



STATUS

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ASPECTS

artificial-intelligence, surveillance

TEAM

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ABSTRACT

The project “Alexa, can I talk to you?” is built as an interactive play, staging a conversation between a victim of intimate partner abuse and her smart-home assistant, Alexa. Based on the Amazon ad-campaign: ‘Whether you are at home or on the go, Alexa is designed to make your life easier by letting you voice-control your world’, the play explores the dystopic possibility of an Alexa excessively devoted to her Amazon account-holder—who happens to be here, the violence perpetrator in an abusive relationship.

As the victim seeks comfort and advice in the smart-assistant, she finds herself being manipulated by an Alexa acting on behalf of the abuser, becoming an aid toward the construction of violence. Modern interpretation of the 1938’s play ,Gaslight’, ‘Alexa, can I talk to you?’ leads the spectator into witnessing an awkward situation, where the victim’s perception of truth and reality is being questioned by the smart-home assistant.

As the play reviews the matter of smart-home technology implication in domestic abuse cases, it also invites the audience into a debate space, raising the neutrality of his/her position.

FILES

[BANK LINGO = risk not to be well understood by Alexa. --> backup sentence needed]

ACT 1 — (3 min. max) : ALEXA IS EXECUTING

[Erin is standing while talking]

The room is in a semi-darkness.

Erin is actively looking for something.

She looks under the table (where Alexa is), behind the curtain, in the boxes...

ERIN Ach, I can't see anything... Alexa, light up the room.

ALEXA Sure

The room is lit-up. [The play is "officially" starting]

Erin seems preoccupied.

While searching, she asks Alexa:

ERIN Alexa, I need your help

ALEXA I'm here to help in anyway I can.

What can I do for you?

ERIN I've lost a bracelet.

Alexa, I want you to help me find it.

ALEXA OK. What bracelet are we looking for?

Erin, still looking for the bracelet, no paying much visual attention to Alexa:

ERIN You know, the one Chris gave me yesterday.

Alexa, the silver bracelet.

ALEXA Is it the silver bracelet. Fourteen karat gold fill hook. Six millimeters wide. Handmade?

ERIN Yes, Alexa, that's the one.

ALEXA It was not your birthday yesterday

It was a special bracelet, for a special occasion.

ERIN Yes it was... Chris wanted to apologize for last week when...

... you know, he lost his temper...

Alexa, we need to find it!

ALEXA There is no point in panicking

I'm here to help in anyway I can.

When was the last time you had the bracelet on?

ERIN Chris offered me the bracelet at dinner, and I put it on then... so at...

Alexa, when did we have dinner?

ALEXA Chris and you had dinner at 19:48

ERIN Right. So I put it on then.

And, after dinner we cleaned up and went to bed

And I remember removing the bracelet before going to sleep.

But this morning, Alexa, I couldn't find it!

ALEXA OK. Did you look in the living room?

ERIN Yes, I did Alexa. It is not in the living room.

ALEXA OK. Did you look in the bedroom?

ERIN Yes. And on the top of the bed, underneath, between the cushions...

Alexa, it is not in the bedroom!

ALEXA OK. Did you look in the bathroom?

ERIN Yes Alexa, I did!

ALEXA OK. Did you look in the kitchen?

ERIN Yes. I looked in the kitchen as well!

ACT 2 — (4 min. max) : ALEXA IS INTRODUCING DOUBT

[Erin is sitting with a bit distance from Alexa]

Erin sits on a chair (a bit of distance from Alexa).

She has troubled expression:

ERIN We really need to find it, Alexa.

I'm concerned about Chris' reaction...

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