

# **D . O . E .**

**a play for sounds and voices**

**by**

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INT - FRONT ROOM

*SFX - Man is shuffling about in the foreground, fumbling for matches, and then lighting a cigarette. The final movement of Vaughan Williams' sixth symphony - or something equally unsettling - plays softly in the background. A general air of unease prevails.*

*SFX - In the foreground, man draws nervously on a cigarette. In the distance, a cuckoo calls, sounding an augmented 4th. A cockerel crows twice, but each time it is cut short: COCK-A-DOODLE-DUH, COCK-A-DOODLE-DUH. The cuckoo calls again, with the same unnatural interval as before.*

01        MAN              (*Exhales loudly*)

                                (*Muttering with a slight tremble*) It's happening again.

*SFX - Man gets out of chair. Feet cross the room, and then something is thumped three times. The cockerel crows again, but this time it gets stuck: COCK-A-COCK-A-COCK-A and so on. There is a cry of agony and another loud thump. The cockerel stops. After a short pause, the cuckoo calls again, sounding a fifth this time.*

*SFX - Frantic clicking, and the music changes from Vaughan Williams, through the shower soundtrack from "Psycho" and "Land of Hope and Glory", to what appears to be a French lesson.*

02        FR.LESSON parts of the body. (*Beat*) Les

partis du corps. (Beat) The finger. (Beat) Le doigt. (Beat) The ear. (Beat) L'oreille. (Beat) The spleen. (Beat) La rate. (Beat) The hepatic portal vein. (Beat) La veine hépa-

*SFX - More clicking. A brief extract from Penderecki's "Threnody for the victims of Hiroshima", followed by a couple of bars of "The Birdie Song", and then the music settles down to "Morning" from Grieg's "Peer Gynt". Cow bells tinkle, cows moo and sheep baa. A cuckoo calls, correctly this time, and a cock crows.*

*SFX - Feet return to their original position, and man gets back in chair. Smoking continues, more at ease now.*

*SFX - After 30 seconds or so, the phone rings, muffled by a door. Man gets up and opens door. Picks up phone.*

INT - HALLWAY

03        MAN            Yeah?

*SFX - All he can hear - all we can hear - down the phone is the sound of a phone ringing again, as if heard over a phone. The phone is picked up, but all we hear is still the sound of a phone ringing, only now as if heard over a phone, over a phone. And so on. Slams down the phone in disgust.*

*SFX - Breathing becomes nervous again. Lights another cigarette. Picks up phone, dials a number. We hear the ringing tone. The phone is picked up at the other end, but all we hear is the ringing tone again, more distant. This phone is also apparently picked up, but all that happens is that the ringing tone gets more distant still. And so on.*

*SFX - Man cries in anguish again. Slams down phone, and storms back into the lounge. Door close behind him. We are back to Vaughan Williams' sixth again. Paces up and down frantically.*

INT - FRONT ROOM

04 (Muttering again) They're not going to get me. They're not going to get me. I'm going to beat them. I'm not going to be defeated.

*SFX - The phone goes again, still muffled by the closed door.*

05 (Through clenched teeth, starting quietly, gradually getting more manic) Let it ring. let it ring. LET IT RING!

*SFX - Phone continues to ring*

06 Oh dammit.

INT - HALLWAY

*SFX - Races out and picks up phone. All he can hear this time is heavy breathing. His own nervous breathing duets briefly with the stranger on the other end of the phone, until the other starts to cough, gasps out a "Sorry", and then rings off.*

*SFX - Man gently replaces phone, and returns to front room, resuming pacing up and down.*

INT - FRONT ROOM

07 (Muttering once again) It's not

going to get to me. It's not going to get to me. It's not (Beat) going (Beat) to. (Beat) It's. (Beat) It's. (Beat) Deep breath. (Beat) DEEP breath. (Beat) That's better. That's better.

***SFX - The music has stopped, and there is a period of silence, where all we can hear is breathing, gradually getting more and more relaxed.***

08                   Phew! Nearly had me there.  
                      Nearly had me there.

***SFX - There is a brief pause, following which there is - once again - the sound of a telephone ringing, muffled by the door.***

09                   Aaaaaaaaaaggh!

***SFX - Frantic scrabbling at door. Door opens, whereupon the muffled noise turns into the sound of a doorbell, being pressed in the rhythm of a phone ringing. Door is closed again.***

***SFX - Door opens. Deafening sound of traffic jam. Engines running, cars hooting, people shouting etc.***

EXT - TRAFFIC JAM OUTSIDE FRONT DOOR

10                   (Shouting, barely audible above traffic) HELLO? WHAT DO YOU WANT? WHO ARE YOU?

11     DOILE           (Totally incomprehensible shout back)

12     MAN            WHAT?

13     DOILE           (Still totally incomprehensible)

14       MAN           SORRY?

15       DOILE          (Still totally incomprehensible)

16       MAN           OH COME IN, WHOEVER YOU ARE.

**SFX - Door closes. Noise ceases instantly.**

INT - FRONT ROOM

17       DOILE          Doile. From the-

18       MAN           Wait. I just want to try something.

**SFX - Door opens again. Pastoral scene. Sheep, cows, etc. Door closes.**

19                    Oh no. (Beat. Then, absently)  
                         Sorry, you are Mr.-?

20       DOILE          Doile.

21       MAN           D - O - Y - ?

22       DOILE          D - O - I

23       MAN           From?

24       DOILE          D.O.E. (Beat) Department of the Environment.

25       MAN           (Brimming with gratitude) Oh,  
                         thank God you've come. Please step this way. (They go into lounge.) It's been dreadful.

26       DOILE          (Testily) Yes, yes, I'm sure it has been. I'm sure it has. These things can be pretty unpleasant-

**SFX - Helicopter flies overhead**

27                    Still, should be able to fix

it-

*SFX - Small jet passes over, quite low*

28 MAN What do you think it might be?

*SFX - Two more small jets pass over in rapid succession*

29 DOILE Well, what it probably means is that there's some sort of localised-

*SFX - Tornado whooshes over, left to right*

30 (Shouting) LOCALISED DISTURBANCE OF-

*SFX - Another Tornado whooshes over, right to left*

31 MAN (Also shouting) DISTURBANCE OF WHAT?

*SFX - All hell breaks loose: helicopters, Tornados whizzing backwards and forwards, Lancasters rumbling low, World War 2 fighters swooping in, etc. - in fact anything you can lay your hands on. This continues for slightly longer than the listener can bear.*

*SFX - Three loud thumps on the ceiling bring the noise to an abrupt halt. Complete silence for several seconds.*

32 UPSTAIRS (Muffled) Sorry.

(There is a pregnant pause.)

33 DOILE (Quietly) Excuse me, mate, but I couldn't help noticing that you live in a bungalow.

34 MAN (Despairingly) I know.

35 DOILE Well, well. You have got a problem. (Beat) Mind if I take a shuftie around?

36 MAN Sure, sure. Go ahead.

**SFX - Some sort of device is switched on. This is followed by a series of Geiger counter clicks, interspersed with odd "Wheee" noises.**

37 DOILE (Mutters to himself. Shuffles papers.)

**SFX - The device continues to make odd noises. Finally it goes completely ape.**

38 DOILE Hang about. what's this then?

39 MAN What?

40 DOILE This, mate. This. My God, only a Model 37 ECU. Only a bleeding Model 37. Jesus Christ, mate. I should've known as soon as I stepped through the door. This place has got Model 37 stamped all over it. Home sweet Model bleeding 37 home. Bloody hell. Now what do we do?

41 MAN Excuse me, but can you explain to me what on earth you're on about?

42 DOILE (Fuming) Listen mate, don't come the innocent with me. Don't try and tell me you don't know what a Model 37 ECU is about. I may look stupid, but don't think I don't know my ECUs. And this is definitely a Model 37. (Beat) And you mate, are in for a long stretch. Possession. Twenty

years minimum. *If* you're lucky.  
Can I use your phone?

- 43 MAN Well-
- 44 DOILE (Wearily) No, don't tell me. It's usually the first thing that goes if there's a Model 37 around. Christ! You are a sick man, mister.
- 45 MAN (Worried) I still don't understand what you're on about.
- 46 DOILE (Still weary) What I'm on about, mate, is the grey box tucked away under those shelves in the corner. The grey box what is causing all your problems.
- 47 MAN (Relieved) Oh, *that* thing. Never did quite make it out. Left behind by the previous owners.
- 48 DOILE In which case, mate, you should sue your surveyors. If I'm not mistaken - and I'm never bleeding well mistaken, by the way - that grey box is a Model 37 Environmental Control Unit, as banned by the Sao Paulo convention. That grey box is one of the most dangerous pieces of kit that it's ever been my displeasure to deal with. And believe me, I've come across a few.
- 49 MAN (Incredulous) But I thought it was just some sort of device for playing background music, creating an ambience, that sort of thing. (Beat) Mind you, it

*has been playing up a bit lately.*

- 50 DOILE (Sarcastically) Playing up a bit, indeed. Listen, sunshine, this thing could take out most of the neighbourhood if you pressed the buttons in the wrong order. If you were really unlucky, this thing could probably make half of Europe uninhabitable for fifty generations. (Beat) Bloody Environmentalists.
- 51 MAN What?
- 52 DOILE I said, bloody Environmentalists.
- 53 MAN Who are they?
- 54 DOILE People who prat about with ECUs like this Model 37 here.
- 55 MAN Yes, but- (Beat) Look, can you explain all this from the beginning?
- 56 DOILE (Calming down slightly) You really want to know? (Beat) Well, it all goes back to the late '70s - 1970s that is - when they invented a thing called a Walkman. Sort of a portable music machine. First time people could carry around their own personal sound environment with them wherever they went. Used to see people on trains wearing these funny headphone things.
- 57 MAN Really?

- 58 DOILE Yes, really. Then came things called iPods. They could hold everything you'd ever heard. But that wasn't enough, was it?
- 59 MAN Wasn't it?
- 60 DOILE 'Course not. Not when they came up with virtual reality. Sort of goggle things you could wear. Made you think you were inside your own artificial world. Very clever, mind.
- 61 MAN And people wore those on trains, too?
- 62 DOILE 'Course. (Beat) But y'see, trouble was, people being people, even virtual reality wasn't quite good enough. Had to be able to control *real* reality. Press a button, and transform your living room into Acapulco. Press another, and - bingo! - a naked lady appears. They called themselves "Environmentalists". (Beat) Scum of the earth.
- 63 MAN But what was so bad about that?
- 64 DOILE Imagine how powerful the technology had to be, mate. That little grey box over there, that Model 37, contains at least five of your matter - anti-matter bifurcation/re-integration circuits. Plus a couple of reverse photon wranglers, in all probability. Like I said, could wipe out a fair amount of real estate. Wouldn't surprise me if it's gone critical already.

65       MAN           Oh dear. (Pause) Well, I'm awfully sorry.

66       DOILE          Oh, don't bother. Just give us a hand to dismantle it. And let's hope that if it does go up, it only takes us with it? Got the time?

***SFX - An express train roars past the window, rattling china ornaments.***

67       MAN           9:53. (Beat) Unless it's running late, that is.

68       DOILE          (Under breath) Jesus.

69       MAN           What can I do?

70       DOILE          Well-

***SFX - Clanking of tools, then heaving and straining***

71                   First of all, you can zip me into this suit. (Voice is slightly muffled from now on.)

***SFX - Zip being done up with great effort.***

72                   Is that completely tight?

73       MAN          I think so.

74       DOILE          Right, I'm going in. Stay right back.

***SFX - Man wearing cumbersome protective gear stumbling across room.***

75                   OK, I'm there. Let's try this first.

***SFX - Click***

INT - COCKTAIL BAR

76                    Damn.

**SFX - Click**

INT - CAVERN

77                    Bastard! What about this?

78     MAN            (Urgently) I wouldn't press that button if I were you.

**SFX - Click. There is a deafening explosion, followed by a long silence, as debris falls to the floor.**

INT - FRONT ROOM

79     DOILE          Jesus Christ!

80     MAN            (Matter-of-fact) Yes, it did that to me the first time I pressed that one. Should've warned you earlier. Sorry.

81     DOILE          So you bleeding should.  
Bastard's deafened me. (Beat)  
OK, what about this one?

**SFX - Click**

EXT - DESERT ISLAND

82                    Or this?

INT - FRONT ROOM

**SFX - Loud fart.**

83                    (Impatiently) Oh sod it, let's try this one.

*SFX - Another almighty explosion. When it has died down and the debris is still settling, there is another click, right in the foreground, and the sound stops abruptly, as if the whole of the foregoing was a tape being listened to by the following two characters.*

INT - MORTUARY

84 ATT 1 And that's where it stops, eh?  
85 ATT 2 Yup, that's it.  
86 ATT 1 Hmm. Brave man.  
87 ATT 2 Very brave.  
88 ATT 1 OK. What do we have here then?  
89 ATT 2 Tip of (Beat) right index finger.  
90 ATT 1 Check.  
91 ATT 2 Half of left earlobe.  
92 ATT 1 Check.  
93 ATT 2 Small portion of spleen.  
94 ATT 1 Check.  
95 ATT 2 2.3cm section of hepatic portal vein.  
96 ATT 1 Check.  
97 ATT 2 Sliver of tooth. Probably molar.  
98 ATT 1 Check.  
99 ATT 2 Eyelash, slightly singed.  
100 ATT 1 Check.

101 ATT 2 Small section of kneecap.

102 ATT 1 Left or right?

103 ATT 2 Left, I think.

104 ATT 1 Check. Any more?

105 ATT 2 Nope. That's all we recovered.

106 ATT 1 OK. Label for the bag, please.

107 ATT 2 There you go.

108 ATT 1 Thank you. (Writing) Now, it's  
Mr Doile. That's D - O - Y -

109 ATT 2 D - O - I -

110 ATT 1 (Still writing) From the D.O.E.-

111 ATT 2 Dead on arrival ...

112 ATT 1 (Still writing, fading away)  
D - O - A -