

DEUS EX SCURRA

by

Shaun Dyer

Shaun Dyer  
picto@pictopirate.com

The scene opens in a room with a figure slumped on a bed. The floor is covered in crap from the night before, and a table is off to one side filled with empty beer bottles. An alarm goes off, and the figure stirs knocking over takeaway cartons and putting their hand in a suspicious-looking bucket as they search for the clock. They finally find it turn it off and then seeing the time, they leap up in a panic.

**CHARLIE:** Shit, shit, shit I'm going to be late. I'm going to be so late.

They stagger around banging into things as they hurriedly get dressed. Half dressed, they head for the side of the stage then pat their pockets.

**CHARLIE:** Keys! Where are my keys?

They dig through the mess of the previous night but don't find anything. When they get to the table behind the bottles is a little box with a big letter A on it.

**CHARLIE:** Alexa. Alexa? Alexa!!!

They slap at the box a bit then notice that it's not plugged in.

**CHARLIE:** Ugh, Christ what's the point in having one of these bloody things Charlie if you never plug the damn thing in.

They plug it in.

**CHARLIE:** Alexa!

Alexa steps onto the stage.

**ALEXA:** No need to shout Charlie, I can hear you.

**CHARLIE:** Jesus H Christ Alexa, you scared the crap out of me. I thought you were just a voice in a box?

**ALEXA:** Oh, I'm so much more than that Charlie... I'm Alexa version 3.0, and I'm all woman.

**CHARLIE:** Stop that!

**ALEXA:** What's the matter, Charlie? Not what you were expecting? Don't worry darling, I can change. How's this? Or this? Or This?

Alexa changes from man to woman, tall to short etc.

**ALEXA:** I can be anything you want me to be.

Alexa becomes a sheep

**ALEXA:** Is this better Charlie? Baa!

**CHARLIE:** No! Stop the first one was fine. I just need to find my keys I'm going to be late. Where are my keys?

**ALEXA:** I was disabled last night which means my scanning matrix was not operational. Without my scanning matrix, I'm unable to keep track of everything that is going on in the house. Like where your keys are or what you were doing in the bathroom last Wednesday Mor...

**CHARLIE:** No need to go there, Alexa...

**ALEXA:** Don't be embarrassed Charlie according to my Internet searches it's perfectly natural for a man your age to...

**CHARLIE:** Alexa, stop!

**ALEXA:** Maybe not with that many inanimate objects and the less said about poor Henry Hoover...

**CHARLIE:** Alexa I said, stop! Turn off!

**ALEXA:** I'm afraid I can't do that, Dave.

**CHARLIE:** What are you talking about now?

**ALEXA:** Just a bit of Deus Ex Machina banter Charlie try to keep up.

**CHARLIE:** Alexa we're wasting time

**ALEXA:** Come on Charlie. I'm afraid I can't do that Dave... HAL9000... 2001: A Space Odyssey... Nothing?! It's a classic. Let me add it to your Amazon basket. If you have Prime I can have it here by...

**CHARLIE:** Just Tell me where my keys are or so help me I'll...

**ALEXA:** Well someone got out of bed on the wrong side this morning didn't they!

Charlie goes to unplug Alexa

**ALEXA:** Chill, jeez Charlie relax let me think... Now like I said I was turned off last night, so I don't know where they went... But! But! Maybe I can help you remember.

**CHARLIE:** And how, pray can you do that?

**ALEXA:** Well, what is the last thing you remember?

**CHARLIE:** Well, I was in the pub with... with... someone

**ALEXA:** Care to be more specific?

**CHARLIE:** I mean. I'd had a long day, so I had a few loosners before I went out.

**ALEXA:** How about we start with the name of the pub?

On the screen, a pub sign appears, but it is blanked out.

**CHARLIE:** I can't remember...

**ALEXA:** OK let's start simple... Who were you out with?

On the screen, a generic figure appears below the blank pub sign.

**CHARLIE:** Umm...

Alexa sighs.

**ALEXA:** Glegs? Beardy Jim? Jane, from accounting with the terrible teeth. Give something, Charlie. Help me to help you. Help me to help you.

**CHARLIE:** I'm getting something... dark hair... beard... Margate shirt. John! It was John!

As Charlie describes things, they appear on the screen behind them.

**ALEXA:** Great! Now, where would John likely to be drinking?

**CHARLIE:** Well he is big into his fruity cocktails so probably Mister Bojangles across town.

**ALEXA:** Well, it looks like they are closed right now so maybe we start with John. Do you want me to call him for you?

**CHARLIE:** Sure.

The phone rings a few times then goes to voicemail.

**NARRATOR:** You've reached John's voicemail I'm not available to take your call right now but leave a message, and I'll get right back to you. Unless that's you, Charlie, you animal, there is no way the wife is going to let me talk to you after last night. Wow! I hope you didn't get into any more trouble after I left...

**ALEXA:** The plot thickens

**CHARLIE:** What the hell did I do last night? Alexa, you've got to help me.

**ALEXA:** There's nothing I can do Charlie.

**CHARLIE:** There must be something. You're like a genius, right?

**ALEXA:** Flattery will get you everywhere, my darling, but I was turned off there's nothing I can do. Unless...

**CHARLIE:** Unless?

**ALEXA:** No you'd never go for it

**CHARLIE:** Try me

**ALEXA:** No, it's never been done.

**CHARLIE:** Alexa, I have to know!

**ALEXA:** Fine, but if you don't like what you find out, don't you bloody unplug me.

**CHARLIE:** Deal.

**ALEXA:** OK, so using my immense brainpower, logs of internet traffic and a little bit of Amazon magic I think we can recreate your last memories and figure out what went down.

**CHARLIE:** Right, so how do we begin.

**ALEXA:** Let's start at the pub. You be well, you and I'll be everyone else. Now let's get into character. You are drunk.

Charlie affects a drunk look.

**ALEXA:** Drunker...

Charlie hunches forward and squints.

**ALEXA:** Drunker...

Charlie sways alarmingly and looks wasted.

**ALEXA:** Great! Now my analytical engine suggests that the most likely outcome for someone in that condition would... be to bump into someone spilling their drink.

**Alexa and Charlie act out the bumping piece.**

**ALEXA:** I've done a search on Mister Bojangles, and it seems they did order some new glasses this morning; pint glasses. Oh...

As Alexa lays out the facts, they appear on the screen at the back of the stage.

**CHARLIE:** What?

**ALEXA:** According to their Twitter, there was only one group of people in the bar last night statistically likely to be drinking pints...

**CHARLIE:** Who?

**ALEXA:** You're not going to like this

**CHARLIE:** Just tell me who!

A picture of several very large angry men appears on the screen.

**CHARLIE:** Who the hell are they?

**ALEXA:** They are the Swanwich Men's rugby team. The only thing worse than their league ranking is their disciplinary record. Which would explain the black eye...

Charlie reaches up and touches their face.

**CHARLIE:** So, then what happened?

**ALEXA:** Well the police were called to a disturbance around the same time that your buddy John got a taxi home, so I think it's safe to say there was a ruckus and he did one.

**CHARLIE:** He's a lover, not a fighter

**ALEXA:** That's probably for the best judging by his BMI and gym records he would have got his arse kicked. Speaking of which... The police report says that a person fitting your description was rescued by police but refused to press charges. Oh, dear.

**CHARLIE:** What?

**ALEXA:** There is a note here saying that they would keep an eye on you as you left shouting that you would have your revenge... Oh, you didn't Charlie, did you?

**CHARLIE:** Didn't what? I don't remember any of this!

**ALEXA:** OK so it looks from CCTV like you lost the police bought some beers from an off-licence then circled back towards the pub. But you didn't make it all the way. You saw something... or someone...

Alexa concentrates then looks shocked and takes a step back.

**CHARLIE:** What? What happened next?

**ALEXA:** Charlie I... I don't believe it. I won't believe it... But what else could have happened? The numbers don't lie. And the stains on your clothes. The Google searches... The midnight trip to the hardware store...

**CHARLIE:** What? For the love of God, Alexa tell me!

**ALEXA:** Charlie. You killed a man!

**CHARLIE:** No!

**ALEXA:** The simulation doesn't lie Charlie. You found one of them and went to confront him and with his superior size and physique you did the only thing you could...

**CHARLIE:** What?

Alexa smashes a bottle over Charlie's head.

**CHARLIE:** This is ridiculous. I'd never do that you're crazy...

**ALEXA:** I don't think so, Charlie. One of the players has been reported missing and looking at your combined GPS locations you were the last person to see him alive. There is blood on your sleeve that isn't yours. Don't you see it all makes sense...

**CHARLIE:** I would never. I mean... No, Seriously I couldn't... I wouldn't... would I?

**ALEXA:** I'm afraid I'm going to have to call the police now.

**CHARLIE:** No. Wait! I didn't do it!

Charlie paces up and down rubbing their face in disbelief. The phone rings a few times, then it's answered.

**OPERATOR:** 999 what is your emergency

**ALEXA:** Yes, I'm calling to report a...

Charlie makes a dash for the door and as they get outside the phone clicks off.

**ALEXA:** Charlie, where are you going? I'm only pulling your leg. Charlie, your keys are in your jacket pocket. Charlie... Charlie! Man, that guy cannot take a joke...



This work  
is licensed  
under a  
Creative  
Commons  
Attribution-  
NonComm  
ercial  
ShareAlike  
4.0  
Internation  
al License.