

## STL 62 — Temporal Woes and Timebot Shows

### Content Warnings

- Emotional abuse
- Bullying / Taunting
- Childhood trauma
- Gaslighting
- Discrimination & prejudice
- Mentions of: gore, violence, mass death, alcohol, medical malpractice, guns

**TREXEL**

Special thanks to S-Words. Your word of the day is 'susurrate'. Use it wisely.

**[Show Theme – Intro]**

**IMOGEN**

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

**[Theme continues]**

**DAVID**

**(sighs)** Right. Almost time. Ah, I wonder what childhood icon Trexel's brought with him now. General... Grief, or... L-Lieutenant Love, uh... Colonel... Corpses-In-My-Room. **(mutters)** Brigadier... Bandyng-Around-Names. Just... Admiral—

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** It is possible that this military hierarchy needs reform.

**DAVID**

Aargh! I need to scream into a paper bag—

**[Door swooshes open]**

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** David!

**DAVID**

Oh, hello.

**TREXEL**

David.

**DAVID**

Hello, Trexel. Have you— are you, on, on your, on your own?

**TREXEL**

On my tod, David. On my— just a, just a solo Trexel today, Trexel cracking forth, alone into the wilderness that is business.

**DAVID**

There's no, like, childhood presenters or icons just hiding around the door, ready to pop out at, when I least expect it, and introduce themselves as... y'know, the, the Major General Malnutrition or something?

**TREXEL**

No, no. Major General Malnutrition died of... well, I think you can guess.

**DAVID**

Oh.

**TREXEL**

Hit by a space station.

**IMOGEN**

He was looking for a sandwich, and didn't spot the rotating solar array.

**TREXEL**

But, uh, no. I've decided that it's, uh, it's just gonna be me from now on, because I-I dunno about you, but I find Vice-Admiral Fun, ahh, what's the word?

**DAVID**

Sad.

**TREXEL**

Uh, sad and depressing!

**DAVID**

Yes.

**TREXEL**

I thought, 'Y'know what, this'll be fun,' because, y'know, they're called 'Vice-Admiral Fun'. It's in the name. I remember being— But it was just sort of like a— It was like the human equivalent of a crispy mop. Y'know, like when a mop's got all wet, and then somebody's dried it, but like not properly—

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Mmmhmm.

**TREXEL**

—and it's still got all the stuff that it picked up, so it just sort of goes hard and crispy, so, like if it's, if it's like spread out on the floor, and then you pick it up, and it just completely retains the shape.

**DAVID**

Just— just to be clear, uh, uh, th— a mop is like a floppy broom, right?

**TREXEL**

It's like a floppy, wet broom!

**DAVID**

Right.

**TREXEL**

For when there's sick on the floor.

**DAVID**

Ah.

**TREXEL**

Or blood. Whatever you want. Any sort of bad fluids.

**DAVID**

That can then crisp up. Yes, no, Vice-Admiral Fun is, is—

**TREXEL**

Mmm.

**DAVID**

—yes, yes, pretty much—

**TREXEL**

A crispy mop of people.

**DAVID**

Yes.

**TREXEL**

So no, just, just me today, David, just me.

**DAVID**

Okay.

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** You know what? We're getting the gang back together. Just David and Trexel, together again, fighting for what's ours. You know? And by "ours" I mean "mine". But you get it, you're there as well and you've got a knife.

**DAVID**

Right. Yes. Yes.

**[Pneumatic tube hissing, beep]**

**IMOGEN**

Initiating.

**DAVID**

Fine. Okay. Uh, well, hopefully now we don't have to babysit one of your 'guests', we, uh, we can actually get some work done, so let's get on with the brief.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** What wonders will you achieve now you only have serious professionals in the room?

**TREXEL**

Yes, cos that is the only thing that has been preventing us from getting work done before, it's the **guests**. Oh, the guests!

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Yeah, well—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Without the guests, we're on it!

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Gives us a better—

**TREXEL**

We're like a laser-guided hawk. That you've shot out of a catapult. A hawkapult!

**DAVID**

So the brief is from—

**TREXEL**

We need to design a laser hawkapult and sell it.

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Well, uh—

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** There's that laser focus we were hoping for.

**DAVID**

Well, let's see if that's what the brief wants, so—

**[pages turning]**

**DAVID**

Uh, the brief is Ryan de Krono. Uh, this is 'Internal to Stellar Firma'.

**TREXEL**

Ooh! Exciting! We haven't had one of these before.

**DAVID**

**(Reading)** "So creating planets, stars, or other, and messing around with gravity causes all sorts of issues with time in our departments. Uh, time pockets causing rapid aging of the employees, uh, employees claiming extra hours for work done in sped up time—

**TREXEL**

Mmm.

**DAVID**

—work taking too long and causing complaints from clients. Uh, we need to stabilize the time pockets, uh, or if that’s not a thing, then a way of ensuring employees are not impacted negatively by them so they don’t try and claim overtime.” Yeah, so, this is, uh— A department in Stellar Firma has come—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Yes. Yes.

**DAVID**

—to us with a problem we need to solve.

**TREXEL**

Yes, you’ve got it. Don’t worry.

**DAVID**

This is expediting.

**TREXEL**

No, it’s not expediting, David, it’s different.

**DAVID**

Uh, but it’s— This is the same. This could be an expedition... brief.

**TREXEL**

No, it couldn't. Do you know why?

**DAVID**

W— I'm, I— You're gonna tell me.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Nothing in the universe could now halt this oncoming Trexplanation.

**TREXEL**

So. When there's a problem, you go to Expediting.

**DAVID**

Yes.

**TREXEL**

And Expediting sometimes say, 'Whoops, can't help ya.' And that's, that's the, that's the public option, gone. You know, you've exhausted the internal resources that are available to you as a department of Stellar Firma, and at that stage, it's just like, 'Well, best of luck buddy.' **Unless** of course, you got that sweet cash, and then you can engage in what we like to call 'The Public-Private Partnership', is where that we publicly, and privately, take huge amounts of money from you for things that (**chuckles**) should be provided as a service anyway by whatever governs you.

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** But hang on a bit—

**TREXEL**

It's a great system.

**DAVID**

But isn't this a departmental expense? So why is Stellar Firma charging a department... in Stellar Firma for work done by a department in Stellar Firma? That's just moving the money around, like, no money's being made, right?

**[Trexel deploys an extendable pointer and rustling paper charts]**

**TREXEL**

Money moving around **is** money being made. As long as a balance sheet somewhere says 'plus' and then an amount, **(scribbling sounds)** everyone shakes hands, there's champagne, you high five. Obviously somewhere else there's a balance sheet that says 'minus', but then you mark that minus as an overhead expense, and then nobody has to worry about it David! As long as it keeps moving around— It's like a money vortex, and I'm in the center of the money vortex with my mouth open going.

**(Trexel makes gnashing sounds to indicate catching money in his mouth)**

**DAVID**

Right.

**TREXEL**

Business.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Welcome to capitalism!

**DAVID**

So fundamentally what you're saying is that internal consultancy...

**TREXEL**

Yes.

**DAVID**

...is expensive expedition escalation.

**TREXEL**

Sure. If you want to look at it like that, in a very narrow and specific and accurate way, sure, but I like to think of it as a premium service atop which true business can be built, because it's only within private organisations like Stellar Firma, can public organisations like Stellar Firma really gain a business edge.

**DAVID**

Right.

**TREXEL**

**(Softly)** Business.

**DAVID**

I... don't understand.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** If you did understand, you would be incorrect. That is the beauty of the system.

**DAVID**

Okay, so let's, let's try and bring some premium business to... uh—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Mmm!

**DAVID**

—to Ryan de Krono.

**TREXEL**

Primo!

**DAVID**

So, so yeah, so his problem is Time Management have time pockets kind of all—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Yes, yes, yes, yes!

**DAVID**

—over the shop, and it's just, just mucking up the time stream, and, and people are aging and I assume dying, uh, or they're claiming hours, uh, for work done—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** The main thing is: they're claiming hours, David, and that's not gonna look good on that balance sheet we were talking about earlier.

**DAVID**

Yeah.

**TREXEL**

You want 'expenses for employees: nothing'. That's, that's, that's good business.

**DAVID**

Right.

**TREXEL**

If they're claiming overtime, then it's gonna be 'expenses for employees: something'.

**DAVID**

Yep.

**TREXEL**

And that's bad business.

**DAVID**

Okay.

**TREXEL**

And no one likes that.

**DAVID**

So, yeah, s-so Ryan has given us a couple of instances. So he said, like, “Need to stabilize the time pockets, or if that’s not a thing, then a way of ensuring employees are not impacted negatively by them so they don’t try and claim overtime.”

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Well firstly—

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** So—

**TREXEL**

Oh, sor— no, you— you, ah, David, you know what? The team’s back together. You take the first shot. You take the first salvo.

**DAVID**

How—

**TREXEL**

I’ve got ideas, and I’m going to yell them, David, but why don’t you speak yours first before I start yelling?

**DAVID**

**(Surprised)** How uncharacteristically generous of you. Okay—

**TREXEL**

**(Loudly)** It is! Wow! Well done Trexel! Well done Trexel! Parade for me!

**DAVID**

**(Very quietly)** Yaaay.

**TREXEL**

Balloons! Ticker tape! A horse with my face painted on it!

**DAVID**

Those little, like, paper things that you go **(pitched up)** ‘brrr!’ and then the little—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Yes!

**DAVID**

—like, roly-thing kinda comes out and then waggles about, and then rolls back up—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** The honksnake!

**DAVID**

Yes, the honksnake. So honksnakes for Trexel. Um, so—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Can we get that on a pillow?

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Merch promised! Security will believe it when they see it.

**TREXEL**

'Honksnakes for Trexel'. And you can give it to me for my birthday. Also, can you tell me when my birthday is? Sometimes I find cake, but I don't know if that's just... found cake, or specific cake for me. It often has a name on it that's like "Steve", and I'm like, well that could be me, nom nom nom.

**DAVID**

Trexel.

**TREXEL**

I'm in someone else's house at this time, is that important?

**DAVID**

Wh— How old are you?

**TREXEL**

I am... old.

**DAVID**

Okay. So your birthday was old years ago.

**TREXEL**

Oh, okay.

**DAVID**

So unfortunately, it's already, it's already been and gone.

**TREXEL**

**(Disappointed)** Aw.

**DAVID**

So, uh, yeah.

**TREXEL**

What about if I was young?

**DAVID**

That would be young years ago.

**TREXEL**

Ah, what about if I was mid?

**DAVID**

Would be mid, mid years ago.

**TREXEL**

What if I wasn't born?

**DAVID**

Then it would be in your future.

**TREXEL**

**(Frustrated)** But when it— When's it my birthday, then?

**DAVID**

When you're born!

**TREXEL**

Ohhh, good point, and then you're too covered in, you know, **fluids** to really want to eat cake.

**DAVID**

Yep. That was my experience. I, I popped out, and, and nobody offered me any cake—

**TREXEL**

Eh.

**DAVID**

—and the whole thing was quite... **(sighs)** Well, y— I mean, you know, you were **there**, I think.

**TREXEL**

What's your time pocket idea?

**DAVID**

Oh! Sorry! Well, no, it's more that, that Ryan has kind of given us a couple of different options, right.

**[Rustling papers then more scribbling]**

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Okay.

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** So we've got option one — we stabilize the time pockets. We've got option two, which is ensuring that employees are not negatively impacted by the time pockets, and then we've got the sort of implicit option three, which you've kind of got, which is 'doesn't matter if the employee is impacted or not—

**TREXEL**

Mmmhmm.

**DAVID**

—we just have to prevent them from claiming overtime'.

**TREXEL**

Option three, let's go home. Cancel overtime, sorry.

**DAVID**

I think—

**TREXEL**

Sorry, old man who was twelve this morning.

**DAVID**

Okay—

**TREXEL**

No expenses for you, no overtime, bye-bye.

**DAVID**

No, that's fine, I think—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** I've got a hammer!

**DAVID**

Y-you've, wait, what—

**TREXEL**

No overtime.

**DAVID**

Are you gonna hit the twelve-year-old old man with a hammer?

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** You— What you do is you make the overtime form a hammer, and say, 'If you want overtime, you've got to beat yourself to death with this hammer,' so if anybody does it, then don't worry about it, you can't expense to a corpse.

**DAVID**

Can... can we do that?

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Nothing prohibits it in our constitution. Possibly because we don't have one — but it's all the same in the end.

**TREXEL**

Can we do— Ah, you know what, I don't think we can. And do you know why?

**DAVID**

Why?

**TREXEL**

How are you gonna print on a hammer? You gotta have **words** on an overtime form, you gotta print on it. It won't go through a printer. I've tried to force a few tools through printers, and it always breaks them, because printers are weak, and deserve our derision.

**DAVID**

**(Flatly)** The only way of inscribing words onto objects as well we know.

**TREXEL**

But I mean— Wh-what, what are— what are you gonna do? Carve it in with your fists? **(laughing derisively)** I mean, I mean, think about it, David? What are you gonna do, chew it in with your teeth? You'll hurt your teeth!

**DAVID**

Wh—

**TREXEL**

**(Laughing)** You idiot!

**DAVID**

Laser engraving!

**TREXEL**

That's what a printer is. But it's just got a very thin slot, and nobody has yet worked out how to make the slot bigger. It's a shame! It's a shame. But science cannot provide all the answers. Only the Board can. And the Board can is a can in which we keep all of our little figurines of the Board.

**[Metal clangs and reverberates]**

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Hail the Board can, and their can-do attitude!

**DAVID**

Oh, can I see?

**TREXEL**

**(Furious)** No, they're not for you!

**DAVID**

Oh.

**TREXEL**

I like to play little games of Galactic Ball with them.

**DAVID**

So, does every c-citizen-employee have a little Board can?

**TREXEL**

Yes, it's given to you, it's assigned to you as a child, like, 'Here's your Board can, fill it with the knick-knacks that remind you of the Board,' and then Galactonium Boy comes over, and snatches it out of your hand, and says, 'What's in your can, Geistman?' and I'm like **(growing increasingly distressed)**, 'Give it back, Bathin, give me back my can!' And he's like, 'I think I'll take this, and that,' and then I get my can back, and there's nothing left!

**DAVID**

Trexel.

**TREXEL**

**(Strained)** Yeah?

**DAVID**

Did— did Bathin actually do that?

**TREXEL**

**(Still upset)** I think so. I lost them, and I assume that's what happened.

**DAVID**

Right.

**TREXEL**

Uh—

**DAVID**

Did, did, did Bathin find your can, and give it back to you?

**TREXEL**

Well, Bathin came up to me and said, “I think this is your can, Trexel,” and there was no more figurines in it. So. You do the math-emah-tics! **(bursts into tears)**

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** It’s an open and shut case! In that you should open the case, put Trexel’s head in it, and then slam the case shut until the problem goes away.

**DAVID**

Okay, uhh— right. Well. **(Trexel clears his throat, composing himself)** Um. Tragic childhood stories aside, so you’re telling me that all, all the printers, which use lasers—

**TREXEL**

Yes.

**DAVID**

—have tiny little slots that you can’t fit anything bigger than a piece of paper into.

**TREXEL**

Exactly!

**DAVID**

**(Incredulous)** Stellar Firma can build planets and is powered by black holes.

**TREXEL**

Yes.

**DAVID**

H-how can we not have y— a laser that can engrave things that are bigger than a piece of paper?

**TREXEL**

**(Lowered voice)** Alright David, now I know I told you that it's because we can't make the slot bigger, but I'm gonna let you in to a little secret: that's not entirely true.

**DAVID**

Oka—

**TREXEL**

I know! I know, shocking. You'd think, 'But Trexel said it, so how can it not be true?

**DAVID**

Mmmhmm.

**TREXEL**

Trexel is a font of truth, let me sup from his waters of truth.'

**DAVID**

Yep, and I'm definitely gonna trust the next thing that comes out your mouth.

**TREXEL**

What, what, what sort of happened is if, if you think about it, a laser engraving printer is basically like a laser gun, but like trapped inside a box.

**DAVID**

Okay.

**TREXEL**

If you make it a little bit too open and easy to, sort of, get at those lasers, you have what we might call the Third Level Office Rebellion of the Fourth Cycle in Which They Turned Wide-Mouthed Printers into Guns and Killed a Lot of People. You know, not a lot of people know about that, because it was in an admin block, and no-one cares about admin! Thousands died, but they were all in admin, so no-one cared. But, suffice to say the Board decided, 'Okay, well, let's stop printer technology in sort of like, pre-Earth exodus Nineties level—

**DAVID**

Mmmhmm.

**TREXEL**

—and then nobody's going to shoot anybody else with a printer in the face.'

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** We all remember the Strategic Printer Limitation Treaty. Such a great day for peace.

**DAVID**

Okay, uh—

**TREXEL**

Also, they don't do that— they don't do double-sided. You have to, you have to take it, and turn it around and put it back in. It takes ages, but again: the Board said keep it simple, double-sided is too much like a gun. Also it's **only** monochrome.

**DAVID**

Okay. So—

**TREXEL**

**(Interrupting)** No colour printing.

**DAVID**

Okay.

**TREXEL**

But that's, that's because the ink is expensive.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** You have to juice so many octopuses, after all.

**DAVID**

Okay, I mean—

**TREXEL**

You ever pay to refill a printer? I never have, and I've drunk a lot of ink in my time!

**DAVID**

Well, that... actually made more sense than I thought was gonna happen, so f-fine, yeah, okay, okay, so—

**TREXEL**

And that's why we can't just, you know—

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Put a form on a hammer.

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Make a, make a, make it a hammer.

**TREXEL**

So we're gonna have to fix time dilation.

**DAVID**

Uhh—

**TREXEL**

What a to-do!

**DAVID**

I guess.

**TREXEL**

It'd be so much simpler just to, to sort out the expenses thing, but no, no, overtime stays as it is. Let's sort out— Now, did you know, David, **why** there's so much time, time happenings on Stellar Firma?

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Uhh.

I assume... density?

**TREXEL**

It's density, David! Gravity is sort of time, for some reason, that was explained to me, but I've never looked into it. But as far as I can understand it, if you suddenly go, 'Kaboom there's a big thing here!' time's all like, 'Whoah buddy, need to fill that mass with some time,' and it sucks time out from all of the other places. Or, if you like, 'There's loads of mass here, like a mountain, but it needs to go away **now**, ka-blam!' time's all like, 'There was loads of time in that! I was storing all my time in that mountain, and now it's all spilling out all over the place.'

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Somewhere, a science officer just exploded with rage.

**TREXEL**

So, often times, the Build Team will go to work in the morning, they'll be, I don't know, thirty, and then later, they'll be a pile of ash because they aged a thousand years when a wave of time hit them in the face.

**DAVID**

Ah. Well that's... not good. Um.

**TREXEL**

No! It's bad. It also makes it very difficult to date when any work's happened, because on the same project, you've got like 'This happened on Thursday! This happened **two hundred years in the past!**

**DAVID**

Yeah.

**TREXEL**

But also it isn't gonna be done until tomorrow.'

**DAVID**

Okay, I just— sure, I'm just, I'm just gonna quickly check on Imogen—

**[Beep]**

**[scribbling sounds]**

**DAVID**

—like see if we can get any of the sort of, the fundamentals of, sort of, time pockets and dilation, I'm just gonna have a look—

**[Error buzz]**

**ROBOTIC VOICE**

Uh uh uh.

**DAVID**

Oh, it's, it's just a picture of an angry man with glasses, shaking his head at us.

**TREXEL**

No, no, no! No time knowledge for you! Again, think about the printers: if you really explain—

**DAVID**

Right.

**TREXEL**

—time dilation to people, all of a sudden, everybody's enemies are now a baby, or old, or dust.

**DAVID**

Okay, so that means that we can't— cos we can't understand the problem—

**TREXEL**

No.

**TREXEL**

—so we can't fix the problem.

**TREXEL**

**(Scoffing)** David, David, David, what you've said there is so stupid.

**DAVID**

Oh.

**TREXEL**

I fix problems all the time. I have **never once** understood any of those problems.

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Yeah, that stands.

**TREXEL**

You don't need to understand something to fix it. You just need to make it not be. Why is it not there anymore? Don't worry about it, have a glass of gin.

**DAVID**

No, sure, but with the time pockets thing, the only way we can make the time pockets not be there anymore, is to stop building planets, which I think is kind of Stellar Firma's MO?

**TREXEL**

David, David, David, again: you've got a narrow brain. Like, your skull's all round, but I think in there there's just like a thin plane of brain. That's how narrow your thinking is.

**DAVID**

I— You could print on it, you're saying.

**TREXEL**

You could print on— You could fit it into that slot, and laser print the words "idiot" onto your thin, slender brain.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Getting the thin brain in and out of your skull without destroying it, however, would be an act of genius! Quite the paradox.

**TREXEL**

You've got no room for lobes.

**DAVID**

Okay. Well, sorry, tell me your lobey solution.

**TREXEL**

Now the lobey solution i— Oh, oh! Tumescient with lobes, my solution. Oh so girthy, such a girthy brai— 'Trexel, why is your head so wide?' 'Cos of my girthy brain.' Sometimes it comes out of my ears, or at least something comes out of my ears, and it smells like ham.' Why? No one wants to check! I keep going to Medbay, and they're like, 'Get your ham ears out of here! Get your gross ham ears away!'

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** The strict ‘no ham ears’ policy is mostly due to your repeated theft of medical grade rubbing alcohol.

**DAVID**

Yikes.

**TREXEL**

I just want help, you know? And my fingernails keep falling out. Anyway, my solution is: we can’t necessarily deal with the time anomalies happening —

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Mmmhmm.

**TREXEL**

—but maybe we can move them somewhere where it doesn’t matter. You see? So what we do, and now this is going to involve accessing some black holes—

**[error buzz]**

**TREXEL**

—which I know, earlier, we tried to do, and we were told in no uncertain terms ‘no black holes for Trexel.’

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Right.

**TREXEL**

However, we're not doing this. In Expediting, we were like, 'Do this, here's an order, go do it.' In Management Consultancy, 'It's just a suggestion, David, here's, here's the report. Do with it what thou wilt,' is the whole of the law.

**DAVID**

Right.

**TREXEL**

So we don't have to worry about people saying, 'What did you do with the black hole, Trexel? Because you're on the no black hole list.'

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Caution: Trexel Black Hole Alert Status has been raised from "Careful Now" to "Oh No." Security alerted.

**TREXEL**

So. What we do is we get a black hole, and we station it really just next to Stellar Firma, and that'll suck all the time in. It'll just suck all the time— mmm, lovely time into its time mouth—

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Trexel. Trexel.

**TREXEL**

—and then all of the time anomalies get sucked into the time thing, and it's fine.

**DAVID**

Trexel, won't that suck Stellar Firma into the black hole as well?

**TREXEL**

**(Offended, huffy stammering)** Yes, eventually! But what we do is we put another black hole on the other side, equidistant—

**DAVID**

Okay.

**TREXEL**

—so we're being sucked in one direction, sucked in the other. Now, could this mean that everybody is spaghettified? Yes, but the time problem? That's sorted. Or at least you can't tell it's happening—

**DAVID**

What—

**TREXEL**

—because of all the other time that's happening.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Anything can be deemed a success if you make the definition narrow enough.

**DAVID**

Also, I'm **reasonably** certain— Cos as we've said, time is basically gravity, and that's definitely, definitely true, a hundred percent true.

**TREXEL**

One hundred percent. You know I'd even say it's one hundred and thirty percent true.

**DAVID**

Yes. Um, so— Wouldn't that mean, that if Stellar Firma were stationed equidistant between two black holes and were being pulled at the same rate each way—

**STREXEL**

Yes.

**DAVID**

—that all time on Stellar Firma would be mucked up...

**TREXEL**

Yes.

**DAVID**

...forever?

**TREXEL**

Yeah, sure. But we're—

**DAVID**

Do—

**TREXEL**

—**inside** the time whoopsie, so it doesn't matter.

**DAVID**

Doesn't that, that make the time whoopsie—

**(Crosstalk)** No, it would— Not, not all of the station!

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Time is relative, David!

**DAVID**

No, yes, but also, wouldn't mean that like the center of the station would have the most, like, normal time, and then as you got further and further towards the edges, time got more weird? Which means that if you walked from one side of the station to the other—

**TREXEL**

Yes?

**DAVID**

—it would just be completely messed up!

**TREXEL**

Yes.

**DAVID**

Like, **all** departments would be working at different times than other departments. Nobody would know what anybody else is doing. It would make the problem worse!

**TREXEL**

But nobody knows what anyone else is doing anyway, David. That's efficiency.

**DAVID**

But then shouldn't the answer we give them be like, 'Well, who cares?'

**TREXEL**

No, no, because that's in one department— Although there is one thing I can see as a problem to this. Nothing you've said. If all of our time within Stellar Firma is a bit whoopsie, and we're sending invoices out—

**DAVID**

Yes.

**TREXEL**

—it's going to be very hard to do the reclamation, David. You can't be like, 'You've had thirty days to pay this!' when they're like, 'But there hasn't been a company here for four million years.' Because, you know: time.

**(Crosstalk)** So, okay, so I've actually got a better idea.

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Yes, no, that's, that's how it works.

**TREXEL**

That, this, that black hole idea you had, with the two black holes? What, what was that about, you idiot?

**DAVID**

Oh, I'm such a fraud.

**TREXEL**

**You** should go onto the black hole list of no-nos.

**[Pages turning, extended sounds of hasty writing on paper]**

**TREXEL**

So here's what you need to do: a time annex. We need to create a separate warehouse in which all of the time-ruining actions happen. So, within that warehouse, it's, it's a real time wasteland. Everything's wrong. You know, if you chuck a sandwich through the air, it goes mouldy, and then turns into its constituent parts, and then mouldy again, and then bursts into flame. It's a bad place to be. But that's where we put the clones who are doing that bit. And then all of the rest of the work then gets towed out of there.

So, you know, sure, will some clones get old, then young, then not exist, then be their own father? Yes they will. But... it's just clones. Hey buddy, don't worry about it: just clones. Hey, is there something wrong over there? Don't worry, Just Clones TM.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Oops, All Clones!

**(David makes a quiet but steady noise of displeasure)**

**TREXEL**

Trexel's mine!

**(David's unhappy sound continues)**

What? What's up?

**DAVID**

So your solution is to just... throw clones at it?

**TREXEL**

Canaries down the time mine, David! Canaries down the time mine.

**DAVID**

Okay Trexel, uh, I'm not going to write that down.

**TREXEL**

Why not? It's my idea.

**DAVID**

Can, can you, can you, can you guess why?

**TREXEL**

Uh, is it because your hands are weak from all the clapping you have done for how good that idea was?

**DAVID**

No—

**TREXEL**

Uh—

**DAVID**

—we know how weak my hands are. Look at this table.

**[David straining, table creaking]**

**TREXEL**

Oh— Okay, that's a crunchy table now. Okay, um—

**DAVID**

Mmmhmm.

**TREXEL**

—well, uh, is it because you're so in awe of how great my idea was, you can't even bring yourself to write?

**DAVID**

No.

**TREXEL**

Okay. Is it because I've suggested the wholesale time slaughter of cl— Oh, yes—

**DAVID**

Mmm!

**TREXEL**

—yes, you’re a clone, aren’t you?

**DAVID**

I am! Yes, Trexel!

**TREXEL**

And so you’d be cross.

**DAVID**

I am cross. I am cross right now. I am cross at you.

**TREXEL**

Right.

**DAVID**

I’m Cross At TM.

**TREXEL**

Beca— Yeah, because you— because that was like, what if it was me? And your empathy— Okay.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** The fact that for Trexel this represents a keen understanding of other peoples’ feelings is the most cutting indictment imaginable.

**TREXEL**

Um, how about this, David?

**DAVID**

Yes?

**TREXEL**

What about if we create time robots?

**DAVID**

Fine. Yes. Perfect.

**TREXEL**

Now, these time robots, you can't just make them out of regular materials, otherwise their circuit boards would be like, 'Oh no, time!'

**DAVID**

Mmmhmm.

**TREXEL**

So what you do, you've gotta make them out of a very secret, special, rare material that we normally only keep for party tricks. It's called countdownium, and it is a time-resistant metal that has its own internal time that cannot be altered by any other anomaly.

**DAVID**

Okay.

**TREXEL**

As I said, most of the time we use it for like, fun tricks.

**DAVID**

How much countdownium do we have?

**TREXEL**

Eh, we've got about— Oh, you know, a cube and a half?

**DAVID**

Okay, that's not going to make many—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** You didn't ask how big the cube was, David.

**DAVID**

Oh! How big's the cube?

**TREXEL**

Very small. Small cube.

**DAVID**

Right. Relative to...?

**TREXEL**

Big things. Like if you think of a house? Not that.

**DAVID**

Yes?

**TREXEL**

Think of a bungalow. Not that.

**DAVID**

Okay.

**TREXEL**

Think of a single room. Well, hang on, how big are rooms? Think of a medium-sized room, in comparison to what? Think of a room in which three people can lie down in. It's about that big.

**DAVID**

Right, so you've got about— And is it as tall as it is—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** They can't stand up in that room.

**DAVID**

It's, it's a cube, I guess, so...

**TREXEL**

It's a coffin.

**(Crosstalk)** It's a long coffin.

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Wait, now hold on a minute. But that's not a cu—

**TREXEL**

We've got a long coffin of countdownium.

**DAVID**

No, but— That's a cuboid.

**TREXEL**

Alright, Captain Shapes. It's a **cuboid**.

**DAVID**

Okay, so we've got a, we've got a, we've got a kind of, really wide—

**TREXEL**

Such a nerd.

**DAVID**

Okay, right, so, so you're saying we've got, like, a wide coffin of countdownium?

**TREXEL**

Yes.

**DAVID**

I, wh— I guess, like, a robot could be about like, it could be a bit smaller than a person, so let's say we can get six robots out, but then there are— they, you've got to beat the metal, and, and beaten metal gets wider, uh, does countdownium stop, like, time getting through it? Like if we made a—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Yep!

**DAVID**

—cage of countdo— okay, so, we just need—

**TREXEL**

It's like time lead.

**DAVID**

Okay, so we just need c— a countdown chassis, uh, and the internal components don't need to be countdownium. So, we could probably do... I know, let's say, we could probably make like twenty robots.

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Could be, could be.

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Um, how many, how many—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk) (gasps)** David! We can start a holo-vid show!

**(Sings)** TimeBots! Da da da da da!

Solving crimes outside of time!

TimeBots! Doo doo doo doo doo!

It's a quarter to three, and a quarter to justiiiiice!

TimeBots!

**DAVID**

Okay—

**TREXEL**

Now at eleven. And twelve. And also never.

**DAVID**

Okay, I **would** watch that, quite a lot.

**TREXEL**

Pretty good.

**DAVID**

Unfortunately, it's **not** the brief.

**TREXEL**

“Give me your time gun and your time badge!”

“Bleep blorp!”

“Don't take that tone with me, TimeBot! You're a loose bot, and you're full of time!”

**DAVID**

Okay, look—

**TREXEL**

“Wait, this conversation happened yesterday!” Cut to black. Next episode.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Caution: deadline approaching. Missed deadlines will result in incineration.

**DAVID**

Okay, no, t-tell you what—

**[Low mechanical hum as room starts to vibrate]**

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Opens up— home scene, TimeBot’s at home with his husband—

**DAVID**

Okay, Trexel—

**TREXEL**

—and they are arguing about time.

**DAVID**

Trexel. The entire room is vibrating. I think we need to submit the brief.

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Oh, okay. Okay, well, you know, pop it in there! Ti— Just write ‘TimeBots.’

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Right, so, uh, use countdownium, make TimeBots— TimeBots, TimeBots, TimeBots—

**TREXEL**

In the time annex.

**DAVID**

Bots out of time. But time for justice.

**[chime]**

**DAVID**

There we go!

**IMOGEN**

Submitting.

**[Pneumatic tube hissing]**

**TREXEL**

There ya go!

**DAVID**

Uh, s—no, what I'm saying is, if you turn up early tomorrow—

**[Vibrations cease]**

**TREXEL**

Okay.

**DAVID**

—cos really, only— it only ever really takes about twenty minutes to come up with an answer. Y— Give or take.

**TREXEL**

We're very efficient!

**DAVID**

Very efficient. Which means—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Also we just submit whatever we have when the time runs out.

**DAVID**

Well, I'm not dead yet, so, hey.

**TREXEL**

Always **time**. **(chuckles at his own joke)**

**(Crosstalk)** Always time — time to die.

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Ah, very good. See, see, that's what— so, so, if you— that means we've got like, twenty-three and a half hours, starting kind of now—

**TREXEL**

Yes.

**DAVID**

—to write... TimeBots. So if you turn up early for work, we can write— We could, we could start workshopping ideas for TimeBots.

**TREXEL**

Uh, David, I actually have a couple of appointments tomorrow, so...

**DAVID**

You, you— No you don't.

**TREXEL**

No, I do, I do, I've got a couple of appointments.

**DAVID**

What are they?

**TREXEL**

Well, I've gotta wake up—

**DAVID**

Yeah?

**TREXEL**

—and then I've got to— well there's this sort of piece of, like, cardboard in my office that I really need to chew on for a bit, because I've just, I've just started really looking at inanimate objects and thinking, 'Oh, I bet I could eat you!' So I'm working on this cardboard, and that'll take two hours. And then I've got an appointment elsewhere, sleeping again, because chewing cardboard, it takes a lot out of you. Better than rocks. Let me tell you, I've tried rocks. Crunchy, but painful. So, you know, it's a packed schedule, David.

**DAVID**

Right. **(rising disappointment)** But you, you seemed enthusiastic about TimeBots just earlier. Like, when I was trying to submit the brief, you were, you were actively kind of, workshopping ideas, and, and you say—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** I'm— I've done it, it's done. TimeBots. Did you not hear the song?

**DAVID**

But there's no sh— there's no holo-vid show.

**TREXEL**

I gave you two scenes.

**DAVID**

No, you didn't, you, you sort of gave us like—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Remember the one with the gun and— with the time gun and the time badge?

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** But that wasn't—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** And then— Y'know, with the time husband?

**DAVID**

But that wasn't the full scene, you didn't really establish anything. You just, you just took a snippet, y-you took that, the particular part of the scene **(Crosstalk)** and just kind of shouted it.

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** It's very easy to denigrate the creative process, David, it's very easy to stand there on your ivory horse, saying 'That's not a scene, D— ah, Trexel—'

**DAVID**

Fine! Fine.

**TREXEL**

Then **you** write it.

**DAVID**

Yeah, I—

**TREXEL**

You write TimeBots.

**DAVID**

I-I will write TimeBots.

**TREXEL**

And I get executive production credit.

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Absolutely no—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Also, “created by.”

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Absolutely no—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Also “inspired by.”

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Absolutely not.

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Also, “awarded to brackets any awards that might happen, close brackets.”

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** Absolutely not, no.

**TREXEL**

Well then, what credit do I get? I came up with TimeBots.

**DAVID**

Uh, I will give you, “was involved.””

**TREXEL**

“Was involved.” Can you at least—

**DAVID**

**(Crosstalk)** A bit.

**TREXEL**

—like, use the song idea to—

**DAVID**

**(Helpfully)** “Theme by!”

**TREXEL**

“Theme by—” I’ll take “theme by.”

**DAVID**

Okay.

**TREXEL**

Cos everybody knows the theme is the thing.

**DAVID**

**(Quietly)** Sure.

**TREXEL**

No-one watches shows. People watch themes. And then they go home.

**DAVID**

Yeah. Okay. Anyway—

**TREXEL**

**(Crosstalk)** Excellent.

**DAVID**

Get out of my office.

**TREXEL**

Uh, this is my— you'll never take my time gun and time badge, I stand for time justice! Good time to you, sir!

**DAVID**

Timey bye!

**[Door whooshes as Trexel leaves]**

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** I don't know if you're getting better at handling him, or if he's becoming more stupid.

**DAVID**

Maybe a bit of... both? Uh, uh, anyway, Imogen, has the search completed yet?

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Network scan is complete. Access to Clone Production Hub Central Network established. Downloading most recent production and storage reports.

**[Computer tone]**

**DAVID**

That's... well, that's a lot of clones.

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Most recent reports indicate... 301,482 clones currently in storage.

**DAVID**

Sssso... the clones outnumber employees three to one? Now, that is interesting... um, Imogen, can you use that link and the landmark descriptions we got from Enola to plan a route?

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** The powering down of various sections of Stellar Firma Ltd. has corrupted much of my internal schematic database. As such, planning a route may take some time.

**DAVID**

How long?

**IMOGEN**

**[Beep]** Approximately 47 hours.

**DAVID**

Oh. Hmm. Well, in that case, I may as well get on with the TimeBots script.

Scene one: we open on the door of the Time D.A.'s office of time crime.

TimeBot kicks in the door, and throws open a satchel of stolen clocks onto the floor. A closeup on his face: "Time... for justice."

**[Show Theme – Outro]**

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