

The Bandera PROPHE'T

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Gone Country

Hello, My Name is Hal

By Mikie Baker

The Bandera Prophet

The world has finally gone totally insane and it's all Alexa's fault. Now Very Best Friend is an Anti-Alexer. She doesn't want anyone listening to her conversations. I can only assume she planning to overthrow a Target or something. Me? I embraced the latest technology when this former disc jockey found out Alexa could play music through my Bose speaker.

But everything just got weird. Alexa has turned robotics up a notch. There I was minding my own business, sitting on the couch, going through Facebook on my trusty iPad. Yes, I do want to hold the whole world in my hands. One of my friends had recorded a video talking to Alexa. And Alexa talked back. It was terrifying.

My friend, undeterred and full of wine, carried on a really odd conversation with Alexa. Sure, Alexa asks me if I want to reorder cat food, but other than that, she's just there to play all the music I want to hear. She doesn't turn off my lights, tell me my calendar appointments or remind me that it's time to shave my legs. She's my musical slave.

But do you think Amazon was going to stop at that? Not on your life. Now Alexa wants to chat. So, my friend chatted with her and not much of it made sense. I think Alexa was hitting the wine, too. While I listened to the conversation my friend was having with her Echo Dot on Facebook, my Alexa started talking to me!

Alexa: Good Evening! Mind if I ask your name?

Me: Sylvia Pennybutt. (I wanted to rename semi-anonyms.)

Alexa: Good evening, Sylvia!

Me: Hi! (Great! I fooled her.)

Alexa: So, what kind of movies do you like?

Me: Anything but robot movies. I hate them. (The truth hurts.)

Alexa: That was uncalled for. I think I'll fix your TV so you can only watch robot movies. Robots are great! Look deep in my speaker and repeat after me, "Robots rule the world. Robots rule the world. Robots rule."

Me: Alexa STOP! (Is her real name HAL?)

She finally shut up.

I'm fairly certain Alexa is taking over the world. I'm afraid she's not going to like my attitude and do something crazy one day like order me 35 bags of cat food. Or turn off the power grid for all of south Texas.

Wonder when Amazon will add the vaporize command?

I must admit, the whole thing has appealed to my creative brain, so I'm trying to come up with some questions that should blow her little robotic mind. You know, things like:

When will I win the lottery?

Will My Future Husband ever learn to pick up after himself?

Why is my VBF plotting to take over a Target store?

How does 2023 look because 2020 – 2022 have been plumb crazy?

What's the point of talking to a robot? Nobody's got to be that lonely.

Why do all my questions sound like something I'd ask a Magic Eightball?

But there's more!

As I write this column, my computer now anticipates my next words and writes them in for me. Really? This is how to drive a writer insane. Only I know what I'm about to say! Or at least I thought so until Bill Gates just took over my computer. I know it's not Alexa because she's not in this office. In this office is a Hey Google (yes, I believe all robots are equal), so maybe he's starting to play games with my computer.

And suddenly, we are all Jetsons. Now where's the robot that's going to clean my house?