

# SCRIPTED SMALLTALK

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## INTRO

A: Hello! Welcome to SCRIPTED SMALLTALK. Are you ready to start?

I have written this performance as a series of scripted conversations between audience members that I, so to say, have imagined.

I would like to ask you to participate in the reading of these conversations. When you are given a paper with script please read it out loud, in a manner you yourself choose. The performance will last about 45 minutes. I hope you will like it.

SCRIPT tryout

A: Is this thing on? Hello? One, Two, One, Two, hello?

B: One, Two. can you hear me?

C: Yes, fine! Let's start. Who is "A".

B: Ok, I'm "B".

C: "C"

B: Who is "A"?

A: I think it's me. A, B, C

B: B, C, A

C: End of script 1.

B: That was short!

A: That was just a tryout, I think. To check if everything is working OK.

B: I see. Yes, it works fine.

C: Yes. For me too.

B: So. And now what?

A: I don't know. I think it's over? But the next conversation will start then.

C: But are we going to read all the scripts?

A: Really?

B: No, I don't think so. Let's see!

C: Oh I see. Oh, so let's hear. What is this thing really about... small talks between audience members?

A: Let's see. This is kind of like "waiting for"

C: But without Godot.

B: And without the tree.

C: Who's the tree? Hello, hello, one, two, one, two, tree...

A: SCRIPT TWO. Second script.

B: Hello!

A: Hi, how are you?

B: Thanks – fine. Say- have you seen this new science fiction TV series – shit – forgot the name. But the basic idea is great. You can be hired by a company –and have your memory and personality erased and then you are re-programmed to do whatever kind of job. Like you might be just anyone - secret agent, brain surgeon, school teacher, an Inuit from Alaska, a NASA astronaut or whatever... but it's just for a weekend or so. It's project-based....

A: Aha

C: I think I have heard about it. The actors are doing a great job – every episode a totally new role to play. It's fantastic. Also because they forget everything about their previous projects, it's like always new, so it's not problem to miss an episode or two.

B: Aaa, now I remember – It's called Doll-House. That's the place where they work -- it looks like a Pilates centre. When the "dolls" are at “home” they are in this “neutral” or “blank” state – and wear dancers' clothes.

*pause*

B: Did I fall asleep?

A: For a while.

B: Can I go now?

A: If you like.

This is the first thing they say when they have just been reprogrammed. What would a natural dialogue look like?

B: Do you feel free?

A: I'm trying to do my best.

C: So can you tell me what exactly is going on here?

B: Yes, try to imagine this: a theatre. An empty stage. There are black curtains at the walls. The floor is hmm.. beige?off-white?. There are about hundred people sitting on about one hundred chairs. They are watching the floor. You are watching the floor. Behind the walls, there is another room, behind the other room, there is music. Now you are listening to the music.

*pause*

You are falling asleep. Now you look up and you are again in the theatre. You

suddenly remember that you are here to watch a presentation of performance. It seems that the performance is already going on. But you are not sure. Somebody is reading a script. Very slowly. Outside it's SNOWING.

C: Are you trying to re-program me? Ha ha ha. It's not snowing!

A: It looks to me like the artist is trying to manipulate the people into something. And it isn't sure if it works.

C: Yeah. I agree.

B: My theory. My theory is that the director could not manage to find enough performers for the play so she gives it to the audience. It is also quite convenient because you don't have to pay them. Probably didn't get the subsidy this year neither, or perhaps the process was so bad she decided to quit it all and is now using the audience to get away with it.

A: Yeah, it's like outsourcing. Very convenient. Hmmm, but I am not sure if the audience can really perform very well. Even if we try our best. I mean - it might look like we are having fun but really we are not. And this is because of the artificial setup. And in any case if we are now performers we are actually on a job. We should strike or something, demand higher salary.

C: And the extreme pressure - when you have the feeling that you have to perform you usually don't manage even if you try your best.

*short pause*

B: I don't know what I would do in such a situation -- maybe fall asleep?

*pause*

Dream something? Maybe dance...

A: That would be nice.

C: That would be nice.

### SCRIPT 3 (EXPERIMENTS)

A: Hello, everybody! Can you hear me? Am I loud enough?

B: Hello. Yes, I can hear you. Does this sound strange? /.../ Hello.

C: Hi! I mean Hi, I think it is because of the microphones. I am trying to sound natural.

D: Hello Hello, Hi Hello. Does this sound natural to you?

C: It isn't really natural. But good enough. Quite good. Maybe it isn't supposed to be natural. That's what was just said. It's scripted.

A: Scrip-*ted*. Is the emphasis on SCRIPT or TED? Let's hope it's not on TED cause then somebody has to sound SMART and enthusiastic. But scripted – on the other hand means that nothing will be surprising.

C: Scripted. Said who? It's kind of weird, yes. But ok, why not! I guess it's an experiment and we should try to co-operate if we want to know what it is.

B: I think it's a great idea. A scripted conversation. So we can pretend to be talking to each other and actually it's scripted.

D: Yeah. I agree. I just find it quite difficult to keep track of my part. The sentences are too long. And it does not sound like a real talk. It feels artificial.

A: It is artificial but that is also the idea –

B: What is the idea?

D: Scripting the audience. Outsourcing the show?

A: But what about that silly SNOW thing?

B: Exactly - great idea – I mean not the SNOW but the script thing - but then the realisation? I find it didactic.

D: It's "discursive", you idiot.

A: No, "conceptual" is what it is!

C: Not funny. Not funny at all.

D: Not funny at all?

*pause*

C: I like experiments and experimental performances -- but this one -- I don't see the point. As far as I can tell the script is trying to follow the audience... And...But...

(pause)

A: It is very often like that - interesting for the artists but not so much for the others, I mean like the audience.

B: I also like experiments but not to be subject of them. Like did I go to the theatre and pay money to be a Guiney pig?

C: Well, but if you think about it. I am thinking right now - it can be good – in a way. For something. I don't know exactly. I mean - what else can we do than experiment?

*pause*

Or what did you expect –?

B: I don't know. I didn't expect anything.

A: Well. I guess you are right. But I think a lot depends on the content. If we would be talking about something. Something else than the script, I mean. Then we might actually be saying something.

C: But wait?

A: Right.

B: I don't know, but you know “scripting” is so trendy these days. It's like the next thing after documentary and reality show...It's like, people don't write novels or poems or “to do” lists any more, they write scripts...

C: Indeed, and not to mention “self-reflexetivity” ...but anyway, we don't even know what it will be, what we will be talking about. I'm sure it will get more clear as we proceed. Why don't we wait and see?

A: Ok

*pause*

A: I guess we cannot just wait and see.

B: Or while we wait and see, we can still continue the talk, right?

C: At least practice reading. English the Language – Learn to speak English. Repeat after me: “Do you speak English?” “Yes, a little”, “Can you tell me where the nearest Post Office is?”

D: Post office?

B: Yes, sure. But I was wondering what this scripted talk is all about. Does any of you have an idea?

D: Yes, I can help: **Script** may refer to:

Behavioral script, a sequence of expected behaviors;

SCRIPT Scottish Centre for Research in Intellectual Property and Technologies;

Script (comics), the dialogue for a comic book or comic strip;  
Script (performing arts), the dialogue and instructions for a play, musical or other performance work;  
Script (recorded media), the dialogue and instructions for a film or television programme;  
Scripting language (computing), a script written for the command interpreter of an operating system;  
Script (Unix), a tool that records a tty session;  
SCRIPT/VS, a text formatting language developed at IBM  
Scripts (artificial intelligence), a structure for representing procedural knowledge;  
The Script, an Irish band  
The Script (album), an album by The Script  
Writing system;  
Behavioral Script – a sequence of expected behaviors  
Edit. Edit?  
See also: Scrip, any currency substitute;

C: What did you say? Can you repeat? Ah, just kidding.

A: No, not yet. It's a bit chaotic. But I'm sure it will become more clear as we proceed. Sometimes it's better not to know, you know. If you ask too many questions and try to understand everything at once – it might not be the best solution.

D: We are here to question. It is an experiment and this is why we are at NASA and not at the Holland Festival or Stedelijk.

B: You are right. Questions. But it isn't true that experiments belong to small places only. The biggest institutions are everywhere trying to downscale themselves now, and reach their audiences in more individual ways. Like you know they try to make it PERSONAL... Even the operas will soon get rid of their decors, then they will even out the hierarchies between the stage and the auditorium and all the other spaces in the house. The performances would take place everywhere. Sooner or later there will be ticket office operas when the ticketing people sing thing like: Seat number 12 on row 26, that'll be 28 Euros. Ca-a-a-ash or c-a-a-rd.

D: ...and the performance would become more like a party or something.

A: A party? I wonder what there will be on the stage then. Like would they leave it empty? Or make a bar?

D: I don't know. Well, here it is all empty.

A: Yes.

*pause*

A: You know, we could have some fun...But we won't.

B: But we won't.

SCRIPT 3 (SOMETHING)

A: Hello

B: Hello

C: Hi

D: Hello.

A: Hello Hello Hi Hello. Does this sound natural to you?

C: No. Not really. It sounds very much like the last script.

D: Scripted. Maybe it is the same script.

B: I hope it is not exactly the same.

D: No, I can tell, it's already slightly different.

B: Yes, good. But I was wondering what this scripted talk is all about? Does any of you have an idea?

D: No. Not yet. It's a bit messy. But I'm sure it will become more clear as we proceed. Sometimes it's better not to know, you know. If you ask too many questions and try to understand everything at once – it might not be the best solution.

C: Solution? Do we need to solve something?

A: Do we have a problem?

B: Again but maybe we should, we could be more enthusiastic?

C: Even more? But we also don't want to over do it.

D: Oy, I don't like to be dragged into a performance – when I go to see a show I actually want to “see a show”. Does that make me... conservative?

B: No, I mean yeah, I also agree with you. Especially when they “make” you participate. I think we should always have choice – to take part or not.

C: Exactly.

A: And usually anyway it is always the same people that volunteer to perform in such situations. I wonder why? It seems they are already prepared just in case they were to go on stage.

D: Like sitting in the audience - waiting for the chance to jump on stage or grab a microphone.

B: Yes, these are the “performer types” and usually they are performers.

D: I don't like such situations. But I think that now anyway everybody is a performer.

Some are just performing the “non-performer”...so to say

C: Yes, you are probably right. So which one are you? The performer-performer or the non-performer-performer?

B: I’m not a performer.

D: You know, when you are stuck somewhere and you want to get out but actually you are stuck, you are stuck “because” you want to get out.

B: Stuck in what? I’m not stuck.

D: There you go!

B: What?

C: That’s exactly how stuck you are. You don’t even know how stuck you are.

*(pause)*

B: I don’t know what to say now.

D: When you say that you don’t know what to say – you have however already said something.

C: And besides if it is in the script. There’s a contradiction!

B: But it’s not in the script. That’s why I said that I didn’t know what to say. I have a blank page.

C: So if you have a blank page does it mean that you are disappearing as a character?

B: Yes, I fear so. I feel like half a person already.

C: You can have one of my lines.

A: But, hey!

Look at me!

Can you see me? I haven’t said a thing since a while and I’m still here, alright? It’s not true that you have to always say something in order to not disappear. As they say, there is no backstage.

B: Yes, but still it’s a bit weird to have no lines. Makes you feel excluded.

A: Yes, like I also have something to say, but just don’t get the chance to say it, usually because the others are talking all the time.

C: You have something to say?

A: Yes.

C: Say it.

A: Something

D: Feel better now?

A: Well, I would prefer to say something more substantial than “something” but...

B: Something can be a lot of things!

D: Omg! Why did we get the absolute worst script?

A: Something. Something. Something. Yes, totally bad luck!

B: That was our chance. Time's up now.

C: Shit!

## SCRIPT GHOSTS

A: Hey - kids, enough of smalltalk. Let's do something!

B: Yes!

C: Yes what shall we do.

A: That's a good question.

B: I have an idea! Let's play. Let's play something.

C: Oh – but we are already playing something.

D: Something called theatre.

B: But this theatre game seems to have exhausted itself. We can't just play as though we are small talking for the whole performance. I mean it's a great idea and makes me think of many things regarding the audience and the performance, and the politics of the relationship between them ---- or whatever - but let's face the fact - it's getting boring.

D: Yes - you might be right.

B: So play. What shall we play?

A: How about some game.

C: How about for example --- (pause)

- “The self-interview Game” – it’s where one person is having an interview with oneself, while the others listen.

A: Very interesting.

B: Or how about – “Imagination Game”?

A: Imagination game?

B: Yes: imagine a small group of people (performers) entering the space. It might be again the same space we can see here.

They enter the space one after another and move towards. There are lots of chairs in the space on a tribune on a stage.

A: They sit down on the chairs and sit next to each other and behind one another.

C: Then one of them stands up and hands out papers with scripts written on them to the others. They start reading...

A: Oh- but this is not a good game. It's already happening.

B: Yes hey - you guessed it. It's the “Ghost Game”.

D: I don't get it - I just don't get it. Why should I want to imagine myself? To imagine what is already happening? The only thing I can think of when I see myself reading a script out loud in the theatre is that it is quite embarrassing.

A: Yes – like a woo-doo workshop.

C: Totally.

B: It's like to make us feel that there is nowhere to get out to. That everything is already scripted so to say.

C: I agree. It's quite clear. But what I don't get is - what is the point in trying to convey such an image to us?

A: Perhaps, perhaps it's how things are?

C: Of course - I could agree with that. But still I don't quite agree that because this is how things are - that then one should necessarily try to reproduce that. I might be stupid but I still come to see art things or performances hoping to get an idea of how things could be other ways -- other ways from what they already are!

A: Yep – you got a point there.

B: But I wanted to continue the “Ghost Game”.

A: Yes, let's get back to it. So, one person says to the others happily:

(pause)

"Time passes quickly when one is with like-minded people!"

B: The other one answers:

“Indeed - we are a great audience, aren't we! I mean really, all of us, both those that read and those that don't read, those that only listen and watch.

D: Replies the third one:

D: It's the one's that don't speak that are actually the important ones.

B: Indeed - the listener so to say make it all happen, they are the ones in the backstage, They run the show so to say. Cause they let the speakers speak.

D: Oh, I don't know if that's really true. I mean the 99% like to think they are important but in reality – who cares about their statistics.

B: Right and – here too - the listening person is still quite insignificant. I mean, they don't even have a microphone...maybe they're not even here. You know they are like in the radio.

A: Yes, they are excluded, and invisible like ghosts.

B: They have "no say" so to say

C: But hey - that's the point with listening

A: What

C: To have "no say" otherways they are--//

A: To say nothing?

C: I mean to listen is --- ah whatever. Maybe we should let the ones that are listening now say what they think!

B: OK

PAUSE 9 sec.

B: Standard response!

A: So the ghost audience is actually the "listening audience"?

C: What do WE know! Are we still in the GHOST game?

B: What do I know!

(pause)

A: What now?

D: Yes, What now?

B: Omg. Are we in the future now?

C: Calm down everybody!

B: Yes, it says: 7 YEARS LATER.

A: But isn't it quite nice that instead of some kind of – well...

It is more complex – and so the audience has to make quite an effort to understand and decipher the performance which is a script which is about the deciphering deciphering of a script that then becomes the

B: Performance -- that becomes the

D: Manifestation of self-reflexivity -- and thus...

C: Yes, as it says in the flyer: performance as such, the

B: Exactly -- it serves as the so-called "focus". Focus. Focus.

D: Yes, it is so hard to focus on things these days. And that is quite important for a performance I guess.

C: Exactly. But isn't it that the, that the

B: That the question remains the same or even grows with every "measure". And this is because...

C: Because it's contagious.

A: Yap, you're able to catch it from others.

C: This is the mimetic turn.

B: This is what?

A: Mimetic behaviour occurs when several people are running in the same direction not knowing why they are running or where the others are going.

B: But are we lacking something?

A: No. Are we?

C: Ehm. Well. It's clearly...

B: You have to be of a certain age to realize that you will never know where you're going. What you have to understand is you're doing things and they are all deviations. But you keep doing them in order to avoid being attacked by the fact that you have no idea where you're heading.

C: You mean existential torture and collapse.

B: Exactly. In the meantime however while you're doing all the deviations you also come to understand where you're heading - even if where you're heading is down down down into the abyss of the disaster.

C: The so-called "False choice" in spectacular abundance, a choice which lies in the juxtaposition of competing and complementary spectacles and also in the juxtaposition of roles (signified and carried mainly by people) which are at once exclusive and overlapping, develops into a struggle of vaporous qualities meant to stimulate loyalty to quantitative triviality.... Triviality triviality.

D: But, hey: How many A.D.D. kids does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Let's go ride bikes!

A B C D: Music!

SCRIPT (script, love, fun)

A: But I was just thinking -- what “are” the scripts?

B: What do you mean? What are...

*pause*

B: It's what you follow!

B: Like Bill Murray follows “Groundhog Day”.

B: Or Jim Carrey follows “True Man Show”.

A: Oh, you mean like...?

B: Exactly, it's like -- if this was like -- in the future, it would be totally like Neo in “Matrix” like that sort of -- script script you know.

A: Or like the season program in a local art venue.

B: Totally! That's like the dark version.

A: Like being a student at the Institute.

B: Yeah, but it's kind of good too. You know it's sort of the SHIT that makes things go around.

C: But, I mean... eh... what about love? Then people can't fall in love, sort of...

B: Well...

//////////

A: But anyway love is something you do, not something that happens to you.

B: No, no, this is the thing, if love was something that you did that would be scary. You actually fall in love because the script wants you to.

A: I see.

C: But then I want to fall in love with the script...

(pause)

B: There you go.

A: What script?

*(pause)*

B: Oh, did the choreographer leave?

C: Was that the choreographer?

*pause*

A: Oh my, I'm tired now. And my chair is really uncomfortable. Hey, it's not even a chair. It's too hot/cold. What are we doing here?

D: What are we doing what are we doing - my question is rather - who are we?

C: We are all here.

B: Yeah, I guess we are trapped.

C: Pause.

A: So, are you ready for the party?

C: Party?

D: What party!

A: Hahaha. Just kidding. Not a party.

D: Really? Is there an after party?

A: No. I mean. So my question... Oh shit, I forgot what I wanted to say.

C: Oh, you might be right. It's like the tree falling in the forest -- when nobody watches, it means it didn't fall -- right? But on the other hand -- you might have 100 people watching a tree fall and it doesn't fall...?

B: Cause there is no tree to fall, so to say.

A: Yes. No performance to watch.

*(pause)*

A: Pause. And now we should feel happy, cause we are getting "paid" for our efforts here.

C: And for being proactive in general. Great.

*(pause)*

B: Let's continue, where were we?

C: Yes. But have you seen this: [http, w, w, w, dot, youtube, dot, com, slash, watch, question mark, v, equals, capital b, x, p, d, small m, capital K, E, L, E, one, k.?](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxdmKLEonek)

A: Hey, we're not online, can you please, describe it?

B: Yes, it's complicated you know. *(pause)*

B: Is this political now?

C: That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

D: *read inaudibly 5 seconds*

A: *read inaudibly 7 seconds*

C: *talk inaudibly 3 seconds*

C: *pause*

B: Are we ghosts now?

C: We are a silly joke.

D: Hmm. Yes, it's embarrassing, but it can be very funny. You know but later. Much later.

A: And so the script is another way to reduce the "nothingness" or "emptiness" that is there? A cover-up?

B: Are you saying that the script is also a replacement for party?

D: Or a compensation?

B: For?

A: But we also shouldn't blame the script for everything! Sometimes it's also obviously our fault you know. People don't read well. Or even if they read well. They, you know, don't understand it! *pause*

B: Break! (interval)

SCRIPT (honesty)

C: Actually I can't think of anything to say any more.

*short pause to drink something or eat a candy*

D: Me neither...

B: But they say we should articulate ourselves -- at least to try? Or keep trying?

C: Articulate (participate) or die! (*ask for more candy*)

A: Let's speed up a bit. We're reading too slowly.

D: Speed up what?

C: How about an enthusiastic speech that says what it's all about.

B: Aaa, and what's it all about?

A: According to the script...

C: Script says: consult the script.

B: The script says: look for help.

C: Deus ex Machina ('deʊs ɛks 'mækiːnə) Ehh - I was just imagining - that we could say this all together. The whole audience you know. One, two, three: "Deus ex Machina". Like maybe something would happen then.

(pause)

B: Well, but sometimes it's not enough to want something

D: No, no, it totally is.

B: No, it's not.

A: Yes, it is.

B: No, it's not.

A: Yes, it is.

B: No, it's not.

D: *uncomfortable pause*

A: Shit! Such a mess. Pradzioj galvojau.

D: As irgi.

A: Or maybe we really have nothing in common?

C: That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard!

A: You said it like you meant it!

*pause*

B: Hmm. Yes. But what about honesty?

C: What? Honesty?

D: Exactly. Let me explain, kids. Honesty means that you'd be saying the truth -- even if you would risk something. Like a politician would risk not being re-elected.

B: Yes, but then what would you say?

A: Truth? Are you kidding me? You want the truth? Here's the truth if you want it -- you are quite stupid all of you! You think that you are good for something but really you don't know shit and you don't dare shit and oh then you're trying to make some joke you think you are funny -- truth is you aren't even funny -- you fucking smartasses, cowards!!! A bunch of idiots, that's what you are!

D: It's not us, it's the script, man.

A: Bulshit. And the script a piece of shit, too.

*pause*

B: I think that we are on a Titanic. Not the movie, the real Titanic, the ship is going under.

D: Aha, and so what.

B: And so what -- but, hey -- so what, that's the whole point -- what's the point. We all know that. And still...

C: Waiting here..

D: Waiting for someone to bring candy. Not a ship, I think we are on an airplane.

B: But actually -- actually all that -- doesn't matter that much, really it doesn't matter at all -- what matters is that we are all here.

A: No, I have no clue what you're talking about.

B: Exactly.

A: It's a pity we only exist in the future.

D: It's not a pity. Why's that a pity?

B: Is there no escape at all!

ALMOST THE LAST SCRIPT

B: This is the last script. No, not the last. The next one is the last.

D: Is that sad?

A: What?

D: That nothing lasts forever. So somehow you never get into anything really - like you don't even begin because you know it's gonna be over.

*Short pause*

A: Yes, it's sad. Reminds me of some love stories.

*pause*

B: Eeee... I feel a strong urge to sing "Stayin Alive"

C: Me too... But we wont.

D: Ok. So where's the party?

C: It's here. Don't you feel it?

A: I feel it, in a way. I like it. Talking to people. Again and again.

B: Again and again

A: Uhh, there is no end to it.

B: And but but there is no drinks.

C: Yes- I've seen some-

B: But is it one bottle for everyone? That is half empty anyway.

A: At first this seemed like a very bad idea. But actually when you think of it -- it's almost fun. I feel more relaxed now.

B: So you are saying, it is actually not real - eh- like it's a construction of itself. Instead of being a party it is "about" a party?

A: Of course - when you talk about it you talk "about" it.

B: It's the opposite of what I "readed" in the internet. The performance is not "about" something, it "is" something. "Readed"?

C: Yes, in a way. But not just that. We also simply and honestly want to enjoy. We want to have some fun. But this "fun" or "party" the more you think of it the more it becomes blurred. And annoying. And in the end...

A: "Good evening and welcome to Cineplex Theatre. Can I get you the super-combo

popcorn-soft-drink special this evening?" So?

B: Yes, thanks.

*Pause*

C: Hell, I have the same feeling. But then I...

A: Lots of people hope that self-reflection, more self-reflection will shed some light on the so called "fish-tank" situation.

*Pause*

D: Are we dreaming now?

A: Surf the dream.

C: But what is this dream?

D: Surf it, dude.

A: Are we?

C: But hey, I totally want to get out of here.

D: Surf it man, surf it.

A: "Oh Mann"!

C: Is there no escape at all?

D: But I know more than that.

B: More total for being fragmented.

C: Wait. Listen!

I am reading slowly now. Slowly and clearly. I am reading and you are listening to my reading voice. And the more you listen, the more you become relaxed, slowly more relaxed and slowly more hypnotized. You become hypnotized because you are listening to my reading. Now you forget what you were thinking because you were listening and as you are listening to my voice, the sounds in the room become silent because every time you hear the word "silent" you are sinking deeper and deeper because you become more silent and the script has dissolved into silence because you are listening to the silence and and there is no up and no down, no script and no performance, and there is nothing because there is nothing, emptiness emptiness only and "silence" and no typographical, lexical, or even syntactical cleverness is enough to make it heard.

*pause 5 seconds*

B: S I L E N C I O...

*long pause*

A: Guys, we're almost done, that was quite an adventure, it's been a lot of fun talking to you but let's say something about the performance as well?

D: Shit, you are right, we almost forgot. What can we say?