

STL - 045 - Cages and Connivance

Content Warnings

- Comedic violence
- Emotional abuse
- Alcoholism

[Show Theme - Intro]

I.M.O.G.E.N

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

[Show Theme – Intro *Continued*]

DAVID

(Anxious) It's shift time now. Previous 7-1/2 hours... who knows? He was probably lying. But now he's not here, and he should be. Even if he's late, he's late for his lateness. He's like super late. Late squared. Oh no! I'm really screwed now, aren't I? Oh! Trexel! Trexel, come through that door! Trexel, come through that door... now!

[Door swooshes open]

HARTRO

And here we are!

[Something is wheeled in, Trexel struggles]

DAVID

Wah! Ah! Ooh!

HARTRO

Expediting apar— department. Yes.

TREXEL

David! David, quickly! Get her! Get her, David!

DAVID

(Confused) Uh... get her— um...

HARTRO

Don't worry, David. He's just a bit wound up. Look at—

TREXEL

Of course I'm wound up; you've put me in a cage! **(Rattles cage)** You tricked me, Hartro!

DAVID

What—

TREXEL

You tricked me, you duplicitous trickster you!

HARTRO

Now, I would feel bad *too* if I got caught so *easily*.

TREXEL

It was a cunning— David, I need to assure you it was the most cunning trap under which I was captured!

DAVID

Oh yeah?

HARTRO

It was a box and a stick and a cocktail.

TREXEL

What was I supposed to do.

DAVID

Not— not drink.

TREXEL

Not get under the box, grab the cocktail and then knock the stick away for some privacy? *I'm only human!*

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Only being the operative word.

DAVID

Mm. Okay. But you're here, which is good. **(Trexel mutters)** And you're here—

HARTRO

Hello, David!

DAVID

—which is terrifying!

HARTRO

Oh now, why— why do you look so scared?

TREXEL

Ooh! I know! I know this one! I know this one! No, pick me, pick me, Hartro! I know this one!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) ‘Cause last— Yes, I also know this one. No, pick me. Pick— No, I don’t want to be picked!

HARTRO

I’m gonna— Um... listen. Now Trexel, you’re in the cage, and I’m gonna leave you there.

TREXEL

Aw.

HARTRO

‘Cause that’s a nice place for you. Um, David 7, there’s nothing to worry about.

DAVID

Okay, but—

HARTRO

Everything’s under control.

DAVID

Okay, but last time we saw you, you did try and murder us with—

TREXEL

That was what I was going to say. Murder.

DAVID

—with— with death—

HARTRO

You're in a cage. Uh, no. I wouldn't really paint me with that brush, really.

DAVID

Okay, well, now I've got this brush. It's got "murder" written on it, and, uh—

HARTRO

No.

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Metaphorical murder brush detected. Security alerted.

DAVID

Oooooooh... **(As they paint Hartro with the metaphorical murder brush)**

HARTRO

No, stop.

TREXEL

He's painting you with that brush.

HARTRO

David, stop. No. See, I was—

TREXEL

That mind brush. You're being painted as a murderer, Hartro.

HARTRO

This is— this is fantastic. What I was doing was training you, wasn't I now?

TREXEL

Uhhhh, t-training us? For— for what? For how to be murdered?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) For dying in lava?

TREXEL

To be dead from a big blade?

HARTRO

Exact— *Not* to be dead from a big blade, and you did fantastic! I mean, what— what good are you to Stellar Firma when you're dead? I ask you that.

TREXEL

That was what I— That's what I was thinking when I thought, "Oh no, Hartro's gone rogue and is going to murder us." I thought, "Well, why? That's— Stellar Firma won't want that."

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) There is an answer to that question, but I don't think you would like it.

DAVID

I— I think I can volunteer a— a possibility.

TREXEL

You there, the clone with a big brush.

DAVID

Yes, um, it's because, uh, you are you and Hartro has had to work for you for all of these years. So, I-I-I understand why Hartro—

HARTRO

But Dav— David, are you—

TREXEL

What? How do you—

DAVID

—I'm just upset that it also included me.

HARTRO

Are you implying that Trexel's been so horrible to work over and to organise and to line manage that I've actually been pushed to the point where I felt like I couldn't handle it anymore, and I was going to kill him and you because you're his clone? Is that what you're suggesting?

DAVID

No, I'm saying it.

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Subtext abandoned. Text deployed.

HARTRO

Well... you're wrong.

TREXEL

That— that seems—

HARTRO

You're wrong.

TREXEL

It— it seems harsh, but it does seem to make sense, Hartro, because otherwise that would be, **(Chuckles)** well, that would be destruction of Stellar Firma property.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

And you would have been immediately recycled.

HARTRO

And I wouldn't do that, would I now?

DAVID

Yes, hang on a minute. Why... why haven't you been immediately recycled?

TREXEL

Good point.

HARTRO

Uh...

TREXEL

If I'd have done that, I'd've been recycled.

DAVID

No, you wouldn't have.

TREXEL

Well, not me be— Well, no because I've got connections.

HARTRO

Yeah, but well—

TREXEL

But somebody like you, a peon, would have.

HARTRO

If— you know, if there were powers to be— Did you just call me a peon?

TREXEL

(Chuckles) I— well, I—

HARTRO

Uh, Trexel, did you—

TREXEL

I'm in a cage, I can't hear you. Oh, look at this cage— **(Rattles cage wall)** Oh, it's a welded cage. Um...

[Rattles cage wall]

DAVID

Hartro, all our differences aside, could you make the cage a little bit smaller?

TREXEL

How would that work— **(Metallic grinding as the cage walls move)** Oh! Oh, that— that happened. This is an advanced cage. With ensmallening tech™.

HARTRO

I am not a peon, and obviously if the powers that be would have seen a line manager attempt to destroy property of Stellar Firma, they would have been upset. And I—

DAVID

And that's what you did.

HARTRO

I would have been talked to, and I might have been encouraged to do a different line or direction. However, I was just... training. And—

DAVID

O... kay. And who was that different line, Hartro?

HARTRO

Oh, uh, just a— you know— you know, my, uh, line manager wisdom, just, you know, come— just— just jumping into my head and saying, “Oh come on now, Hartro. Don’t kill Stellar Firma property.” **(Laughs awkwardly)**

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Checking staff records. Records show a disciplinary meeting between Line Manager Hartro Piltz and Standards.

HARTRO

Yeah, o—

TREXEL

(Smug) Oh, I see.

DAVID

Right.

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Org Chart updated.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Well, well, well, what a *twist*. If I could move my arms in this cage, I would be twirling an imaginary moustache.

DAVID

See! See! It's not just me Standards are standardising! It's Hartro as well! See, it's bad! Standards are just—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) It's Standards all around. Standards all around!

DAVID

Standards are standarding in every standard way.

TREXEL

And now it would appear we have a minion of Standards in our midst!

DAVID

Yes, a little Standards minion!

HARTRO

Right, well, there's no need to get nervous or to— to— to overreact, okay?

Things are tot—

TREXEL

(Yells) *No, I'm gonna overreact!*

HARTRO

No—

TREXEL

(Rattling cage) Ooooooh! Aahhhh! Eeeeeee!

DAVID

Make the cage smaller! Make the cage smaller!

[Metallic grinding as the cage walls move]

TREXEL

(Makes constricted strangled noises, faint) Okay, I'm—

HARTRO

Trexel, just breathe and stop—

TREXEL

(Faint) I'm just gonna breathe.

HARTRO

Just don't even react.

TREXEL

(Faint, struggling to talk) Um, could— a little bigger? I'm struggling to breathe.

HARTRO

Right, like I've said, I've got everything under control. **(Trexel softly gasps for air)** And in fact, boys, **(Trexel's gasping grows more desperate)** you're— you're doing—

DAVID

Um, Hartro—

HARTRO

—quite—

DAVID

I-I think he is actually dying.

HARTRO

What? Oh. The— Just releasing that. **(Metallic grinding as the cage walls move, Trexel takes gasping deep breaths)** In fact, Trexel, here. Come on. Come out of the cage.

[Cage door rattles open]

TREXEL

Ah, thank you. Uhh.

HARTRO

You're getting all bulbous and... checkered.

TREXEL

Oh. Oh, I'm so bulbous, and I've now got— this is quite a fetching checkered pattern on my skin now.

DAVID

Yes, a— a pinstripe person.

TREXEL

Mm, I'm in pinstripe pain. Ow. Well, hang on, checkers aren't the same as pinstripes.

DAVID

No.

TREXEL

(Yells) *You know nothing of fashion, you clone clod!*

HARTRO

Well, I mean, look what he's wearing. **(Snickers)**

DAVID

What? No— I'm—

TREXEL

Oooh, snap!

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Fashion slam detected. Alright everyone, gird your loins!

DAVID

I-I— And I would—

TREXEL

You got dragged.

DAVID

I was *born* in this!

TREXEL

Got that shade thrown!

HARTRO

He can't— he can't help it.

DAVID

No, I can't help it! I literally don't have any other option! If I could dress differently, I would!

TREXEL

How would you dress if you could dress differently, David?

DAVID

Well—

TREXEL

Like me? Like your mentor? Like your fashion icon, Trexel? Strike a pose!

DAVID

Uh, no—

HARTRO

Or like me, smart and— yet, uh, sensible and tight.

TREXEL

Strike a pose.

DAVID

Uh, n-no, I'd— I'd— I'd prefer some sort of, like, uh, nice high collared jacket, um, a little bow tie, um, no shirt, uh, 'cause I saw a picture of Bath— **(Shy, wistful)** of— of Bathin like that once.

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Yum.

DAVID

And, uh—

TREXEL

No. No more poses. No more poses for anyone.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) And— and jean— and jean shorts.

TREXEL

No. Strike— strike a pose is over. We're now striking the pose striking.

HARTRO

Ooooooh... How sweet, the dreams of a clone. **(Laughs)**

TREXEL

Hmm.

DAVID

(Reserved) Well, I mean, yes. I-I do have dreams and—

HARTRO

You need to have chest hair to have a chest exposed. I mean, **(Lost in a daydream longing for Bathin)** Bathin's got lovely chest hair.

DAVID

It is quite thick and luxurious.

TREXEL

I've got chest hair. Would anybody like to see *my* chest hair?

HARTRO

No, and we do—

TREXEL

Here it is!

[Unzips top]

HARTRO

No— Eugh!

DAVID

(Disgusted) Aaaaawww! So matted!

HARTRO

(Trying not to vomit) Oh my... eyes!

TREXEL

Bushy!

DAVID

Eugh!

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Chest hair ruined for everyone. Security alerted.

TREXEL

You could lose a badger in there—

HARTRO

Ugh!

TREXEL

—if you knew what a badger was.

DAVID

Oh. Oh, it looks like a thicket!

TREXEL

It is a thicket! Look, here's some wildlife!

[Rummages through chest hair, animal starts chittering]

HARTRO

Put it— put it away, or I'll put you in the cage!

TREXEL

Oh! Come back! Get— get back in here! Get— **(Struggles with the animal)** You live in my chest! **(Animal quiets down)** There we go.

[Zips top back up]

HARTRO

And we digress. **(Takes a breath)** Right, so— Uh, it's a review! You're here, uh, and—

TREXEL

What are we reviewing?

DAVID

Wait, what?

TREXEL

What are we reviewing? What— what— what—

DAVID

How are you so—

HARTRO

What do you mean, what do—

TREXEL

You don't know what's going on, you haven't been here. You've been away with Standards standardising things.

HARTRO

Trexel, I always know what's going on.

TREXEL

Oh, do you?

HARTRO

I am your—

TREXEL

What am I thinking of right now?

HARTRO

...Wildlife.

DAVID

And alcohol.

HARTRO

And David 7. Hurting David 7.

TREXEL

Okay, that's— that's pretty— that's— that's pretty much all of it so...

DAVID

Alright.

HARTRO

There you go. See? We're in your head.

TREXEL

Eh.

HARTRO

I'm in your head.

TREXEL

Could you just tidy in there?

HARTRO

Don't forget it.

TREXEL

Could— could you give it a tidy?

HARTRO

(Inhales) So, you're in the Expediting department. Um, ehhehh, you know. It's a nice— This is a nice, uh, office.

TREXEL

It's a backwater. It's a hellhole.

DAVID

There— I mean, there's literally some back... wat—

TREXEL

A stink pile.

HARTRO

There's a little puddle.

DAVID

Yeah, there— Yeah.

HARTRO

Yes, I, uh— there's a— there's a tube in the middle of the— Oh, that must be where you put your...

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

Yep. Yep.

DAVID

That's— that's where the brief. Yep.

HARTRO

The briefs. Okay, I suppose—

TREXEL

It's a— it's a hellhole, Hartro. You don't have to dress it up. It's a hole of hell.

HARTRO

Yes, it— it's a little rusty in here—

TREXEL

Very rusty.

HARTRO

—but nothing that, you know, a little plant or a— you know, you could put a— you could put a picture on the wall, couldn't you?

TREXEL

If you can get a nail through this steel (**Knocks on steel wall**) then maybe.

HARTRO

Hmm. And there's grooves. Uh, what are those grooves along the floor for?

DAVID

Oh, if we don't deliver the brief on time the walls try and crush us.

TREXEL

Yes. Yes.

HARTRO

Nice.

TREXEL

I thought the alarm was alarming and the door knocking was a bit alarming but, uh, turns out the threat of crushing, more alarming still.

DAVID

Yeah.

HARTRO

Right, so you've ended here.

DAVID

Mm-hmm.

HARTRO

Uh, but you know, things are going... fantastically up there.

DAVID

What?

TREXEL

What?

HARTRO

I mean, yeah. I mean, I'm— I'm here to review you, and I can say... 100% fantastic. My—

DAVID

No. No.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Well, what a turn up.

HARTRO

Yeah—

DAVID

Nope.

TREXEL

Well, you know what? You know what? **(Chuckles)** I— I think I've expressed some...

DAVID

No.

...Concerns to you, David, but thinking about it and being told that it's gone well, that— that— that feels right.

DAVID

This doesn't make any sense— This is— It has never gone well before.

TREXEL

Yeah— Well, I would— wouldn't be so hasty, David. Let's hear— let's hear Hartro out. I know Hartro...

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

...Did try and kill us but who amongst us...

HARTRO

I didn't!

TREXEL

...Hasn't committed murder? Certainly not me.

DAVID

I haven't.

HARTRO

I mean, if you replace “kill” with “train” then 100— I agree. But yeah. So— Uh, things— things going well. I mean, upstairs all I can say, smiles. You know.

TREXEL

Yes.

HARTRO

They’re like, “You got a problem, go to Geistman.”

TREXEL

Yep. Yes.

DAVID

Wait, who—

HARTRO

“He’ll get— he’ll sort it.”

TREXEL

Go to Geistman.

HARTRO

“He’ll sort it.”

TREXEL

I’ve got a pillow at home with that stitched on.

DAVID

Sorry, who’s smiling? Is it Number 1 and Number 48? Are they smiling?

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) One might charitably say smirking.

HARTRO

You keep talking about Standards, but I'm just— I'm— I'm talking to you—

DAVID

Yes, who you work for now.

HARTRO

Yeah.

DAVID

By your own— well, I.M.O.G.E.N's admission.

HARTRO

Excuse me, David! Excuse me.

DAVID

What?

HARTRO

Who put you in charge of the castle?

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

I have no castle. I have a small, dank room.

HARTRO

And you have no brush.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Get off the parapet.

HARTRO

So stop painting things and stop dis—

DAVID

No, I do. I do. Here it is. Oohhhhhh! **(Starts painting again)**

TREXEL

Oh, look at him with his mind brush!

HARTRO

Put it— put it down or you go in the cage.

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) All the best art is achieved from inside a cage.

DAVID

(Defeated) Ooh— oh.

TREXEL

It's a bad cage, David. You won't— don't want to go in.

DAVID

I don't want—

HARTRO

Nobody wants a cage.

DAVID

No. No, I don't want the cage.

HARTRO

So, for example—

TREXEL

Mm-hmm.

HARTRO

—a young gentleman, uhh, trapped in his security office.

DAVID

Yeah...

TREXEL

Yes. Yes.

HARTRO

Yes. That was a complaint came down here.

TREXEL

Mm-hmm.

DAVID

It did.

HARTRO

Turns out, not trapped. Well— **(Claps)** Well done.

TREXEL

We-Well done us. We saved that person's life, didn't we David?

DAVID

(Suspicious) Yeah.

TREXEL

(Stutters) Didn't we, David? You don't seem convinced.

HARTRO

David, you saved— You took a trapped person and made them non-trapped.

DAVID

Okay...

HARTRO

This is 101 Expeditors extraordinaire. I mean, you could teach a class. You get a trapped person, you get them untrapped.

TREXEL

Yes. Yes, this sounds right.

DAVID

We— we could— we could— You're saying, you, *you*—

HARTRO

Yes?

DAVID

You are saying—

HARTRO

Yes, your Line Manager.

DAVID

—that Trexel Geistman—

TREXEL

Mm-hmm.

HARTRO

Eh?

DAVID

—could teach a class.

TREXEL

Exactly.

HARTRO

Go to Geistman.

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Trexel Geistman is banned from all educational institutions due to the “chalk incident”.

TREXEL

Welcome to class, young minds. Young minds ready to be formed like clay in the hands of a master.

DAVID

So— so Hartro, I just— I just wanna—

TREXEL

A question from the back. That’s correct, I am this handsome. It isn’t an effect.

DAVID

So, I just want to double check.

HARTRO

Mm-hmm.

DAVID

Um, and I want to hear the words you saying, “I think Trexel Geistman is so good **(Hartro clears throat)** that he can teach a class.”

TREXEL

I’d love to hear that too.

[Hartro continues nervously clearing throat]

DAVID

'Cause you definitely really mean it.

HARTRO

(Obviously lying) I mean things that I say.

DAVID

Okay. So say— so say—

HARTRO

I do.

DAVID

So say that and mean it.

TREXEL

So say that.

HARTRO

I mean— I mean this— this situation we're in right here—

DAVID

Mm-hmm.

TREXEL

The one in which—

HARTRO

—is one that is... is tricky at times.

DAVID

Mm-hmm.

HARTRO

But look at us. You know, people have issues and, boy, sometimes they're not trapped.

DAVID

And— and you think that...

HARTRO

And I think that some people could learn something.

TREXEL

From— from who? From who?

HARTRO

From... from people that can...

TREXEL

Tre...

HARTRO

(Words refusing to come out right) Fro— T— T— Trarar—

TREXEL

From Tre...

HARTRO

Frerar Tra—

TREXEL

From Tre...

HARTRO

From T— Tr—

TREXEL

Tre...

HARTRO

Trrrre...

DAVID

Yeah?

HARTRO

From Trax-el.

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Only someone threatened with death would say such a thing.

TREXEL

I'll take it!

[Hartro sighs deeply]

DAVID

Okay. And, uh—

HARTRO

(Frazzled) Is it hot in here? Is it hot?

DAVID

No, it's—

HARTRO

It's hot in here.

DAVID

—actually freezing cold.

TREXEL

It's very cold.

DAVID

Yes.

HARTRO

(Exhales) Is that a puddle?

DAVID

There's— there's— there's ice in the puddle actually. **(Hartro steps in the puddle and exhales)** Um, it's a bit of a frosty, frosty puddle.

HARTRO

Right. Right. Moving on. Um— That didn't happen.

DAVID

Yes, to the next thing we— we absolutely nailed.

HARTRO

Yes, you nailed some— several other things.

DAVID

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

HARTRO

Let me look at my list here. Oh, yes. Oh! Case of the same surname. Two people with the same surname.

TREXEL

Murder.

HARTRO

Can you imagine it in Stellar—

TREXEL

Murder is the solution, and I'm guessing it did very well, Harto.

HARTRO

Somebody died, and it was fine. 'Cause you know what? Now we have one person with one surname instead of two.

TREXEL

There you go.

DAVID

Um—

HARTRO

I mean, it's an interesting way to solve a problem, but is the problem solved?

Yes.

DAVID

Oh, an interesting way.

HARTRO

Interesting.

DAVID

It's interesting and— and—

TREXEL

People say—

DAVID

And— and a way that other people were happy with?

TREXEL

People say that murder is outdated. “Don't murder people, it's against the law” or something.

DAVID

Yes, remember we were saying—

HARTRO

I don't want to be murdered!

DAVID

We were saying that just before, because Hartro tried to murder us.

TREXEL

Yes, but— but— but in the context of me doing—

HARTRO

Stop. Using. The brush! I *trained* you, David 7.

DAVID

Trained us... *to death*.

HARTRO

No, you're alive. Very much alive. Right in front of my eyes in fact.

DAVID

'Cause we were— 'cause we were saved! 'Cause we were sucked through a tube!

TREXEL

Alive— alive and successful.

HARTRO

I mean look, I can touch you David.

DAVID

Ah! Ooh!

HARTRO

Look, there you are right in front of me.

TREXEL

Was jabbing— jabbing—

DAVID

Why are you— No!

HARTRO

There you are, not dead. Not dead at all.

TREXEL

Hang on. Hang on, wait. I didn't get a jab. Maybe I'm dead. Hang on a minute.

(Jabs himself) Oh, ow! Ow, I just poked myself in the eye!

HARTRO

Are you sure you're not dead?

TREXEL

I'm pretty sure my eye hurts.

DAVID

Ah, but if you were a ghost you could touch yourself, so we're gonna have to jab him as well. To test—

TREXEL

Oh, ye-yes. Please! I don't want to be a ghost!

DAVID

Yes, jabbing Trexel on 3, 2, 1...

TREXEL

Countdown.

HARTRO

Alright.

[David jabs Trexel repeatedly while yelling]

TREXEL

Ooh! Ah! Eeh! Oooh! Okay. Okay, David stop now. David, I'm alive!

[Jabbing and yelling stop]

HARTRO

Oh, that was fun, David. Good idea.

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Jabbing is fun but wildly unproductive.

TREXEL

Can I go back in the cage?

HARTRO

Oh, yes. So— so basically that— You know what? I want to give you some good news, and David 7 I don't know why you don't just take it, but I'm—

(Insinuating) I want to be mentioning, you know, the Executive Track here. You know?

TREXEL

(Lustful sigh) Oh my.

HARTRO

Some— some people might be— some clones and...

TREXEL

Some...

HARTRO

...others might be going on an Executive Track.

TREXEL

(Machine gun-like laugh filled with desire) David. David. David, you don't understand what this means to me. The Executive Track.

DAVID

Trexel.

TREXEL

(Getting more excited) It's the Executive Track, David!

DAVID

Yes, Trexel—

TREXEL

Not anyone gets in the Executive Track!

HARTRO

Not any— not everyone.

TREXEL

I've always wanted to be on the Executive Track.

DAVID

You don't say?

TREXEL

Hartro, thank you!

DAVID

Okay—

TREXEL

Thank you Hartro. You are my queen.

HARTRO

Oh! **(Laughs)**

TREXEL

May I bow before you, Hartro?

HARTRO

You may— Yes, you may.

DAVID

So hang—

TREXEL

Let me supplicate myself in this puddle.

[Splash]

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Obsequious genuflection detected. Security alerted.

TREXEL

I wish to track towards the Executive positions.

DAVID

Trexel, stop tryin'a put her feet in your mouth!

TREXEL

(Incomprehensible because Hartro's feet are in his mouth)

DAVID

O— Oh! Oh, Trexel!

HARTRO

If he— if he wants, he can. I mean, I understand. **(Trexel feet-muffled word noises)** This is a big moment for him.

TREXEL

(Muffled) Thank you!

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Somehow this feels like the *worst* thing he has ever done.

[Trexel muffled noises]

DAVID

Trexel, please.

[Trexel spits Hartro's feet out of his mouth]

HARTRO

You're— you're welcome.

TREXEL

Oh, it was worth it. It is worth it. David, this is incredible. This is the best thing that's ever happened to me. I thought my career was over in this benighted department of Expediting!

DAVID

Well, exactly. You said this was a career cul-de-sac—

TREXEL

It is!

DAVID

—so why would we be here if we were only—

TREXEL

No one's come back!

DAVID

So— Yes! Exactly! No one's come back so why are we—

TREXEL

It's impossible!

DAVID

Exactly!

TREXEL

It could never happen!

DAVID

Yes!

TREXEL

Especially not to me!

DAVID

Entirely true!

TREXEL

And yet here we are.

DAVID

No! No, I was— No. Look, Hartro—

HARTRO

Yes.

DAVID

—you start working for Standards and now immediately we’re doing A-Okay, despite the fact that all of your previous reviews have been, let’s just say, um, a little bit fractious.

HARTRO

You’re— you—

DAVID

Remember when you tried to kill us?

TREXEL

Hmm.

HARTRO

I— **(Exasperated sigh)** You keep going back to this, David 7! I mean—

DAVID

I do because you tried to kill us!

HARTRO

What— what do I have to do to get it into your brain that I was training you for this exact moment.

TREXEL

A hug. I think you should hug David to prove to him your good will.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No. I don't— no, I don't— I don't think— I don't think we— No.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I— I am not touching— I am not hugging— I am not—

TREXEL

I think we should all bring it in for a big hug.

DAVID

No, I don't think we need to—

HARTRO

I am not— Trexel, absolutely no—

TREXEL

Bring it in everybody! **(Hartro and David yell and struggle)** Bringing it in!

DAVID

No.

HARTRO

Stop it.

TREXEL

Oh, let's squeeze away the hostility because Trexel Geistman's on the Executive Track.

DAVID

(Struggling) You're a line murderer, Hartro.

[David and Hartro exhale when Trexel stops hugging]

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Hugs ruined for everyone. Security unembraced.

HARTRO

David—

TREXEL

Ah, don't we all feel better?

HARTRO

No.

DAVID

No.

TREXEL

Okay, well I feel better, and I'm the most important one.

HARTRO

I think that you're overthinking this. That's what I think.

DAVID

Yeah?

HARTRO

When are you— Why don't you let me, the— the line manager, do the thinking.

DAVID

No— but—

HARTRO

And you the clone, why don't you do the... clone... activities.

DAVID

No, because Standards came out of the wall and told me that they had, **(Hartro laughs loudly)** and I quote—

TREXEL

(Amused) Out of the wall.

HARTRO

(Laughing) Too funny, Dav—

DAVID

(Badly impersonating Number 1) “Big plans, David. Big—”

HARTRO

Okay, well he's—

TREXEL

Well, this all sounds—

DAVID

Wait, there was a dramatic pause. “Plans.”

HARTRO

Okay.

TREXEL

I think— I think you’re remembering that. I think they probably just popped their head in to say “howdy-do” and now you’re blowing it all out of proportion.

HARTRO

Exactly

TREXEL

because the most important thing...

DAVID

No!

TREXEL

...Is that I’m great and everything I’ve done is great.

DAVID

No, these are the big plans!

HARTRO

David—

TREXEL

Hartro, could you— could you tell us more about the successes we've had.

HARTRO

Oh, I forgot about the awards!

TREXEL

(Gasps) Awards!

HARTRO

Yes.

DAVID

Wait, what?

TREXEL

I would like to thank myself and... yes.

DAVID

Awards? From— from where? What awards?

HARTRO

Oh, several awards. You know, it's very funny. I think in— in the— in the midst of all the training and the games that— Remember the games I created?

TREXEL

I remember the games so fondly.

HARTRO

I mean, yes. I forgot—

DAVID

I mean, one of the games was quite fun.

HARTRO

—one of the award for, uhm— Oh! Most dangerous planet ever sold. You got that one.

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

Okay, that— Yes, that happened.

HARTRO

That— that was brilliant.

TREXEL

Which one was it?

DAVID

Isn't that a bad award?

HARTRO

It was—

TREXEL

Was it the one where the moon crashed—

HARTRO

Yes.

TREXEL

—into it.

HARTRO

That one.

TREXEL

You— you— you said yes before I finished saying—

HARTRO

Because I— I remem— I knew it was— I was thinking of it at the same time—

TREXEL

‘Cause it has that aura of success around it.

HARTRO

Yeah. Yeah.

DAVID

Was it the one— was it the one that was entirely covered in lava and everyone who used it died?

HARTRO

That one as well. I think you won that twice.

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

You got that award two times in a row.

DAVID

Was it— was it the trough that turned everyone into soup?

HARTRO

David, I— I know what you're trying to do here.

DAVID

But was it?

TREXEL

You're trying to list my successes.

HARTRO

Eeh— Ooh! Another award! Yes, aah, best—

TREXEL

Yet more! Oh, an embarrassment of riches!

HARTRO

Uh... best, uh, use of... Bathin in a subliminal ad.

TREXEL

(Interrupting) Nope, don't want it. Don't want the award. Put it back. Put it back on the shelf.

HARTRO

Hmm.

TREXEL

Melt it down.

HARTRO

Okay, well, you know, when you have so many awards sometimes, you know, you have more failure awards than the other award.

DAVID

Hang on a minute. I thought— Isn't— isn't Bathin one of our direct competitor— Why would we have a— an award specifically about, about Bath—

TREXEL

Customer competitor, David. Locked in a dance as old as time itself.

DAVID

So, Stellar Firma—

TREXEL

(Sings) ♪ I hate you. I love you. Hold my hand and turn away. Don't look in my eyes! But don't look away from *me*! I feel your heart beating in your chest. ♪

DAVID

Hey Trexel.

TREXEL

(Sings) ♪ I grab your heart and crush the life out of it! ♪

DAVID

You're dancing with Bathin.

TREXEL

Ooh! Get off me! Get off me! I don't— I don't— I didn't want it! I didn't like it! I didn't like it. I didn't like it. I didn't smell him.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) But that is what— that is the sort of lengths you would go to for your job.

TREXEL

Smell him. Nothing. Right, well...

DAVID

(Muttered) Cedar wood.

HARTRO

Wouldn't you? I mean, that's what we're looking for here. And to be honest, you keep saying "working for Standards" but I mean who— who spoke to Standards last?

DAVID

You.

HARTRO

Yeah. So who would know most?

TREXEL

Hartro.

HARTRO

Me.

DAVID

I.M.O.G.E.N

HARTRO

So—

TREXEL

That— that only makes logical sense.

DAVID

No, it'd be I.M.O.G.E.N

HARTRO

I don't—

TREXEL

That makes logical sense, David.

DAVID

(Stammers) But what— But I.M.O.G.E.N says Stan— you work for Standards.
I.M.O.G.E.N said that and I.M.O.G.E.N’s I.M.O.G.E.N

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) Correct! I.M.O.G.E.N is I.M.O.G.E.N!

HARTRO

We all work for Standards in a way.

DAVID

No, no, no, no, no, no. We— we work fo— We work for Stellar Firma—

HARTRO

Of course, them as well.

DAVID

No, we work for the Board.

TREXEL

Alright—

HARTRO

(Exasperated) Do— do— do you need me to do a graph? Do you need me to
do a—

TREXEL

I think—

DAVID

Stellar Firma – Episode 045 – Cages and Connivance

Yes! Yes, I would! I want to see an Org Chart!

HARTRO

Well, I'm not—

TREXEL

Ah, well let's— Oh.

HARTRO

I'm not doing— I don't work for clones, David. I mean—

TREXEL

Hartro. Hartro, let me handle. Let me—

DAVID

You offered!

HARTRO

Da— bla—

TREXEL

Hartro. Hartro, let me handle this.

HARTRO

Oh... t...

TREXEL

David, when you start asking for things like Org Charts, you— you— you don't even understand the world of pain you're about to enter. Hartro, you remember the last AGM?

HARTRO

Oh, yeah.

TREXEL

When they tried to roll out the new Org Chart?

HARTRO

[tsks] Oh.

TREXEL

Rolled straight off the stage, into the audience. Killed 30 people! If I wasn't hanging around in the back, I might've been crushed myself!

I.M.O.G.E.N

(Beep) The deaths made the chart immediately out of date which is the real tragedy.

DAVID

(Sarcastic) Oh. Oh, how lucky.

TREXEL

It's enormous and complicated and no one can understand it. So, I think you need to narrow your view and narrow it down onto the *awards I'm winning!* Hartro, what have I won?

DAVID

No, I'm gonna narrow it down onto the line between Hartro and Standards, which is one line that says, "working for Standards".

TREXEL

Okay.

HARTRO

You know what— you know what we have here? You— Trexel, do you know what we have here?

TREXEL

I don't know. What do we have here?

HARTRO

We've got a clone above his station.

TREXEL

Oh, a clone above his station.

HARTRO

Just thinks he might be Mr. Big Clone.

TREXEL

Too big for his—

HARTRO

Sock.

TREXEL

—proverbial boots.

HARTRO

Yeah.

DAVID

Oh, I'm— I'm in a— I'm in a basement that's wet with no pod.

HARTRO

That's right.

DAVID

I don't think I'm Mr. Big Clone.

HARTRO

I think it's important to remember where you are, David 7. Yep.

DAVID

Yeah. In a basement that's wet with no pod.

HARTRO

Exactly.

TREXEL

And where— and where— and how do we get out of this?

HARTRO

Well—

TREXEL

(Whispers) We get out of it on the Executive Track.

HARTRO:

I say the Executive Track.

TREXEL

The Executive Track!

HARTRO

On the Executive Track.

DAVID

No, but—

TREXEL

Join me David. Hold my hand.

DAVID

No. No. No! No!

TREXEL

Hold my hand and we will go together!

DAVID

No no no no! No.

TREXEL

Into the— into the sunlit uplands of the Executive Track.

HARTRO

Come up.

DAVID

Because this— this podless puddle room is still better than whatever Standards have in store for us!

TREXEL

Well, that does sound quite convince— I'm torn. I-I've never wanted...

HARTRO

Trexel.

TREXEL

...anything more in my life than to be on the Executive Track but—

HARTRO

You won the award.

TREXEL

(Desire and excitement) Oh, I did win an award but—

HARTRO

Four.

DAVID

No, you didn't!

TREXEL

No, but that makes sense. Why would I have won an award?

DAVID

Four awards?

HARTRO

More— more— more awards.

TREXEL

Oh, I'd like more awards!

HARTRO

Several aw— a— a list of awards

TREXEL

Ooh!

HARTRO

that I could just—

DAVID

List off? Now?

HARTRO

List off.

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

The award for... benevolent... rusing.

TREXEL

That sounds real. Well, I—

HARTRO

The award for most alcohol consumed... while at work.

TREXEL

It me!

DAVID

Okay, that— No, that one— that one— Yeah, he could have won.

HARTRO

The award for planets... being sold... on a... 'escarpment'.

TREXEL

I— I don't know what one of those is.

DAVID

You— you told us explicitly that we sold *no* planets.

HARTRO

I tell— I told you what you needed to hear. I needed results. I needed to train you quick and fast, and I did it.

DAVID

Well, you trained us so well that we fell into a different department.

HARTRO

Come on, nobody knows the rhymes and reasons of life. All I can say is you're lookin' good now, kiddo!

DAVID

I— No! I don't! I look much worse. I looked better when I had a pod!

HARTRO

Only one way to go and that is — Trexel...

TREXEL

It's, uh, sideways!

HARTRO

Uhhh, and up!

TREXEL

Sideways and up! That's what I was saying. You go sideways out the door and then up in the lift to the Executive Track!

HARTRO

I just want to say—

TREXEL

Does this mean— Hartro, does this mean—

HARTRO

Yep.

TREXEL

Does this mean if I was to, perhaps, be on the Executive Track, I could maybe have my... admission privileges back to the, um, Cosmic Lounge?

HARTRO

Say it. Yes. **(Trexel on the verge of hyperventilating)** Trexel, look me in the eyes.

TREXEL

(Breathy) I'm looking.

HARTRO

I guarantee you.

TREXEL

Ooh!

HARTRO

You stick with me.

TREXEL

Ooh ooh ooh!

HARTRO

you produce good work, **(Trexel laughs)** you get these troubleshooting issues sorted, and we will fly, baby!

TREXEL

I am on board! Hartro, let's go get a drink!

HARTRO

Ahhh... Ehhh...

TREXEL

To celebrate! A celebratory drink! Put me back in the cage and wheel me to a bar!

HARTRO

Yeah, alright.

TREXEL

Yeah-ha-hoo!

DAVID

No, Trexel—

HARTRO

In you get.

DAVID

Trexel!

TREXEL

(Bangs on cage wall) Bye-bye David!

[Cage gets wheeled out]

DAVID

No Trexel! Don't listen to her lies!

TREXEL

(From further away) Bye!

[Door swooshes closed]

DAVID

Don't listen to her lieeeeeesss!

TREXEL

(Muffled) Make the cage smaller.

[Show Theme - Outro]

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