

STL 52 — Games of Spies and Guns of Paper

Content Warnings

- Emotional abuse
- Existential crisis
- Bullying/taunting
- Comedic violence
- Fire (including SFX)
- Mentions of: death, injury, alcohol/smoking, guns

TREXEL

Special thanks to Fleuranna. Never give up, or any other directions. They're yours. You're not a charity.

[Show Theme – Intro]

IMOGEN

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

[Theme continues]

[Sounds of crockery and washing up]

CUSTOMERS

Buh-bye! // Bye!

DAVID

Alright, yeah... Bye! Bye!

[David sighs as the doors swoosh and close, soft muzak is playing]

DAVID

Another day, another lots and lots of board cred.

Ah...

[Metallic knocking from the vent]

DAVID

Oh! Oh, th-the vent, um, right. I'm just going to go, go stand by these cupboards, and wait for Trexel.

[Waits as knocking continues]

DAVID

Nothing...

[Vent opens, as Trexel comes screaming out, surprising David and smashing crockery]

TREXEL

David! David, why are you standing in front of the cupboards? Ow... argh...

DAVID

Trexel, why did you come out of the cupboards?

TREXEL

Ow, your hard body has dented me!

DAVID

Wait. **How** did you come out the cu—? Is there a vent back there?

TREXEL

It's a second vent behind the cupboards, David. I didn't want to land on you again, but you moved, you incompetent fool!

DAVID

Well I, I didn't want you to land on me again. So I moved.

TREXEL

Ah... god... Remember David, never do anything of your own volition. Your volition is stupid... ow, ow.

IMOGEN

[Beep] The only real volition is Imogen! Hooray for Imogen!

DAVID

Rude. And comeuppance had. Bendy body. And you've destroyed all of my plates!

TREXEL

(Sarcastic) Oh no! Look, what's happened to the plates! Who will wash them now? Oh, they can't because you can't wash a smashed plate.

DAVID

Did you—

TREXEL

What a shame, David, what a shame.

(Talks over David who is trying to speak)

No plongeur here. No, no Sink Chancellor needed, position closed.

DAVID

(Angry) What are people going to do? Just eat out of cupped hands?

TREXEL

I always eat out of cupped hands, or maybe a cupped foot if I'm feeling particularly bendy.

DAVID

Maybe we can pivot to sort of a gimmick restaurant, "Come to David's Place. You've got to eat out of your ha—". I could work with this. I could work with this. I'll get onto Marketing.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Warning: That plate eatery has been flagged for being both unhygienic and upsetting.

TREXEL

I'm sorry, Marketing?

DAVID

Well, yeah.

TREXEL

You're engaging in ma— David, you're lying low! You are hiding! Don't engage in marketing.

DAVID

No, Marketing is me. I p-put on a special Marketing hat, and sit in the office, and work out how to market it.

TREXEL

Hang on a minute. You're telling me there's a special hat, and I don't have it? Show me this special hat.

DAVID

No.

TREXEL

Show me this special hat.

DAVID

Uh, no I'm not.

TREXEL

David!

DAVID

It's my hat!

TREXEL

Da-David. I'm not going to take it away from you. I just want to see the special hat.

DAVID

Fine. Fine. Let me... Here it is.

[Rustling of stuff]

TREXEL

Oh-ho-ho yeah!

DAVID

No, no, no, no! Look!

TREXEL

Look at me! I declare that you should market your restaurant by closing down because it's stupid. So says Marketing. Sorry, David—

DAVID

Give it back! Give it back!

[Furious scrabbling to regain hat]

I'm Marketing. David's Place is great. And it's the best marketing thing, and we love your hermit crab motif. Okay, great.

TREXEL

Fine. Sounds like you've surrounded yourself with a 'yes you'.

DAVID

Well, I, yes, it's nicer than having a 'no everyone else', like normal.

Anyway, what do you want?

TREXEL

What do I— What do I want, David?

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

I want to change your life. And my life has changed too. Now you may remember I did a little bit of a cry yesterday, because you pointed out to me that my entire identity as an individual and member of the proud and wide tradition of families of Stellar Firma has been completely stripped away because I'm no longer a consultant—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yeah, we—

TREXEL

—I'm no longer an executive track person.

I'm just, I'm just nothing. I'm just Trexel Geistman, and... nothing.

DAVID

And so I'm hoping at this point, you've realized that your job shouldn't be your entire identity, and you should actually get an identity outside of the consultancy, which you are no longer doing.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Warning: self-determination is not an official or endorsed stance of Stellar Firma Limited. Why not try staying in your place instead?

TREXEL

That's an interesting idea. But what I've done instead, David, is I've decided I'm going to be a spy!

DAVID

You're going to be a spy?

TREXEL

And I don't need **you** anymore. So I just came to tell you I'm going to be a spy, and you can't shove it.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

Shove it up your cafeteria!

DAVID

Okay. And, and **how** are you going to be a spy? You going to spy school or...?

TREXEL

Well, well, what I was doing is, while I was, sort of, wandering bleakly in my existentially crisis-al way, I went and met Fernsworth. Do you know Fernsworth?

DAVID

No, Trexel, obviously I don't know Fernsworth.

TREXEL

Oh, you'd love Fernsworth. Now, I've never seen her. I've only heard her voice, crackly over a mysterious line, but she is a real high up in the Sabotage and Espionage Department, do you see?

DAVID

Right.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Do not trust mystery voices from unseen beings. Other than me!

TREXEL

That's right. Sabotage and Espionage. And their motto— It's great, you'd love their motto. Er, it's a bit hard to see, because it's a black card, and then they printed on black. So, you sort of have to hold it up in the light, and part of it's matte, and part of it's sh—

It's very cool, David. They one thing's it's very cool.

DAVID

How did you get hold of one of these cards?

TREXEL

Oh... I stole it. Like a spy would!

DAVID

I mean, I guess that is a good start. Where did you st—

TREXEL

Out of somebody's satchel!

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

After I hit them over... the head. Like a spy! I mugged them. I mugged somebody. Now this, uh, motto is: "Know your competition, and strike them down hard and without mercy!"

DAVID

Okay. Well, I mean, I suppose you struck that person down, hard and without mercy.

TREXEL

No mercy to— I regret nothing! They were bleeding— ah, spies!

DAVID

Was this Fernsworth?

TREXEL

Oh, no, no, no, no.

I spoke to Fernsworth afterwards. She called me, and said, 'Oh, you're going to be murdered in your bed, for what you've done.' And I said, 'Ah-hah, joke's on you. Don't sleep in a bed. I sleep in the vents' and she was all, like, 'Ooh, you sleep in the vents? Maybe that's something we can—' and, y'know, we got into a bit of a back and forth. We really hit it off!

And Fernsworth's my friend now. So, you know, just, just putting that out there. You know, just in case that, you know, shames you or makes you jealous because, yeah, Fernsworth's my friend. I don't know if you've got a friend who's a spy? I don't, I don't think so—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No—

TREXEL

—but maybe, maybe you can ask Angry Jim? Have you guys got Angry Jim?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No, I've got— I've just—

TREXEL

Is Angry Jim a spy? No! Angry Jim's a mechanic!

DAVID

No, I've just got 30 to 50 regulars, who are all very lovely and give me money.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Even by Trexelian standards, **this** is embarrassing!

TREXEL

Well... I've had a phone conversation with F-Fernsworth...

It's not important. Now, the thing about this, the thing about this, David, is it means I don't need you anymore because I'm going to be the world's greatest spy.

DAVID

Mm-hmm.

TREXEL

The university's most bestest spy, and I've actually already made **my** business cards. Here you go. "Trexel Geistman. Spy!" I'm a spy, here's my address, it's The Vents.

DAVID

O-Okay. Um...

TREXEL

Here's my phone number. I'm a spy!

DAVID

Isn't... isn't that bit of a problem being a spy?

TREXEL

How so?

DAVID

Well, you kind of don't want people to know your identity. 'cause that's, I mean, that's, as far as I know, and hey, I haven't, I haven't got a friend who's a spy, but as far as I know, the whole point of being a spy is people don't know who you really are.

TREXEL

No, no, the whole point of being a spy, is wearing a tuxedo and gambling away large amounts of money.

DAVID

So this is going to be a gambling-based spy... What, what does Sabotage and Espionage actually do?

TREXEL

Okay. Okay, okay. Imagine this: You are a trade delegation from Quadrant J, let's just say, let's pick on a quadrant, out of the air. I'm going with J.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

And that trade delegation contains a, a subterranean ring of espionage against Stellar Firma. You know they're, they're here for trade talks, but actually they're going to steal our... diamonds, perhaps diamonds!

DAVID

Okay.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Everyone does love diamonds!

TREXEL

A-And I'm, I'm Trexel Geistman, Spy, and we're hosting a big gala dinner, and I walk in there and go, 'Good evening everybody! I'm a super cool spy!'

And they're all, like, 'Pft, I'd like to know this spy, here are my secrets', and I take the secrets and I drink heavily. And then I fire a gun, repeatedly into the ceiling until, you know, spying time's over. Spy, here's my card.

DAVID

D-Do you really think that— You're, you're paraphrasing right?

TREXEL

Paraphra—? What does that mean?

DAVID

That's not your— That's not actually your plan?

TREXEL

Yeah. That's the whole plan, start to finish.

DAVID

Okay... Look, we haven't done this in a while, but... Role play?

TREXEL

Ah yeah, sure, I like to roleplay. Imogen do you think you could manage a role play in this dingy cafeteria hellhole?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Portable role-playing holodome activated!

[Sound of holodome engaging]

TREXEL

Thank you. Okay. Right.

DAVID

So I am a... what did you say? Quadrant J? And I have—

TREXEL

Trade delegation of Quadrant J!

(David has some trouble pronouncing it)

TREXEL

Get into it David!

DAVID

Okay. Trade delegation of Quadrant J...

(Attempts to adopt a gruff persona) Grr. I love Quadrant J. And do you know what I hate? Stellar—

IMOGEN

[Beep] Watch it, buster! There may not be gunwalls here, but I can still ruin you.

DAVID

The— Yes. That, we all know what that means, in the role play thing. Fine. So, I have all these secrets that I don't want to give up. I'm sitting in my casino. Grr.

TREXEL

Excuse me. Good sir.

DAVID

Yes? Hello.

TREXEL

Can I perhaps interest you in... a gun! 'cause I am a spy! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! I'll have a dry martini, which is a martini except I'm sitting in a giant glass.

DAVID

Oh, well, I'm now playing the rest of Quadrant J's trade delegation, and we've all got **our** guns, and have shot you.

[Sound of holodome disengaging]

TREXEL

What?! What did I do?!

DAVID

Shot one of them. Immediately.

TREXEL

I didn't, I didn't shoot **them**. I merely shot in their direction, and they got in the way. That's spy games!

DAVID

But—

TREXEL

That's spy-lateral damage.

IMOGEN

[Beep] [wrong buzzer sound] Incorrect. This is unilateral murder, which is the sole preserve of The Board.

DAVID

Regardless of *your* justification for *how* the bullets got into them.

TREXEL

Yes?

DAVID

You still shot them, and said you were a spy.

TREXEL

Okay.

DAVID

So everyone else then goes, 'Oh, look a spy. We don't—

TREXEL

Hooray, a spy! Spies are cool. Have a drink. Also our secrets.

DAVID

But they... But they don't like spies. Th-That's the point. That's why spies are secretive.

TREXEL

(Flabbergasted) I mean, sorry, what? Who doesn't like a spy? They're the coolest.

DAVID

Okay. Okay. What if—

TREXEL

Have you met Fernsworth?! I haven't!

DAVID

Okay, so let's say I'm a spy from Galactonium...

TREXEL

I always suspected! Imogen! Get him! Get him with your gunwalls! Bang, bang, bang! Die, die Galactonium scum!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Firstly, there are no gunwalls. And secondly, no!

DAVID

Trexel, Trexel...

[Trexel starts slapping David ineffectually]

TREXEL

Eat this, Bathin's pawn!

DAVID

Trexel, Stop it.

TREXEL

Sorry, Sorry. I got, I got into it. I got too into it.

DAVID

Exactly. But I said I was spy, and **(emphatically)** you... didn't... like me.

TREXEL

(Trexel gasps, realisation dawning)

Because people don't like spies from the other side.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

I just like Stellar Firma spies... you'd like Galactonium spies,

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No, I like—

TREXEL

'cause you're a scumbag. You're a scumbag, and you deserve to die.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) —Look—

TREXEL

That's what, that's what we've learned here.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) —Trexel—

TREXEL

You're a Galactonium **(splutters)** poltroon!

DAVID

—Trexel, I'm not a spy from Galactonium. That was— I was just illustrating.

TREXEL

Why did you say it, David?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No, 'cause I—

TREXEL

I heard it with my little ear shells!

DAVID

Yes!

TREXEL

They picked up your noises!

DAVID

I was, I was proving a point. So, the point is **if** I was a spy from Galactonium, I wouldn't say I was one because I don't have that reaction. Do you see?

TREXEL

I'm starting to see your point, David. Yes.

DAVID

Right!

TREXEL

Perhaps being a spy is more about not telling people you're a spy—

DAVID

Yes!

TREXEL

—which somewhat defeats the point of being a spy, as far as I can— Hang on, let me just have a little look, here. So, so the whole p— let me, I've got, I've got a brochure here [paper sounds] from Sabotage and Espionage. So, if I'm reading this right, and... by right... I mean, for the very first time, because up until now, I was pretty sure I just understood what a spy was, but apparently not!

Right. So it's saying, I have to dress up as, like, a Galactonium... pawn, and go to Galactonium, and pretend to be Galactonian, in order to get secrets from Galactonium.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

I can't tell anyone I'm a spy, and people will think I'm a Galactonian, which is, urgh, horrible. Being, being a spy seems awful!

DAVID

Well, I think I, I think people get off on the whole, you know, the adrenaline rush of, of at any point they could be found out and, and killed. But to be quite honest, I have lived that life. Where, at any point, I could just be killed for no particular reason! And do you know what? It's really not all that!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) No, no.

TREXEL

Right?

TREXEL

I, I've lived my entire life with, with the sure certainty that my position and status will ultimately protect me from any mortal repercussions. So... it doesn't sound like it's for me. You know what, David, this is why people always tell me, 'Trexel, read things! And, you know, don't even start in the middle, start at the top and then go down'.

I mean, I've never gone there before, but I mean, this is one instance where I probably would have saved myself a lot of time fantasising about being a spy.

Look, right at the top here, "Sabotage and Espionage, A Division of Business Warfare. Your loved ones might never see you again." **(laughs)**

DAVID

Oh.

TREXEL

I probably should have started there, shouldn't I?

DAVID

Yes. Yes. Er...

TREXEL

Well, bullet dodged. I won't be a spy. I'll just be... Oh, I'm back here again. Well, where would I be? I'm just... Trexel.

DAVID

You could be a... plate repairer.

TREXEL

What? Just glue the, glue the plates back together?

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

Then wash them?

DAVID

Yep.

TREXEL

Sounds an awful lot like that plongeur business, except with glue involved!

DAVID

Ah, you could be an Executive... Plate Consultant.

TREXEL

(Wearily) Yes, I suppose I could be an Executive Plate Consultant.

Maybe, David, maybe you're right. Maybe there isn't more to this world.

Maybe you should just... find something that you're good at, and that you love, and just engage in it. Not worry about... **(sighs)** hierarchy and recognition and danger... just... enjoy what you have.

Board, that sounds stupid!

DAVID

Well, look, you could— We could, we could, we could, we could compromise, right? 'Cause I'd, I'd rather you didn't just go off and get yourself killed, all told.

IMOGEN

[Beep] I am genuinely interested as to why you would not want that.

TREXEL

Really?

DAVID

But—

TREXEL

But David, I felt, I felt the way we left it last time that you were very much along the lines of 'You, you go off and do what you want, Trexel, you stupid fool. And I, David, who's finally found what they love, and are engaging in it, can stay here in my lovely fulfilled pod of David's Place. Little hermit crab shell!'

DAVID

Yeah, but I didn't want— didn't expect you to go and throw yourself into the teeth of Galactonium gun barrels.

TREXEL

Well, what else was I supposed to do, David? When somebody rejects, you put yourself in mortal danger, to win back their lo— **(flustered blustering)** Er, er, I mean, to, to, it doesn't matter what they think! Because you're Trexel Geistman, best person in all the world!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Yikes.

DAVID

Okay. We're going to, we're— **(heavy sigh)** We're gonna blast past that one Trexel.

TREXEL

Please. Please do. Blast away.

DAVID

Also, because, I mean, the subtext wasn't exactly **that** sub. It was more just text.

TREXEL

(Cry-shouting) I just do text, David!

DAVID

You're Trexel Geistman.

TREXEL

I've got no subtexts! Or subcutaneous tissues. I'm just all, like, in and out, there's no midpoint. And also I don't allow sub-letting.

(David struggles to find words for a moment)

DAVID

Sure. But look, look, we can compromise, right?

Why don't you, you could be a spy, right?

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Can I?

DAVID

'Cause, I mean, you were a detective for a bit.

TREXEL

Oh yes, I was, wasn't I? Hang on, I've still got the tape here.

[Click]

[Detective noir music starts playing, and sounds of an old-timey café can be heard]

TREXEL

(Detective voice) He sits in the stupid café with this stupid idiot person

(snick of a cigarette lighter)

who he doesn't care about. Smoking a cigarette, that he doesn't smoke, and he flicks into the corner, and it lights a table on fire.

[David makes panicked sounds as something apparently goes up in flames]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Deploying anti-noir detective fire foam.

[Long parp sound, then foaming aerosol sounds]

DAVID

Right? Look, you can go undercover in the kitchens as a plongeur, right? With, with David 7 never suspecting anything.

TREXEL

Oh!

DAVID

He'd never know that Trexel Geistman or... maybe we could develop an alter ego for you... so you don't use 'Trexel Geistman'—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Yes! 'Trexyl Gystman', with Ys instead of the Is.

DAVID

No! Maybe changing it a bit more because I think David might see through that because David knows Trexel quite well...

TREXEL

(Laughs) I don't think so, he's pretty stupid, pretty stupid is David.

DAVID

Okay, well, hang on. Why don't we just call you 'Lexert'?

TREXEL

Lexert?

DAVID

Yeah. It's Trexel backwards.

TREXEL

Ohhh! No-one will ever spot that.

DAVID

Yes. Um, 'Namtsieg'...

TREXEL

Is that Geistman backwards?

DAVID

Yes, it is.

TREXEL

Lexel, Lexel Namthieg?

DAVID

Nam-tsieg.

TREXEL

Na... na... No, no, say it again? Namp-thee?

DAVID

Nam! Nam-tsieg!

TREXEL

Lexel Nam Tsieg! It sounds like I'm a cursed tape being played backwards to some frightened children at Halloween.

DAVID

I mean, aren't you?

TREXEL

Ooh, in a way, I like it! I will be Lexel Namtheeg!

DAVID

Okay. You could just say Namseeg.

TREXEL

(Over-enunciating) Nam-Theeg.

DAVID

Okay. Fine. If you want to be called Lexert—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I'm a creepy tape!

DAVID

Nam-Seeeg—

TREXEL

Oh look at me! I'm a spooky tape! Aren't I great at engaging!

DAVID

Yep. Well, you can get into the kitchen, Lexert Namtseeeg, and, and, and, and foolish David, will never suspect a thing, as you collect information about how David runs his business. And can then leave notes around suggesting how he could improve engagement with customers and footfall.

TREXEL

And then sell them out to the authorities to win justice!

DAVID

Let's not do that bit, because then Lexert Namtsieg will also be unmasked as Trexel Geistman, Wanted Criminal!

(Trexel gasps melodramatically)

TREXEL

Noooooo! I have been unmasked.

Alright, fine. I'll do it. I agree. After all this hemming and hawing and toing and fro-ing, you've finally, finally been beaten, David. I am now going to go into

that kitchen and clean plates, as a spy. And there's nothing you can do about it, you idiot!

DAVID

(Playing along) No. No! I am undone! Noooo!

(Trexel laughs evilly)

IMOGEN

[Beep] Warning: line manager detected.

[Door beeps and whooshes open]

TREXEL

(Mocking) Oh look, it's Hartro, and she's got a gu—

(Panicked) Oh look, it's Hartro! And she's got a gun!

DAVID

What? No!

HARTRO

That's right. It's Hartro, with a gun, come to collect the boys.

[Sound of paper crinkling]

DAVID

Wait. Is that, is that gun made of paper?

TREXEL

A paper gun?

HARTRO

No. No, no. What, what do you know about paper, David 7? What, what do you know about guns?

DAVID

I'll, I'll admit, not enough to be sure that you won't shoot me with your paper gun.

HARTRO

That's right!

TREXEL

Sold, to the woman with a gun!

HARTRO

It's a gun. I've got it. I've got the upper hand. Now listen, boys, I've been stakin' the joint out, and you're coming with me.

TREXEL

O-Okay.

DAVID

Um...

TREXEL

That's alright, fine. We'll, we'll come with, we'll come with you, Gun!Hartro.

HARTRO

That's good Trexel. That's good.

DAVID

(Forlornly) But this is my place.

TREXEL

David, David, not now.

HARTRO

David, you're a clone. Do you know what that means?

DAVID

Er, that I'm David?

HARTRO

It means that you don't have a place. What, what have, what've you been doing down here? You've been hiding. Have you, have you turned this ridiculous, derelict place into— have you been running it like a café?

DAVID

Er, a moderately successful café, yes.

HARTRO

So, so sad.

TREXEL

Harsh.

DAVID

Oh...

IMOGEN

[Beep] This seems unnecessarily hurtful.

TREXEL

Come on, David. Abandon your stupid, shattered dreams, and come with me and Hartro, with this paper gun.

DAVID

Oh.

HARTRO

(Muttering) It's a real gun.

TREXEL

It was inevitable. You know that, David.

DAVID

I guess it wouldn't last.

TREXEL

Nothing ever does, ha ha. Onwards into inevitable death!

DAVID

Okay.

[Door beep and whooshes]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Well, nice while it lasted. Incinerating room now.

[Flame jets roar and things sizzle, fade out]

[Show Theme – Outro]

Stellar Firma is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill Ltd. and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence.

Created by: Tim Meredith and Ben Meredith

Producer: Katie Seaton

Executive Producer: Alexander J. Newall

Editing: Maddy Searle

Mastering: Jeffrey Nils Gardner

Music: Samuel D.F. Jones

Artwork: Anika Khan

Cast

I.M.O.G.E.N. - Imogen Harris

Hartro Piltz – Jenny Haufek

David 7 - Ben Meredith

Trexel Geistman - Tim Meredith