

# ARTFUL Deceit

## INSTRUCTION Manual

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## PROLOGUE

As dusk gives way to the inky darkness of night, a luminous moon casts an eerie glow over the sprawling, luxurious community known as Whispering Hills Estates. Nestled amid bucolic, lush countryside, its grand architecture stands as a monument to wealth and sophistication.

Winding its way down a long driveway enveloped by a canopy of foliage built by the interlocking branches of dozens of seemingly enchanted trees, a car slowly approaches the imposing, fortress-like entrance of the home of its most illustrious resident. It rolls to a stop in the driveway and a lone figure in a trenchcoat steps out – you. You are J. Butterfield, a canny local private investigator with a dead client and a lot of questions.

Three weeks ago, you received an envelope. It had been pushed under your office door and was marked in ornate script with the words, “Of Greatest Urgency.” Intrigued, you grabbed your trusty sword-shaped letter opener from a cluttered desk drawer and tore into it. Inside, you found the kind of letter that is basically an urban legend in your line of work.

Richard Hawthorne, millionaire art magnate, was retaining your services to investigate a murder. One that had not yet happened. His own. Included was a huge check and a set of security codes to access both the gates of his private community and the back door of his residence, 34 Hush Lane, in the event of his death.

Your assignment: if anything were to happen to him, investigate immediately and determine for certain whether it was due to natural or nefarious causes.

Paranoid or not, the man came to the right place. Your cluttered office and perpetually disheveled look belie a razor sharp analytical mind and expert interrogation skills. Underestimation by others is your secret weapon and allows you to fade into the woodwork, catching clues that others miss. This has made you one of the most successful P.I.s around. You had accepted the job immediately, not expecting to have to follow through so soon.

This afternoon, a broadcast on your police scanner called you to action with news of Hawthorne’s death. Presumed cause: heart attack. Maybe, but something made the man nervous enough about his safety to secretly retain you so you throw on your overcoat, check the breast pocket for your well-worn notebook (into which you tuck the letter) and make your way through the gates of Whispering Hills Estates. You find 34 Hush Lane, Hawthorne’s sprawling residence in the heart of the Estate. Time to start investigating the survivors and getting to the bottom of this curious situation.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of the game is to discover enough evidence that when you accuse the suspect of murder, they break down and confess.

Discovering who created the murder should become obvious over time, though there are enough suspects with motive to require good detective work. The job isn't done when you figure out who did it. Next, you need to prove it!

Specifically, there are three things you need to learn before the game will allow you to accuse a suspect.

- **[Me]** Means
- **[Mo]** Motive
- **[Op]** Opportunity

When you have collected enough evidence the corresponding indicator in the top right of the screen will brighten. In the example below, the player has collected enough evidence to prove the suspect had a motive as indicated by the **bright green type**.

Once means, motive and opportunity are completed, you have enough evidence to **ACCUSE** your suspect.

Front Path	[Me][Mo][Op]
------------	--------------

Once you accuse the suspect (because you collected enough evidence) they will break down and confess. Following the confession, the authorities will take the suspect away in handcuffs and the game is over.

If you accuse the suspect too soon, the game will prevent you from making the accusation.

<b>] ACCUSE MARY OF MURDER</b> Before accusing Mary of murder, first uncover their Means, Motive and Opportunity.
--

## LOADING THE Game

This game may be played on real hardware with a floppy disk. In fact, this is my preferred method of playing. However, the instructions for copying the .d64 file onto a floppy disk are outside the scope of this document.

The following are instructions for how to play using the popular Commodore emulator VICE.

You'll find the game files in the **Disk Images** folder.

### COMMODORE 64

1. Install the [VICE](#) emulator
2. Inside the "bin" folder of VICE's installed location launch **x64sc.exe**
3. Drag-n-drop **Artful\_Deceit\_230924.d64** file into the emulator window
4. Wait for it to load (~1.5 minutes)

**Note:** if you experience a lag after typing a command it's because the C64 is loading information from the floppy disk drive which takes a few seconds.

## PLAYING THE Game

This section explains how to interact with the game by providing it with commands you would like your player to perform. You can imagine you are telling the game "I would like to..." without actually typing that bit every time.

**NOTE:** The use of articles such as "a", "an" and "the" are not only unnecessary, but should be avoided as the game will not understand them.

For example, type `GET COAT` instead of `GET THE COAT`.

### TIPS FOR PLAYING

(even for advanced users)

The language parser in *Artful Deceit* is not as advanced as modern Inform 7 or other parsers running on modern computers. A tradeoff was made in keeping this game simple, enjoyable and capable of running on retro hardware. This version of the language parser optimizes for simplicity.

Rule of thumb: keep the commands simple rather than trying to write complete sentences.

Examples:

These work	These don't work
<code>] GO NORTH</code>	<code>] WALK DOWN THE HILL TOWARDS THE WHITE HOUSE</code>
<code>] DROP KEY</code>	<code>] THROW KEY ON THE FLOOR</code>
<code>] ASK TINA ABOUT PHOTO</code>	<code>] TINA, TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THIS PHOTO</code>
<code>] DRIVE TO STORE</code>	<code>] USE THE CAR TO DRIVE TO THE STORE</code>
<code>] GO SOUTH</code>	<code>] ENTER MARY'S ROOM</code>

Please consult the **Command Reference** chart to see which commands the language parser will understand. This will help reduce frustration caused by parser complaints.

### SYSTEM

The game has been intentionally designed to prevent the player from ending up in a no-win situation or dying. You should feel comfortable to explore and experiment without the fear of unfixable consequences.

However, solving the game will likely take you more than a single sitting. It is recommended to save your progress before ending your session so that you may resume where you left off. When you save, the game takes a snapshot of the current game state such as object locations and other progress information. Restoring the game places the game back into the same state it was when you saved. For your convenience, side two of the game disk has been formatted for use as a save disk. Just flip the disk over to save or restore progress, then flip it back to continue playing the game.

```
] SAVE
Please insert SAVE diskette
--- Press RETURN key to continue ---

(Flip the disk to side two or insert a
formatted disk with free space, then
press RETURN.)

Save Position (0-9): 0

(Enter a number from 0 to 9 to choose
which game slot you wish to save into.)

Game saved.
```

Now, you may re-insert the game disk side one or wait until prompted while playing the game.

] RESTORE

Please insert SAVE diskette  
--- Press RETURN key to continue -

*(Flip the disk to side one to insert the  
GAME disk, then press RETURN.)*

Save Position (0-9): 0

*(Enter a number from 0 to 9 to choose  
which game slot you wish to restore.)*

Game restored.

You may quit playing the game with the QUIT command. You will be prompted to confirm this choice before the game exits. Press the Y key to quit or any other key to cancel the action.

] QUIT

Unsaved game progress will be lost. Are you sure? [y/N]

There are 3 commands you can use to change the level of detail you receive while playing the game. BRIEF, which is the default setting, is best for players just starting out as it contains a balance of detail and brevity. VERBOSE is useful if you find yourself forgetting the details of a location and would like to be reminded. SUPERBRIEF is useful for people who have played more than once and remember what the location descriptions are. You can switch between these modes at any time.

] BRIEF

OK, you will get brief descriptions.

] SUPERBRIEF

OK, you will get super-brief descriptions. Remember that objects and people are not mentioned; only the name of the place you are in.

] VERBOSE

OK, you will get verbose descriptions.

## MOVEMENT

You will not get far in the game if you do not move around. The most used instruction you give the game will be to GO somewhere. "Somewhere" is often described as a direction, but can be other nouns as well.

] GO NORTH

You enter the kitchen.

] GO UP

You climb the ladder.

] GO TO BEDROOM

You enter the bedroom.

Since GO is used so often in the game, you can abbreviate walking in a direction by simply typing the first letter for that direction. For example, N for north or U for up.

] N

You enter the kitchen.

] U

You climb the ladder.

## OBSERVATION

When you enter a location for the first time, the game will provide you with a description of what you can see, the exits you may take and the identified items you may interact with. Some items may not be listed until you discover they are there.

Master Bedroom

The master bedroom is a sanctuary of tranquility and elegance. Bathed in soft hues of cream and gold, the room boasts a grand canopy bed with billowing curtains, its plush bedding inviting a restful slumber. A large bay window allows natural light to cascade in, offering a picturesque view of the lush gardens

below. Ornate furniture and delicate artwork adorn the space, adding a touch of opulence, while a cozy seating area beckons for moments of quiet contemplation. This room serves as a private retreat, embracing a sense of luxury and comfort for its occupants.

Exits are **East** and **South**.

You can see:

- a bed
- a rug
- a window

When you revisit a location, the location description will not automatically be displayed. To see the location again, enter **LOOK AROUND** (or **LOOK**, or **L** for short). Additionally, **EXAMINE** (or **X** for short) is treated as a synonym for **LOOK**.

**Master Bedroom**

Exits are **East** and **South**.

You can see:

- a bed
- a rug
- a window

**] LOOK**

The master bedroom is a sanctuary of tranquility and elegance. Bathed in soft hues of cream and gold, the room boasts a grand canopy bed with billowing curtains, its plush bedding inviting a restful slumber. A large bay window allows natural light to cascade in, offering a picturesque view of the lush gardens below. Ornate furniture and delicate artwork adorn the space, adding a touch of opulence, while a cozy seating area beckons for moments of quiet contemplation. This room serves as a private retreat, embracing a sense of luxury and comfort for its occupants.

In cases where you wish to do a more thorough examination of something, you can use the **SEARCH**

command. This is a way to identify objects that weren't noticed by a casual glance.

**] LOOK BAG**

The bag is full of junk.

**] SEARCH BAG**

Digging through the junk at the bottom of the bag, you find your car keys.

**] INVENTORY**

You are carrying:

- leather bag
- car keys

## Interaction

Throughout the game, you will need to interact with people and things. There are several ways to do this. First, let's review how to interact with things. **GET** and **TAKE** may be used interchangeably.

**] GET KEYS**

You are now carrying the keys.

**] PUT KEYS IN BAG**

The keys are now inside the bag.

**] DROP KEYS**

You've dropped the keys.

Interacting with people can be to ask a question, ask for an object, tell them something, or show them something. The following are four equivalent ways to ask Alice about Jamie, each resulting in the same response.

**] ASK ALICE ABOUT JAMIE**

**] QUESTION ALICE ABOUT JAMIE**

**] TALK WITH ALICE ABOUT JAMIE**

**] TALK ABOUT JAMIE WITH ALICE**

Alice: I find it interesting that Jamie

spends so much time with Frank. I wonder what they're up to.

Getting, giving and showing something to character:

] ASK MICHAEL FOR TOWEL

You are now carrying the towel.

] GIVE TOWEL TO MICHAEL

You give the towel to Michael.

] SHOW TOWEL TO MICHAEL

Michael smiles and nods his head signaling you have the correct towel.

## Solving the murder

To win the game you will need to accuse the correct suspect of murder, then have them arrested.

In order to accuse a player of murder you need to have enough evidence. In particular, you need to know the means, motive and opportunity to commit the murder. At the top of the screen there are 3 indicators [Me] for means, [Mo] for motive and [Op] for opportunity. As you collect enough information for each during the game, their respective indicators will light up.

If you accuse a character of murder before completing all three components you will receive a complaint.

] ACCUSE MARY OF MURDER

Before accusing Mary of murder, first uncover their Means, Motive and Opportunity.

Each of the three indicators at the top right of the screen will brighten when you've uncovered enough evidence, signaling you are ready to make an accusation.

When you have enough information and are ready to make the accusation, you will receive a different response from the game.

] ACCUSE MARY OF MURDER

Mary quickly laughs it off as an absurd suggestion.

You: You wanted Alice dead because she was having an affair with your husband.

Mary appears rattled, but remains silent.

You: This lab report shows your fingerprints were found on the gun used to kill Alice.

Mary now appears very nervous and explains "Naturally my fingerprints would be found on my own gun. I reported the gun missing months ago and haven't seen it since."

You: Doorbell security camera footage shows you leaving Alice's home just moments after she was shot dead, still holding the gun in your hand.

In light of the evidence, Mary breaks down in tears and confesses.

Two police officers usher in making it clear they heard the confession and Mary is directed away in handcuffs.

## APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE GAMEPLAY

The following excerpt is not actually from *Artful Deceit*, but is instead a self-contained example to give you a better understanding of how to interact with the story using grammar that the game can understand. Player input is preceded by a prompt which looks like “]”. The prompt shows you on the computer screen where you will type your instructions.

You may choose to enter your commands as UPPERCASE, lowercase, or Sentence case, the game does not have a preference. Below you will find the commands in UPPERCASE to make them stand out in the example.

### Hallway

The hallway between the study to the north and the master bedroom to the west is a graceful passage adorned with ornate wallpaper depicting delicate floral patterns that seem to come to life in the soft glow of the chandelier above. A plush, crimson carpet runs along the length of the hallway, muffling footsteps and adding a touch of opulence. Tall, slender windows allow streams of sunlight to filter in, casting gentle rays that dance upon the polished wooden floors, while antique portraits of distinguished ancestors line the walls, their eyes seemingly following your every step, lending an air of intrigue to the corridor.

Exits are: **North** and **West**.

### ] GO NORTH

You enter the study.

### Study

The study exudes an atmosphere of intellectual sophistication, adorned with towering bookshelves lined with

leather-bound tomes and dusty manuscripts. A large oak desk sits in the center, cluttered with scattered papers and quill pens, hinting at the owner's meticulous research and detective work. Soft sunlight filters through the window, casting a warm glow on the worn armchair, inviting visitors to lose themselves in the realm of deduction and mystery.

Exits are **South**.

You see:

- a desk
- bookshelves

### ] EXAMINE DESK

The large oak desk, polished to a deep mahogany sheen, features intricately carved patterns along its edges, reminiscent of twisting vines and enigmatic symbols, giving it an aura of mystique and scholarly grandeur.

The desk contains:

- a silver key
- a quill pen
- a manuscript

### ] TAKE SILVER KEY

You are now carrying the silver key.

### ] TAKE QUILL PEN

You are now carrying the quill pen.

### ] SEARCH BOOKSHELVES

The bookcase stands tall against the wall, reaching from floor to ceiling, its mahogany wood exuding an air of timeless elegance. The shelves are filled with an eclectic mix of books, ranging from weathered classics to obscure volumes on esoteric subjects. As you meticulously examine the shelves, your fingers trailing along the spines and notice a particular book that stands slightly ajar, its worn edges betraying its frequent use. With a gentle tug, the book slides out partially, revealing a hidden compartment behind it. Nestled within this secret space you see a small metal lever.

] PULL LEVER

As you pull the cold metal lever, a faint click resonates through the study. Suddenly, with a barely perceptible rumble, the bookshelf smoothly glides to the side, revealing a hidden passage concealed behind it. To the east, a secret doorway materializes, its dark recesses beckoning you to explore further. Soft candlelight flickers from within, casting dancing shadows upon ancient stone walls.

] GO EAST

As the player steps into the secret room, a hushed atmosphere envelops them.

Secret Room

The air feels charged with ancient knowledge and arcane energy. Illuminated by a solitary beam of light from above, a raised podium stands in the center, upon which rests a weathered leather-bound book of spells, its pages worn with time and secrets. The room itself is adorned with mystical symbols etched into the walls, their faint glow adding an ethereal ambiance. Shelves lined with dusty scrolls and potion vials adorn the chamber, hinting at the deep sorcery that has transpired within these hidden confines. The air is filled with a faint scent of aged parchment and an underlying sense of both reverence and trepidation.

You see:

    a book of spells

] TAKE BOOK

As if it is bound there by mystical forces, you are unable to remove the book of spells from the podium.

] EXAMINE BOOK

You step closer to the book and look upon its pages. As if by magic, you begin reading from the book in a soft hushed tone. Your voice quivers with a mixture of anticipation and caution, creating an audible whisper that hangs in the air, carrying faint traces of ancient power.

"In realms unseen and mysteries deep,  
I call upon powers, my secret to keep.  
With ancient words, their magic unfurled,  
Summon forth a wizard from the astral  
world.

By moonlit skies and stars aligned,  
With incantations, ancient and defined,  
I beckon thee, O wizard wise,  
From realms of magic, materialize.

Through shadowed veil and arcane lore,  
Appear before me, I do implore.  
With wisdom vast and powers grand,  
Guide me with your enchanted hand."

As the final syllable of the summoning spell escapes the player's lips, a shimmering glow materializes before them, gradually taking the form of a regal figure draped in robes of flowing midnight blue. The air crackles with energy as the glow subsides, revealing a wise and captivating wizard, her eyes sparkling with ancient wisdom.

With a graceful gesture, she extends her hand and introduces herself with a voice that carries echoes of forgotten realms, "I am Seraphina, seeker of arcane knowledge, summoned by your call. How may I assist you on this mystical journey?"

] ASK SERAPHINA FOR KNOWLEDGE

You: Seraphina, seeker of arcane knowledge, I seek your guidance and wisdom. Please, share with me your vast understanding.

Seraphina: Smiling with a glimmer of curiosity "Ah, a seeker of knowledge. If you wish to partake of the secrets I hold, there is a task I require of you. Present me with an object of significance, and I shall enchant it with the essence of ancient wisdom. In doing so, it shall become a conduit, imparting its knowledge to you when the time is right. Choose wisely, young adventurer, for the object you offer will shape the path of enlightenment before you."

### ] SHOW QUILL PEN TO SERAPHINA

As you hold out the quill pen, Seraphina's eyes glow with radiant intensity. With a gentle wave and a few whispered incantations, she imbues the pen with a shimmering aura, infusing it with the echoes of forgotten wisdom and ancient enchantments.

### THE END

### Epilogue

In the years that followed this daring adventure, your journey continued in unexpected ways. Fueled by experiences gained within the realms of mystery and imagination, you discovered a latent talent for weaving captivating tales. With an enchanted quill pen in hand and the spirit of adventure as your guide, you embarked on a new chapter in life.

Your stories, inspired by worlds you've explored, resonated with readers far and wide. Your gift for crafting immersive narratives and engaging characters led to your rise as a best-selling author in the realm of interactive fiction. Your books became treasures cherished by readers who eagerly turned the pages, eagerly unraveling tapestries of choices and consequences.

## APPENDIX B: FEEDBACK & SUPPORT

Your feedback is invaluable. While we put the best effort into thoroughly testing the game, there are far too many permutations of hardware setups and user input creativity to test every scenario. If you find a bug, have a suggestion for improvement, feel the puzzles are too difficult or too easy, please let me know.

- [Report a bug](#) you found.
- Send questions or comments to [TenPrintClearHome@gmail.com](mailto:TenPrintClearHome@gmail.com).
- Join the [Artful Deceit Announce](#) Google Group for news and release updates.
- Discord Server (soon).

## APPENDIX C: ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### James O'Reilly

I was born and raised in New York City, peeking and poking at memory 8-bits at a time. I fell in love with computers as a kid and grew up programming on my own TI 99/4a, Commodore 128D and Apple II+. The first two machines are still very much in service today and my collection has since expanded to include home computers from the 70's and 80's such as an Apple IIe, Atari 800, Atari 800XL, Commodore 64, Commodore VIC-20, Commodore Plus/4, Commodore Colt PC 10/20 and more.

I enjoy many different types of video games but have always preferred those that require careful thinking and slower, more deliberate reactions. I'm extremely fond of the adventure genre beginning with the Infocom and Scott Adams catalog of games, then every LucasArts point-and-click adventure and, of course, games from Microïds like the Syberia series. Plus a few honorable mentions like Sanitarium and Toonstruck. Actually, my list of favorites is far too long to include here but I think I've made my point!

In addition to solving puzzles in adventure games, I also love the "whodunit?" murder mystery genre. I must have seen every episode of Columbo three times, as well as Perry Mason, Murder She Wrote, multiple incarnations of Sherlock Holmes and every Agatha Christie novel-based movie ever made.

Needless to say, the Infocom games Deadline and Suspect fit squarely in the center of a Venn diagram between adventure games and murder mysteries. While the inspiration of all the legends who forged this path inspired me to infuse Artful Deceit with the subtle familiarity of a handful of nods to their work, I hope you find this new murder mystery adventure game to be as fresh and intriguing as the originals.

### Dian Mills O'Reilly

I am a Canadian/British/American editor, writer and general word nerd. I am also basically a detective (complete with t-shirt, bought at CrimeCon, attesting to such) after having sleuthed my way through dozens of boxed murder mystery games and listened to hundreds of hours of true crime podcasts in the past few years.

My inspirations are Jim Fitzgerald, Nancy Grace and my husband, James. When the latter embarked on

this *Artful Deceit* journey, I hoped to be the first to play his completed game. Instead, he gave me the opportunity to help him to bring Whispering Hills to life through my favorite kind of storytelling.

Thanks so much for venturing into Richard Hawthorne's world. May you have as much fun solving this mystery as we had creating it.

## APPENDIX D: WARRANTY & COPYRIGHT

### warranty

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James O'Reilly

[TenPrintClearHome@gmail.com](mailto:TenPrintClearHome@gmail.com)

Thank you for respecting the copyrights and supporting the continued development of our game. We hope you enjoy the immersive experience we have crafted for you.