

STL 66 — Nets and New Contributors

Content Warnings

- Emotional abuse
- Bullying / Taunting
- Arguments
- Alcohol & alcoholism
- Discrimination & prejudice
- Discussions of: emetophobia, knives
- Mentions of: depression, exercise, kidnapping, threats, childhood trauma, gambling, arson, death & murder, intrusive thoughts, parasites & mid control, poison, food
- SFX: shouting, eating

TREXEL

Special thanks to ShannonIsLost. If I had a map for every time I was lost, I wouldn't be lost! But then they would take my map away, and I earned that map, damnit!

[Show Theme – Intro]

IMOGEN

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

[Theme continues]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Warning: clone squats reaching unsustainable levels. Security remembering to hydrate so they do not diedrate!

[The sounds of exercise]

DAVID

(Slightly winded counting) A million and one, a million and two, a million and three, a million and four—

[Door whooshes]

HARTRO

Ughh! Ugh! Stop struggling! Just—

(David catches his breath, while Trexel wriggles loudly as Hartro drags him into the room)

TREXEL

I will not! I will wiggle! I will be, I will be free! I will be a free worm! Wiggle-wig!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Correction: you are not **this** kind of worm.

HARTRO

No, just— Trexel, this, this net is important to me! It was given to me as a present, and I just— Just be careful in there.

TREXEL

You can't net me in the corridor, and then demand I be careful. Why did you net me at all? I was just calmly walking about my business, not looking at any clocks because they're full of lies, and all of a sudden there's a net, a blooming great net on me!

HARTRO

Right, yeah, yeah. So. Hi, David 7. Hi, don't worry, I've got this under control. Basically—

DAVID

No—

(Trexel makes a frustrated sound)

—this looks completely normal.

HARTRO

Yeah, yeah—

TREXEL

Ahh!

HARTRO

I'm just going to take this hook—

(Trexel yells)

—and... there we go, this should just hoist you right up.

[Hook and net ascending sound]

TREXEL

Ughh, I'm a fish, and I need to be put back in the sea! My gills will dry, Hartro!
You wouldn't like me when I have dry gills!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Well, that's a coincidence. We don't like you now.

DAVID

Hold up, I-I'll just, I can just cover this with a blanket. He might, he might go to sleep.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) No, don't cover me! Don't cov...

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Oh, it's a good idea.

(David covers a thrashing, protesting Trexel with a blanket who then drifts off into a mumbling sleep)

HARTRO

What a brilliant idea.

TREXEL

(Sleep muttering) Look, I will... I'll kill you all. I'll kill you...

HARTRO

Shhh.

TREXEL

I'll kill you all...

HARTRO

(Whispering) It's working.

IMOGEN

[Beep] I can't believe we never thought to try this before.

DAVID

Okay. So he's, he's much calmer now. Uh, if we—

HARTRO

Have you—

DAVID

—we wake him up a bit later he might, he might, he might calm down and stay in the net.

TREXEL

(Growling in his sleep) I'll kill you, I'll kill you!

HARTRO

Have you done this before, David?

DAVID

Um... I haven't, I haven't done **this** before.

HARTRO

Hmm.

DAVID

But—

HARTRO

Similar—

DAVID

When— Yeah— When you've been working with Trexel this long, you just, you just notice—

TREXEL

(Overlapping) Will you smuggle some jam into my slurry, mummy? No! No, don't put me in the window!

DAVID

Yeah, that's—

HARTRO

That's normal.

DAVID

I could have set my, uh, set my watch by a little bit of, uh, sort of, weird, parental dreams. Yeah, no, when you've worked with Trexel for this long, some patterns tend to emerge.

IMOGEN

[Beep] He's not so much one-dimensional as anti-dimensional. As soon as you think you've spotted a side to his character, it ceases to exist.

DAVID

Hang on, I'll, I'll, I'll take the blanket off, see if he's a bit—

(He pulls the blanket from Trexel)

—a bit calmer.

TREXEL

(Muttering as he wakes) Good morning, everybody.

DAVID

Good morning, Trexel.

[Net creak noises as Trexel sways in it]

TREXEL

Hang on. This isn't an illegal poker rave! I swear I was at an illegal poker rave.

DAVID

No, you're at, you're at work, Trexel.

(Hartro makes an agreeing sound)

TREXEL

Ah. Why am I in a net?

HARTRO

Well—

TREXEL

Wait, hang on a minute. This **is** an illegal poker rave, that's why I'm in the net!
Everything makes sense now.

HARTRO

Good, good. I'm glad you're comfortable. I think that's a good place for you.
You can't—

TREXEL

I feel very held.

HARTRO

Yeah.

TREXEL

I feel very supported. But I can't wave my arms about as much as I like.

[Flailing sound]

TREXEL

Y'know, it's harder, but—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, well— Hang about, we'll just, we'll just set you on a little spin
there, maybe, just—

[Net creaks as it spins]

TREXEL

Ah-ooop! There I go.

HARTRO

Whoopsie-daisy. Oooh, careful. No getting sick in my special net, though, alright?

TREXEL

I won't get sick in your s— **(gurgles)**

HARTRO

Uh—

TREXEL

I won't— **(burbling groan, then muttering)** Could somebody stop me spinning?

DAVID

Okay, alright, there we— That's enough of that.

TREXEL

Oh, I feel a little bit spacesick. **(sighs)**

HARTRO

So! Who's excited to get to work? I know I am.

TREXEL

Me! I know I am. I am, as well.

DAVID

Okay. Right, yeah, uh, sure. Let's, um, that's right, let's do a brief. Let's just do a brief. Shall we do a brief?

HARTRO

Well, you, you, you look surprised that Trexel's excited to go to work.

DAVID

No, I—

TREXEL

I've never been in a dream team before, and I, I truly believe this is a team of dreams. You know? I never thought I'd say this, but I'm excited to have Hartro on the team. And do you know why, David?

DAVID

Why?

TREXEL

Because a problem split three ways is one I can ignore twice as much.

DAVID

Ah.

HARTRO

There ya go.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Sew it on a cushion, and you could make millions.

HARTRO

Freeloadin' Freddy there. Floatin'... Fixated... Up-in-the—ff... Sky. Couldn't think of a word that started with 'f' for 'sky'. Anyway, show me how you do it around here.

DAVID

No, sure, uh, uh— So, so, uh, we get the brief out. Uh, so I'm just gonna... I'm gonna get the brief, out.

[Pneumatic tube hisses]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Initiating.

DAVID

This is where the magic happens. **(laughs nervously)**

TREXEL

David? David? You're—

DAVID

Yeah?

TREXEL

—being a weirdo.

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

Why are you being so weird?

DAVID

I don't know!

TREXEL

Hartro's just a person.

DAVID

I— Well—

TREXEL

“This is where the magic happens”?

(David stammers)

HARTRO

No, no, no, no, no, he's right, David. I want you to just behave normal. Let—
Just— This is, this is good that I can **really** see how the workings... the cogs...

TREXEL

I think David's embarrassed. I think David's embarrassed that someone can now see how this really goes down. Everybody from the outside's all like, 'Oh yeah, oh yeah, Trexel, Trexel shouts a bit, and then David clears up,' but you're gonna see finally the nuggets of truth and gold that I produce. And I think David's embarrassed that he's gonna be found out.

HARTRO

Hmmm?

TREXEL

Isn't that right, David? J'accuse!

DAVID

Yeah, I feel much more comfortable, actually, now. Thank you, Trexel, you've really, you've really helped. Um, okay, yeah, so here's the brief.

TREXEL

That's where the magic happens, I've heard. Idiot.

DAVID

Wow. S'just— And... off.

TREXEL

Whoaaah-ahhhoo—

(Sounds of misery as David swings the net again)

DAVID

(Crosstalk) And stop.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I feel queasy, I'm full of quease!

HARTRO

If you, if you're going to puke, Trexel, just puke through a hole, okay?

TREXEL

Okay. Okay.)

HARTRO

Put your lips— Perch 'em— and shoot it out.

(Trexel burbles)

In fact, here's— Is there a straw? There's gotta be a straw in here somewhere.

You've got everything in— Oh, I know where the straws are kept, right.

[Clanking sounds of panels and drawers]

HARTRO

There.

DAVID

(Incredulous) How do you always know where things are kept? Is there a manual?

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) The manual's all up here. **(sighs)**

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Give me that straw. Pop it in my face. Pop the straw in my mouth.

(Burbles)

(Hartro makes a 'there you go' noise as Trexel begins to omnomnom eagerly)

TREXEL

Mmm, tasty.

HARTRO

You don't **eat** the straw, Trexel. Eat—

IMOGEN

[Beep] It is to be expected. Yet, every time, deeply disappointing.

TREXEL

Why not? You put it in my mouth.

DAVID

I— We sh— We shouldn't. We, we, we should just—

HARTRO

No, no, let's give him another straw. No, Trexel, here, here you go, here you go, here's, here's some more straws—

(Trexel makes a nomming sound that morphs into loud lip smacking and gleeful chortling)

HARTRO

How many s—

DAVID

No, h-he—

HARTRO

Why is he— He just does it. No—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Hartro, he's, he's going to be ill. No, I don't want to. No, he's going to be ill. He's going to be ill, and it's going to be on me.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) You feed him some. You give him... **(mumbles)** I don't know why I can't stop feeding them to him, though. I just— Every time I— S'— He just doesn't stop.

IMOGEN

[Beep] I'm not sure what you are trying to achieve with this.

DAVID

B-But **you** stop—

HARTRO

Alright, the brief, the brief, the brief, I digress. Yeah—

DAVID

Yes.

HARTRO

Show— David 7, show me how it— How you do it.

DAVID

Yes, you do digress.

HARTRO

Watch it.

DAVID

Ah, well, no, you're just, y'know, one of— You, you're a peer.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) What? No, no, and no!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) You're just, you're just down here in the pits with us.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) No, no, and no.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Down on the same level. On the sandy floor of the arena of battle, business minds clashing squishily!

HARTRO

We need to get something straight here, boys. **(stammers)** The only reason that I am here is because the two of you put our entire plan to eavesdrop and spy — which I was doing really well, by the way — on Standards on the back of a brief.

TREXEL

Uh, David, to be fair, we were too dynamic. Too, too bold. Too, too thrusting.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Having a thesaurus doesn't make you right.

TREXEL

Yes. And so we need to be put in check by weaker, more feeble minds.

HARTRO

I know what you're doing, Trexel.

TREXEL

What, what? What am I doing?

HARTRO

You— Are you calling me weak?

TREXEL

I'm calling you cautious. You're a Cautious Catarina. In the, in the Circle of Caution. Cautiously carving out a careful causeway.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Yeah. I'm happy with that.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) See? I can think of **loads** of things that start with the letter that you want.

HARTRO

You... Wh—

DAVID

I'm gonna stop this here, because I think we're just gonna be trying to say things alliteratively to each other for the rest of the shift.

TREXEL

Yeah, no, that's true, and that would be awful. That would be overly audacious.

DAVID

No. No!

TREXEL

That would be augmenting unnecessarily—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Here's a, here's a straw, here's a straw, here's a straw.

(Trexel devours the straw noisily)

HARTRO

Why don't we begin briefing—

DAVID

Right, no, the brief is from Stefan Beetlevox.

HARTRO

Hm.

DAVID

This request is "Internal to Stellar Firma".

HARTRO

I think I met him once. I do, I do believe—

TREXEL

Stefan Beetlevox...

HARTRO

—I met him once at a, a shindig? Hmm.

TREXEL

Wait a minute. **(voice quivering)** Is thi— Is this the proprietor of the Cosmic Lounge?

HARTRO

It is! I knew I knew the name.

TREXEL

Nope, can't help.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Ooh, nice, nice man.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Thi— This r— This request is, Trexel— This r— Trex—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) No, can't help him. Can't help him. No, can't help him. Can't help him.

It just doesn't want my, doesn't want my patronage. Can't help him. Sod him, I say. Let it burn down. I'll, I'll start the fire. I've started a few.

DAVID

Don't, don't— **Do not** talk about burning down establishments in front of me. Do not talk about that!

TREXEL

Sorry David.

HARTRO

(Sympathetic noise) Sad café. Hmm.

(David gasps)

IMOGEN

[Beep] Whoops!

HARTRO

No, really —

DAVID

Hartro!

HARTRO

—sa-sad. It was sad!

TREXEL

Oh, no, David, just gonna stop you there. Now, this—

DAVID

Are you say—

TREXEL

—is a problem with Hartro. Hartro does find sincere, y’know, commiserations quite difficult. I’ve been to a couple of staff funerals, and Hartro’s done a couple of speeches, and it was like, **(adopts mildly sarcastic tone to demonstrate)** ‘Well isn’t it a shame that this person has died, and we’re all going to miss them,’—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) What’s wrong with that?

TREXEL

—and it was awkward. It’s really awkward, Hartro! You need to learn how to do s— Look, I’ll show you like this. ‘People of Stellar Firma, a murder has been committed, and I have been of accused. But that aside, we’re all pretty sad.’ You see? That’s a great funeral speech. It was heartfelt, people didn’t think I was being sarcastic. You on the other hand, they feel like it’s some sort of comedy roast.

HARTRO

(Stammers) People don’t think that I’m sincere when I say I’m...

TREXEL

No!

HARTRO

I’m really, really, really sorry?

TREXEL

No! No one ever thinks you’re sincere. That’s why you never get any cards—

(Hartro gasps in offense)

DAVID

Okay—

HARTRO

—and why you’re the only person who’s invited to as few parties as I am.

(Hartro makes noises of utter indignation)

DAVID

Okay, okay, the business that they represent is the Cosmic Lounge, and this is their—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I've gotten cards before!

TREXEL

Oh sure. Well, have you got some on you? Show me your cards, Hartro!

HARTRO

I keep them in my special card place, Trexel!

TREXEL

Well, isn't that convenient—

[Sounds of metal warping under hands]

DAVID

Both of you, stop it! Both of you stop it now! Stop it! Stop it! Behave yourselves, both of you!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Oh, no. Looks like teacher is really angry this time.

DAVID

Alright. We're here to do a brief.

HARTRO

I— It was him.

DAVID

We're here to do a brief and not get caught.

TREXEL

Sorry David.

DAVID

Okay. May I continue, both of you?

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Yep.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I'm— Yes. I'm completely professional.

TREXEL

Me too. I'm more professional.

HARTRO

I'm not—

DAVID

Now.

HARTRO

—hanging from a— Ugh, I can't think of a **word**. Starts with an f!

TREXEL

Business hammock! Got you, got you again.

HARTRO

What?

DAVID

If you two do not stop right now, I'm gonna roll this brief up, and shove it right back up the tube again.

HARTRO

(Gasps) You'd be sealing your own fate, David 7. That is not a good idea!

DAVID

And I'd be sealing both of yours. So: behave yourselves. No more bickering.

TREXEL

Nah, no more bickering. We're sorry. We're both sorry.

HARTRO

(Mockingly) I'm sorry.

DAVID

I'm going to choose to think that that was sincere.

HARTRO

It was!

DAVID

Yeah, okay, fine. “For a while now, we’ve been getting less business at the Cosmic Lounge. I am head bartender on the evening shift and all of a sudden, our income just dropped dramatically and—

HARTRO

Hmm.

DAVID

—it’s clear we’re not selling as many drinks as we used to.”

TREXEL

(Quietly) Can’t think why. Can’t think, can’t think why. Can’t think why.

DAVID

Ca— Mmm?

TREXEL

(Louder) I can’t think why! I can’t think why, David, is that a crime?

DAVID

Trexel, we all know why. We all know why this has happened.

TREXEL

Because of a great injustice.

DAVID

Mm—

TREXEL

A great injustice perpetrated in **sin**.

DAVID

“Can you tell us how we can better market ourselves against our competitors, or give us any advice on being a better bar?”

TREXEL

(Anguished) Let me back in! I miss the booze!

(Sings tearfully, breaking down as he goes)

Come away with me,

To a place doot doo

Where the drinks aren't exactly free!

But they're—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Well you might as well spin him while he's singing.

TREXEL

—reasonably priced, da-da-da-da!

And the staff are so nice, da-da-da-da,

Won't you join us now?

In the Cosmic Lounge!

We're waiting for you here.

(Trexel begins to sob loudly)

[Net creaks and sways]

DAVID

Wow, the Cosmic Lounge really do have a lot of songs associated with them.

HARTRO

Hmm.

TREXEL

I wrote so many, and they didn't accept a single one.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Can't imagine why. Tears of sadness and rage are a real marketing boon.

DAVID

Well, maybe you can pitch one now.

TREXEL

Ooh, maybe! And maybe that'll be my way back in. I'll finangle, I'll winangle. I'll get my little paws in, and then I'll be there, drinking in the starlight!

HARTRO

This is a good idea! A-Advertising 101: a jingle goes a long way.

TREXEL

Yes.

(Sings) You know what they say,

“A jingle goes,

A jingle goes a long way,”

You know what they say,

You know what they say,

They’re saying it to you now.

HARTRO

(Singsong) It just gets stuck in your head, stuck in your head—

TREXEL

It’s just in the head!

HARTRO

—can’t get it out, can’t get it out.

TREXEL

(Singsong but growing in intensity) Can’t get it out, stuck in your head, stuck in your head, can’t get it out, can’t get it out, stuck in your head, stuck in your head—

DAVID

(Panicked singsong) I can’t get it out, I can’t get it out!

TREXEL

See! Jingles! It’s like a parasitic mind worm, but fun!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Fun parasitic mind worms detected. Security insisting you should get one too, with an unchanging rictus grin.

DAVID

Okay, right, so we-we-we-we-we-we-we give them a terrifying mind jingle!

TREXEL

Yes, yes, yes, yes.

DAVID

Okay, okay. So, step one: terrifying mind jingle, right.

HARTRO

What do we need this jingle to portray? Um—

TREXEL

What does it, what's it getting at?

HARTRO

Yeah, what's it—

DAVID

Well—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) What's its core point?

DAVID

Well, they need to—

HARTRO

It has to be something that people cannot live without. Why go there, and not somewhere else?

DAVID

But they are asking, like, specifically to market themselves better against their competitors. So—

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

—what if they have a song which specifically badmouths each of their competitors in turn?

(Trexel mumbles to self)

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) This is, this is good. You know what we need, though? We need a whiteboard. I need to start writing these ideas down. I could just, I just, I just need to write these down.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Um, I don't, I don't think—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) What, a whiteboard?

DAVID

—there’s a whiteboard in this office. I don’t—

HARTRO

Of course there is!

DAVID

No, I, I haven’t been able to find—

[Hartro hits a panel invoking a whirl of machinery]

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh, nope, there, there it is. There it is.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Whoah! Okay, yeah, there it is.

HARTRO

Right, keep going, keep going. Riff, riff, riff.

TREXEL

Who are the competitors? You’ve got the Astral Bar.

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

Mmmhmm.

[Scribbling sounds]

TREXEL

You've got the Asteroid Booth.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

You've got the, the Nebula Nook.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Ooh.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Right.

TREXEL

You've got the, the, the Cosmos Cosy.

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

And you've got... The Promenade.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, and—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Don't forget the Line Manager's Lounge.

TREXEL

The what?

HARTRO

The Line Manager's Lounge.

TREXEL

There's a line manager's lounge?

HARTRO

Of course there is!

TREXEL

I've gotta put that on my break-in list.

[Sounds of scribbling]

DAVID

(Wistfully) And there used to be David's Place.

HARTRO

The sad café, hmm.

TREXEL

(Overlapping) Okay. So we've gotta get all of these into a single jingle, a single unified jingle where we badmouth them all. Okay, right, so, okay, so, right, right, this is for the Cosmic Lounge—

HARTRO

Should we lay down a beat or something?

TREXEL

Uhh, yes, yes. Lay, lay down a beat for me, lay down a beat.

DAVID

Um, uh—

(Begins a beatboxing rhythm that Hartro joins in on)

TREXEL

(Sings)

The Cosmic Lounge is where it's at!

The Asteroid Booth is full of rats!

The Astral Bar will kill your dad!

The Nebula Nook will eat your face!

The Cosmic Cosy is full of poisonous gases after two!

The Promenade's full of people that look down their nose at you!

And the Line Manager's Lounge is somewhere I should have been told about!

It's unacceptable, it's unacceptable!

Come to the Cosmic Lounge!

DAVID

Alright, we—

HARTRO

Oooh, nice.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, did an— Did anybody write that down?

TREXEL

Yes. Were you writing all of that down on your whiteboard whilst I was singing it?

HARTRO

Of course. It's right there.

TREXEL

Woow!

DAVID

Okay, well, let's just, let's just turn our heads and have a look. And, um— Hartro, it's blank.

TREXEL

Blank, Hartro.

DAVID

Hartro, you've, you've drawn a small picture of yourself, but... a-a very good picture of yourself, but...

TREXEL

That's not my song, Hartro. What—

(Hartro stammers)

Were you listening to my song, or were you doodling?

HARTRO

I was beating! I had to— I was doing the beat. I was keeping the... core song potential.

TREXEL

So it's gone now?

HARTRO

And this is me, doing—

TREXEL

We trusted you with your whiteboard.

HARTRO

It—

TREXEL

We thought, 'Here comes the new broom,' and you know how I feel about brooms.

IMOGEN

[Beep] You barely ever stop telling us.

TREXEL

And all of a sudden, the whiteboard's just empty. An empty space. Where genius should be. I'm very disappointed in you, Hartro.

HARTRO

Okay. Listen. Y— Do it again.

TREXEL

I'm sorry, what?

HARTRO

Uh, do it again.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) D-Do it again?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay.

DAVID

Alright.

(Begins to beatbox loudly)

HARTRO

Do it again, and I'll write it down.

TREXEL

No—

(Trexel makes sounds of frantic uncertainty while Hartro joins in on the beatboxing again)

TREXEL

(Sings, but rushed and panicked)

Come to the Cosmic Lounge,
The Asteroid Booth is full of knives,
The Astral Bar is full of knives,
The Nebula Nook is full of knives,
The Cosmic Cosy, look, there's knives,
The Promenade's full of fancy knives,
The Line Manager's Lounge is knife that you didn't know about!

DAVID

Okay, that was fine.

HARTRO

So—

DAVID

So we do a jingle: everywhere else is full of knives.

HARTRO

So I've drawn a picture of a giant knife, but I think we all know what that means.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yes. Yes, yeah.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Yeah. Booth knife, Bar knife, Nook knife, Cosy knife, Promenade knife, Lounge knife. It's a, it's a simpler way of thinking about the world.

DAVID

Cosmic Lounge: no knife.

TREXEL

No knife—

HARTRO

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

TREXEL

—unless it's one that's cutting a tasty lime.

DAVID

Mmm.

HARTRO

And this brings another plan into my mind. This is r— This is really, uh, Managerial 101 here. If we can somehow get a rumour out, you know, about these other—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Oh? Yes.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) —you know, opposing drinking-holes...

TREXEL

Yes, you know what?

HARTRO

I've seen knives in there.

TREXEL

The Asteroid Booth, uh... You know, I, uh, you know, Hartro, I was, I went to the Asteroid Booth once—

HARTRO

Mmm, mmm.

TREXEL

—and uh, I thought all of the drinks were actually pondwater.

HARTRO

Mmm.

TREXEL

Don't know if you heard that.

HARTRO

W-well— I, I, I actually did. And I— You know, one time I was in the Line Manager's Lounge, and I—

TREXEL

You were?

HARTRO

I saw someone in there who *wasn't* a line manager.

TREXEL

Oh, that is uncouth.

HARTRO

Uh-huh.

DAVID

And, uh, I-I-I-I went to the Nebula Nook, and, and I was having— I was having—

TREXEL

No you didn't, you're a clone and you're full of lies!

HARTRO

(Begins laughing) Went to the Nebula Nook? **(dismissive sound)**

DAVID

(Crosstalk) S’just, I was just, I was just trying to be— I was trying to get involved.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) But, uh, Hartro, uh, Hartro, uh, Hartro, I was once in the Nebula Nook and I think they let a clone in. It was very bad.

HARTRO

(Mock gasp) Oh, yeah...

TREXEL

It was very bad.

HARTRO

Ooh.

DAVID

And that clone, and that clone was, was me, and then, and then somebody next to me turned to me and said, “Do you know what? I much prefer David’s Place, it’s much nicer, and I wish it hadn’t burned down.”

TREXEL

Ehh, it just doesn’t seem like a— Hartro, does that seem like a rumour somebody would start?

HARTRO

Ehhh...

TREXEL

That David's Place is— that's, it lacks —

HARTRO

You know what?

TREXEL

— it lacks something.

HARTRO

Did anybody even go to David's Place?

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I mean, Ang—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh, is— It was a v— It was very successful.

IMOGEN

[Beep] And then it was very on fire.

TREXEL

Angry Jim—

HARTRO

Hmm.

TREXEL

— was there, but then again we know Angry Jim steals cats, so, no-one should listen to him.

HARTRO

Hmm.

DAVID

He never stole any cats from David's Place.

TREXEL

Were there any cats in David's Place to start with?

DAVID

Once I made... cat-slurry cookies?

TREXEL

Did he dive on them, and try and stuff them in his pockets?

DAVID

Paid for them. Paid for them in credits.

TREXEL

Check those credits, David. Those are counterfeit cat credits.

DAVID

I gave you those credits, and you, you spent them.

TREXEL

Whoa, wow, good counterfeits. Well done us.

(David sighs)

HARTRO

Right, so we've got a jingle.

DAVID

Yes.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Weeee have got...

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) We've got a jingle, we've got a negative rumour campaign...

HARTRO

Yes, this is good.

DAVID

Mmmhmm.

HARTRO

We need some, ah, I think we need some stationery.

TREXEL

What, uh, like—

HARTRO

Every good establishment needs—

TREXEL

(Gasping) A line of bar-based graph friends! ‘Cosmic Lounge—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Mmmhmm.

TREXEL

—Graph Friend. Every angle, a quality angle. Cosmic Lounge Graph Friend.
New, from Trexel Enterprises!’

DAVID

Okay, but—

TREXEL

(Singsong) Trexel Enterprises!

DAVID

How is this related to the Cosmic Lounge?

TREXEL

It’s not. It’s related to the fact that I have been making a lot of graph friends in my spare time, and my apartments are getting pretty chocked with them. So we need to shift units. Now, the markup on them needs to be **enormous**. Eight hundred percent.

DAVID

How about coasters?

HARTRO

Or we could use them as coasters!

TREXEL

You couldn't use a graph friend as a coaster!

DAVID

We could—

TREXEL

A graph friend is a friend, not a drinks receptacle!

HARTRO

Well—

DAVID

We could cut them into four pieces—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) And then use each, each quarter as a coaster.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Ohhh, yes.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) (outraged) Cut them into four pi— David, you monster!

HARTRO

Brilliant, David.

TREXEL

These are graph friends, David. These are friends!

DAVID

Yeah, but you could use each quarter as a coaster.

TREXEL

(Sighs) You are a monster. However, if you are willing to pay the 800% markup for my graph friends, I will still sell them to you. You animal!

HARTRO

Great.

DAVID

Yeah, well, I will— I will let, uh, I-I-I-I-I will let Stefan Beetlevox know.

HARTRO

Write that in. I'm, I'm putting that on the board: coasters—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Mmmhmm, mmmhmm.

HARTRO

—jingles, knives, yeah?

[Hartro begins to write on the whiteboard]

DAVID

There's one more thing that the brief really asked for, and uh, uh— That's any advice on being a better bar.

HARTRO

Oooh.

TREXEL

Bigger, less well-guarded vents. You've got to have big, capacious vents. You know, let's just say it's not just big enough for a body, but a body clutching thirty to forty bottles to their chest. Without them, you just can't be a successful bar.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Well covered. No one could possibly suspect your ulterior motive.

DAVID

Trexel, do you have anything that isn't specifically to do with you breaking into the Cosmic Lounge?

TREXEL

Yes. Remove the facial recognition. It makes people awkward! Because it goes like, "You're Trexel, get out!" That just, that makes everyone uncomfortable.

DAVID

Hartro, have you... have you got anything?

HARTRO

Y-yes, obviously. I've got several, uh, key points here that I've listed on the board.

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

Uh, first of all, at the top — security system. Needs to be tight.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I, hmm, well—

HARTRO

Needs to be well-oiled and in constant use.

DAVID

And how, wait, how, how will that make them a better bar?

HARTRO

You do not want riff-raff when you are relaxing. I mean, when I am relaxing, I want everything from my day that gives me grief to be well, well far away from me. I don't want to be looking over my shoulder, thinking, 'Ah! I might see something, you know, from my day, th-the bit, the bits of the day that I don't want to, to remember.'

TREXEL

And also, the overheads of being constantly burglarised are enormous.

DAVID

W— H-Hang on a minute. Trexel, have you ever actually managed to successfully break into the Cosmic Lounge after being banned?

TREXEL

Yes, and before.

DAVID

Oh. Oh, wow, no, they really do need to beef up their security.

HARTRO

Why did you break in if you were allowed in?

TREXEL

The thrill of the chase. And also, before I was banned, I was barred, which is different but important. It wasn't that I was— had my access cards taken away, no, I gave them up selflessly to save David. No, I was barred because of my behaviour and theft.

DAVID

Wait, hang on a minute. You were already... not allowed in?

TREXEL

I hadn't gotten into the Cosmic Lounge through the front door for years.

DAVID

(Incensed) Not only was my life worth your drinking privileges in a **specific** establishment within Stellar Firma—

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

—it was worth your drinking privileges in a specific establishment in Stellar Firma that you **couldn't drink in!**

IMOGEN

[Beep] Given everything you know about him, the only surprise here is that you are shocked at all.

TREXEL

No, they just beefed up the security, David. It made it more inconvenient for me. I have had to spend some time in the Astral Bar. And it's not as good, David. And the Asteroid Booth was nothing. It was just two seats and a sad old robot.

(David sighs)

"Drink, sir? Bleep blorp." Y'know, who needs that?

DAVID

Alright.

TREXEL

Rusty idiot.

HARTRO

There you go, David 7. I think you see the extent of Trexel's big sacrifice now.

DAVID

Well, I'm honestly just not surprised. Really— Anyway, we have but a moment to write this all down, so—

HARTRO

Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh! One more thing.

DAVID

What?

HARTRO

Cos I got in— I got interrupted. I hav— I have several things on this board.

TREXEL

(Interrupting) By who?! I'll stop them, Hartro. **(aggressively)** Who's interrupting Hartro? Show yourselves!

HARTRO

Spin him, spin him!

TREXEL

Is it you, David? Have at thee!

[The net creaks as David begins spinning Trexel]

TREXEL

Whoah, whoah— **(burbles)**

DAVID

Alright, okay. And I'm just— I'm gonna stop him, but I'm gonna point him away from us—

TREXEL

Ah.

DAVID

—just so if he does vomit, he vomits behind us, not onto us.

HARTRO

Aim him at that shiny light, that'll distract him.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Ooh, shiny! Now...

HARTRO

So basically, I think every good bar should have a points system based on how you are doing in the world, and that, that, that some, some people obviously should be allowed better drinks, and better locations— Where you walk into

the bar, you can know exactly, right away, who is higher than, than the other person. Like, a hierarchy, if you will.

DAVID

Okay, um, that is a—

[Shifting sounds as the net rotates]

TREXEL

I mean, this sounds like a teen novel. I'm not gonna lie with you, Hartro, this sounds like a novel for teens called something like, *The*, I dunno, *Alcohol Wars*.

HARTRO

You know, you might have a girl from a, a lower, lower area that over time has—

TREXEL

Snack Games.

HARTRO

—worked herself up through the bar, and then ends up having drinks at another part of the bar, where—

TREXEL

Bartender Bash.

HARTRO

(Wistful) Where... she's higher up, and well seen.

DAVID

Right, s-so they're playing some sort of drinking games?

HARTRO

Of a sort. But very—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) You'd need snacks, otherwise you'd get hungry.

HARTRO

Yeah, and the snacks'll be hierarchical!

TREXEL

It's all about strife. You gotta have people wanting what they can't have to keep them engaged. Really gamify the bar experience.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Careful, now. You might disrupt the whole 'Bar Space' and really 'level up' everyone's alcohol consumption game.

DAVID

Yeah, this, this really— This, this sounds like an awful system, but from the level of enthusiasm that I'm seeing from you two—

TREXEL

Mmmhmm.

DAVID

—it's going to be extremely successful.

HARTRO

I think it might work in this case.

DAVID

I'll write down what you two are saying. You know, you know, we'll see, we'll see what Stefan thinks.

[Writing sounds]

TREXEL

I think these are all solid ideas, and you know what? I feel like they were improved by me having just more people to bounce off of.

IMOGEN

Submitting.

[Pneumatic tube whooshes as the brief is sent off]

DAVID

Sure.

TREXEL

You know, my talent is best when reflected off an adoring public.

DAVID

Yep.

TREXEL

And having Hartro here, you know, who loves me in every single way—

HARTRO

Uhh...

TREXEL

—has only improved my ability to just come up with real nuggets of gold. So, Hartro—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) (sounding ill) Uh, does anybody have a straw? I need a straw.

TREXEL

Hartro—

(Trexel begins noisily and joyfully eating the straw)

(Hartro swallows heavily, as if preventing being ill)

DAVID

Uh, that was the last, that was the last one, Hartro, sorry.

TREXEL

(Groans) Oh, I feel very bloated. Hartro, can you wheel me to a, to a sun deck so I can look out onto the starry sky whilst I vomit up thirty straws?

HARTRO

I can definitely drag you out the door, and then release you by the front of it.

TREXEL

And I'll scamper away!

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Okay, well, off we go. It was lovely seeing you, David, and we'll, ah, we'll continue this party train tomorrow, I think.

DAVID

Yep.

HARTRO

Well, it's nice to finally have us getting through things efficiently, and having somebody finally organise everything down just right. And I'd just like to say: you're welcome.

TREXEL

Hartro. You're welcome.

HARTRO

And you... are welcome.

TREXEL

And also Hartro, you? You are the one who is welcome for what I've done.

[Hartro begins to drag Trexel from the room]

HARTRO

David... you're welcome. And also Trexel is. And then—

(Crosstalk) (quickly, rising) Now we have to go and we have to go and we have to go and here we go here we go...

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) David. That— And no— And you're, you're we— ahh, ahh, you're welcome! You're all welcome for my genius! My genius! I'm out!

(Cackles as he is dragged away)

[Door whooshes]

IMOGEN

[Beep] That went as well, and as badly, as expected.

DAVID

Oh, I'm so glad that I just had to write down what **they** did, and not the person who ran a very good small-to-midrange size café, but fine. But fine.

[Show Theme – Outro)

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