

STL 67 — Sagacity and Social Mobility

Content Warnings

- Bullying / Taunting
- Injury (inc SFX)
- Alcohol & alcoholism
- Discussions of: toilet humour
- Mentions of: death, frostbite, self-injury, animals, violence
- SFX: brief high frequency sound, loud clanking/hissing

TREXEL

Special thanks to Ria. May the great River of Life generate for you vast quantities of hydroelectric power with which to destroy your enemies!

[Show Theme – Intro]

IMOGEN

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

[Theme continues]

[Door whooshes, accompanied by metallic rattling]

HARTRO

Ah, hello!

DAVID

Ooh!

HARTRO

Hi, David.

DAVID

Uh, hi, Hartro. Um. Why are you so late? I was expecting maybe some—

(Hartro scoffs)

—on-timeliness from... you. Not Trexel, but you.

HARTRO

Yes, well, of course. Yes, I-I like to be timely, and I-I did start at the correct time, and um, I didn't just bring—

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

—this frozen **(two metallic knocks)** slurry cart for us to uh, to—

DAVID

I was—

HARTRO

—sample the deliciousness of. **(chuckles)**

DAVID

Oh, I was, I was sort of hoping maybe you'd just brought treats for—

HARTRO

No, David, because it's not full of treats.

DAVID

Oh.

HARTRO

I knew little Trexel, the *Geist* Man, would be trying to hide. Trying not to come on time. Boards knows where he'd like to be spending his time, but I had something else—

DAVID

I-In a bar.

HARTRO

—up my sleeve. Yeah, well, probably in a bar. Uh. But I've caught him. Heh heh heh heh.

DAVID

Right, so he's in there.

HARTRO

Yeah. **(smug chuckling continues)**

DAVID

Wait, now, ha-hang on— Just before you let him out, just before you let him out, hang on a minute—

HARTRO

I have to let him out?

DAVID

I-I dunno, hang on a minute—

IMOGEN

[Beep] Yes. Must we let him out? What would we gain?

[Trexel slaps the slurry cart from the inside]

DAVID

Yeah, no, the uh, the, the, the brief hatch is still closed. I don't think it's registered the... consul...

[A loud bang from Trexel]

DAVID

consultant, so...

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Ohhh, the consultant lock, of course.

IMOGEN

[Beep] We had the brief tube system reinforced after *someone* got caught tampering with already submitted briefs.

DAVID

But, but b-before we do, before—

HARTRO

Yes, yes.

DAVID

—we do, I just want to mention something. You wanted to stop him from turning up late? But he has coincidentally turned up, in that cart, around about the exact same time he does every day. So... you're gonna have to get a better time on this, I think.

HARTRO

D-David. The— David 7, these are details, and I— y'know, I— If one thing's true about Hartro, that is that she improves. And this is t— this is just me letting Trexel know the game is afoot. Y'know?

DAVID

Oh, right— ah, ooh.

HARTRO

Like, 'You better run, squirrel, cos I'm comin'.' **(chuckles)**

DAVID

Yeah, cos, there's, uh, there's a-feet coming. Okay. Yes.

HARTRO

Ah— Should we see how he's doing? He's probably pretty cold, poor little thing. Let's see if I can just open one of these—

[Panel on the cart opens and Trexel emerges, shivering and freezing]

HARTRO

Ah, there we go.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Oh look, a Trexsicle.

TREXEL

I was promised free money if I walked into that chamber! And all of a sudden there's a slamming noise and it's dark, and it's cold, and then there's an hour of silence! I demand to know what is the meaning of thi— H-Hartro, D-Dav— I'm— What, I'm at work?! This is even worse than frostbite!

[Panel slides shut again]

HARTRO

Oh, no, no, don't shut it, don't shut it, you have to come out, you have— You can't go back in— Y-you—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) (muffled) No, I don't want to! I'll die in here!

HARTRO

You have to go to work, Trexel! We can't get the brief— **(sighs)**

DAVID

Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait—

[Pneumatic tube hisses]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Initiating.

DAVID

Oh, no, it's open, it's registered, it's registered! You can— Yeah, no, just get rid of him, it's fine.

TREXEL

What, now, no, you're not, you're not—

[Panel slides open and he re-emerges, crunchy with ice]

TREXEL

—you're not handling the brief without me, no I'll, I'll come out, I'll come out.

HARTRO

Well, he seems to be holding the brief.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I just need to— I just need to— I just need to unfreeze my limbs.

(Sounds of ice shattering)

Ahhhh, okay, that's got one of them.

(An impact, followed by a pained sound)

And there's the other. Okay, I, I think I'm thawing a bit now. Just a bit crunchy around the joints. Ready... ready to go. Ready to rar! I'm a raring boy. Oh—

DAVID

Trexel—

TREXEL

Everything hurts.

DAVID

Trexel, you've forgotten about your legs.

TREXEL

Augh, can't I just—

(Shattering noises as Trexel makes sounds of pain and relief)

HARTRO

Ouch.

TREXEL

There you go, there's, there's a bit of movement. There's a bit of movement.

IMOGEN

[Beep] If he didn't drink so much antifreeze, he'd probably be dead. Better luck next time.

HARTRO

So d'you see what happens when you try to hide from me?

TREXEL

Yes, I, I—

HARTRO

I'm going to find you.

TREXEL

I get enticed into small, cold boxes. I must admit it—

HARTRO

It was so easy.

TREXEL

It was a pretty clever ruse there, Hartro. You painted a pretty enticing message. "Trexel come in here. There's money." Ah— What was I to do? Not walk into what was clearly a freezer? I don't think so. Who am I? Trexel Geistman? Yes. On I walk.

DAVID

So I've always wondered, but never got a proper answer—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Hmm?

DAVID

—for, for obvious reasons. What **does** Trexel do all day when he should be at work?

HARTRO

It is incredible. This man is—

TREXEL

Hello.

HARTRO

You would think— At fi— The first hour, I mean, cos I was— I have to admit, David 7, I was surprised as well, though, took me lo— so long to catch him. It's just the complete unpredictableness of his, his life. He has absolutely no—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I'm like a bouncy ball chucked in a school gymnasium. Who knows where I came from? Who knows where I'm going? All we know is teacher's cross.

HARTRO

No structure whatsoever. At one point, he was staring at a window—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) What are you hiding?

HARTRO

—and he, he was licking it, and I don't know why he was licking it.

TREXEL

Taste the knowledge.

HARTRO

He tries to speak to people. That is— That's the most pathetic bit. H-He speaks to several people and they just walk by or pretend they haven't seen him. He

spoke to one person for about five minutes before he realised they were asleep. I mean, this is pathetic.

TREXEL

I'm working up a theory that sometimes I'm invisible, but I can't tell when. It's the only rational explanation.

DAVID

Trexel, **(bubbles)** is there anybody on Stellar Firma that you haven't at some point wronged?

TREXEL

No!

IMOGEN

[Beep] When Trexel is in a room, the living envy the dead!

DAVID

Oh...

HARTRO

(Softly) Mmkay.

DAVID

Ah, sh-sh... shall I do the brief?

HARTRO

Oh!

DAVID

I think I should do the brief.

TREXEL

Well, we can.

HARTRO

Yeah, o-o-oh, uhh, I've brought my, uh, my materials and my stationary.

[Hartro rummages through her things]

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Ah, the craft box. Um.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Ohhh, the crafts. Oh, the crafts are here. Uh—

DAVID

Well, I mean, usually, the brief is submitted, I-I kind of just write it down, and then it rolls it up in a tube—

TREXEL

It's not really a 'craft zone.' Like there's no real room— it's more of a, it's more of a brain palace. You know, more an obstacle course of the mind. Not much like paper and craft and, and cardboard.

DAVID

Unless... unless you wanna use it for ideation. But like really, we have— We don't really usually have that much.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I see what's going on. I see what's going on here.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Like, really, it's all I can do to get it written down.

HARTRO

You boys, you're a bit intimidated, aren't you?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Crafts is the most intimidating of all the hobbies. So many knives.

DAVID

No, what's going on is that Trexel and you were late for work, and I don't know what's...

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Now listen—

TREXEL

I, I actually am quite intimidated if, if it, if it means anything. And— I just, it's those kind of safety scissors. What are you trying to save me from? Reveal your secrets!

HARTRO

Right, well, I'm just going to set up over here. Uh, it's obviously—

[Mechanical whirr]

HARTRO

Oh, there's the table button, there we go. I will be— I will just— This is a perfect space for me.

TREXEL

There **must** be a manual somewhere. I mean, if I found it I wouldn't read it, but the concept of one seems sensible.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Lounge mode activated.

[Soft furniture deploys]

DAVID

I swear the room's bigger now.

HARTRO

Oh, I just did a size adjustment.

TREXEL

I-It is bigger!

(David stammers incredulously)

And there's more cushions. It's comfier, and nicer, and I hate it.

HARTRO

Well, we need to be comfortable when we work. I mean, how do ideas produce themselves in a chamber of uncomfortable tightness?

TREXEL

Ideas are produced by restrictions and pain. If you want to find out how to escape a situation, start strangling yourself, and then you'll find a way out.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Security alerted about... whatever that was.

HARTRO

Now, now, see, no, I think a good idea comes to you when you try hard enough and you invest your time and you properly structure things, and you prepare yourself. I mean, you need to wake up at least by four A.M. in the morning if you want to have a good idea.

DAVID

Okay, I think creativity works like 'I should read the brief so we know what the problem is.'

TREXEL

There is only one four A.M.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Wait, now, are we just ignoring the thing that I said?

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) And it's the afternoon one.

DAVID

Are we, are we still on the—?

TREXEL

No, we need to establish this.

DAVID

But we've—

TREXEL

Waking up at— You can, you can be awake through four A.M., but waking up **at** four A.M.? That's unconscionable. Hartro? And you will be hearing from my lawyers.

HARTRO

I—

TREXEL

If I can find out who they are, you'll be hearing from them.

HARTRO

Well, I will— I will stand up in court and defend four A.M. 'til the chickens fly the moon.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Not a phrase.

TREXEL

Let's not even bother w— Let's have it right now.

DAVID

No.

TREXEL

Let's do a holovision of a court.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No, no, no.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Alright, let's do it.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Okay, okay.

[Holovision whirrs to life]

TREXEL

I put it to—

(Hits gavel)

Order! Order in Time Court!

DAVID

Hartro! Aren't you here so— No, aren't you here so we submit the brief?!

TREXEL

David.

HARTRO

Yes, yes.

TREXEL

David, you are in contempt of Time Court! Contempt of Time Court. Now—

DAVID

No—

TREXEL

—Ms. Piltz, I put it to you that your insinuation of a four A.M. wakeup is a Time Crime under Time Law.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Wait, are you the— Are you— No, hang on a minute— Are you the judge or the prosecutor?

TREXEL

Both!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No, that's not how it—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) You cannot be the judge, that's not fair!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No, I want—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I call non-fair Time Trial.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Tell you what—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I object!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) I'll be—

TREXEL

I would like Hartro's comments stricken from the records. Overruled!

Sustained. Okay!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, those two things contradicted each other—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) You are not the judge, David 7 has to be the judge!

DAVID

I— no, or the prosecutor. I'll be the prosecutor. I'll be the prosecutor.

TREXEL

Oh, yes, good, good! Okay. Uh, David 7's the prosecution, I'm the judge, and Hartro is the defendant.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Okay, order, order in the court!

DAVID

The prosecution wants to make their opening statement.

TREXEL

Please prosecution, approach the bench.

DAVID

Uh, the prosecution calls no witnesses. Uh, the prosecution rests. Case dismissed.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) That's un— **(sighs)**

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I won! Ha! Four A.M.!

DAVID

Okay—

[Holo vision powers down]

HARTRO

Ha-ha-ha!

TREXEL

You know what? The wheels of justice bend towards confusion.

DAVID

And I'm gonna read the brief!

TREXEL

I suppose so.

DAVID

It's from Makvala Agryris. They are "External Seeking Wisdom". And, uh, so it says, um, "I represent—" This is a long company. "I represent CRISPR, Inc, the leading company in the field of animal reanimating. Our company uses TOP SECRET—" That's in capitals. "—technology to re-engineer previously extinct animals according to the wishes of our clients. If you want your own rat-sized pet lion—" Don't know what those are. "—we can re-engineer it for you."

TREXEL

Well, it's like, you know lions, which are like big cats, y'know, cats—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Th— Uh—

TREXEL

—they’re like large weasels, and you know weasels, they’re like a stoat with an attitude problem.

DAVID

So they’re, they’re, they’re sort of, they— **(stammers)** They’re space cats. The, the floating, y’know, limbless...

TREXEL

Oh yeah, y’know, you know those, like, with legs and bigger.

DAVID

Do they float?

TREXEL

In space, everything does.

DAVID

Well, there you go. Okay, great, well, uh, their, uhh, problem is that “We keep getting customer complaints about—”

HARTRO

David 7, can we just pause for a second, and can, can we just take this moment to, to, to realize that this is my second brief with you. And I just— I just feel

really good about this. I just feel— Consulting is, is good, isn't it? Like, look, look at us. I just— Let's hold hands.

(David and Trexel mutter confused assent)

I'm just— **(stammers)** I think it's— I think we're just rushing into this, and I think we need to really take a moment and breathe.

(Hatro inhales serenely)

DAVID

Don't rush— I— **(stammers)**

(Trexel heaves loud, heavy breaths)

HARTRO

And re-align—

DAVID

The time on the wall is ticking down.

HARTRO

We're just—

TREXEL

I'm breathing.

HARTRO

We're about to do something miraculous. We are about to read a brief, and—

DAVID

Hartro, are you crying?

HARTRO

I'm just sweaty.

TREXEL

(Tearful) I'm crying.

DAVID

Why?

TREXEL

I'm sorry, I'm just a bit of an empath. I really feel other people's emotions. It's always been a thing about me.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) (sarcastic) Oh yes, your problem is you're too caring, yeah.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) It's so beautiful.

TREXEL

Anyway, could somebody explain to me why it's beautiful that I'm crying?

DAVID

Okay, so, "The problem is that we keep customer complaints about our rodent-sized pets being too smart. Claiming—

HARTRO

Hmm.

DAVID

—that the animals we provide keep hacking their owner’s bank account, uh, to order more animals like themselves.”

IMOGEN

[Beep] It’s the perfect business model.

DAVID

“Our sale—”

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Should we still be holding hands?

HARTRO

Oh, n— Uh, that’s fine, we can finish now.

TREXEL

Okay. It was nice.

DAVID

Okay. “Our, our sales keep increasing, but our reputation as the best supplier of reanimated pets is at stake! How can we keep our clients satisfied when their pets keep trying to build their own tiny armies?”

HARTRO

This is just a classic case of over-intelligence. I've, I've seen this before. This is just— it's a cut and dry s-system.

TREXEL

It happens to the be— Y'know, if I had—

HARTRO

Mmm.

TREXEL

—a credit for every time I created an intelligence, and then it turned out that that intelligence was secretly trying to build an army to destroy me, I mean, I'd have six or seven credits.

DAVID

What? Where have you been building intelligences from?

TREXEL

My bathroom.

DAVID

You've been building intelligences in your bathroom?

TREXEL

Well yeah, there's no cameras in there. At least I don't think there is. Well, there is one camera, but that's just for me.

IMOGEN

[Beep] No.

HARTRO

Trexel, um—

TREXEL

Yes.

HARTRO

Are these intelligence, uh, that you're creating— Are, are they maybe just thoughts? Are you just maybe having a thought?

TREXEL

Noooo, no, no, no, I, I—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh... oh, no, wait, are they—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) —discussed this with a medical person. What's a thought in my head, and what I have made and armed, are different things. And then they killed the doctor, so I'm certain.

DAVID

Tr... Trexel.

TREXEL

Cos I haven't got any blood on my hands.

DAVID

Trexel, I hate to— Do you— Hm. Do you 'create an intelligence' every time you go to the toilet?

TREXEL

No!—

HARTRO

Ohhhhh.

TREXEL

—It's a mucky thing! These aren't like mucky endboys! No, no, I make them out of machine parts that I scavenge. I just keep them in my bathroom because it's tiled. And so any sort of, like, goo that comes from the creation of life — which is beautiful, and we should respect—

DAVID

Mmkay.

TREXEL

—doesn't get into my nice shag carpeting.

DAVID

Can we not talk about your bathroom goo any more, please?

HARTRO

Yeah, I think we've been doing that too much already.

TREXEL

Ah, nobody wants to know about my secret armies of intelligent aliens, fine!

DAVID

Well, they're not secret because you th— Aliens! I thought they were machines!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) What?

And a machine can't be an alien? Is it from this planet? No, cos we're not on a planet. Check and mate!

DAVID

Well, that means we're all aliens, which means none of us are aliens.

TREXEL

Think about it.

DAVID

I have!

TREXEL

I'm writing a novel on the subject. It's **massive** and pointless.

IMOGEN

[Beep] But the teens will love it.

HARTRO

Right, I am making a note. Uh, I think we need to alarm several about Trexel's bathroom.

[Scribbling noises]

TREXEL

Uhh, unfortunately, Hartro, I have written our plans onto every single one as a contingency, so if you have them **(Hartro sighs)** captured, everyone will know.

HARTRO

Why?

TREXEL

Yes! Always three steps ahead!

HARTRO

Why?!

TREXEL

Geistman wins again!

DAVID

(Sighs) Right. Anyway.

HARTRO

I feel we're digressing.

DAVID

Yes!

TREXEL

Yes, I think we should get back on topic. Ever since Hartro joined, we've really struggled to get things done.

HARTRO

The funny thing is, Trexel, I've already got it done. It's, it's completed in my head.

(Crosstalk) The answer is so clear. It's obvious.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh. Okay.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Alright, fine, fine. No, a, a way.

DAVID

Alright.

TREXEL

A way out of wholecloth, please Hartro.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) My, uh, yep. I'm ready to go.

HARTRO

Great, well, see—

(Glass clinking)

—I've, I've done this visual aid, just cos I'd like you to really understand the solution.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Wow. When did— when did you make these things?

DAVID

We were holding hands for half the—

HARTRO

I'm quick!

DAVID

Wow.

HARTRO

So, uh, David. I would like you to hold these globes.

DAVID

Uhhh.

HARTRO

Like that—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Ahhh, o— alright... I'll just...

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Just globes?

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) You'll need to be able to hold all three of them.

DAVID

Okay, no, I've just—

HARTRO

Yeah.

DAVID

I can't— How do I hold all these globes?!

TREXEL

Well—

HARTRO

Don't—

TREXEL

—use your third hand.

DAVID

Oh.

TREXEL

We've all got one.

DAVID

Alright, yeah, fair enough.

HARTRO

There we go. Great. Yeah, and just make sure they're out far enough from your body so that the—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, so I've just gotta stretch—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) —whole globe can be seen. Cos that's very—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) 'kay...

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) —very key to this—

DAVID

Guess I'll just—

TREXEL

You don't want a partially concealed globe.

IMOGEN

[Beep] We've all been there.

TREXEL

Causes problems.

DAVID

Guess—

HARTRO

Alright.

DAVID

—I'll just write with my feet, then.

TREXEL

Well, if you would, please!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yeah, no, I am! I, I, I am! I said—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I'm sorry about this, Hartro. Just complain, complain, complain.

DAVID

No, I said I was going to, and I am! I'm doing it! I'm doing it now!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Well then please do, quietly!

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I would really like a can-do attitude, David.

DAVID

I am! I am can-doing! I-am doing! It's an am-do attitude!

[Scribbling ensues]

HARTRO

Right, and if you could—

TREXEL

And I got around it by writing the word 'Do' on a can that I take around with me.

[Metallic clang]

TREXEL

'I'm not doing it, but here's my can-do attitude.' And I throw it at their head and run away!

HARTRO

Trexel, I need you to do something as well. What, what I would like you to do—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Ahh. Did you see the can?

HARTRO

(Sighs) Yes, I saw the can. Saw the can, heard the... nice little thing you came up with. That's really, really great. I like that you are being, uh... proactive.

Now, can you please, when I point to you, just bark and/or meow. Any sort of, like, animal sound would be helpful.

TREXEL

I... can.

HARTRO

Great. Okay.

TREXEL

Yes. You know what? Not only can I, I'd be glad.

DAVID

Hartro, you've made a terrible mistake, but please continue.

HARTRO

No, I haven't. That's the thing! You just don't understand.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) I— Okay.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Just need to limber up.

(Begins to make various animal noises)

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) It's so clear, and— We, we need to s— Is there a way to send this with the solution w-when we send off the brief?

DAVID

I, I can s— I can try and squish it all into the tube.

HARTRO

Yeah, perfect.

TREXEL

And I'll just yell so loud that they'll be able to hear it.

HARTRO

Uh, and the na— the name of the client again.

DAVID

I just have to—

[Clinking of orbs and liquid noises]

DAVID

I've just— I just— Can you, could you hold—

TREXEL

Put down— I'll, I'll take an orb, I'll take an orb.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Thank, thank you. Right.

TREXEL

Ohh, it's gooey! He's made your orb gooey, Hartro!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Wh— No— That was— It was already gooey!

TREXEL

Miss! Miss! David 7's made this orb all gooey!

DAVID

Well— No— Shut up! Their name is Makvala Agryris.

HARTRO

Makvala Agryris.

DAVID

Or, sorry— Or— Yeah, or, or, CRISPR, Inc. I don't know if you wanted the business or the person.

HARTRO

Why not both?

DAVID

Anyway, can I have my— Can I have my orb back?

TREXEL

Here's your slimy orb, slime boy.

DAVID

Yeah, it was a slimy orb when I got it, thank you.

TREXEL

Yeah, sure, likely, slimy.

HARTRO

Uh, mmkay. "Dear Makvala Agryris:

(Trexel makes aggravated pet noises)

We at Stellar Firma are pleased to present our solution for your problem re: CRISPR, Inc. Obviously, the solution is, uh... presented itself, and we are happy to share our findings."

(Trexel interjects with animal noises, but possibly he has never heard an animal before)

HARTRO

Okay, this is really— Do you see what's happening here? Cos, basically, we are communicating with the animals as well as the client.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Oh, is that what's happening? I had assumed it was a descent into madness.

HARTRO

"Now..."

DAVID

Okay...

HARTRO

It is important that you treat your animals as your equal, and this will elevate their performance and behaviour to a level that is more suitable, uh, to your needs. Uh... vis-à-vis less murder, violence, et cetera."

(Trexel continues the animal noises, with two identifiable meows)

HARTRO

"Now, you might be asking: why the orbs? Thank you! I'm glad you asked. Each of these orbs is programmed with special behavioural information that is only akin to a... animal's... mind."

TREXEL

I'm a horse! Look at me, I'm a horse!

HARTRO

“This cutting edge technology has been patented by Stellar Firma Limited, and we have provided three orbs shall you like to spread them across your company, and for all your animal—”

TREXEL

Ra-a-a-a-m-bunctious goat.

HARTRO

“—needs. Love, Stellar Firma.”

DAVID

So did you— Did you just have these, or did you make these?

TREXEL

The animal control orbs. Cos that’s a— That’s specific, Hartro.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Also, why was I holding them while you were— What was the point of that?

HARTRO

If you don’t already know, do I have to explain this? This is—

DAVID

Y-yes.

HARTRO

This, this is Consultancy 101. Now—

DAVID

I have—

HARTRO

—|—

TREXEL

Oh, yeah, if you don't get this— I get it, I get it, I understand.

DAVID

Trexel— Trexel—

TREXEL

I know— I knew exactly why you need to hold the orbs.

DAVID

You get nothing, Trexel!

TREXEL

You lose! You slimed up the animal control orbs! They now have to be washed!

HARTRO

They were slimy when I— They were slimy when I got them. They were slimy when I got them!

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) The— Excuse me!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) No, no.

HARTRO

Now, they were not.

DAVID

They were!

TREXEL

These were some dry orbs.

DAVID

No, these—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) They were very dry.

DAVID

The orbs were not dry, they were moist! Moist, I tell you!

TREXEL

Okay, okay, okay, okay. Let's not get hung up on the moisture level of these miscellaneous animal orbs. Let's all agree, however, that this brief cannot be submitted.

HARTRO

Uh— Excuse me?

DAVID

What? But we have—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) It's too in-depth.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) But we have like no— We have no time!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) We have spent— We have spent so much time presenting good, classic, traditional Stellar Firma ideas, and now we're shoving an audio/visual display, and animal control orbs up the tube— I thought we were trying to lay low. I hate to be the voice of reason here—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yeah, but this is not— But—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) —but this is gonna be, y'know out of the ordinary.

HARTRO

When I was a young girl, I didn't wake up at four A.M. every morning, and practice being consultant to make little animals just so that when the day finally came, and I was in this position, and I had a visual aid, and an audio aid,

and I happened to have some behavioural orbs that I keep handy because I need them— **(sighs)** Just to let them waste. This is a good solution! And we're sending it.

TREXEL

You, like all of us, have known from birth your role. You are— You are of line manager stock, I am of consultancy stock, you— But you're telling me you once dreamed of being a consultant? That's just not how it works, Hartro. You're always gonna be a line manager, as, as you are. The only reason you're here is because you're— you've, you've gerrymandered and philandered your way into a consultancy room due to, y'know, us nearly getting everybody killed with the plans... and it's not important why! But this isn't, this isn't a natural thing. You should be happy with your lot,

(Glass clinks and liquid sloshes)

—that's the Stellar Firma way.

IMOGEN

Submitting.

[Pneumatic tube hisses]

TREXEL

David's happy with his lot, I'm happy with my lot—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Uh— Hey.

TREXEL

—you’re happy with your lot. That’s the Stellar— wh-what, what?

DAVID

I, I’ve, I’ve submitted Hartro’s, um, solution.

(Hartro gasps happily)

TREXEL

(Angrily) Oh, you’ve what?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Well, it was good.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Thank you!

DAVID

It was good.

TREXEL

(Stammers) Not— It was not—

DAVID

It **was** good.

HARTRO

It was good!

TREXEL

—it was not good— It— David, it was out of— It was, it was a— It was a big, overstuffed mess it what it was.

DAVID

You wouldn't know. You were just scared it was too good.

HARTRO

That's right!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) No, I, I was not scared it was too good! I wouldn't—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) You were just— You were just scared than any, any, anything you've ever done!

TREXEL

I don't have to stand here and listen to this. I'm going back into the freezer. I said good day, sir!

[Mechanisms hiss and whir to open, then close the door heavily]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Somebody please put something heavy on the lid.

HARTRO

Thank you, David. **(sniffs)**

DAVID

S'alright.

HARTRO

I will remember that. You don't know how many times I've woken up in the middle of the night, sweating, dreaming of exactly what Trexel just said to me.

DAVID

Well, I'll, I'll see you tomorrow for some more consultancy.

TREXEL

(Muffled) Wheel me to a bar!

HARTRO

I will not be wheeling him to a bar.

DAVID

S'alright, I'll just— Hang on. Wait, no, just open, open the door?

HARTRO

Yep.

[Door whooshes]

DAVID

And I'm just gonna... kick!

[Cart trundles out the door and noise fades into distance]

HARTRO

Oh! There he goes. Bye, David 7.

DAVID

Bye, Hartro.

HARTRO

We did a good thing today!

DAVID

Yeah.

HARTRO

We did a good thing!

DAVID

We did.

[Door whooshes, followed by Hartro's retreating footsteps]

DAVID

(Whispering bitterly to himself) Line Manager... Consultant... Clone...

[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.

Stellar Firma 67 – Sagacity and Social Mobility

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