

Argument Clinic

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(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNkjDuSVXiE>)

RECEPTIONIST: Yes, sir.

CUSTOMER: I'd like to have an argument, please.

[Audience Laughter.]

RECEPTIONIST: Certainly, sir. Have you been here before?

CUSTOMER: No, this is my first time.

RECEPTIONIST: I see. Do you want to have the full argument, or were you thinking of taking a course?

CUSTOMER: Well, uh, what would be the cost?

RECEPTIONIST: Well yes, it's fi-, it's one pound for a five minute argument, but it'll eight pounds for a course of ten.

CUSTOMER: [Thinking.] Hmm... Well I think it's probably best if I start with the one and see how it goes from there, okay?

RECEPTIONIST: Fine. I'll see who's free at the moment. Uh... Mr. Dubakey is free, but he's a little bit conciliatory. Yes, uh, try Mr. Barnard, room twelve.

CUSTOMER: Thank you. [Clearing his throat.]

[The sound of a woman's heels as she walks down the hallway. There is a click of a handle as the Customer opens the door.]

ABUSE MAN: [Aggressively Shouting.] What do you want?

CUSTOMER: [Defensive.] Well I was told outside –

[Audience Laughter]

ABUSE MAN: [Shouting.] Don't give me that, you snotty-faced heap of parrot droppings!

[Audience Laughter.]

CUSTOMER: [In Shock.] What?

ABUSE MAN: [Continuing aggression.] Shut your festering gob, you tit! Your type makes me puke! You vacuous, toffee-nosed, malodorous pervert!

CUSTOMER: [Yelling.] What? I came in here for an argument!

ABUSE MAN: [Apologetic.] Oh! Oh. I'm sorry! This is abuse.

CUSTOMER: Oh! [Audience laughter.] Oh I see! Well that explains it.

[Audience Laughter.]

ABUSE MAN: Yes. No, you want twelve A next door.

CUSTOMER: I see.

ABUSE MAN: Yeah.

CUSTOMER: Sorry!

ABUSE MAN: Not at all! That's alright. [Audience laughter. The door closes.] Stupid git.

[Knocking]

MR. BARNARD: Come in!

[The door opens.]

CUSTOMER: Is this the right room for an argument?

MR. BARNARD: I've told you once.

[Audience Laughter.]

CUSTOMER: No you haven't

MR. BARNARD: [Deliberate] Yes I have.

CUSTOMER: [Confused] When?

MR. BARNARD: Just now.

CUSTOMER: No you didn't.

MR. BARNARD: Yes I did.

CUSTOMER: [Annoyed] Didn't.

MR. BARNARD: I did!

CUSTOMER: Didn't!

MR. BARNARD: I'm telling you I did.

CUSTOMER: You did not!

MR. BARNARD: Oh, sorry, is this a five minute argument or the full half-hour?

CUSTOMER: [Realizing] Oh! Oh, just the five minute one.

MR. BARNARD: [Audience laughter. The door closes.]

MR. BARNARD: Alright. [The customer clears his throat as he sits down. The chair scrapes against the floor.] Thank you! Anyway, I did.

[Audience laughter]

CUSTOMER: You most certainly did not.

MR. BARNARD: Now let's get one thing quite clear: I most definitely told you.

CUSTOMER: You did not.

MR. BARNARD: Yes I did.

CUSTOMER: You did not.

MR. BARNARD: Yes I did.

CUSTOMER: Didn't.

MR. BARNARD: Yes I did.

CUSTOMER: [Annoyed.] Didn't!

MR. BARNARD: Yes I did.

CUSTOMER: Look, this isn't an argument.

MR. BARNARD: Yes it is.

CUSTOMER: No it isn't [Audience laughter.] It's just contradiction.

MR. BARNARD: No it isn't.

CUSTOMER: Yes it is.

MR. BARNARD: It is not!

CUSTOMER: It is! [Audience Laughter] You just contradicted me!

MR. BARNARD: No I didn't!

CUSTOMER: Oh you did!

MR. BARNARD: No no no no no no no

CUSTOMER: You did! Just then

MR. BARNARD: No no. Non- nonsense.

CUSTOMER: Oh look, this is futile.

MR. BARNARD: No it isn't.

CUSTOMER: I came here for a good argument.

MR. BARNARD: No you didn't. You came here for an argument.

CUSTOMER: Well an argument's not the same as contradiction.

MR. BARNARD: Can be.

CUSTOMER: No it can't. An argument's a collective series of statements to establish a definite proposition.

MR. BARNARD: No it isn't.

CUSTOMER: Yes it is! It isn't just contradiction.

MR. BARNARD: Look, if I argue with you, I must take up a contrary position.

CUSTOMER: But it isn't just saying, "no it isn't."

MR. BARNARD: Yes it is!

CUSTOMER: No it isn't! [Audience Laughter.] Argument's an intellectual process. Contradiction's just the automatic gainsaying of anything the other person says.

MR. BARNARD: No it isn't.

CUSTOMER: Yes it is.

MR. BARNARD: Not at all.

CUSTOMER: Now look-

MR. BARNARD: [Dinging a Bell] Thank you! Morning!

CUSTOMER: What?

MR. BARNARD: [Cheerful] That's it. Morning!

CUSTOMER: I was just getting interested!

MR. BARNARD: Sorry. The five minutes is up.

CUSTOMER: [Doubtful] That was never five minutes just now.

MR. BARNARD: 'Fraid it was.

CUSTOMER: No it wasn't.

MR. BARNARD: Sorry, I'm not allowed to argue anymore.

CUSTOMER: [Shocked] What?

MR. BARNARD: If you want me to go on arguing, you'll have to pay for another five minutes.

CUSTOMER: [Whiny] But that was never five minutes, just now.... Oh come on! This is ridiculous!

MR. BARNARD: I'm very sorry, but I told you I'm not allowed to argue unless you've paid.

CUSTOMER: [Defeated] Ah, alright. [Money crinkling] There you are.

MR. BARNARD: Thank you.

CUSTOMER: Well...

MR. BARNARD: [Confused] Well what?

CUSTOMER: That was never five minutes just now.

MR. BARNARD: [Deliberate] I told you, I'm not allowed to argue unless you've paid.

CUSTOMER: I just paid.

MR. BARNARD: No you didn't.

CUSTOMER: [Annoyed] I did!

[Audience Laughter]

MR. BARNARD: No you didn't.

CUSTOMER: I did!

MR. BARNARD: No you didn't.

[Audience Laughter Crescendos.]

CUSTOMER: I did!

MR. BARNARD: You most certainly did not.

CUSTOMER: [Yelling.] Look, I don't want to argue about that.

[Audience Laughter.]

MR. BARNARD: Well I'm very sorry, but you didn't pay.

CUSTOMER: A-ha! Well if I didn't pay, why are you arguing? Got you!

MR. BARNARD: No you haven't.

CUSTOMER: Yes I have. If you're arguing, I must have paid.

MR. BARNARD: Not necessarily. I could be arguing in my spare time.

[Audience Laughter.]

CUSTOMER: Oh I've had enough of this.

MR. BARNARD: No you haven't.

CUSTOMER: Oh shut up!

[The door opens then slams. Footsteps are heard down the hallway. Another door opens to a different office.]

CUSTOMER: I want to complain.

[Audience Laughter.]

COMPLAINTS MAN: You want to complain? Look at these shoes! I've only had 'em three weeks and those are worn right through.

[Audience Laughter]

CUSTOMER: No, I wanna complain about the man in the-

COMPLAINTS MAN: You complain, nothing happens, you might just as well not bother. My back hurts and and what if you have a fine day? [The Door Slams.]

CUSTOMER: I want to com- [There is a crack of the mallet hitting the customer on the head. The customer shouts in pain.] Ow!

MALLETT MAN: No no no. [Demonstrating.] Hold your head like this, and then go, “wah”. Try it again.
[There is another crack of the mallet hitting the customer’s head]

CUSTOMER: [In Pain.] Woah!

MALLETT MAN: Better, better, but [Stressed] wah...wah... Hold your hands here.

CUSTOMER: No!

MALLETT MAN: No.

[There is another crack of the mallet hitting the customer’s head]

CUSTOMER: [Screaming in Pain] Wah!

MALLETT MAN: [Excitedly] Look! That’s it! That’s it! Good!

CUSTOMER: Stop hitting me!

MALLETT MAN: What?

CUSTOMER: Stop hitting me.

MALLETT MAN: [Confused] Stop hitting you?

CUSTOMER: Yes.

MALLETT MAN: Oh, uh, what did you come in here for?

CUSTOMER: I came in here to complain.

MALLETT MAN: Oh, I’m sorry! That’s next door. It’s being hit on the head lessons in here.

[Audience Laughter.]

CUSTOMER: What a stupid concept!

INSPECTOR FOX: Oi! Hold it now.

CUSTOMER: What?

MALLETT MAN: What?

INSPECTOR FOX: Allow me to introduce myself. I’m Inspector Fox of the Light Entertainment Police, Comedy Division: Special Flying Squad.

CUSTOMER and MALLETT MAN: <Simultaneously> Flying fox of the yard?

INSPECTOR FOX: Shut up! [Hitting the Customer on the head with a wooden baton.]

CUSTOMER: [Yelling in Pain] Oh!

MALLETT MAN: No, no, no [Demonstrating again] Wah!

INSPECTOR FOX: [Hitting the Mallet Man on the head with a wooden baton.] And you!

MALETT MAN: Wah!

INSPECTOR FOX: He's good! You could learn a thing or two from him. Right! Now you two, me old mutinies, you are knicked!

CUSTOMER: What for?

INSPECTOR FOX: I am charging you under section twenty one of the strange sketch act.

CUSTOMER: [In Disbelief] The what?

INSPECTOR FOX: You are hereby charged that you did willfully take part in a strange sketch. That is a skit, spoof, or humorous vignette of an unconventional nature within –

[Recording Ends]