Logical Fallacies

Intro to Debate and Argumentation: Snell

What is a logical fallacy?

- An inconsistency within your logical appeal (logos)
- Lowers your credibility (ethos)

example #1

- All Olympic runners are fast.
- Michael is an Olympic runner.
- ► Michael is fast.

example #2

- All AHS students are smart.
- Pat is a AHS student.
- ► Pat is smart.

example #3

- All dogs are animals.
- All cats are animals.
- ►All dogs are cats.

example #4

- **Question:**How did the window get broken?

- **Evidence:**There is a baseball on the floor.

Baseball wasn't there this a.m.

Kids were in the yard across the street.

They were playing baseball this afternoon.

They stopped playing earlier than usual.

They aren't in the yard now.

- **Conclusion:**One of the kids broke the window with the ball and then they all ran away.

Example #4 continued: BUT what if…

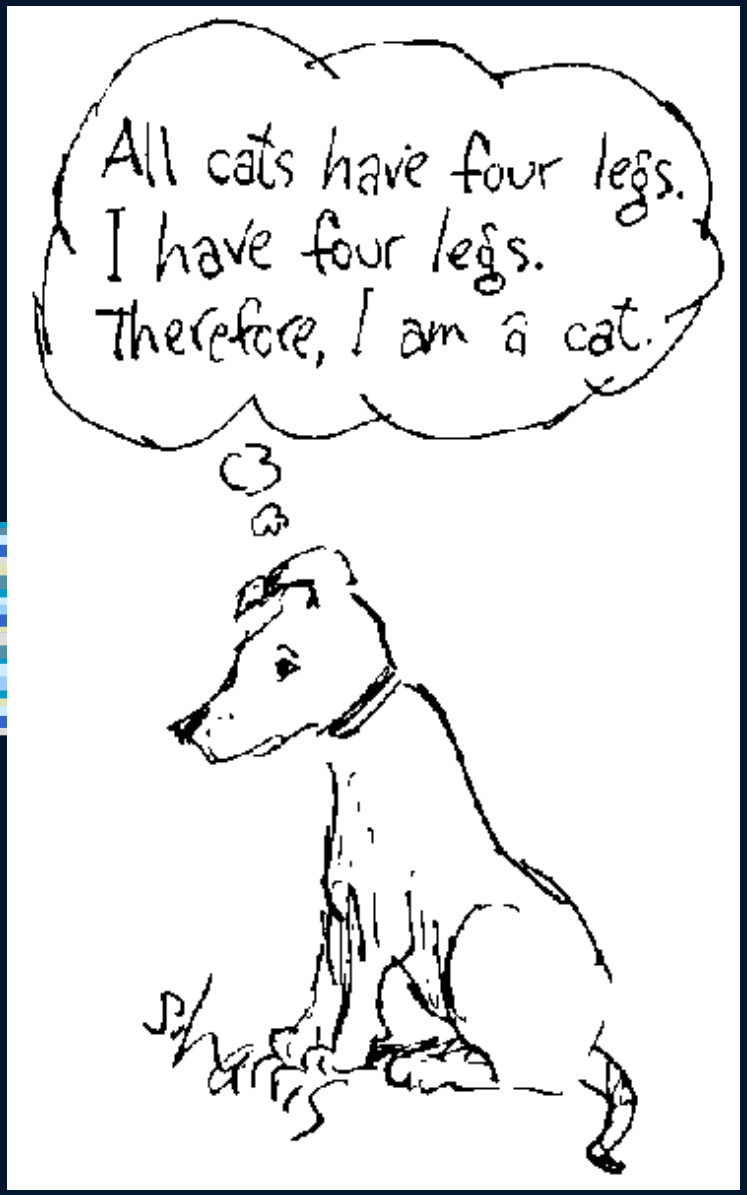
…you have a Bears flag in your front yard?

…you live next to Mr. Thompson (aka Packers' fan)

10 argumentative fallacies

1.Hasty Generalization or Faulty Syllogism

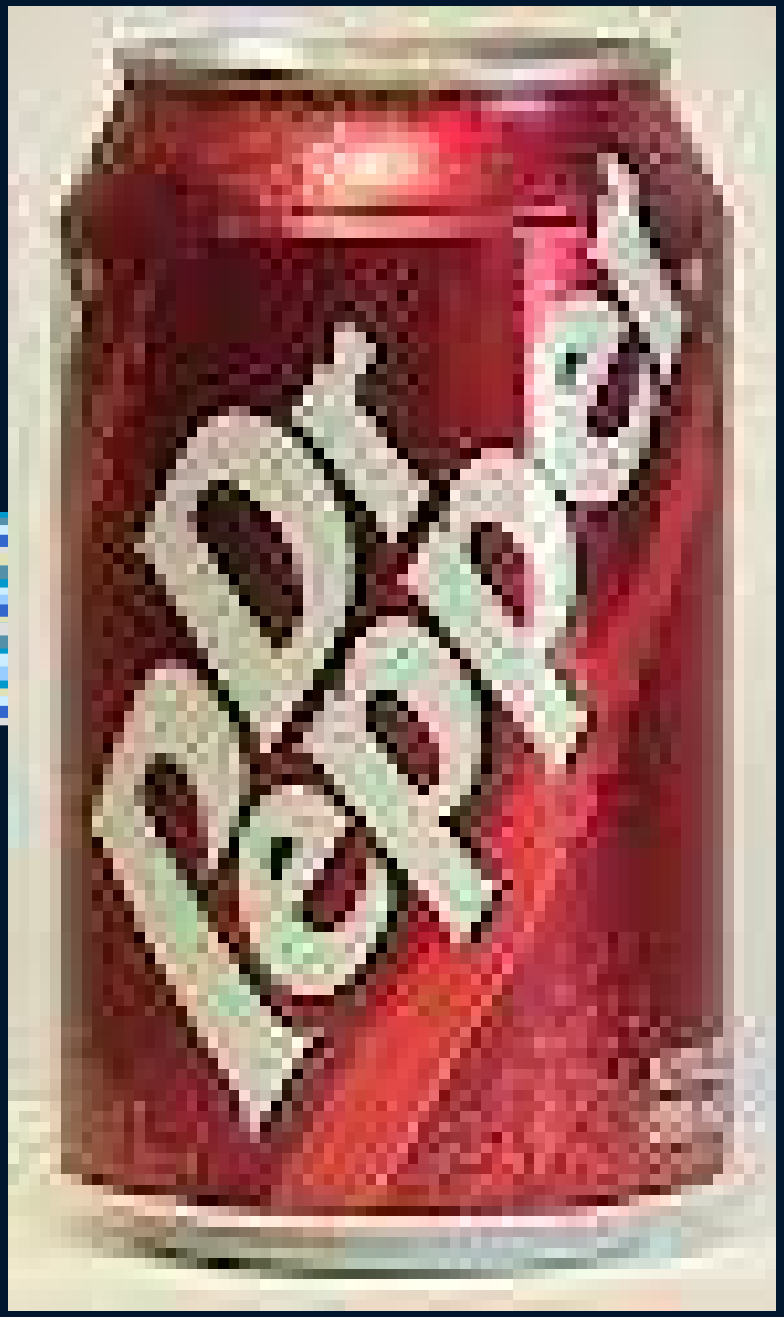
- Drawing conclusion on the basis of insufficient evidence.
- “Everybody agrees,” “nobody like,” “most people care”


All cats have four legs.
I have four legs.
Therefore, I am a cat.

2.Faulty Use of Authority

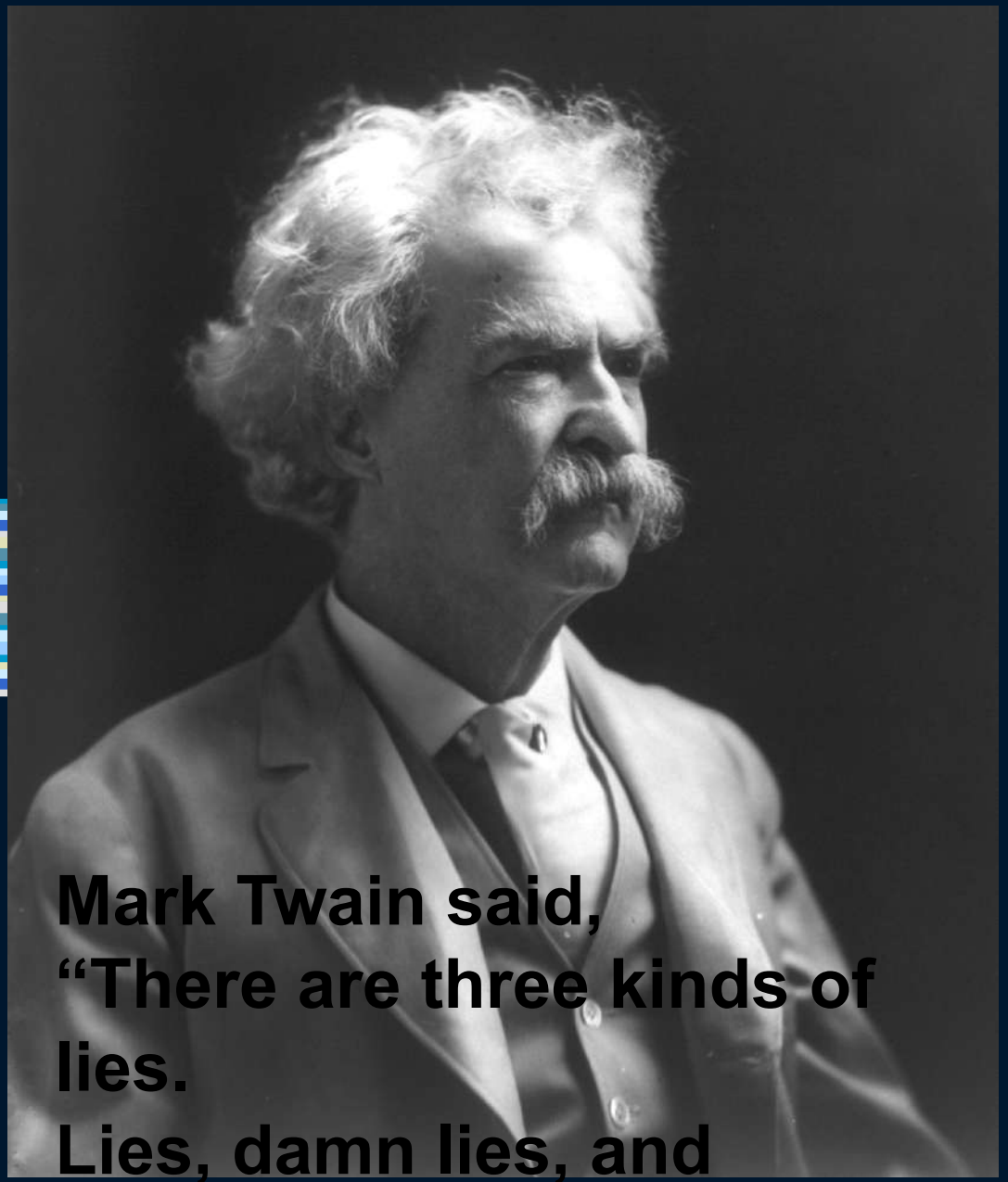
- misrepresenting the trustworthiness of sources
- The attempt to bolster claims by citing the opinions of experts without evaluation and comparison of credentials and claims.
- Taking something out of context

- According to the doctor, I need less sodium in my diet….



3.Misleading Statistics

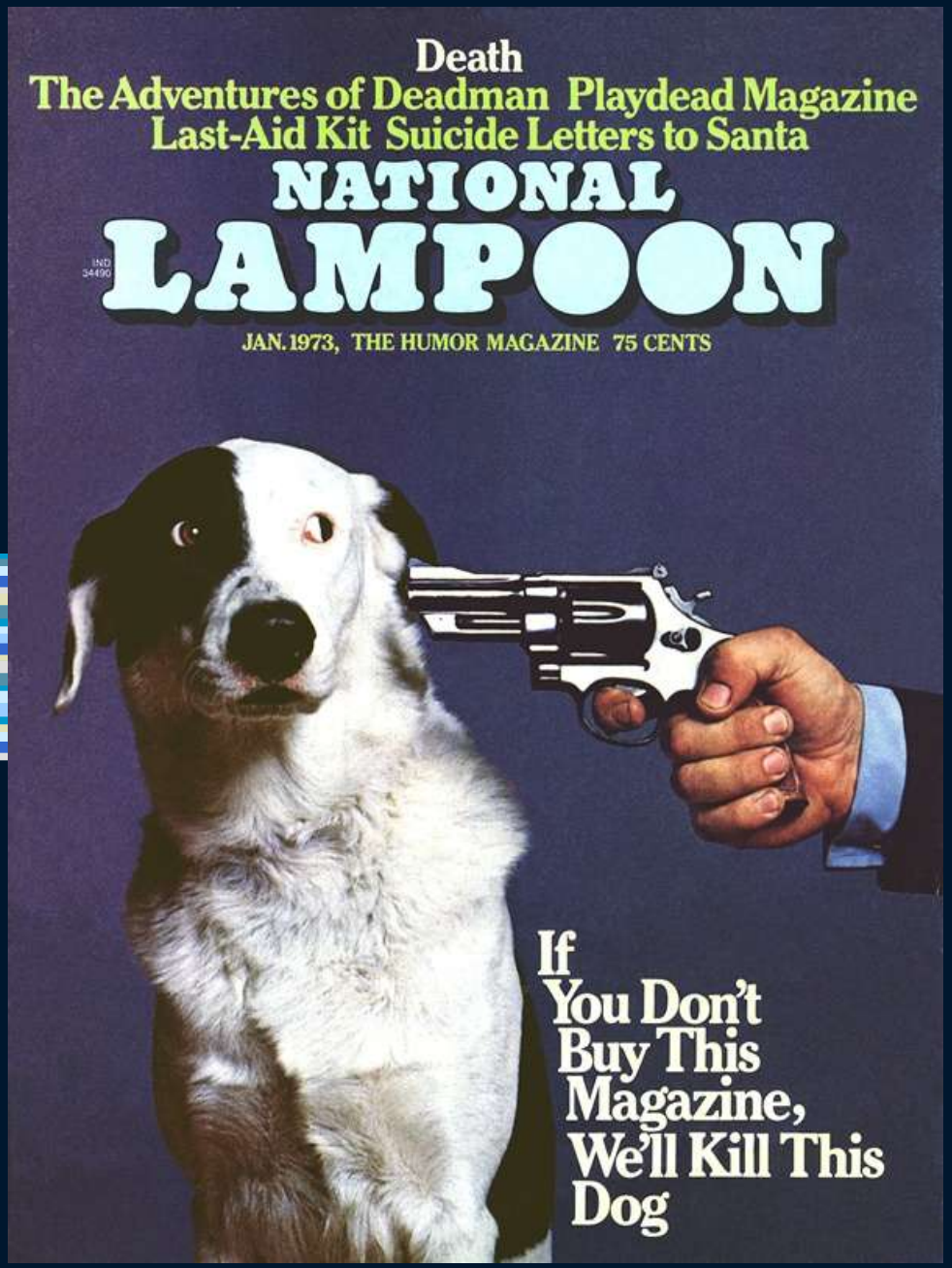
- A fallacy in which a very small number of particularly dramatic events are taken to outweigh a significant amount of statistical evidence.



Mark Twain said,
“There are three kinds of lies.
Lies, damn lies, and statistics.”

- The AP Japanese Exam is the most difficult exam; after all, 100 percent of Andover High School students didn’t pass it.

4.Faulty Emotional Appeal


Death
The Adventures of Deadman Playdead Magazine
Last-Aid Kit Suicide Letters to Santa
NATIONAL
LAMPOON
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If
You Don't
Buy This
Magazine,
We'll Kill This
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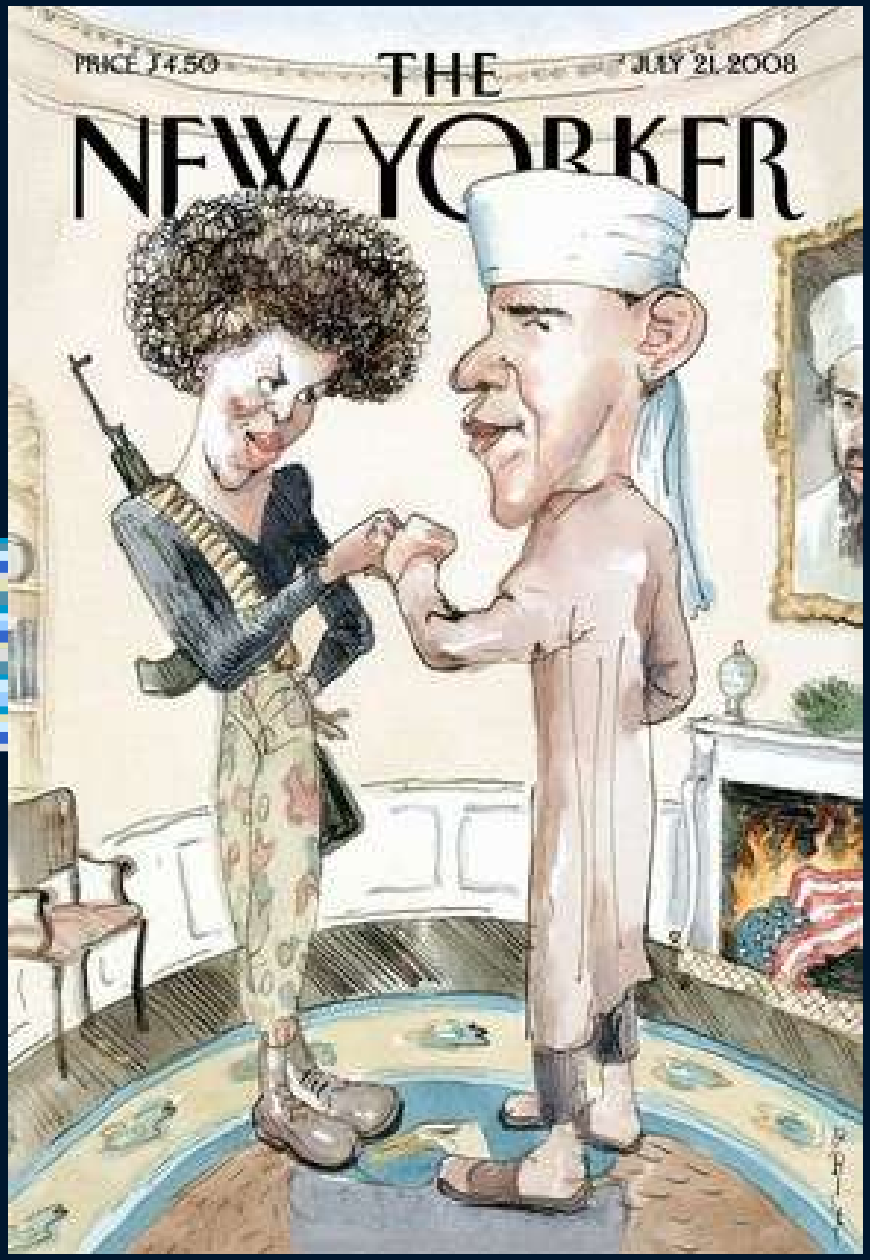
5.False Analogy

- Assuming without sufficient proof that if objects or processes are similar in some ways, then they are similar in other ways as well.
  - Many analogies are merely descriptive and do not offer proof of the connection between two things being compared.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6. Slippery Slope

- Predicting without justification that one step in a process will lead unavoidably to a second, generally undesirable step

SLIPPERY SLOPE
SO, A MAN MARRIES ANOTHER MAN...
WHAT'S NEXT? A WOMAN MARRYING HER DOG?!!
A SHE MARRYING BEES!?
THINK ABOUT IT.

7.Ad Hominem

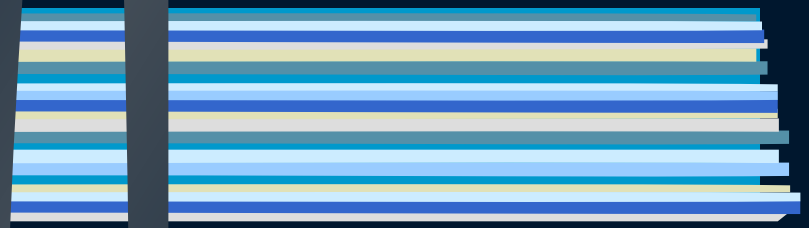
"Against the man"

- attacking the arguer rather than the argument; discrediting an argument by trashing the person making it.
- Watch for this is EVERY political debate!

DEBATE STRATEGY: WIN ARGUMENTS WITH AD HOMINEM ATTACKS
NO, YOUR FACE IS A LOGICAL FALLACY!

Hilary Clinton would make a terrible president because her husband was impeached while in office.

8. Post Hoc



- "after this, therefore because of this."
- The arguer infers that because one event follows another, the first event must be the cause of the second event. Proximity of events or conditions does not guarantee a causal relationship.

- The rooster crowed, the sun came up. Therefore, the rooster made the sun come up.

- I took a pill, I got better.

Therefore, the pill made me get better.

- Every time Snell starts her day with a cup of coffee, she is in a better mood. To keep Snell in a good mood, we should buy her Caribou Coffee.

CARIBOU
COFFEE

9.Straw Man or Red Herring

Strawman

- **You misrepresented someone's argument to make it easier to attack.**
  - By exaggerating, misrepresenting, or just completely fabricating someone's argument, it's much easier to present your own position as being reasonable, but this kind of dishonesty serves to undermine honest rational debate.

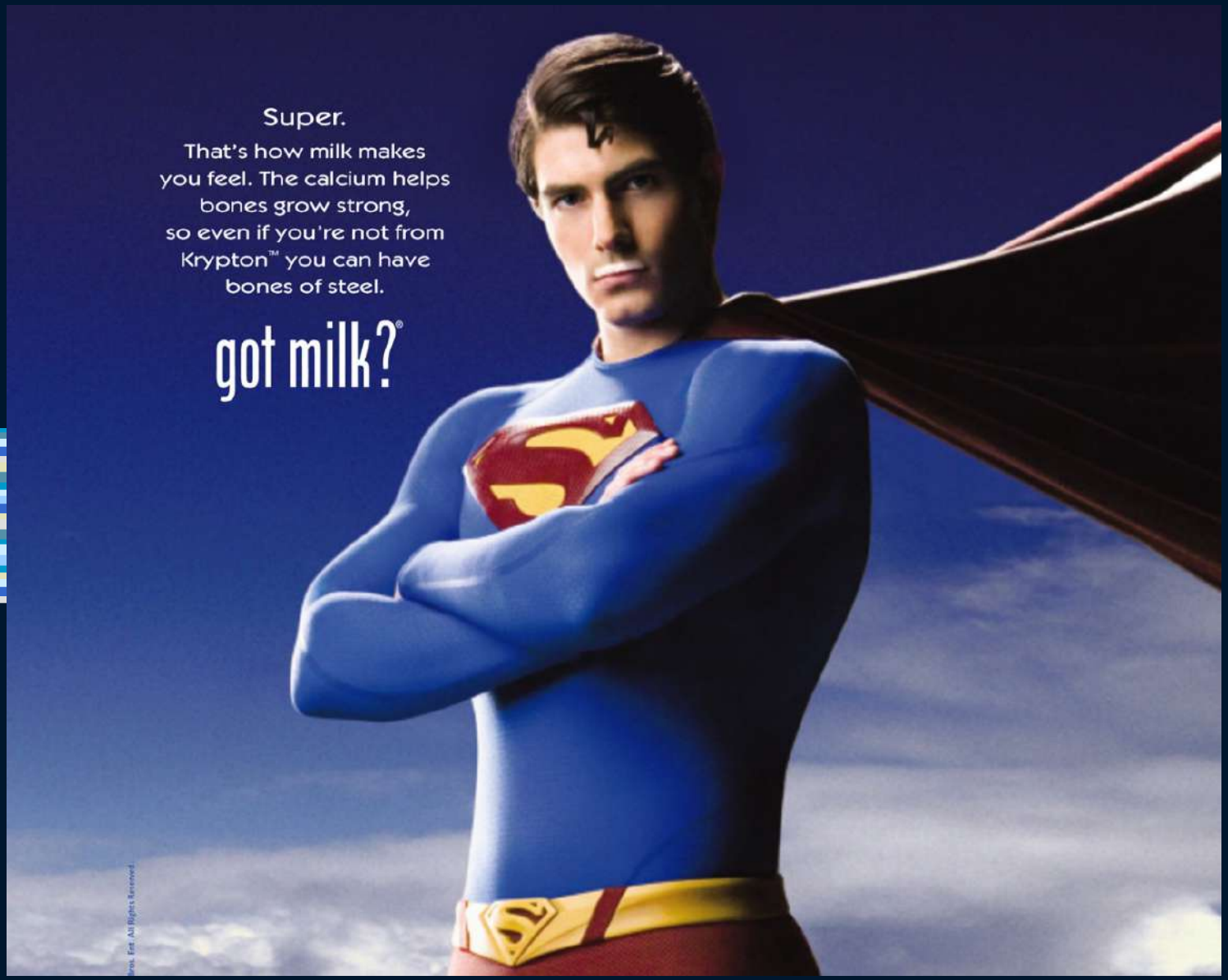
Strawman

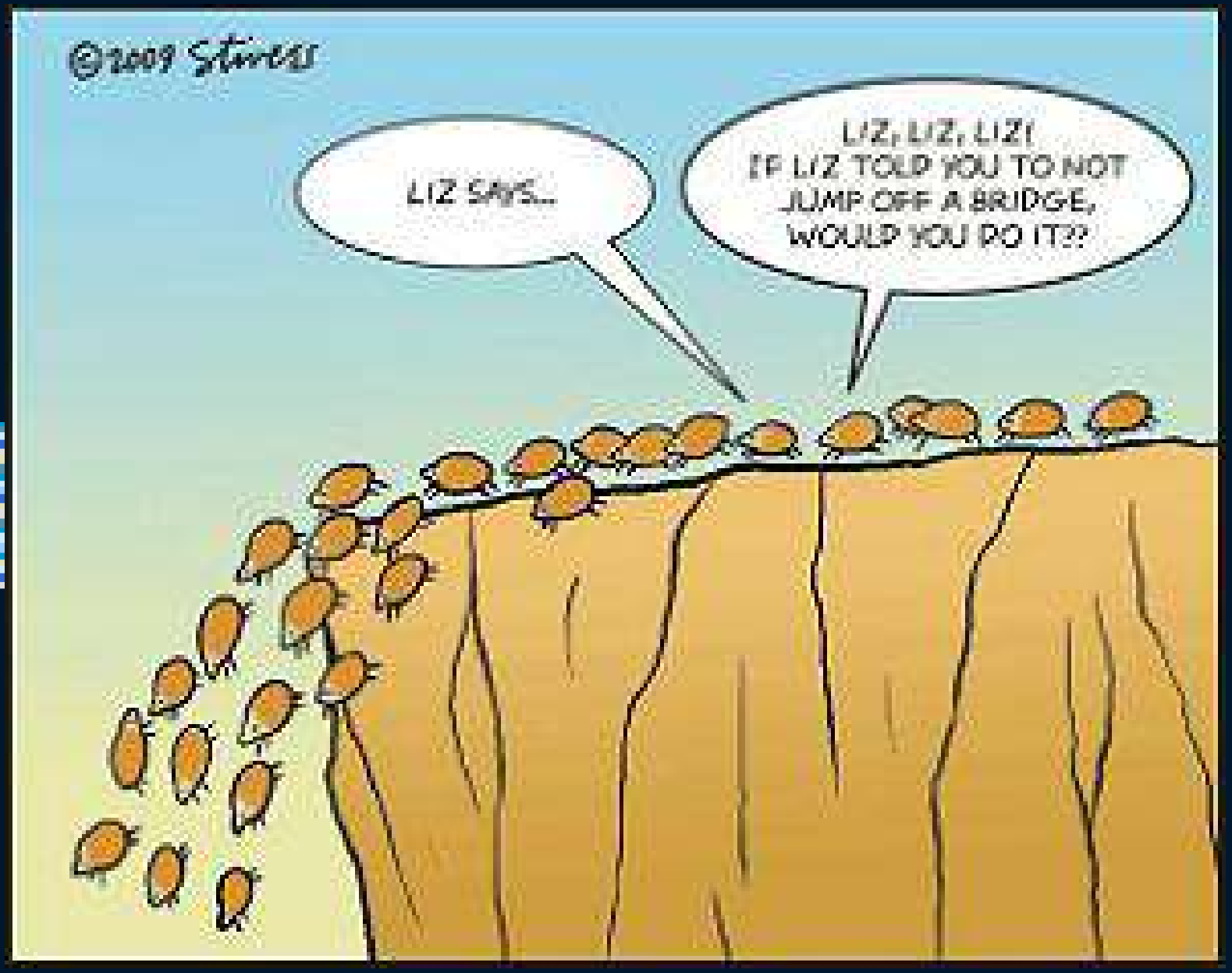
- Example: After Will said that we should put more money into health and education, Warren responded by saying that he was surprised that Will hates our country so much that he wants to leave it defenseless by cutting military spending.

MY OPPONENT... UH- WOULD LIKE YOU TO BELIEVE... UM... THAT OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IS... UH.. PERFECT THE WAY IT IS!!
NO to
GOP

10. *Ad Populum*

- "To the people”
- “Everybody’s doing it”


Super.
That's how milk makes you feel. The calcium helps bones grow strong, so even if you're not from Krypton™ you can have bones of steel.
got milk?®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LIZ SAYS...
LIZ, LIZ, LIZ! IF LIZ TOLD YOU TO NOT JUMP OFF A BRIDGE, WOULD YOU DO IT??