

**No Defense**

by

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## CAST

BRAD

A haggard, nervous, slightly dissheveled man in his mid to late thirties, wearing jeans and other casual clothing.

LEO

A gruff, overweight man in his mid fifties sloppily wearing a cheap suit. He is a loud and perpetual heavy breather.

GIORGIO

A perfectly groomed man in his early forties who is meticulously dressed in an Armani suit, Gucci loafers, gold cuff links, suspenders, silk tie and Coach valise. He is obsessed about looking stylish, clean and fabulous. He is meticulously careful about keeping his ensemble spotless and unwrinkled

LORI

An attractive woman in her early thirties, dressed in a conservative business suit.

DYLAN

An outdoor looking man in his late twenties or early thirties who is dressed in too-short shorts and a muscle tank top. He is sweaty from his bike ride to the train. He is loud and enthusiastic.

CONDUCTOR

A tough looking middle aged woman, preferably bulky, dressed in a frumpy train conductor uniform.

### **SCENE:**

A commuter train, with the focus on two narrow seat benches facing each other, in profile to the audience. One is supposed to hold three people, the other two -- but the fit will be very tight.

### **AT RISE:**

The seats are empty as the train pulls into a station. The doors open, and a garbled voice is heard over the intercom.

(BRAD enters. He wears a knapsack filled with gear. He takes the upstage seat on the three-person bench. He sighs, then pulls out a notebook PC, a palm pilot, a cell phone, an electronic book reader, DVD player, and anything else that looks cool and high tech. He spreads them out onto the seats next to and across from him. He plugs in his notebook below the seats across from him, then begins typing on the portable keyboard, checking his gadgets, etc.)

CONDUCTOR

(Offstage from a P.A. system, with a bored, monotone voice.)

(Unintelligible). The stop is (unintelligible).

(The train stops and the door opens. LEO enters. He is out of shape, winded and sweating from walking onto the train. He briefly scans the rest of the car, but finds no seats. He then reluctantly takes the downstage seat on the two-person bench, moving a gadget or two in the process. BRAD clandestinely watches him, shaking his head at the annoyance. After LEO sits down, he peeks at BRAD and his gadgets, then shakes his head disapprovingly. He takes out a newspaper and tries to put his briefcase on the seat next to him, but it is covered with gadgets. LEO stares at BRAD for assistance, but BRAD does not look up. LEO then clears his throat repeatedly, but BRAD ignores him.)

LEO

(Angrily.)  
Excuse me.

(BRAD reluctantly looks at LEO. LEO pointedly looks at the gadgets. BRAD sighs in frustration while reluctantly clearing the chair across from LEO.)

BRAD

(To himself, but said loud enough for LEO.)  
Some attitude.

LEO

(In response, to himself, but said loud enough for BRAD.)  
Hogs four chairs, then talks about attitude--

BRAD

(In response, to himself, but said loud enough for LEO.)

Guy's just got to ask and--

LEO

(In response, to himself, but said loud enough for BRAD.)

Clear your throat and people still ignore you--

BRAD

(In response, to himself, but said loud enough for LEO.)

Guy's been coughing and wheezing since he got here and I'm supposed to know he wants something?

(Both sigh angrily and shake their heads. LEO rumples his paper and BRAD returns to his keyboard. After a pause, the train slows as it approaches the next stop.)

P.A. Announcement

(Unintelligible). Next stop is (unintelligible).

LEO

(To himself.)

What?

BRAD

(To himself.)

What did he?--

(The train stops and the doors open. GIORGIO enters, impeccably dressed. He looks around for a seat elsewhere, finds none, and must therefore take the dowstage seat on the three-person bench. To do so, he must get BRAD to move his stuff from the seat. He does this by staring at the stuff on the seat while clearing his throat. This time, BRAD gets the hint and, while sighing in annoyance, moves the gadgets to the seat next to him. GIORGIO then brushes the seat thoroughly, removes his jacket, folds it impeccably and reaches over to put it on the rack above them. LEO is startled by the sudden movement, so he noisily lowers his paper to give GIORGIO a dirty look, a roll of the eyes and an annoyed sigh. Meanwhile, BRAD carefully protects his laptop and gives GIORGIO a nasty look, a roll of the eyes and an annoyed sigh. GIORGIO carefully sits down,

adjusts the crease of his pants, cuffs and socks.  
GIORGIO looks at the disheveled LEO and the casually  
dressed BRAD, rolls his eyes and sighs.)

GIORGIO

(Sotto voce, to himself.)

Slobs.

(Beat as they return to their doings. GIORGIO dons  
white gloves and pulls out a copy of the Wall Street  
Journal. LEO furtively watches this procedure and  
chuckles derisively at the gloves. LEO then pulls out  
a coffee and a donut from his bag. While trying to  
tear a hole in the coffee cover, he inadvertently  
spills a small drop on the floor. GIORGIO jumps up.)

GIORGIO

Jesus!

LEO

What?

GIORGIO

That'll ruin the Gucci's!

LEO

It's nowhere near--

GIORGIO

It'll travel.

LEO

It's a drop.

GIORGIO

It's enough.

LEO

(Reluctantly taking a napkin and cleaning the spill,  
then muttering under his breath, but loud enough for  
GIORGIO.)

Guy should be wearing a dress.

(GIORGIO snorts while LEO puts the napkin on the empty  
seat across from him. This gets the attention of  
BRAD.)

BRAD

(Looking with disgust at the napkin.)  
Excuse me.

LEO

It's not--

BRAD

It's almost touching my notebook.

LEO

It's nowhere near--

BRAD

Microfibers could destroy--

LEO

(Picking up the napkin, sighing, then ostensibly to himself but loud enough for the others.)  
Pretty boys and techno geeks, what a ride.

(All snort, then ride in silence; the train stops at the next station. Entering is an attractive woman in a business suit with a skirt slightly above the knee. The three men stare longingly, trying to be subtle but failing. She looks elsewhere for a seat but finds none. So she reluctantly opts for the upstage seat of the two-seat bench.)

LORI

Excuse me.

(In stark contrast to prior times, all three jump up enthusiastically. BRAD moves his gadgets, LEO moves his paper and GIORGIO brushes the seat with his gloved hand. LORI rolls her eyes and sighs. She then squeezes into the spot and sits down carefully to prevent voyeuristic views, which the three men furtively seek. They all return to their doings, with the men occasionally stealing glances at LORI, who pulls out a cell phone, but gets no signal.)

LORI

(Repositioning the phone.)  
Come on.

(All three men quickly offer their phones. The

following three lines are said simultaneously.)

LEO

Would you like to use--

GIORGIO

I usually get good--

BRAD

Mine's satellite based--

LORI

(Brusque.)  
No, thanks.

(Beat as the train progresses. They return to the individual doings. Then a phone rings and they all reach for their phones. It is LORI'S.)

LORI

(Loud and angry.)  
Yeah?... No, that's not-- Those bastards said they'd deliver--... Screw that!. You tell those shits I don't get the job by Tuesday, I'll hang them by their-- ... hello? Hello? Damn signal!

(She hangs up the phone and sees the men staring in shock at her.)

What?

(The men sheepishly return to their doings. The train pulls into the next stop, and DYLAN enters with a folding bike and back pack. He is wearing hiking boots and too-short shorts. He leaves the bike by the door and looks for a seat on the train. As he does so, the four others bury their heads, hoping he doesn't see the empty seat among them. DYLAN eventually does.)

DYLAN

Dude, is that --

(Groans and sighs from all as GIORGIO reluctantly gets up to let him sit.)

DYLAN

(Amused by the grumblings.)  
Duuude.

(DYLAN sits down and there is immediate jostling for elbow position.)

GIORGIO

Excuse me.

DYLAN

Dude.

LEO

Watch your--

DYLAN

Duuude.

BRAD

Trying to work here!

(All sigh in annoyance. DYLAN smells ripe from his bike workout, forcing the others to turn away and fan themselves.)

CONDUCTOR

(The conductor appears.)  
Tickets.

(Due to the tight space, they all squirm and struggle to get their tickets.)

BRAD

(To CONDUCTOR.)  
Why is it so crowded?

CONDUCTOR

(With disdain.)  
Yez is sitting, ain't yez?

BRAD

But there's usually room to spread out.

CONDUCTOR

There still is ... in that stretch limo yez left home.

BRAD

(Ostensibly to himself, but loud enough for CONDUCTOR.)  
Everyone's a wise-ass.

(CONDUCTOR takes tickets from all, then notices the bike.)

CONDUCTOR

Who's is this?--

DYLAN

(Holding up a bike pass.)  
Yo yo.

CONDUCTOR

Bike pass is good off peak only.

DYLAN

Dude, off peak don't last as long as this train ride.

CONDUCTOR

I doesn't set the hours.

DYLAN

But it's a folding bike, yo.

CONDUCTOR

A bike is a bike is a bike is a--

BRAD

Can't concentrate--

LORI

Would you just!--

DYLAN

(Getting up and removing the bike seat.)  
There. Now it's parts.

CONDUCTOR

(Consulting her portable manual.)  
Regulation 568.B7: said bike parts cannot be left unattended.

(Beat.)

DYLAN

Totally bogus, dude.

(DYLAN gets up, collects his bike and carries it to his seat. Groans from others.)

GIORGIO

(Leaning away from the greasy chain.)  
Hey, watch that thing.

(More elbow jostling and angry sighing. LEO tries to read the paper with his arms outstretched but he can't because of the bike.)

LEO

You're in my airspace.

DYLAN

Say what?

LEO

I can't put my arms out--

BRAD

Excuse me, I'm trying to work here?--

LORI

Would you all just ...?

(DYLAN awkwardly puts the bike somewhat on the floor between his legs, but it's still extremely crowded. Sighs and grumbles from all. LEO tries to read his paper closer to his face. To do so he must extend his elbows, one of which rubs against LORI.)

Are you enjoying yourself?

LEO

What are you--

LORI

Keep your elbow off my--

LEO

I didn't--

LORI

(Ostensibly to herself, but loud enough for others.)  
Perverts, prima donnas and slobs: what a ride.

BRAD

Trying to work here!

(LEO carefully pulls his elbows in, then places his

paper towards GIORGIO's side.)

GIORGIO

That paper is dripping on--

LEO

It's not wet--

GIORGIO

Microfibers are landing on the Armani.

LEO

I can't believe--

GIORGIO

The Armani can't breathe!

(LEO moves the paper back to center, away from GIORGIO, then ostensibly to himself, but loud enough for the others.)

Looneys, cranks and prudes. What a ride.

(Cell phone rings. They all reach for it. It's GIORGIO'S. )

GIORGIO

Yeah? ...

(Emotion and decibel level increase, as if he were on the trading floor.)

Buy, buy, sell, SELL, BUY!

(The others give GIORGIO pointed looks. GIORGIO lowers his voice, covering his mouth and speaking fast.)

Buy sell sell buy bye.

(He hangs up.)

(The others look at him, shake their heads and sigh. They ride in silence for a beat. DYLAN then shifts position, revealing his armpit to GIORGIO, who cringes from the smell.)

GIORGIO

Jesus!

DYLAN

(Ostensibly to himself, but loud enough for GIORGIO.)  
Like I'm having a party with that cologne.

(Both snort and turn away from each other. DYLAN turns to BRAD, who cringes and leans forward. This positions him closer to LORI, who assumes he is trying to look up her dress, so she angrily tries to cover her legs more fully, while snorting at BRAD.)

BRAD

Hey, I'm not trying to --

LORI

(Snorting, then ostensibly to herself, but loud for everyone.)

Perverts, all of them.

(Cell phone rings. They all reach; this time it's BRAD's. All others snort at the interruption.)

BRAD

Hi Sarah... Hopefully before midnight, if-- ... What, you think I want to work late? ... Aww, don't start that.

(Now Sotto voce so others can't hear, which only makes them lean in even more.)

You know I want to be home for you and Jeremy and -- ... And what, you think my life is a joy ride? Miserable job, come home to a dark house, no sex --...

(Catching himself, then looking at the others who were eavesdropping, but quickly pretend not to be.)

Sorry, it's just that ...

(Sotto voce.)

not, uh, not doing it, makes me--... no, don't put Jeremy on now, not when there are people-- Wait! ...

(He looks up and the others quickly look away. He sighs, then speaks in a muted sing-song baby voice.)

Hi goober, how's--... No, daddy's on the choo choo train and can't sing--... No, don't cry... No--

(He sighs, then sings the Teletubbies theme, to the consternation of the others.)

Tinky Winky, Dipsie, La La, Poe. Teletubbies Tele--

(Another cell phone rings. All reach. It's LORI'S. She talks loudly while BRAD continues humming and singing.)

LORI

(Loud and angry.)

Yeah? ... That's a crock of shit --... I don't give a flying--

BRAD

Excuse me! I'm on with a three-year old.

LORI

So am I!

(She continues her call, as does BRAD. The following lines overlap.)

LORI

Bullsh--

BRAD

Daddy got to go.

LORI

You tell that Son of a Bitch that--...

BRAD

No no, those are berry bad words.

LORI

Screw you!

BRAD

No, "screw" is a bad word, too. Don't--... Hello? Hel--

(Back to adult voice.)

No, it's this woman next to--... Well I told you not to put him on the goddamned phone, didn't I? ... No, I'm not cursing at you, I'm --... Hello? Hello? ... Jesus!

(He glares at LORI, who calmly ends her call and returns to her magazine -- never acknowledging BRAD'S glare. Beat. Then LEO, who has been holding his coffee and reading his newspaper, begins to fall asleep. His head starts nodding and his paper starts drooping. His coffee tips precariously as he droops. At first he leans toward LORI, who elbows and temporarily awakens him. LEO clears his throat, reads his paper and drinks his coffee. He quickly falls asleep again, slumping toward DYLAN, who shoulders him away. He then slumps toward GIORGIO, who leans in and yells close to his ear.)

GIORGIO

Excuse me!

LEO

Huh? What?

GIORGIO

Coffee and Armani do not mix.

LEO

(Sotto voce, ostensibly to himself, but loud enough for GIORGIO.)

Pretty boy needs slipcovers.

GIORGIO

(Sotto voce, ostensibly to himself, but loud enough for LEO.)

Old fart needs a nurse.

(LEO slurps his coffee loudly, to the consternation of others. He then pulls another donut and coffee from his bag.)

DYLAN

Dude man, that'll kill you.

LEO

What?

DYLAN

That custard-filled fat fest.

LEO

Yeah, right.

DYLAN

It's making us a country of cottage-cheese butts.

LEO

This one little donut is doing all that, huh?--

BRAD

Trying to work here--

LORI

Would you all just shut--

GIORGIO

Jesus!

(Silence. LEO then takes an aggressive bite of his donut as he stares at DYLAN.)

DYLAN

(Ostensibly to himself, but loud enough for LEO as he unwraps a protein bar.)  
Dude wants to off himself.

LEO

And what is that?

DYLAN

This a ph-balanced, electro-charged, fiber-filled neutrino meal.

LEO

That's funny: so is this, especially when dunked in this high-fiber, isoflavone power drink carefully disguised as coffee.

DYLAN

Go ahead, like, off yourself, chubby dude man.

LEO

All muscle, pal--

LORI

Would you please--

BRAD

Trying to work, here--

GIORGIO

Come on!

(Snorts and clucks from all. Beat as they return to their doings. Then GIORGIO tries to reposition his feet, but can't because of the cord extending from BRAD'S laptop. He unplugs the cord and drops it to the floor.)

BRAD

Hey, what are you--

GIORGIO

It's bisecting the Armani crease.

BRAD

So I've got to waste the battery?

GIORGIO

Destroy the crease, you destroy the Armani.

BRAD

(Sotto voce.)  
The nerve on some--

DYLAN

(To BRAD.)  
Dude man.

BRAD

(Sotto voce, to himself.)  
"Bisecting his crease." Like to give him a whole new  
crease.

DYLAN

Dude man, you know what they do with those batteries?

BRAD

(Looking up, realizing this is directed at him.)  
Aww Jeez--

DYLAN

Bury them in landfills, dude. Where their lead and zinc seep  
into the water tables, making us a bunch of mangy mucous  
mummies--

LEO

Ho, I'm eating here!

BRAD

Well, if certain people left cords alone--

(GIORGIO ruffles his newspaper and snorts. Lights go  
out. Snorts and groans from all. Then an  
unintelligible announcement from the P.A. The following  
four lines overlap.)

BRAD

(To himself.)  
What did he?--

LEO

(To himself.)  
I can't hear--

GIORGIO

(To himself.)  
Was that?--

LORI

(To herself.)  
I don't know--

(Lights up to dim. They maneuver their newspapers and magazines to try to read in the feeble light, but to no avail. Then BRAD shakes his computer.)

BRAD

Great, now the battery's dying.

GIORGIO

This is ridiculous.  
(He exits to another car.)

(LORI sniffs suspiciously, then disgustedly as someone has farted. She fans the smell away from her face.)

LORI

(Ostensibly to herself, but loud enough for the others.)  
Jesus, it's a nightmare.

(The others now get a whiff and groan.)

DYLAN

(Ostensibly to himself, but loud enough for LEO.)  
Donut-dunking gas bag.

LEO

(Ostensibly to himself, but loud enough for DYLAN.)  
Gas-blasting goober.

(GIORGIO returns with CONDUCTOR.)

CONDUCTOR

So yez wasn't listening to the announcement.

LORI

Oh we were listening. We were just hoping you could repeat it in English.

CONDUCTOR

Hey, I am an officially certified P.A. announcer, so don't-

BRAD

Just tell us--

CONDUCTOR

(With bored, monotone voice.)  
Trains is backed up--

LEO

Jesus Christ.

CONDUCTOR

Be moving shortly.

LORI

But you just said we're backed up.

CONDUCTOR

We's'll move ... a little. Then we's'll stop a little. Then we's'll move, then we's'll--

GIORGIO

Great, a comedienne.

BRAD

Why the hold up?

CONDUCTOR

Normal traffic.

LEO

No it's not! We're already twenty minutes late and we're not even half way--

CONDUCTOR

Hmm.

(She thinks for a moment.)  
Sick passenger.

BRAD

You just said it was normal!--

CONDUCTOR

Normal for when there's a sick passenger.

GIORGIO

I don't believe--

CONDUCTOR

All right, how's about...

(She thinks.)

lines is down.

LEO

Wait a minute--

CONDUCTOR

No? Okay, then "Door is jammed."

BRAD

Would you just--

CONDUCTOR

Floods, dog on the track, signal troubles -- which one yez wants?

LEO

The clown queen of conductors.

CONDUCTOR

Look, I'd love to chat with yez very important peoples, but I got work to--

BRAD

Work? You sit in a cubbyhole looking at magazines--

CONDUCTOR

Yez is been peeking!--

BRAD

And napping--

CONDUCTOR

Passengers is expressly prohibited from peeking into--

LEO

Man, what a racket.

CONDUCTOR

Me? Yez sits on yez white-collar cabooses pushing pencils all day, and yez calls my job a racket?

LORI

Would you both just--

CONDUCTOR

(Returning to her droning, automoton voice.)  
Thank yez for yez patience. Train will be moving shortly.

BRAD

What about the lights and air conditioning?

CONDUCTOR

As soon as I knows, yez'll know.

(Sighs and disgruntled sounds from the group as CONDUCTOR exits. BRAD puts on a walkman and starts singing hip hip to "Firestarter," by Prodigy.)

DYLAN

"I am the fire starter. A super fire starter."

(The others glare at DYLAN, but he has closed his eyes and is oblivious to the stares. After a moment, LORI taps him on the knee.)

LORI

You're singing loud.

BRAD

And badly.

(BRAD puts back the headphone and sings slightly lower, but still loud. LORI angrily closes her eyes and tries to sleep. Each of the guys tries to subtly peek up her dress, look down her shirt, etc. After a moment, she wakes up and catches them. They all return to their doings. Behind his newspaper, LEO begins clipping his fingernails, which the others can't see, but can hear.)

LORI

That's disgusting!

LEO  
What, you don't cut your nails?

LORI  
Not in public.

LEO  
I always see women filing their--

LORI  
You're not filing, you're clipping.

LEO  
So?

LORI  
So courteous people know the difference.

LEO  
Well, since there are none of them around...  
(He goes back to clipping his nails.)

LORI  
(Ostensibly to herself, but loud enough for LEO.)  
Why am I wasting my breath on a pig?

LEO  
(Visibly upset.)  
What? What did you?--

(In his anger, LEO accidentally spills a drop of coffee, which sends GIORGIO in a frenzy. )

GIORGIO  
Jesus!--

LEO  
(To LORI.)  
That's the last thing my wife called me before she walked out!

GIORGIO  
(To LEO.)  
Not the Gucci's!--

LEO

(To GIORGIO.)  
What are you talking about?--

BRAD

I am trying to work!--

GIORGIO

They're drenched!--

LEO

It's barely a drop!--

LORI

(Ostensibly to herself, but loud enough for the others.)  
What do you expect from a pig?

LEO

You better stop calling me that!--

DYLAN

(Singing.)  
I am the Fire Starter!--

LORI

Stop that singing!--

GIORGIO

You're going to pay!--

LEO

You're not getting a dime!--

LORI

(Loudly to herself.)  
Oink oink!--

BRAD

I can't work!--

GIORGIO

I'm calling my lawyer!--  
(As he reaches for his cell phone, he inadvertently pulls on BRAD's notebook cord, causing BRAD to drop the notebook.)

Hey!

BRAD

(Singing louder.)  
I am the Fire Starter!--

DYLAN

My data!--

BRAD

Would you all just shut!--

LORI

(To LORI)  
Nobody calls me a!--

LEO

Oink oink!

LORI

You're paying for these!

GIORGIO

(To GIORGIO)  
First you unplug it, then you break it!

BRAD

(To DYLAN)  
You'd better stop singing or I'll!--

LORI

(Intentionally loud while staring at LORI.)  
Fire Starter!--

(BRAD rips the headphones off DYLAN's ears. The next five lines are said simultaneously in rage.)

GIORGIO

That's it!--

DYLAN

Dude!--

BRAD

You son of a!--

LORI

I'm going to!--

LEO

Nobody calls me a!--

(LEO rolls up his paper and is poised to whack LORI. GIORGIO removes a cufflink and holds the pointy side to LEO's neck. BRAD threatens to snap his notebook computer on GIORGIO's face. DYLAN threatens to whack BRAD with his energy bar. LORI aims her hair mousse at DYLAN. Everyone freezes while looking warily at the others. An embarrassed pause as their collective rage fades.)

GIORGIO

(Looking at LEO's paper.)

Jesus!

(They all jump.)

LEO

What?

GIORGIO

(Reading off the paper.)

Knicks lost again?

BRAD

Ah, they're bums. No defense.

GIORGIO

Tell me about it

(To LEO.)

You done with it?

LEO

Yeah, sure.

(HE hands GIORGIO the paper.)

DYLAN

(To BRAD.)

Dude, is that a TFT screen?

BRAD

(Proud to show off a toy.)  
Oh yeah! Thirty-two million colors, high definition ...  
(Shows it to BRAD.)

DYLAN

Awesome!

(The men all lower their weapons and converse about computers and sports. LORI stays out of the conversation, but slowly lowers her mousse can. The train stops.)

CONDUCTOR

(Offstage, from P.A.)  
Last stop. This is yez last stop. Please de-train quickly.  
Yez has a wonderful day.

(The four men continue conversing as they exit; LORI follows behind, shaking her head.)

LORI

(Sighing.)  
Got to get a job closer to home.

END