

STL – 037 – Tedium and Touching Gestures

Content Warnings

- Comedic violence
- Emotional abuse
- Alcoholism

TREXEL

Special thanks to bittercape. May the evidence be *entirely* circumstantial.

[Show Theme - Intro]

IMOGEN

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

[Show Theme – Intro *Continued*]

DAVID

[whispering to himself] Okay, I'm just gonna get the glitter glue and **[glitter glue noise]** apply it to the frame. Just smear it about a bit **[footsteps approach]** like he likes and then... 'Kay.

[door swooshes open]

TREXEL

What is **[David yelps]** all— David, there's sparkles all over the floor. Have you split open an atom, David?? David, do we need to get the hazmat team in here? Oh gosh! Oh god!

[David puts object in his drawer]

DAVID

Uh... yes.

TREXEL

[stammers] You split up an atom and this is atom dust all over the floor?!

DAVID

Yep, and it went in the drawer and we're not looking at anything in the drawer.

TREXEL

I.M.O.G.E.N., decontaminate the room!

IMOGEN

[beep, klaxon sounds]

Emergency decontamination. Please cover your mouth, eyes, and anus.

[squeak as wheel turns, decontamination chemicals fill the room, Trexel yells,

David whoops]

TREXEL

Oh ha ha, it burns! It burns.

DAVID

Wee! Ya-hoo! **[blowing raspberries]** Ahh!

TREXEL

Oh, that was a close one, David. [**wheel closes, klaxon ends**] How did you get hold of an atom to split in the first place?

DAVID

Umm... uh, secrets.

TREXEL

Well... that's where atoms come from.

DAVID

Yep.

IMOGEN

[beep]

You can get atoms from literally anywhere.

DAVID

Yep. So, that is what happened. [**haltingly**] Uh, anyway, we have a brief to do.

TREXEL

Yes. And, David—

DAVID

What?

TREXEL

—a beef to do.

DAVID

No. What?

TREXEL

I'm very cross.

DAVID

Why?

TREXEL

Because you, David, clearly don't respect me.

DAVID

I don't— What?

TREXEL

I got very distracted yesterday about all the spy business and the excitement from my fun weekend—being alone—and I forgot about what you *did* in our last session with Hartro.

DAVID

I don't know what that was.

TREXEL

You didn't respect me.

DAVID

No.

TREXEL

You undercut me.

DAVID

Oh, no, I didn't.

TREXEL

At every turn, David, even when we tried to work together, you always found a way to stick your little fingers into my self-respect and tear away like a child with a wet cake!

DAVID

Meh, meh. You know, probably not.

TREXEL

So I've decided, David, if you're not gonna have any respect for me then why should I bother having any respect for you?

DAVID

Any difference gonna be noticeable?

IMOGEN

[beep]

Lack of respect detected. Older members of security alerted.

TREXEL

Oh. Oh, you want to find out if... if there will be a difference if I don't respect you, David. Do you really wanna find that out? 'Cause guess what? I'm a dictionary. You've opened me up to 'F' for "find out", 'cause you will.

DAVID

Okay, so first of all, find out is two words, so you wouldn't find it in the dictionary.

TREXEL

[upset] See, you're doing it just now! You're doing it! You didn't have to comment on that. You could've just let it slide, David!

DAVID

Yeah but, you know, obviously you care about my opinion and respect me, so you—

TREXEL

Get the brief.

DAVID

Um, okay.

TREXEL

Just get the brief.

DAVID

Yeah, I'll get the brief.

TREXEL

Just get the brief.

DAVID

Get the brief.

TREXEL

Just get the brief.

DAVID

I wanna see what it's like when Trexel Geistman doesn't respect David 7 desp—
except for all of the respect that he usually gives David 7.

TREXEL

[appalled] I saved your life!

DAVID

[getting tired of Trexel's antics] Sort of!

TREXEL

Sort of. To be fair.

DAVID

You endangered my life!

TREXEL

That was true.

DAVID

And then aren't allowed to go to that bar you like.

TREXEL

You may think that's not a big deal, but have you seen the cocktail menu at the Astral Bar?

DAVID

No, I haven't!

TREXEL

Well, I've got one here. Look! Look at it!

[menu wobbles]

DAVID

You've kept—

TREXEL

Look at it!

DAVID

This looks—

TREXEL

Look at the limited selection!

DAVID

This looks fine!

TREXEL

They're only serving between four and nine, David!

DAVID

There are fourteen options!

TREXEL

There are so many other hours outside four and nine! I have to drink *draft beer*!

DAVID

You don't work any of these hours. I mean, you should, but you don't!

TREXEL

It's a tough life out there, David, and I think you should have some respect for the hardships I go through.

DAVID

Oh, well then, you take your tablet of pain back.

[menu wobbles]

TREXEL

Give, give— Give it back.

DAVID

Yeah. And now we'll go on with Trexel Geistman not respecting David 7 while David 7 reads out the brief.

TREXEL

Read the brief.

DAVID

Fine.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Initiating.

DAVID

We are seeing Sub-Manager Paxt Scrum.

TREXEL

Oh.

DAVID

Uh, their pronouns are they and them.

TREXEL

Oh, Board no.

DAVID

And they want a plan—

TREXEL

No, David. No, David. David, stop. Stop. Stop.

DAVID

What? What? What?!

TREXEL

David, just push the brief back up the tube. I can't— I can't do it.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Objects put back up the tube will be returned with deadly force.

DAVID

No, it's a one-way hole. I can't push the—

TREXEL

I am not having a meeting with Paxt “Bloody” Scrum.

DAVID

Who is Paxt “Bloody” Scrum?

IMOGEN

[beep]

Spicy language detected. Security alerted.

TREXEL

The most tedious person I have ever had the displeasure to meet, and, David, I've met some pretty tedious people. You know Harry? If you've sat across from him in a club for six hours while he tells you about his family holiday and shows you picture after picture of his smiling children, you haven't known tedium. And even then, Paxt "*Bloody*" Scrum is the most boring person I have ever met.

DAVID

Harry seemed nice. Right. Okay, so... fine. But Paxt Scrum is still a client that we have to meet.

TREXEL

It's death, David. To go into a meeting with Paxt Scrum is like putting your head out of an airlock.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Inadvisable.

DAVID

Right. So what you're saying is that you are uncomfortable with the prospect of staring death in the face, maybe every hour of every day.

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

Okay. Well, I'm not! Okay. So we're gonna do this because it's *the brief* that we got from upper management to see *this* client and this client is Sub-Manager Paxt Scrum!

TREXEL

But they're so *boring*, David! I don't want to speak with them! I went to school with Paxt Scrum.

DAVID

Ooh! And Bathin! You both went to school with Bathin!

IMOGEN

[beep]

Mmmmmm... Bathin.

TREXEL

Yes, David. We both went to school with Bathin and—

DAVID

What was he like?

TREXEL

—even Bathin didn't like Paxt Scrum.

DAVID

Oh.

TREXEL

And Bathin seemed to like everyone, including me, which was always really irritating. “Oh, hi Trexel!” “Get away from me, Bathin!” “Okay. See you later, buddy!” “Damn you, Bathin!” Even that guy hated Paxt Scrum.

DAVID

Oh, okay. Well, that does change things if even Bathin didn’t like them.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Bathin is a great judge of character.

DAVID

Well, they’re still the client so is there some sort of... I don’t know, sales method perhaps to exert domination over them?

TREXEL

Do you mean perhaps there’s a... step in the Trexel Geistman Ten Step Program to Sales Domination!

[cheerful jingle]

DAVID

Yeah, maybe.

TREXEL

Perhaps. Read the rest of the brief, David, and I'll have a think.

DAVID

Right. Well, you might know this already, but they want a planet built because they need a location for team building that has a natural element of danger in order to cull their workforce. Um, they like quiet, salty crisps—I don't know if that's quiet and salty crisps or salty crisps which are quiet—

TREXEL

[sighs] Oh, who cares?

DAVID

—and blankets. Um, they dislike chocolate, meaningless chatter, and pedestrians. If they were an animal, what would they be? They would be a squirrel—

TREXEL

Yep.

DAVID

—or a crocodile.

TREXEL

Well, sure. The most basic animals imaginable.

DAVID

I'll take your word on it for that one. Their greatest strength is their ruthlessness and their ability to plan ahead. And their greatest weakness is their inability to confront problems upfront.

TREXEL

A ruthless obfuscator. Who could love a ruthless obfuscator? You don't care for people and yet you never deal with things.

[David pointedly hmm's]

IMOGEN

[beep]

You walked right into that sass. Security alerted.

TREXEL

Alright, David. It's not just I.M.O.G.E.N. that notices sass. I've got a pretty good sass antenna myself and it's pointed directly at you and your sassy, sassy mouth.

DAVID

Oh, yeah. Why is that then?

TREXEL

Well, I— I— I do have a step on the Ten Step Program that might work for this, David, so do— do you wanna hear it or do you want to just keep being sassy?

DAVID

No, fine. Let's hear the step on the Ten Step Program.

TREXEL

Narrative creativity.

DAVID

Telling stories?

TREXEL

Not— not quite, David. Telling lies.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

The only way to effectively deal with and emotionally survive a tedious, tedious person is to create a web of lies. You're not you; they're not them. You make a fantasy world in which you can both coexist. You can pretend they're fun. You can pretend you're interested in them, and the thing you're interested isn't actually them because they're boring, because what you're interested in is the lies you've told yourself about them.

DAVID

But don't you do that already, like, *all* the time?

TREXEL

That's why I'm such a good salesperson, David! The secret is I'm always lying!

DAVID

Right. That— Yep.

TREXEL

But you're not, David. And this is about you. So we're gonna teach *you* how to *lie* until you can't tell the difference between a lie and a truth.

DAVID

Oh, I'm great at lying.

TREXEL

Are you?

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

How can I tell?

DAVID

'Cause I'm lying right now.

TREXEL

Are you?

DAVID

I don't know, am I?

TREXEL

But if you're lying there then— then it would be true. But if it was true, then— then you're— then you're not lying— Oh, I've got a nosebleed!

DAVID

Oh.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Caution: mind blown.

TREXEL

Oh, go— I've got another nosebleed! Both my noses are bleeding, David!

DAVID

Oh! Uh...

TREXEL

Quickly! Quickly, get something!

DAVID

Oh! Oh... No. **[stammers]** In the drawer! I've got paper towels. Here you go. Here you go.

[paper towels rustle, fire ignites and roars]

TREXEL

Ha ha! Ha ha!

DAVID

No. No. Oh, stop setting it on fire! Put them on your nose! Put them on your nose! No, not while on fire! **[Trexel screams in pain]** Not on fire.

TREXEL

The singeing has cauterised my wounds.

DAVID

Oh, good.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Warning: Stellar Firma is not responsible for injuries sustained by employees. Ever.

TREXEL

Okay, maybe you're a little better at lying than I thought but I'm— I'm gonna ask you not to turn that power onto me, David, because I— I looked into the sun and the sun burned my eyes.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

But how are you going to apply this clearly well-developed lying skill—I have no idea where you’ve got it from—but this clearly developed lying skill to this particular task?

DAVID

Me?

TREXEL

Could— Ye— You!

DAVID

Me?

TREXEL

‘Cause this is a fine balance, David. The person can’t just suddenly panic and have their nose start bleeding. They’re not gonna buy anything, there’s gonna be blood all over their paperwork.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

I might have burned the paperwork, but the ashes are covered in blood!

DAVID

Okay, how would I lie to somebody— Okay. Okay.

TREXEL

It's about what you lie about, David.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

Let's try a scenario. I'm going to be real boring and you're going to feign interest and suggest more interesting scenarios that I might pick up on out of sheer panic because I know I'm a tedious waste of air.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Right. Uh, we're in a small restaurant.

DAVID

Right— Oh! Okay.

TREXEL

We're not at the same table—

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

—but we’re both eating on our own.

DAVID

Oh, no, this is a de—

TREXEL

An irritatingly— In an otherwise empty restaurant, they’ve sat us right next to each other.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

Guess what, David, the tables—uncomfortably close together.

DAVID

Oh, no.

TREXEL

Why have separate tables if you’re gonna put them that close?!

DAVID

I’ve never even been to a restaurant and I already hate this.

TREXEL

There’s barely elbow room. Just try and get up. That’s right, you’ve put your butt in their face. Imagine you’re there.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Roleplay holovision initiated.

[electronic powering on sound]

TREXEL

Right. “Ah, good afternoon.”

DAVID

“Oh, Board. Why are you talking to me?!”

TREXEL

“Oh, I’m terribly sorry. I’ll— I’ll be quiet.”

DAVID

“Thank you.”

TREXEL

You’ve lost the sale.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Roleplay holovision terminated.

[electronic powering off sound]

TREXEL

You were just mean, David. You were just mean. Think about it.

DAVID

Well, I'm not trying to sell to this person who just *talked* to me randomly in a restaurant!

TREXEL

I— David, David, David, you're missing the point. The point about using lying to your... advantage is to get people on your side. You've got to pretend you're interested a little bit to get them *in* before you start turning them into a more interesting person for your own purposes. If you just go up to them and say, "Oh, you're so boring!" they're like, "Oh, okay. Well, I'll just leave then," and then where are you?

DAVID

Well, that's what I wanted to happen. Now I'm eating on my own comfortably in this restaurant!

TREXEL

That's a good point. That does sound better. Okay, imagine this. Same scenario, that person has got wads of cash and you want them. Won't get them if they just leave.

DAVID

Okay. No, they— Okay. Yes. Right.

TREXEL

The motivating factor is there. Okay, ready? Let's go.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Roleplay holovision initiated.

[electronic powering on sound]

TREXEL

"Oh, good afternoon."

DAVID

"Oh." Direct eye contact. "Good afternoon."

TREXEL

"Why don't you sit next to me, so we constantly have to actively turn to one another?"

DAVID

"Perhaps I'll sit opposite you so that we can better engage one another in conversation which I want."

TREXEL

"That sounds dee-lightful. Can I, perhaps, interest you in small sets of images from my family holiday?"

DAVID

"That would be dee-lightful."

TREXEL

You've fallen into another trap, David! You're trapped in the photo realm now!

IMOGEN

[beep]

Roleplay holovision terminated.

[electronic powering off sound]

DAVID

What?

TREXEL

You can't just accept the photos.

DAVID

But—

TREXEL

That goes on for hours and hours. You keep on trying to interrupt and they're like, "Oh, there was just this fun one! I had a Li-lo and I fell off of it!"

DAVID

Okay, okay, okay. Okay. Okay! Okay. Okay. Okay.

TREXEL

[crosstalk] And then you wait for there to be more story, David, **[yells]** *and there's no more story! That was the whole story, David!*

DAVID

Alright, no. Okay, we'll try this again! Offer me the photos again!

TREXEL

Okay.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Roleplay holovision initiated.

[electronic powering on sound]

TREXEL

"Would you, perhaps, like to look at these images of my recent family holiday?"

DAVID

"Oh!" Look at photos. Look away dramatically. Swoon! "I couldn't possibly. All of my photos died in a fire."

TREXEL

"I'm so sorry." I feel terrible about trying to show you my photos, and I put all of the massive stack of photos away. **[David sighs in relief]** "Perhaps you could tell me about a recent work trip you went on."

DAVID

“Oh... uh, yes. Of course, I could. One time... I went...” **[starts breathing heavily]** I— I don’t have a story. Now I’m the boring person!

TREXEL

Oh. **[David yells]** The tables have turned! **[David yells]**

IMOGEN

[beep]

Roleplay holovision terminated.

[electronic powering off sound]

TREXEL

You are the borer! **[David yells]** Okay, calm, David. **[David yells loudly then softly]** Calm, David. This can sometimes happen. When you’re in a realm of lies, sometimes you open a door and there’s just a blank space behind.

DAVID

[shakily] A void.

TREXEL

And you don’t want to get trapped in that void.

DAVID

No! No.

TREXEL

And if, David, if I wasn’t so cross at you—

DAVID

What?

TREXEL

—maybe I'd help you out.

DAVID

No!

TREXEL

But I am, so I shall let you *languish*.

IMOGEN

[beep]

It's not a victory if you already had all the power.

DAVID

So, you— you're just gonna leave me at the bottom of this tedium hole, are you?

TREXEL

You— you've dug yourself into this tedium hole, you can dig *yourself* out.

DAVID

Oh, brilliant. I'll just try and dig myself out, and you'll just *leave me here* like all of the other clones in your life, eh?

IMOGEN

[beep]

Yikes!

TREXEL

The roleplay is cancelled.

DAVID

What?

TREXEL

That's it, David.

DAVID

What?

TREXEL

I'm done.

DAVID

Done with what?

TREXEL

You.

DAVID

Me?!

TREXEL

I am trying my best, David. I may be cross. I may be late. I may be drunk. I may be angry. I may be stupid. I've forgotten what we're doing here!

IMOGEN

[beep]

Not helping.

TREXEL

Oh, yes! But the thing is, David, I'm still trying my best. So for you to turn 'round and throw that in my face, well that's... that's *evil*, David. And I've thought a lot of things about you, David, but I never thought you were evil.

[David splutters]

IMOGEN

[beep]

Emotional trap detected. Security alerted.

DAVID

Right... Well, don't you think I'm not trying?

TREXEL

Sorry, David, I can't hear you from up here on the high ground.

DAVID

Oh, really? You're on the high ground?

TREXEL

This big, high horse I'm on is too tall.

DAVID

[over Trexel acting out] You, Trexel Geistman. Well, in which case, fine. Would somebody on the low ground **[opens drawer]** do this? **[picks up something from the drawer]**

TREXEL

What's that?

DAVID

A graph friend.

TREXEL

But... but I lost Percy.

DAVID

Yes, ya did. And I made you a new one. And this one's name is Lucy. And it's drawn on the side in glitter glue just like Percy's.

TREXEL

Oh.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Arts and crafts detected. Security alerted.

DAVID

So, go on! Take it! Take it up to your “high ground” where you’re “trying” ever so hard. And I’ll just stay languishing down—

TREXEL

[sings] ♪ Lucy— ♪

DAVID

And I’ll just stay la—

TREXEL

[sings] ♪ Lucy, I can see— ♪

DAVID

And I’ll just stay languishin—

TREXEL

[sings] ♪ You’re so beautiful to me. ♪

DAVID

Okay, it’s no longer about me anymore, is it?

TREXEL

[sings] ♪ Oh, Lucy! The angles we shall take,

Measurements real and fake.

Together we

Will measure the

Sweet world we have— 🎵

DAVID

I thought that was it.

TREXEL

[sings] 🎵 In our grasping hands.

Drawn in bonds.

Such binding bands.

You and me

Luuuuu-uuuu-uuuucy! 🎵

DAVID

Yeah, it also does lil' spirals.

TREXEL

I love her.

DAVID

Great.

TREXEL

I love my new graph friend, David. Thank— thank you. **[starts singing over David's sounds of protest]**

♪ Lucy, through the dewdrops we do dance.

Lucy, in the meadow we'll prance.

Lucy, take me by your corners,

Don't hold back,

I'm not a hoarder.

You're the only graph friend I have. ♪

DAVID

That's not very kind to Percy.

TREXEL

[sings] ♪ Since I lost my greatest friend,

A childhood, a special friend,

A Percy that I'll never see again. ♪

DAVID

To anyone listening, it's not the clone.

TREXEL

[sings] ♪ He is lost to me— ♪

DAVID

He cares more about the—

TREXEL

[sings] ♪ And for a long time I couldn't see— ♪

DAVID

The graph friend is more important.

TREXEL

[sings] ♪ A way out of my sorrow and despair! ♪

DAVID

I don't even know the clone's name!

TREXEL

[sings] ♪ But Lucy, you have come into my life,
Buried yourself into my heart
Like a kindly, kindly knife and we shall be
Together. ♪

DAVID

He doesn't even remember who's made it.

TREXEL

[sings] ♪ Lucy! ♪

DAVID

David made Lucy.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Musical crime detected. There is no one appropriate to inform.

TREXEL

Thank you, David. Thank— thank you for this. This is the nicest thing anyone's ever done for me.

DAVID

Really?!

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

Oh.

TREXEL

By quite a way.

DAVID

Eugh!

TREXEL

I've never really had a... a friend since, well, since, you know... my first friend.

DAVID

Your graph friend.

TREXEL

My clone friend. But this is a close-run thing, David. This is a... this is a kindness that I didn't expect.

DAVID

Wh—

TREXEL

I-I'm sorry. You're not evil, David.

DAVID

Good. No, I'm not.

TREXEL

You're not evil.

DAVID

I'm trying!

IMOGEN

[beep]

Good and evil are constructs for the childish.

TREXEL

And I... I've— I've been overly harsh and maybe a little bit churlish and— **[deep breath]** Okay, we've— we've not got long, David, and— and we— we need to get through this next sales session—

DAVID

Look—

TREXEL

—so let’s just— let’s just work out a quick way of— of making sure that...

DAVID

Paxt Scrum!

TREXEL

Paxt Scrum.

DAVID

You went to school with them!

TREXEL

Sorry. Sorry! I’ve just— I’m very emotional— Did you hear how long that song was?!

DAVID

That was really long! That was a really long song—

TREXEL

Too long, some have said!

DAVID

Took a lot longer than I thought it was going to and we do not have much time. But, honestly, fortunately, I think we're both quite good at this. We're gonna go in there, we're gonna pretend that everything that Paxt Scrum says is the most fascinating thing we've ever heard, and we're going to feed their tiny, raisin-like ego until it inflates into a big grape. A big wealthy grape that splits and just pours money wine all over us.

IMOGEN

[beep]

Please refrain from further torturing this simile.

TREXEL

That's my David. Quickly! A quick-fire round of their likes. Do they like salt and vinegar crisps?

DAVID

No, they only like salty crisps!

TREXEL

So do we all! Do they like blankets?

DAVID

Yes!

TREXEL

Do they like chewing gum?

DAVID

Umm... Unspecified...

TREXEL

Correct! It's unclear! I think we've got it, David.

[four loud, steady knocks]

I think we've got it.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

I'm a squirrel; you're a crocodile. Let's go in there and make this *boring idiot* sing.

DAVID

Together now.

[door opens]

TREXEL and DAVID

[from the meeting room, simultaneously] Ahh, Paxt Scrum! We're so glad to see you!

[Show Theme – Outro]

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