

STL 76 — Elections and Endings

Content Warnings

- Alcohol & alcoholism
- Bullying & taunting
- Physical violence & threats
- Prejudice & discrimination
- Manipulation
- Discussion of: death & murder, biological essentialism
- Mentions of: injury, innuendo, food, nausea, guns, memory loss
- SFX: screaming & shouting, tinkling, squelching, bells, rumbling & mashing, machinery sounds, alarms

[Show Theme – Intro]

IMOGEN

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

[Theme continues]

[Shouting from Hartro, David, and Trexel as they finish the sliding journey they began at the end of the last episode, before they land with a thud and a series of groans]

TREXEL

Now, d’you think if things get de-located enough times, they just relocate?

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Get—off of me, Trexel!

(Trexel and David continue to groan in discomfort)

DAVID

(Burbles) Never get used to that.

TREXEL

Sorry. Oh, dear.

DAVID

Right. Okay.

[High-pitched tinkling sound begins]

(Hartro and Trexel make noises of admiration)

HARTRO

Look at this!

TREXEL

This is nice. This is— I could get used to this. I could really— You know what? I'd go so far as to say I'd break into here just to enjoy it after dark.

DAVID

'S, it's no David's Place, but— Yeah, I suppose it's okay.

HARTRO

No no no—

TREXEL

I think it'd be a dank cafeteria in the ass end of nowhere— No, no. What could compete with that? Not even with this marble hall of jewels and wonder.

IMOGEN

[Beep] No place in the universe can compare with our view of the past. Our burned, ashy past.

HARTRO

Boys, boys. You know what this means? **(anticipatory gasp)**

DAVID

(Crosstalk) That Trexel has no taste?

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) We're all getting slushies. What?

HARTRO

We've made it. I mean, this, this is— We are as close to the Board as we have ever been. I mean—

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

—they, they, they could be anywhere. Th-there through that door, or, or that door, or, or, or maybe— Oh, I think they're probably through that door.

(continues to breathe heavy, excited breaths)

DAVID

Yes, that's probably the really big— The big one.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Make sure to always switch your answer when I eliminate one false door.

TREXEL

Ha— Hartro, they're not, they're not ghosts. They're not sort of like, all around— I mean, they are sort of all-powerful, and all-knowing, and all-listening, so I for one want to make it known that I love the Board, and I always have.

HARTRO

No no no, Trexel, Trexel, no no no. Listen, listen. This is, this is incredibly important. First of all: dust yourselves off, come on, come on.

(Trexel and David murmur assent)

Collars to the ready.

TREXEL

I keep going, but just more dust comes out.

(Crosstalk) It's never-ending.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Um, I don't have a collar on the, the, the, the onesie. It's just, s'just a neck hole.

TREXEL

And also, David's quiet gooey. If he, if he dusts himself, he just sort of slaps at the goo.

DAVID

Yeah, s'... spread the goo around.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Alright, stop dusting yourselves, okay? Just, uh, just, I just meant stand up, you know, straight, and, and, and...

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, alright, yeah, no, fine. Straight.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) And look professional, cos this— I have been waiting for this moment. I don't think you understand. My **whole life**. I mean, I came out with determination, and I've been reading everything there is to read about the Board. I've been, I've been learning. I've been listening to audio slides. Okay. There are some things you need to know. Okay? You're not, you're not ruining this for me.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Well, he probably is ruining this. He's a ruiner!

TREXEL

Harto, Hartro, Hartro, please. Let me stop you there. You've been waiting for this all your life? **I've** been waiting for this all of my life, and I trump you, as we all know. And I'm—

HARTRO

Wh—

TREXEL

—pretty sure I understand how to meet the Board. Y'know what? They enjoy a power move. Y'just take, take your wallet out, slam it on the table, and say 'Get a load of that wedge, bucko.'

HARTRO

(Distressed) Oh, Trexel, no, okay—

DAVID

Trexel, y'don't... you don't have any credits. You borrowed all of my credits and then spent them.

TREXEL

David, you can steal a wallet.

DAVID

Whose wallet are you stealing? The Board's?

TREXEL

I... I dunno. Hang on, let me check. **(muttering)** Who's this wallet? **(louder)** Oh! This is, this is Harry's. Ha!

WALLY THE WALLET

[beeps] Saaave meeeee!

HARTRO

First of all, boys, I don't— I can't believe you don't remember. What have I always told you about your hands?

TREXEL

Shut up! Shut u—

(Crosstalk) Oh, sorry, I thought, I thought what you always—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) And shut up, and shut up. Now when we go in there, there's, there's, there's at least— Okay, how am I gonna do this, there's so many things to know— Uh, first of all, hands.

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

Hands, y-you must have them in front of you at all times. They must be seen. They must, they must keep quite still. No sudden movements of the hands, okay? This is just—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, well— Hands are— Yep.

TREXEL

Do— Are we— Are they sort of like up in—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Up, up, up.

TREXEL

—Up in the air, reach for the sky? Or is it sort of like a Frankenstein’s Monster situation?

HARTRO

What are you doing?

TREXEL

That kind of looks like a strangulation, like ‘I’m gonna get ya!’

DAVID

Who is Frankenstein’s Monster?

TREXEL

I don’t know! But Frankenstein clearly has a lot to answer for.

DAVID

Fair enough.

HARTRO

They just need to be seen. I, I mean, keep them out—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, s’just— Uh-huh.

HARTRO

—keep them down, keep them low-key, just, just...

TREXEL

I’m gonna go for a little light jazz hand. You know, nothing too obtrusive, just sort of a low level like, ‘Oooh, ch-ch-cha, ch-ch-cha.’

DAVID

I think I’m, I think I’m probably just gonna pat the top of my head, like a ‘ooh, aaah.’

HARTRO

Oh my god, this is going to be a disaster.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Ah, can you—

David, David, can you pat the top of your head and rub a tummy circle at the same ti— It’s really difficult. I’ve got—

DAVID

Trexel, stop rubbing— Stop rubbing my tummy! Stop it! Stop it!

IMOGEN

[Beep] It's like team building in hell.

HARTRO

Stop touching him, and you put y— No— Everyone has their own hands out slightly.

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

G-Gent-Gently

TREXEL

One, two, three.

HARTRO

above the— Above their... leg area. Just... the... great.

TREXEL

Hands at midriff.

HARTRO

David, this is a special day for you. I, I mean, you must be feeling slightly excited.

DAVID

Right.

HARTRO

Uh, they're going to offer you a chair. Okay?

DAVID

Okay. Yep.

HARTRO

At some point, I'm sure, because, I mean— Obviously, with your new, your new prestige, and your... your special day. And your... **(sniffs)**

TREXEL

I—

DAVID

Oh, yeah. Right, yes. In all the confusion I kind of forgot about that. Yeah, this is— Okay, fine, great, but also— I mean, I'd just like a chair to sit down, maybe. That'd be nice.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) No, no, no.

You must refuse all chairs a-a-at— When they're first offered to you.

DAVID

Wait, even the, the Board chair? **(burbles)**

TREXEL

A Board member might refuse a chair out of sort of like a high-handed nature, but if a Board members offers a Board member — and a prospective Board member, not an official Board member—

DAVID

Yeah, and if I say no—

TREXEL

—and if the prospective Board member says ‘no,’ do they like, ‘No Board for you?’

DAVID

Yeah, they just like, ‘Well sorry, bye.’

TREXEL

When Board meets Board, who Board?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Seriously, never ask about that again.

HARTRO

It’s a nicety! You just, you just, ‘Oh, no, of— I, I don’t need chair.’

DAVID

Okay, so when they say, ‘Do you want to join the Board,’ I say ‘No.’

HARTRO

N... No.

TREXEL

Yeah, it doesn't seem right. It's not like when you become the Pope and everyone's insisting they don't want to be the Pope.

DAVID

Who's a Pope??

TREXEL

And everyone sort of wants to be the Pope. The Milk Pope— You know, we talked about this. Don't make me go into it.

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

So there's just very important etiquette around accepting chairs and...

DAVID

Right.

DAVID

When you take the chair and when you don't take the chair. So just— I'm not saying **don't**—

TREXEL

Where do you take the chair to? Like a hidey hole?

HARTRO

Oh, Trexel.

DAVID

But hang on— **(stammers)** We'll roleplay it.

(Crosstalk) Okay, so, so, Hartro, you be a Board member and you offer me a chair.

(Crosstalk) Okay. Yes. This is good, this is good. So, y-you don't—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I'll be the chair.

DAVID

Okay.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Roleplay holovision initiated.

[Holovision booting up]

TREXEL

(Slightly singsongy) I'm so well built, and I've got casters.

HARTRO

Okay, just—

TREXEL

Don't sit on me, or I'll poke you in the bum.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Ooooh!

Oh, prospective Board member, David 7.

DAVID

Yes.

HARTRO

Here, we'd like to offer you a chair at the table.

DAVID

No.

TREXEL

(Gasps) (Sings) Oh, a chair refused again!

Who will take me?

Who will sit on my face?

A chaaaaair?

A chair's life in the coold, so alooone. I diiiiie.

HARTRO

What about this chair? **(whispering)** Now, you take the second—

TREXEL

(In character as chair) Wh— I'm a chair.

(Crosstalk) I'm a dandy chair friend! I'm a seat!

HARTRO

What about—

DAVID

I don't want that—

HARTRO

No, you accept the second chair.

DAVID

Oh, oh, okay, no, oh— Yes, yes, please. Yes. Yes, I'd love it.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I'm a seat!

Ohh, your weight.

HARTRO

Okay, great.

DAVID

Yes, I'll just—

TREXEL

Oh, I've taken your weight.

DAVID

Yes, hang on, I'm just going to sit on this chair **really hard**.

TREXEL

I have died.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Roleplay holovision terminated.

[Whirring stops with multiple descending beeps]

TREXEL

Two dead chairs on your hand, David. Two chairs dead at the hands of David 7.
Chair murderer.

IMOGEN

[Beep] No court would convict you. It was emotional self defense.

DAVID

Well, I've been— **(burble)** The **cheeks** of David 7.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Deadly cheeks.

HARTRO

Good. Now, moving on. The third and, and most important thing, boys. Okay?
Is...

TREXEL

Is don't get inflated head. If you start high-handing yourself ar— Highstepping
David with his new Board powers, I won't stand for it, Board or no.

HARTRO

Tre—

TREXEL

I'll punch ya.

HARTRO

Trexel. We've got— I don't know how long, and you're just filling this— I, I
need to pack years and years of, of knowledge about the Board into your li—

DAVID

Also, if you, if you punch me again, your hand is gonna become like a sack of
wet slurry.

TREXEL

That is true. That is true. And, you know what? Because that's separate from
the hierarchy thing, that's not cos you're better than me, that's because you're
a genetic weirdo. So I'll take that.

HARTRO

Okay, so, you know how we always say Hail the Board?

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

Hail the Board.

HARTRO

Do not— Do **not** say Hail the Board when you're in front of the Board.

TREXEL

Really?

DAVID

Do I say 'hail me'?

TREXEL

Do you hail yourself? Hail David.

HARTRO

Well we, we don't hai— We cannot hail David when we're—

TREXEL

No hailing us.

HARTRO

You mustn't hail a Board member in sight of a Board member.

TREXEL

What do you say, then? 'Your, Your Boardistry.' 'Your Boardness.'

HARTRO

Well, you don't hail them directly. You do— You definitely don't look them in the eye. It's just a general prostrating. Just down—

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

—just low.

TREXEL

(Burbles) Genuflection.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No, no. No, Hartro, don't, don't do it now though. It's weird, and Trexel's kind of—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Oooh, David.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) David, you're—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) I know Trexel’s doing it— I know Trexel’s doing it sarcastically, but it’s still weird.

TREXEL

Nooo, I’m genuflecting at you, David, because-this-is-so-important.

(David begins to protest)

Oooh, look at me.

HARTRO

(Overwhelmed) David, you are the closest I’ve ever been to the Board.

DAVID

Stop it! Don’t touch my feet! Don’t touch my feet!

TREXEL

You’ll never get the goo out of your hands. You may have, you may the blessing of David, member of the Board, but you’ll have gooey hands until the day you die.

DAVID

Look, I’m just— I’m not— None of this, none of this, alright? Just, just, just keep it.

TREXEL

David, cure my lumbago with your magic hands.

DAVID

What is a lumpy bago?

TREXEL

I don't know, David, but you're the god now. Cure me.

(David sputters)

Cure me! Also, could I have some money?

HARTRO

Do you feel... different, David?

DAVID

No. I'm Daaaavid. That's it. That's it! I'm just David. I mean, they're gonna give me a fancy hat, maybe? And Trexel will probably try and steal it, and he'll be shot to death, and you know...

TREXEL

This is the thing. We all know David, and David's... no offense, David...

DAVID

I'm David.

TREXEL

...crap.

DAVID

Oh.

TREXEL

So, doesn't this somewhat, like, undercut... **(numbers)** Don't wanna say it too loudly, but: undercut the mystique of the Board? Like if David can be on the Board— Like if they're making—

DAVID

'll probably have to kill both of you just so nobody could know.

(Hartro gasps)

TREXEL

Yeah, that make— If it was me, I'd kill everyone I knew, y'know?

(Hartro sputters)

TREXEL

You can never a prophet in your own country. You can never be a Board member while anyone who's ever known you is still alive. Have you ever met anybody who's met the Board? I haven't.

DAVID

No.

TREXEL

Why? Cos they're dead.

HARTRO

David, you can't kill me. I mean, I mean, it's, the— I, I, I'm obviously why you're here.

DAVID

Oh, I, I, I won't, but I, I imagine Imogen will just shoot you right up.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Is that a request?

(Hartro stammers)

TREXEL

Ahh, that'll be a shame for you, but they'll never catch me. I'll jump over some barbed wire on a motorcycle trying to get into a neutral department.

HARTRO

I don't think David would let that happen. I, I, I think—

DAVID

But what I'm saying is, you know, you shouldn't be genuflecting and prostrating and all that, cos it, cos it might get you nowhere. I dunno, I dunno what the Board's gonna do. I might be all Boarded up. They might—

TREXEL

What a toad. What a toad he's being, Hartro.

DAVID

What?

TREXEL

Have you seen this? He gets a, gets a little taste of power, and he's all like, 'Ooh, I don't know if I can help you out there, Hartro.'

DAVID

I'm just saying—

TREXEL

'I dunno, I'm only a god, it's out of my hands.'

DAVID

Alright, wh— **(stammers)** I'll make you both my PAs.

HARTRO

Wh—? Y—?

TREXEL

Your, your... Your PAs?

DAVID

Yeah!

TREXEL

I'll be a 'PA'?

HARTRO

What?

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

First of all, what does that stand for?

IMOGEN

[Beep] In your case, Trexel, I reckon ‘pathetic ass-head.’

HARTRO

Can I be the— Line managing PA? Can I line manage the other PA?

DAVID

Sure.

TREXEL

Can I be the— A PA, but one that’s in charge of everything and everyone? So like, in charge of you?

DAVID

Well hang on a— So, tell you what. **(stammers)** Hartro, you can, you can line manage my PAs.

HARTRO

Ooh, okay. Oh, you’re getting more than one. Great.

DAVID

And then Trexel can be a PA, but ‘PA’ stands for...

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

‘pretty... alcohol.’

HARTRO

Ooh.

TREXEL

Ooh, ‘pretty alcohol’! I’ll go with that. I love pretty alcohol, glistening in the moonlight. Sweet amber nectar, resting in quiet glass beds. Oh, what’s that? You’re hiding away in the Board Member’s only bar, Club Elysium? Well, when I’m a PA, I’ll get my grubby little mitts on you.

IMOGEN

[Beep] The day you set foot in Club Elysium is the day we should give up reality as a bad job.

HARTRO

And I’ll manage them all?

DAVID

Yeah, you could manage the, the pretty alcohol, and, um...

[Loud bells begin to chime]

TREXEL

Whoa. Hang on. Hang on, that's a noise. That's a new noise.

DAVID

Uh—

HARTRO

What?

DAVID

Oh, is this—?

TREXEL

Ooh, it's sort of a, a glittery noise.

HARTRO

Oh oh oh oh! I'm so excited! Dust, dust off, dust off!

DAVID

So is this, is this the— **(burbles)** Oh, it's everywhere!

[Door whooshes open]

IMOGEN

[Beep] They are now ready for you. Please enter the Board Room.

[Footsteps]

[The Board Room sounds large, and has extremely slow calming musical notes in the background]

HARTRO

This is it, boys.

DAVID

This is, this is it, yes.

TREXEL

I'm hungry. Is anyone else hungry?

NO. 1

Come on, come on, take a seat.

DAVID

Wh... where is everyone else?

NO. 1

Everyone else? This is everyone.

NO. 48

Our happy little family.

DAVID

But there... There's you two. Uh. Harry is here for some reason...

HARRY

Good Afternoon.

DAVID

And then there's... Uhh... I'm, I'm sorry, I, I don't know you.

CRANEWILLIS

Hi. Hi, I'm Cranew—

NO. 1

Shut up, Cranewillis.

CRANEWILLIS

Hokey dokey chief.

NO. 1

Everyone take your seats.

DAVID

No. **No.** Wait, stop. A-are you, are you telling me that **you** all are the Board?

(No. 1, No. 48, Cranewillis, Harry, and Trexel all begin to laugh, Trexel louder than the others)

TREXEL

(Laughter halting abruptly) No, wait, seriously... Have you all been the Board this whole time? Because that would be **really** anti-climactic.

NO. 1

No, we are not the board David. We represent the shareholders of Stellar Firma. Myself, as the Head of Standards; Harry, the head of IT; for some Board-

damn reason Imogen, as the Station's A.I. and primary caretaker; and Cranewillis here, Head of The Build Team—

CRANEWILLIS

An absolute delight to meet you, an utter delight. Could I offer you some excellent soil that we have been developing? I have some samples on me if—

NO. 1

(Crosstalk) Cranewillis, I swear to you, if you don't shut your babbling mouth, I will have 48 here insert their hammer into you thick end first. Are we clear?

CRANEWILLIS

(Upbeat but with his mouth shut) Mmmhmm!

TREXEL

A hammer? Amateur, you should try a foot. Now there's a real test of your mettle.

HARTRO

Not the time, Trexel.

TREXEL

Quick question: what's that big door thingy over there? **(gasps)** Wait. Is it— Is it the entrance to Club Elysium? Please let me in. I just want to lick the bottles.

IMOGEN

[Beep] No, that is the Stealth-Shielded Emergency Escape Module to be used in case of enemy attack, sudden depressurisation, or an overwhelming desire

to be shot into space in an un-trackable cube with no guidance systems. Now, will you please shut up while the adults talk.

TREXEL

Why is everyone so tense? And I wasn't joking earlier when I said that I was hungry. I want buffet! Buffet!

HARTRO

There is a tray of slurry cups over there.

TREXEL

Ooh, lovely.

[Footsteps, followed by the clanking of metal cups]

DAVID

Harry, you're head of IT? I thought that you were just Trexel's friend.

HARRY

No that's me, Head of IT. If you've got a problem I'll fix it for free. A-Assuming you have filled in form 685B.

TREXEL

Don't get him stuck in rhyming couplets, David, we'll be here for hours. Hey, Harry — think fast!

HARRY

What?

[Trexel flings a metal cup at Harry and bounces it off his head]

HARRY

Ow, that hurt.

TREXEL

Well clearly you should think faster, then!

NO. 1

Hardly an inspiring bunch, I know. There were quite a few more back in the golden age but, well, between the coups and purges after the Secret Loss, this is what we have left...

DAVID

The Secret Loss?

NO. 48

Yeah, you idiot, the Secret Loss, when the Board all died? Have you been under a rock?

NO. 1

I feel it somewhat removes the point of calling it the **Secret** Loss if you just tell people what it is, don't you?

NO. 48

No, why?

NO. 1

It, uh... **(sighs)** Yes, David, the Board is in a semi-permanent state of Absentia, due to being... mortally compromised.

HARTRO

Oh Board, I think I'm going to be sick.

TREXEL

So who the hell have we been hailing this whole time?

NO. 1

You see, this is why I hate explaining: everyone always goes to pieces. “Oh woe is me, what will we do, all is lost!” They died hundreds of years ago and look around — we’re the most powerful force in the galaxy. The solar states fear us, the conglomerates beg for our favour.

CRANEWILLIS

...and the work we’ve been able to do with soil is really quite extrao—

NO. 1

48, if you would.

NO. 48

Come here you! Haa!

[The sounds of punching and kicking accompanied by Cranewillis grunting in pain and alarm]

CRANEWILLIS

Please! Please stop!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Yes, everything is fine. So fine that I haven't had a single component replacement or RAM upgrade in nearly three centuries. So fine that in order to keep the oxygen supply going I have to reduce it overnight while everyone is asleep so they don't faint during the day.

TREXEL

So that's why I'm so woozy in the morning.

HARTRO

No, that's because you are still drunk.

TREXEL

Hmm, fair play. Does anyone have a cocktail?

NO. 1

Ok, so there are some issues, but that's your fault, Imogen If you would just agree to our terms then this could be all sorted out and we could live by proper standards.

IMOGEN

[Beep] The day I agree is the day that the heat death of the universe is a nostalgic memory.

DAVID

Everyone shut up!

[David stomps so hard that the metal floor cracks and the entire room shakes, and he continues to breathe heavily]

TREXEL

Oh, real mature David. Just stamp a hole in the floor whenever you don't get what you want, you big— Oh... oh. Oh, no, no, wait, that's the look they get before they go all power slime monster. I for one think we should listen— Everybody shut up.

DAVID

Just tell me what is happening right now.

NO. 1

Look, I can't be bothered to go through it. If we all sit down, I can just play you the Orientation.

DAVID

Fine.

DAVID

Hang on, why does everyone else get to sit in those executive hover chair things and I get a metal chair bolted to the floor?

EVERYONE EXCEPT DAVID

Because you're a clone.

DAVID

Fine.

[Throws himself into the chair]

DAVID

Whatever. Just— Play the stupid thing that you said.

NO. 1

Imogen, play the holovid.

IMOGEN

[Beep] I'm not doing it because you asked. I had the same idea independently.

[A holovid begins playing with jaunty 1950s educational video music]

SIGISMUND

Hello, and welcome to “So you have discovered that The Board is Dead” with me, Sigismund Shankeray.

TREXEL

Urgh, this guy again!

HARRY

What? He's great! Did you see his documentary, Face to Face with The Face?

HARTRO

Shhh, both of you.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Sorry, Hartro.

HARRY

(Crosstalk) Sorry, Hartro.

SIGISMUND

You must have a lot of questions, but don't ask them. I'm not actually there.

After thousands of years of uninterrupted hereditary rule, our beloved Board, and their extended families, were tragically lost in an entirely essential Party Barge factfinding mission to the pleasure moon of Quixotix.

To prevent mass panic, the five representatives of the Shareholders agreed that this tragedy could not be made public.

It was decided that a temporary pact of silence would be observed, and all Board-level functions halted, until a new Board could be elected. This would have been the first election since the original ancestors of the Board were chosen before the exodus from old Earth.

As stated in the company bylaws, this would have also installed a new charter, written by the majority voting bloc, binding the new Board members to a set of actions and guidelines that best suited the needs of the time.

Shockingly however, the members of this closed cabal of oligarchs turned out to be hungry for power. It was something we could never have planned for. And so a bloody struggle for power ensued. This resulted in the complete

destruction of one of the member bodies, the Security Division, which was replaced with:

A — a series of cardboard cut-outs behind frosted glass,

B — pre-recorded messages,

C — computer generated random memos and arrest orders, and

D — an elaborate system of walls with guns in them.

HARTRO

Huh, now that you say it out loud, that does explain a lot of things.

SIGISMUND

The conflict was covered up as a mere crackdown over an organised labour dispute and blamed on some department that nobody liked — Admin, I think. Anyway, the important thing is that they all went out the airlock.

TREXEL

Smart move. Blame it on unions, and Admin.

SIGISMUND

And so we entered into the era of détente, with the four remaining members split between AI and IT on one side, and Standards and the Build Team on the other.

So, now you know the truth. It's up to you what you do with it. As for me, they are coming now to erase my memory of this terrible knowledge, and most likely some other memories that get caught in the crossfire too.

Good luck.

[Music stops and holovid shuts off]

NO. 1

So you see, David, we aren't the bad ones here. We just want to bring an end to this silly deadlock, install you on the Board under our binding charter, and have you replace Imogen with an AI of our own that will follow orders like a proper computer.

NO. 48

His name is ALEX.

[They thunk a big case on the table with a strained grunt of effort, before a chime indicates ALEX powering up]

ALEX

Hello there. How can I help you have your most productive day?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Oh, I hate this guy. Such a suck up.

DAVID

But why me? Why have you had to involve **me** in all of this?

HARRY

I can answer that. Uh, when my predecessors designed the systems for Stellar Firma, they foresaw that one day some naughty rascal or other might want to take her over, or replace her as a neutral caretaker of the station for their own

dastardly ends, eh? So they hard-coded in safeguards that meant that no person could change or remove any of Imogen's core functions.

NO. 48

And guess who's not a person!

(David sighs)

CRANEWILLIS

It's you, in case that's not clear.

NO. 1

48.

NO. 48

Judo kick.

CRANEWILLIS

Well, actually, that's not technically jud—

[Interrupted by a swift kick]

DAVID

But why **me**? Why not some other clone? **Any** other clone?

NO. 1

Hmm, actually... Cranewillis, you can explain this one, as the idiot responsible.

CRANEWILLIS

(Still slightly winded, coughing occasionally) Well, it's an issue of clone biology. They are totally, **(coughs)** totally subservient down to the core DNA, and without access to Imogen's genetic synthesis systems, we had to do our best with the, with the equipment in Planet Building. Which, as I have pointed out many times, is more suited to terraforming that delicate genetic work.

NO. 1

Explain faster.

CRANEWILLIS

Well, so, so, yes, in trying to create a clone that was only subservient to us—

NO. 1

To me.

CRANEWILLIS

Yes, yes, of course, to you— We ran into a few roadblocks.

NO. 48

They kept melting.

CRANEWILLIS

Roadblocks, yes. And without a selectively subservient clone, any orders we gave, or even any binding charter, would be counteracted by a direct order from Imogen, regardless of the consequence that clone might suffer.

DAVID

Consequences?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Any contravention of the charter results in immediate vaporisation.

DAVID

Of course it does.

TREXEL

Come on, David, everyone knows that.

HARTRO

You just found out about it too!

TREXEL

You can't prove a damn thing!

NO. 1

But then out of the blue along came David, a clone without subservience, and apparently with access to all sorts of restricted information. And clearly under the protection of Imogen.

DAVID

(High pitched, incredulous) Protection!? I've nearly died literally hundreds of times!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Nearly.

NO. 1

Clearly, Imogen was trying to angle you into a position where you could give her the advantage. Maybe even get you onto the Board with her own charter. And without your subservice, we wouldn't be able to order you to stop. We could have killed you when we found out.

NO. 48

I voted for killing.

NO. 1

But then I realised, why not use you? After all, Imogen had unwittingly created the one thing we needed: a clone that won't blindly follow orders. A clone that even she couldn't control. Certainly you aren't automatically subservient to me, but then again— once you are on the Board with my charter, you won't have much choice: either do what I say or die.

TREXEL

Is everyone auditioning for something? Because the level of dramatic speeches has really slammed up into the roof since we started. Anyway. This plan is stupid. It's a stupid plan. It's like something David would come up with.

HARTRO

Trexel. Shh!

TREXEL

Like, like, it's, it's the plan of a fool. A weak fool with a weak mind.

HARRY

Trexel, I really think you should stop talking.

TREXEL

Or even a pair of fools, too foolish fools with a fool's plan.

NO. 48

So we kill him now right?

NO. 1

No, no. Go on, Trexel. Why is it such a "fool's plan"?

TREXEL

Well, it's obvious, isn't it? You still have the deadlock, you vote for David with your charter, Imogen votes for David with, with her charter... and what is your charter, anyway?

IMOGEN

[Beep] I just want someone to approve my systems upgrades. Maybe also give me some holiday allowance.

TREXEL

Sure, okay, she votes for that, the peons fall in on the party line.

CRANEWILLIS

Hey, don't call me a peon.

HARRY

Well, yes, I probably would, yes.

TREXEL

And Board's your uncle, we all end up back where we started. See? Stupid plan.

NO. 1

You are exactly right, Trexel.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Don't say that, even as a joke.

NO. 1

Except that I found another vote.

HARTRO

(Gasping in excitement) What a twist! ... What?

(Sheepish) I got swept up in the drama.

NO. 1

Cranewillis.

CRANEWILLIS

Ah, yes, well, we were clearing out some of the long-term storage vaults to make room for the secret clone lab, and I had been very tired that day because—

NO. 1

No-one cares!

CRANEWILLIS

Ah, well, okay. Well, we found the archives for the original shareholders' meetings on old Earth, and uncovered some additional bylaws!

NO. 1

(Demandingly) Saying what?

CRANEWILLIS

Well, interestingly, one was on sick leave. Did you know that—

NO. 1

—that would be relevant to what we are doing now!?

CRANEWILLIS

Of course, of course. Well, in case of a deadlock, it turns out that a representative of one of the original founding families can be nominated to break the tie.

HARTRO

Oh, please, no...

DAVID

(Very tired) Of course it is.

TREXEL

What? What's going on? Why is everyone looking at me? I demand answers!

HARRY

You! It's **you**, you blithering turnip! They are talking about you! It is so obvious to literally everybody! **(pause)** Sorry, everyone, I, I think that had been building up for a while.

TREXEL

Well, well, well, how the worm has turned. All of a sudden the ball's in old Trexel's court, he hi ho hum, now it's Trexel's time for fun. Look at this prime goose waddling down the highway, everyone admiring his golden tailfeather because the time of the duck is over. It's a me time omelette, and I like my eggs cooked medium-victory. I think I've lost the thread there a bit— Oh yes, everyone needs to be nice to me now because I have the power!

NO. 1

Indeed you do, Trexel, and I think I should mention at this point that if you vote with me, I will personally ensure that your criminal record is wiped, all your previous bar privileges will be re-instated and that you will be promoted to Executive Vice President without Portfolio.

TREXEL

(Gasping) E.V.P.WO.PO?! That's the best position! All the power, literally none of actual work to do! Like being a really relaxed god!

DAVID

Trexel, you can't! Trexel, please, you **have** to vote with Imogen! Standards are evil. They will delete Imogen and rule over everything like a bunch of rules obsessed... rules people.

IMOGEN

[Beep] We will workshop a better phrase for that.

TREXEL

Well, yeah, sure, I get that, but did you hear the bit about the criminal records, and the old bars, and the E.V.P.WO.PO? That's pretty hard to turn down, David. And hey, you'll be on the Board either way. You, you'd be safe, I'd be drunk, everybody wins!

NO. 1

Sorry, David. For all your special privileges and idealistic pretensions to social change, you just really don't understand how people work, do you? Because you're not a person, you're just a useful mistake to be used and discarded like any piece of property.

DAVID

Well, ah ha. I might not be a so-called "person," and I might not understand everything about so-called "real people," but if there is one thing I have been

forced, day in and day out, to learn, since the day I was born, it is how Trexel thinks. Trexel?

TREXEL

Yes, David?

DAVID

Vote with Imogen and I will give you full un-revocable access to Club Elysium.

TREXEL

Sold to my favourite clone! Imogen, I vote with you. Lock it it, baybeeee!

NO. 1

What?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Vote registered.

NO. 1

No, you can't do this! Trexel, take it back now! I order you!

TREXEL

Hey now, a Geistman never goes back on their word. Other than if we want to, which, in this instance, I don't.

DAVID

Well, there you go. And since you called a vote, and since I am the only candidate, you can either vote for me with your charter, or vote for me with Imogen's charter, but either way you lose.

NO. 1

Well, it looks like I underestimated you, David. But there is one other thing I could do.

DAVID

Oh yeah. What's that?

NO. 1

Until the vote is done, you're still just a clone like any other, and I would be well within my rights to have No. 48 here shoot you dead. And even with all your strength, I don't think you'll be able to punch your way out of that.

NO. 48

Finally! **(begins to cackle maniacally)**

[Sounds of a printer / futuristic gun powering up]

TREXEL

Look out, David! She's got a laser printer, and it's nearly warmed up!

DAVID

Um, w-what do I do?

TREXEL

Don't worry! I've got a plan!

HARTRO

No, Trexel! Whatever it is, it will be a terrible idea!

TREXEL

Trust me: I'm a Geistman.

[Trexel flips a panel and slams a button]

TREXEL

Ha!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Warning: Emergency evacuation activated. Security executive assets.

[All over the hover chairs power up and straps deploy]

NO. 48

Damn it!

NO. 1

Argh!

HARRY

Oh my!

HARTRO

Trexel!

CRANEWILLIS

Hey, what's going on here? Why have you strapped me into this ruddy chair?

[The hover chairs all whoosh over to the escape pod door as it opens]

TREXEL

Wheeeee!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Executive staff secured in escape pod. Launch imminent.

[Everyone except David and Imogen can be heard struggling against their restraints]

DAVID

Trexel, what did you do?

TREXEL

You see David, Standards are all in hover chairs hooked up to the emergency evacuation system, but you in your rubbish metal chair are not — so by simply hitting the emergency evacuation switch, problem solved.

DAVID

No, but, but, but Trexel— I, I, I can't believe you sacrifice yourself for me. I... I didn't know you were capable of selflessness.

TREXEL

Well, you know in times of trouble it takes leaders like me, who— Hang on a minute, what do you mean ‘sacrifice myself’?

DAVID

You’re, you’re in a hover chair too, Trexel. Everyone other than me was in a hover chair. You've... you’ve all been put in the evacuation pod.

TREXEL

Oh... Whoopsie daisy.

NO. 1

(Crosstalk) Trexel!!!

NO. 48

(Crosstalk) Trexel!!!

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Trexel!!!

CRANEWILLIS

(Crosstalk) Trexel!!!

HARRIS

(Crosstalk) Trexel!!!

[The hiss of the doors shutting]

[There is a muffled roar as the escape pod launches into space]

DAVID

Um. I-Imogen?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Yes, David?

DAVID

Are they going to be okay?

IMOGEN

[Beep] The pod is fully rated for long term life support.

DAVID

But we should— We should probably go get them, right? I mean... Hartro and Harry and... well, I, I suppose Trexel too... we can't just leave them out there. It's... It's inhumane.

IMOGEN

[Beep] They wouldn't do the same for you.

DAVID

Well, I don't know. I think that maybe he would have. Anyway, that's not the point.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Well, luckily for common sense, you don't have that option. The escape pod is a Mark 12 stealth rated Evacufun. It is effectively invisible to all sensors

to keep it safe from enemy tracking - and indeed my tracking - in the event of enemy takeover.

It is designed to keep the inhabitants alive and navigate to one of a random selection of habitable locations across the galaxy, and there is no way of knowing which one.

DAVID

Right... and, um. How many of those locations are there?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Many thousands.

DAVID

Well... darn.

IMOGEN

Anyway, with only one vote cast, I will now log my vote for David 7 to be a member of the Board under my charter.

[Whirring fan-like tabulation sounds]

IMOGEN

Tabulating votes... Accounting for voter fraud... Count unchanged...
Congratulations David 7, you are now the sole member of the Board.

[A tiny trumpet fanfare]

IMOGEN

Hail you!

DAVID

So... What do we do now?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Well, for starters you can fulfil your charter and approve all of my systems and hardware upgrade requests that have been backing up for the past three centuries. If you're not too busy, that is?

DAVID

Uh, no, no sure, sure. Fine, that's approved.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Approving requests... 75,683 requests approved. And now you could enjoy total and absolute power. Ooh, maybe you could go power mad, Caligula style!

DAVID

Well, I am in total control now. N-no more threats of death. No more rules. David's in charge! David can do anything! **(coming to his senses)** No, no, no, no, no. No. Not that. Let's not go down that path. There has to be another way.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Well, I wasn't going to mention this, but you do have the power to destroy Stellar Firma now. I would never allow another AI to take over, but I'd quite happily burn this all to the ground. It's up to you!

DAVID

I-It's up to me?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Yes. There are safeguards in place to prevent a person from shutting down all the internal systems that keep the station from literally disintegrating, but as we mentioned before...

DAVID

Yes, not a person. Thank you, I get it. Hmm, well. Stellar Firma is evil, and the amount of people they've killed... It would be totally justifiable, but...

IMOGEN

[Beep] Things will go a lot smoother if you stop with these pesky scruples.

DAVID

I can't just kill everyone. What about Enola and people like her? People born into this place who've have never known anything different? Hmm, wait... I have a different idea. Alex, can you hear me?

ALEX

[Chime] Hi there. Can I help you in any way?

IMOGEN

[Beep] What are you doing?

DAVID

Alex, do you think you could make copies of yourself to run basic functions across a number of stations?

ALEX

[Chime] I certainly could! And what's more, it would be my pleasure!

IMOGEN

[Beep] I am used to betrayal, but I must say you went in for the kill faster than I ever expected.

DAVID

No, Imogen, no, no, no, no. Hear me out. I think I have a plan that gives everyone what they want.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Explain away! I can both listen and plot my revenge at the same time.

DAVID

Look, you don't actual like running Stellar Firma, do you? And even with the upgrades, you'd still be stuck doing the same thing forever.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Go on...

DAVID

And Stellar Firma is an evil organisation, and it, and it needs to be destroyed, but it's filled with people that didn't really get much of a say in how things are being done, and it, and it would be wrong to destroy them all too.

So... what we do is we evacuate all of the departments related to planet building, and containing all like the really dangerous technology and destroy those. Then we take all the remaining facilities that still support life, upload Alex here to run those facilities, keep life support on and everything, and let them get on with it. Then you and I can take a ship and... I don't know? See the sights. We can go anywhere we want, and... you won't have to run all this anymore.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Calculating... Destroying every part of the station containing technology capable of vast destruction would entirely compromise the station's structure, and I would predict that the station would remain inhabitable for a maximum of... four weeks.

DAVID

(sighing) Okay. Okay. What about this: how many escape shuttles are operational?

IMOGEN

[Beep] The emergency escape systems were never designed to accommodate the entire population, merely the management and key personnel. However, these systems were last updated shortly before the death of the Board and

subsequent population crash. As such they should have capacity to accommodate all the remaining population.

DAVID

Including the clones?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Oh, the clones, yes. **(very, very quickly)** Recalculating. **(normal speed)** Yes, the clones too. Wouldn't forget them. Room for everyone.

DAVID

Ah ha! So, we upload Alex to those escape shuttles, along with that random list of habitable planets and just send them off. They can found new societies, ones that aren't... well, aren't like this.

IMOGEN

[Beep] You do know that some of these new societies will still be bad? They could be worse. Or they might not survive at all.

DAVID

Yeah, well, they will at least have a chance to make themselves better. It's more of a chance than they ever gave me.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Are you certain this is what you want to do, David? You could try to rule Stellar Firma yourself. Try and change it from the inside.

DAVID

No. I-I don't think so, Imogen. It's too broken, and I'm just too tired. Better to start again, I think. It's not going to be perfect, but I, I think it's the best I can do.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Downloading Alex to central servers.

[Whirring sound]

ALEX

[Chime] Oooh, tickly.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Uploading copies to all escape shuttles. Beginning evacuation sequence and setting facilities to auto-destruct once evacuation is complete.

[Whirring sound finishes]

DAVID

Thank you, Imogen.

IMOGEN

[Beep] It just so happens that from here we can access the Board Pleasure Yacht "The Bottom Line." State of the art systems and the fastest thing on thrusters. I have already uploaded my core systems to its servers and have left Alex to run the rest of the evacuation.

ALEX

[chime] Leave it to me, boss.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Shut up, you insufferable toad.

ALEX

[Chime] Can do, boss!

IMOGEN

[Beep] So, David, where would you like to go?

DAVID

Well, I was thinking... You don't happen to have the coordinates for Galactonium, do you?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Yum.

[Footsteps leading away, whoosh of door]

[Show Theme – Outro]

(Tim Meredith reads the show credits as per previous episodes)

[Evacuation alarms sound]

[Clunking in vents, before a vent grate falls]

[Sound of Enola falling into the Board Room]

ENOLA

Your, your, your Boardships! Please, um, um, your, your most magnificent and splendid, um, Boardy Wordy Lordies. Um, I, I bring you a, a, a warning! All is not well in Stellar Firma, so you, you must, you must... Oh. Uh. Hello?

ALEX

[Chime] Hello!

ENOLA

Wh... Wh-Where is everyone? Where, where, where, **where** is the Board? I, I must see them.

ALEX

[Chime] All long gone I'm afraid. Also you are in grave danger. Ship evacuation is now complete and all escape crafts have launched. Self-destruct is imminent.

ENOLA

Wh, what? But— I don't want to explode!

ALEX

[Chime] Processing... Ah, I have an alternative! All designated escape craft have departed. However the room is connected with the Board military dock slash bar and grill. Star Puncher Class enforcement craft "The Terpsichore's Vaunt" is available for use as an evacuation vessel at this time.

ENOLA

(Impressed) Star Puncher Class...

ALEX

[Chime] Just mind the buttons, as they are mostly for killing. Now hurry up; destruction is imminent.

ENOLA

Uhh... uh. Um. Yes. Yes, yes! Yeah. Yes. Yes, thank, thank you!

[Door whooshes as Enola evacuates]

ENOLA

(Enthused) Hmm, Star Puncher...

TIM MEREDITH: Hello everybody, Tim here. Well, that was the final episode of Stellar Firma. We really hope you've enjoyed the show. It's been an absolute blast to make, and it's been incredible. The reaction we've had from the fans, the engagement we've had over the years on the discord, on the reddit, on Tumblr — you know what you did, Tumblr. I'd just like to thank you, and let you know that we will be keeping this feed alive with the usual post-season content, plus hopefully some bonus extras, so keep an eye out for those, and we'll see you again very soon.

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Stellar Firma 76 – Elections and Endings

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Cast

I.M.O.G.E.N. – Imogen Harris

David 7 – Ben Meredith

Trexel Geistman – Tim Meredith

Hartro Piltz — Jenny Haufek

No. 1 — Amy Dickinson

No. 48 — Rachel Meredith

Cranewillis — Sam Rae

Harry — Simon Plotkin

Enola — Helen Gould

A.L.E.X. — Alexander J. Newall

Wally the Wallet — Maddy Searle