name and give you the mom brady doll.

10-Buttheads(icon=sun): Very friendly and laidback race of surfers who look like Annette and Frankie. When you do a radio contact of the planet all Clyde picks up is the surf report. They talk in "mellowese"(not valley girl speak). They will trade you health food items in exchange for sunscreen (with SPF of 4 or lower) or sex wax. In return for giving them peanut butter they will give you the Marcia brady doll.

11-Spudlians(tv console): This race looks like Mr. and Mrs. Potato head with arms & legs. They manufacture the T.V. sets for the rest of the galaxy and eat lots of T.V. dinners. They will trade you the two included video games (pong and Space Invaders) in return for either T.V.guides,T.V.dinners,6 packs, or cheez-wiz. In exchange for the completed matrix they will give you the antidote to save earth (which makes your save earth icon work).

12-Larrys(icon=chemical symbol for polyester): Look like a cross between a tacky hollywood agent and a slug (from the waist down)(slimy green body,black, greasy hair, plaid polyester jacket, cigar and sunglasses). Keep calling you 'babe' and pinching your bottom. In exchange for cigars they will give you Greybackian Army Knife (69,105 attachments and only the can opener works). In exchange for polyester hawaiian shirt they will give you the Alice Brady doll.

13-Arloes(Icon=no sissors circle): Look like 'Cousin Itt' from the Addams Family with love beads,peace sign pendants, smiley face buttons and sunglasses. Their planet is called "Alice's Restaurant" and is located just 1/2 a mile from 'The railroad tracks' (a well known space station). You can only enter from the planets dark side (the back entrance). They will trade you the ONLY get-out-of-jail free card in exchange for the Danny Partridge doll. In exchange for a guitar they will give you the duck, and for anything else they give you cans of SpaceGello.

14-Electrolucks(icon=electrical outlet): Race that looks like push along cannister vacuum cleaners with attachments for neck and heads (with the head having features). In exchange for replacement bags they will give you a random ship attachment.

15-Quaalons(icon=crayon): From the planet of Quay-o-laa. Each member of the race is a different colour and appears as a crayon on two legs. This race is extremely stupid. For the Napoleon Solo lunchbox they will give you the Peter Brady doll, then give you back the object you gave them, then give you a painting they made for you, then ask you to sit for a large drawing, (essentially wanting you to stay forever). Their idea of art is walking around bumping into each other on football sized pieces of paper.

16-Sparky's(icon=lightning bolt): Look like worms with baseball caps on. They are very friendly, chsrming to talk to, and want absolutely nothing from you. Whenever Clyde lands on the planet he short circuits (they are electrical worms). They will trade a random car attachment for anything rubber.

17-Beanie & Cecil planet - friendly planet. In return for (?) they will give you the anti-gravity shielf (propellor hat).

18-Popeye planet - in return for spinach they will give you extra muscle (more powerful engine attachment for ship). In return for a corn cob pipe, they will give you Cindy Brady doll.

Random Throwaway Encounters

Planet Chara 4- Surrounded by force shield. Sign over north pole states "Sorry, wrong game".

Partial Object list-Addendum

- 1-Acme probe repair kits (40% of which are always defective).
- 2-Generic peanut butter.
- 3-Cigars.
- 4-Replacement bags (generic).
- 5-'Get out of Jail' free card.
- 6-Lolly pop.
- 7-Baseball caps (Dodgers, Red Sox)
- 8-Various types of Pasta.
- 9-Generic T.V. Guide.
- 10-Real T.V.Guides.
- 11-Sex wax (for surfboards).
- 12-Cheez-wiz.
- 13-6-packs.
- 14-Frozen T.V. dinners.
- 15-Food things.
- 16-Drink things
- 17-Generic items (laundry detergent,etc.).
- 18- Brady doll: Jan.
- 19-Brady doll:Marsha.
- 20-Brady doll:Peter.
- 21-Brady doll:Greg.
- 22-Brady doll:Alice.
- 23-Brady doll:Mom.
- 24-Brady doll:Dad.
- 25-Brady doll:Cindy.
- 26-Brady doll:Bobby.
- 27-Greybackian army knife with 69,105 attachments.
- 28-Bottle of Mr.Clean.
- 29-Bottle of windex.
- 30-Health foods and vitamins.
- 31-Suntan lotions with varying SPF factors.
- 32-Thompson submachine gun.
- 33-Alibi.
- 34-Fuel cannister attachment.
- 35-SpaceGello.
- 36-Duck (slightly daffy).
- 37-Carrots.
- 38-Mirror.
- 39-Game software module:Spaceinvaders.
- 40-Game software module:Pong.
- 41-Napoleon Solo lunchbox.
- 42-Brady Matrix frame (Crystal tic-tac-toe frame).
- 43-Fuzzy dice navigational system.
- 44-Car attachment:anti-grav. shield (propeller cap).
- 45-Car attachment:Greybackian battle cruiser detector(rare and flaky).
- 46-Danny Partridge doll.
47. Spinach
- 48-Corn cob pipe

Greybackian Trivia Questions Database(Partial list)

- 1-On the show "Kung Fu"; what was 'grasshoppers' other name?
a-Wo Fat.
b-Kwai chang Caine.
c-Chang Lo Pan.

answer=b

- 2-What was Lucy Ricardo's middle name?
a-Esmerelda.
b-Harriet.
c-Madonna.

answer=a.

- 3-How were the identical characters in 'The Patty Duke Show' related?
a-Sisters.
b-Cousins.
c-Friends.

answer=b.

- 4-What product did Lucy in 'I Love Lucy' do a commercial for?
a-Vegameatavitamin.
b-Vitameatavegamin.
c-Vegavitameatamin.

answer=b.

- 5-Who was the first T.V. Lois Lane?
a-Noel Neill.
b-Lee Sholem.
c-Phyllis Coates.

answer=c.

- 6-What is Gomez Addam's favorite food?
a-Eye of Newt.
b-Horn of toad.
c-Wing of bat.

answer=a.

- 7-Who usually played Thing on 'The Addam's Family'?
a-Uncle Fester.
B-Lurch.
c-Cousin Itt.

answer=b.

- 8-What was Maxwell Smart's Chief's real name?
a-Milton.
b-Thaddeus.
c-Delbert.

answer=b.

9-What is the name of Fred Munsters pet dragon?
a-Rover.
b-Fido.
c-Spot.

answer=c.

10-Who was the vampire on 'Dark Shadows'?
a-Barnabus Collins.
b-Quentin Collins.
c-Gary Collins.

answer=a.

11-What was the name of the ship that got 'Lost In Space'?
a-Jupiter II.
b-Saturn I.
c-Venus III.

answer=a.

12-What is the name of Bruce Waynes butler?
a-Raymond.
b-Alfred.
c=Walter.

answer=b.

13-Who was the daughter on 'Family Affair'?
a-Buffy.
b-Jody.
c-Muffy.

answer=a.

14-Who was the original T.V. Catwoman?
a-Lee Merriweather.
b-Julie Newmar.
c-Ertha Kitt.

answer=b.

15-^{What}~~Who~~ was Beaver and Wally Cleavers buddy's name ?
a-Eddy Haskell.
b-Maynard G. Crebbs.
c-Andy Hardy.

answer=a.

16-Which of the following was not a companion of 'Dr. Who'?
a-Romana.
b-Danora.
c-Sara Jane.

answer=b.

17-What was Elliot Ness's office number?
a-104.
b-208.
c-301.

answer=b.

TIMESYNC NOTES

12/22/88
revised 1/3/89
~~revised 1/17/87~~

* Does the title make sense anymore? The original game design involved relativity effects, time travel, etc. Name doesn't seem to match the current design.

* The game, and the universe in which the game is set, lack a coherent theme. Its just a bunch of unrelated jokes with no overriding connection (other than the rather tenuous one that all the jokes are sort of early 70's anti-nostalgia).

EXAMPLE: Some races are fixated on Earth TV shows (e.g. Spudlians) due to receiving old broadcasts; others are based on Earth TV shows (e.g. Danoes) to add humor to the game but without a rational explanation for such a coincidental similarity existing in the game's universe. A consistent scheme is needed as a base from which all these jokes and ideas spring. One possibility: although every race in the galaxy has invented TV reception, Earth is the only planet which has ever invented TV broadcasting -- and therefore, unknowingly, Earth has been supplying TV programming for every known race for years, thus shaping the culture of myriad races. Each race reacts differently, fixating on a particular show (like the Spudlians), going wild over commercials and lemon-scenting everything they make, despising all humans because of the low quality of Earth's TV broadcasts, etc.

NOTE: I notice that this idea has made it into the newest treatment; however, most of the planets/races still don't have a logical reason for existing under the umbrella of this concept.

EXAMPLE: The baseball motif which keeps appearing (the Lasorda oracle, the baseball-diamond circuitry, division of game into innings) has no rationale. Once again, why this coincidental similarity, other than to get some cheap yucks? One possibility would be to connect this with the TV broadcast idea above. Another idea: the Greybacks are the only race in the galaxy that despises baseball (as befit their persona as arch-villains) and therefore every other race uses baseball-related symbology when they want to avoid Greybackian detection or interference.

* The preponderance of inside jokes seems to be a problem. I don't mean *really* inside jokes, like a race called the Erhardts, I mean jokes which require knowledge of very specific areas outside the realm of the game. For example, to fully appreciate the jokes in Timesynch, you'd need to be familiar with:

The Brady Bunch TV show

Roadrunner/Coyote cartoons

Bugs Bunny/Elmer Fudd cartoons

Isuzu commercials

Miami Vice TV show

Baseball, in general

Los Angeles Dodgers Baseball

Hawaii Five-0 TV show

The Partridge Family TV show

Charles Atlas

Happy Days TV show

The Wild Ones TV show

The Addams Family TV show

Woody Allen

Arlo Guthrie

Kojak TV show

Beach Blanket movies

Surfing

Beany & Cecil

Popeye

This probably isn't an exhaustive list -- and the list is growing. There's certainly nothing wrong with some inside jokes -- if you don't get them, you usually don't notice you've missed something; if you do get them, you feel a special bond with the author. However, the vast number and centrality of them in the Timesync design is a problem. For example, I am only familiar with eight of the twenty items in that list; narrowing the example to the main design pillars, I am familiar with baseball but know almost nothing about The Brady Bunch. There are probably many people among the potential players of Timesync who are in even worse shape than I am in these areas. This means a significant group of people who won't appreciate a significant portion of the game. Some examples of better, non-inside jokes: generic planet, garbanzoids, crayola creatures...

*The design of the game seems to be little more than travelling and swapping items in order to finally obtain the antidote. The puzzles all boil down to basically "What is this race interested in?" More types of puzzles and types of activities are needed. The opening planet maze is a good step in the right direction.

*The Miami Vice and Isuzu references are from the wrong decade.

*Leisure Suit Larry: why advertise a competitor's product?

*The TV trivia is somewhere between ridiculously hard and impossible. However, if this information was included in a package element, it would make good anti-piracy.

* Idea: Make the fuzzy dice regular six-sided dice. You then have 36 stars in the "universe" and all of them can then be "real." Make each side ("sector") represent a concentric sphere a certain distance from Earth -- everything on the 1-dot side would be 5 light years from Earth; everything on the 2-dot side would be 10 light years from Earth, etc. The further you got from Earth, the older the TV signals that this planet would be reacting to; the furthest sector would only be just getting "Your Show of Shows" and "Howdy Doody."

* Idea: an on-line rolodex-type database to store info about the worlds you've visited: name of planet, name of race, coordinates, likes, dislikes, etc. It could start out the game with just a few tantalizing bits of info (perhaps gleaned from the quarantine planet); more info would get filled in as you visit more places. It would be good for the player to leaf through when stuck, to get ideas of where to go.