Tactics

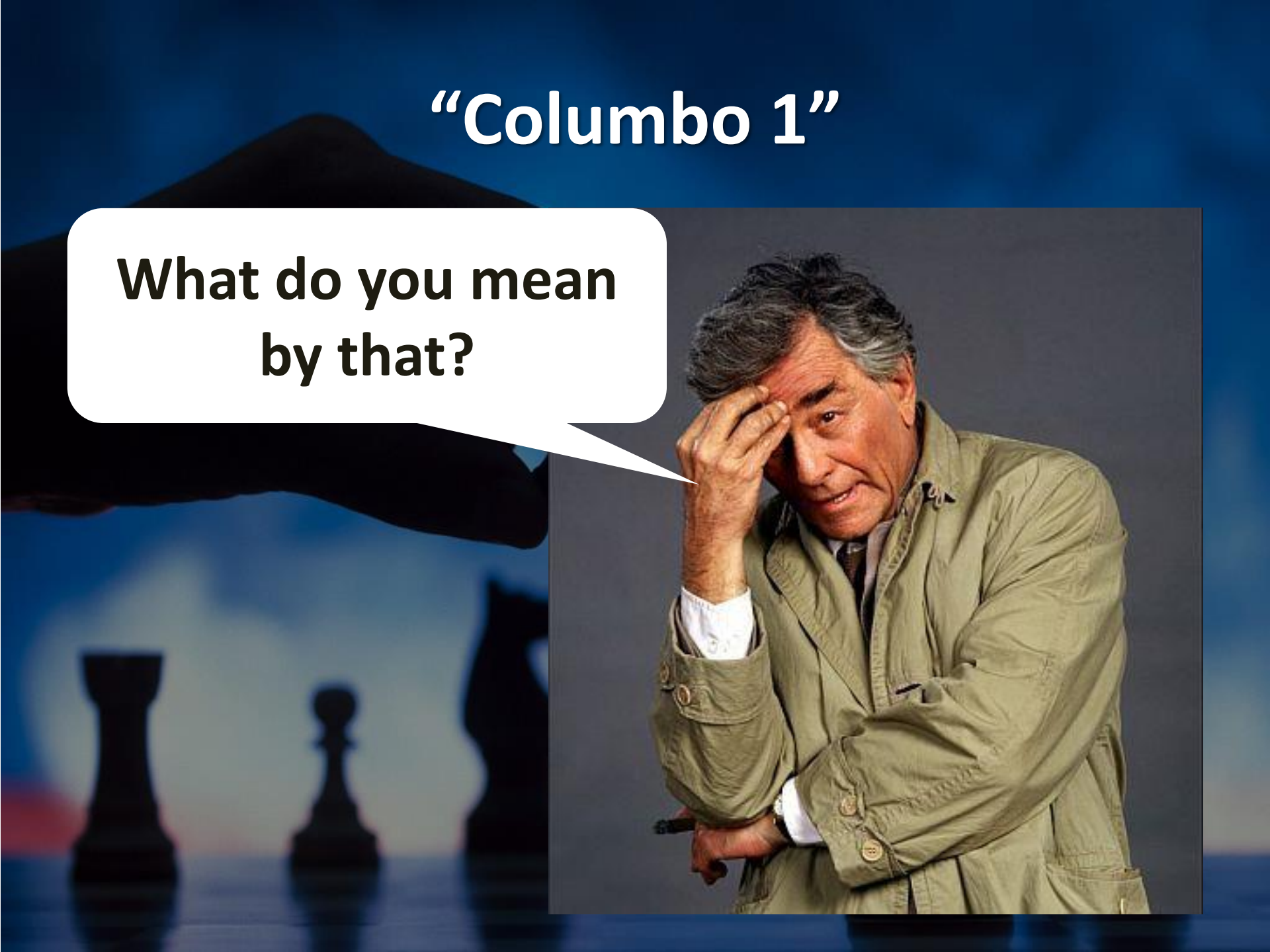
Steamroller

Rhodes Scholar

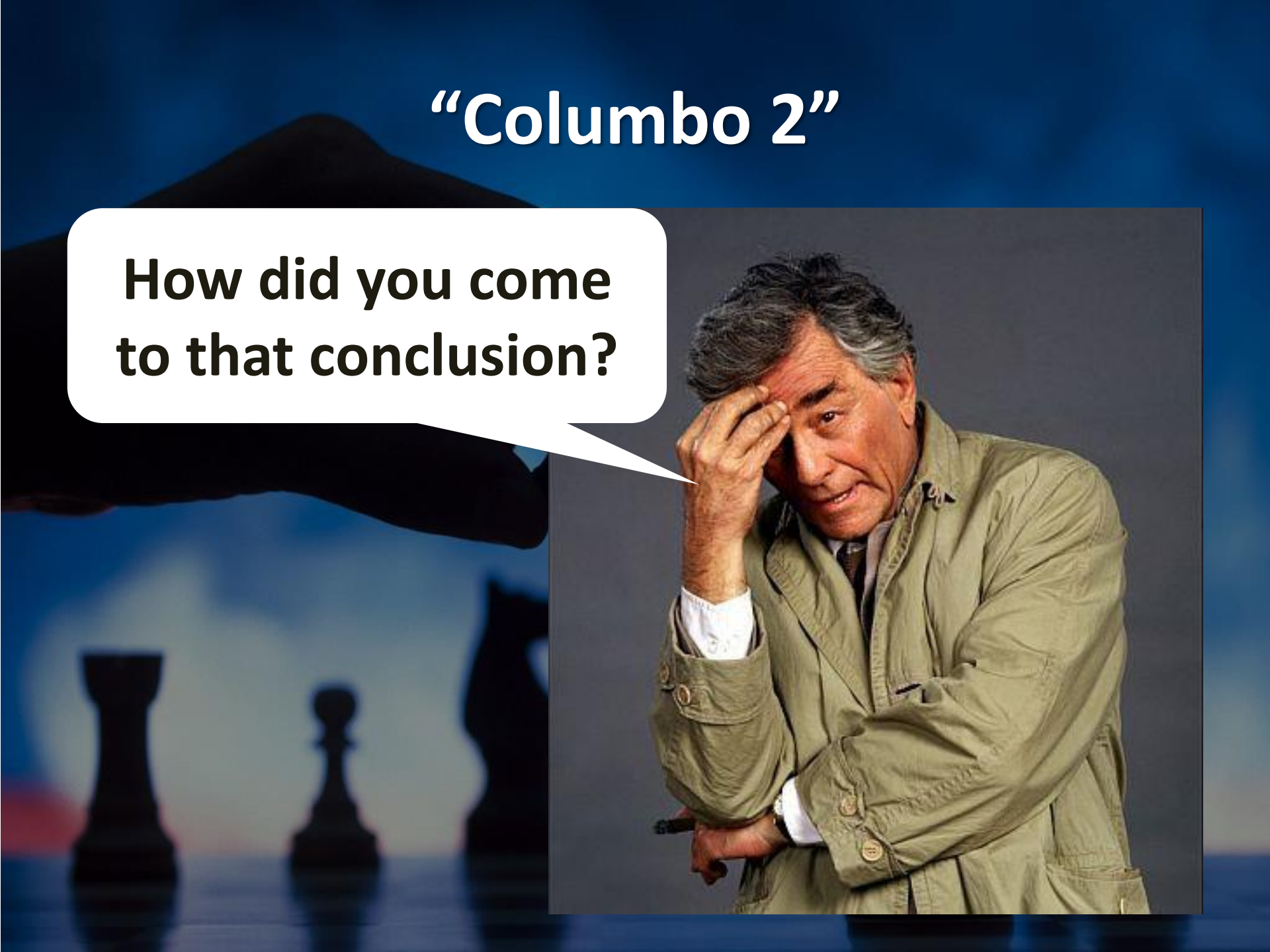
Just the Facts, Ma’am

Review

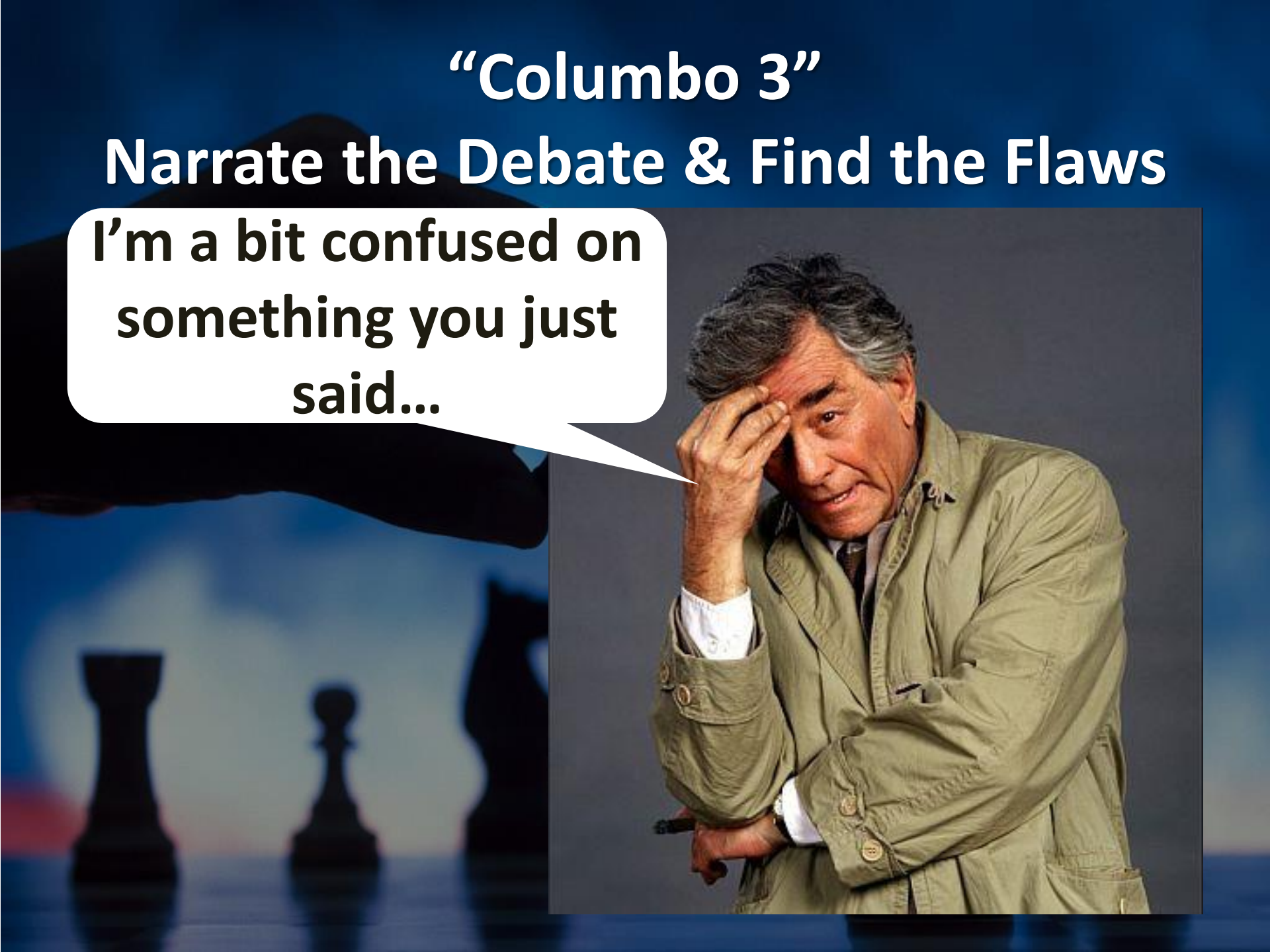
“Columbo 1”



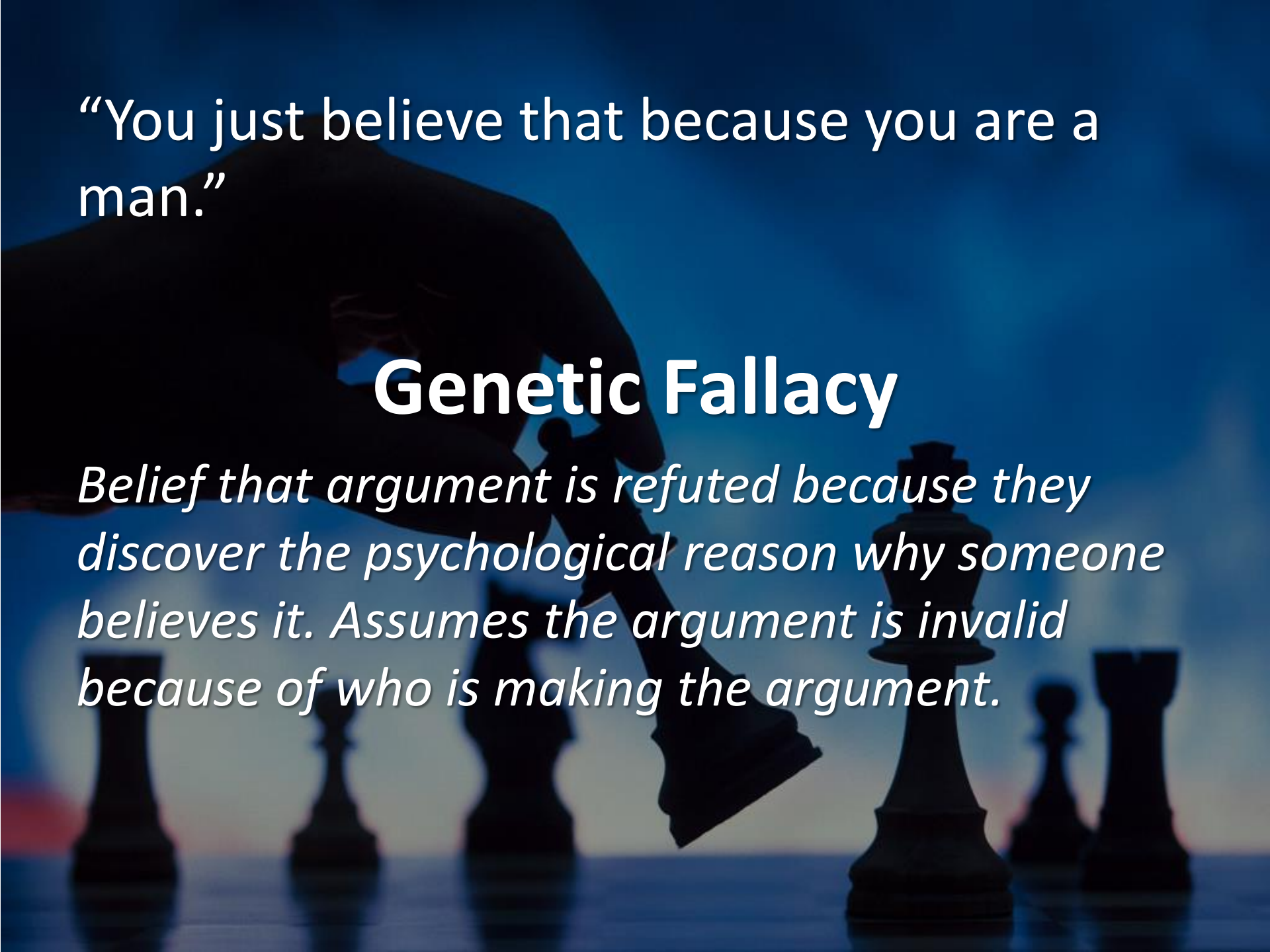
“Columbo 2”



“Columbo 3”
Narrate the Debate & Find the Flaws



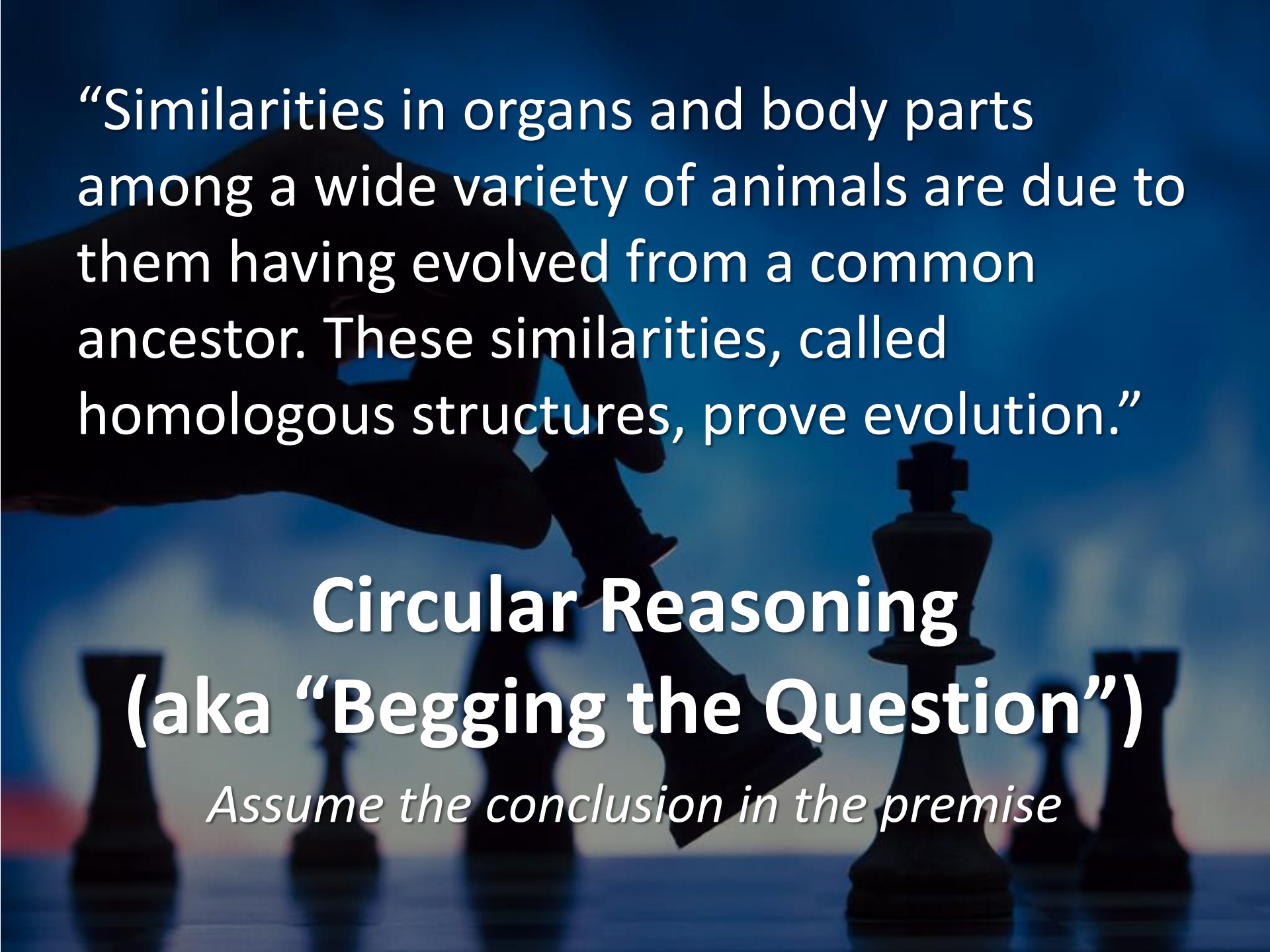
Review
Finding the Flaws

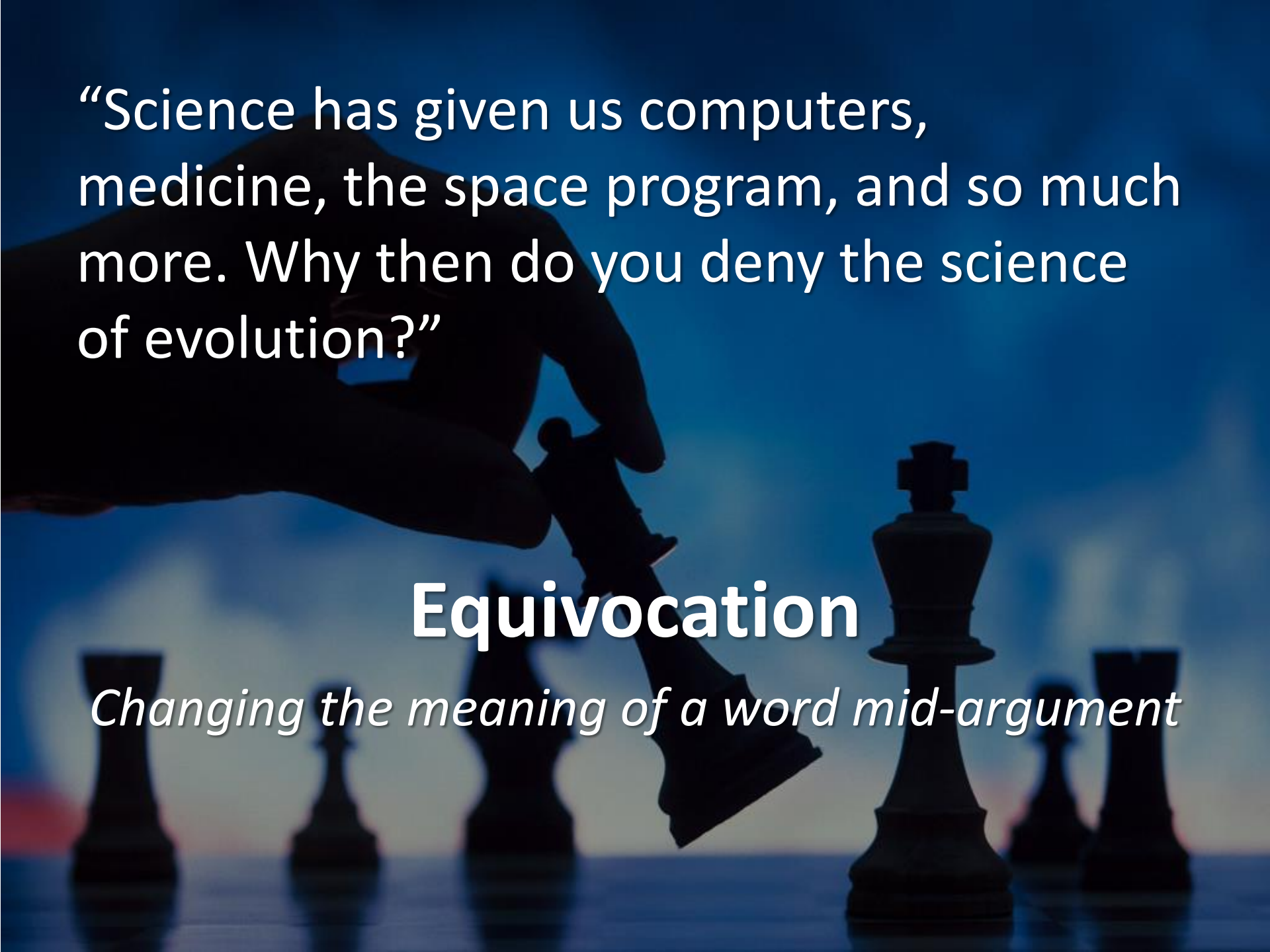


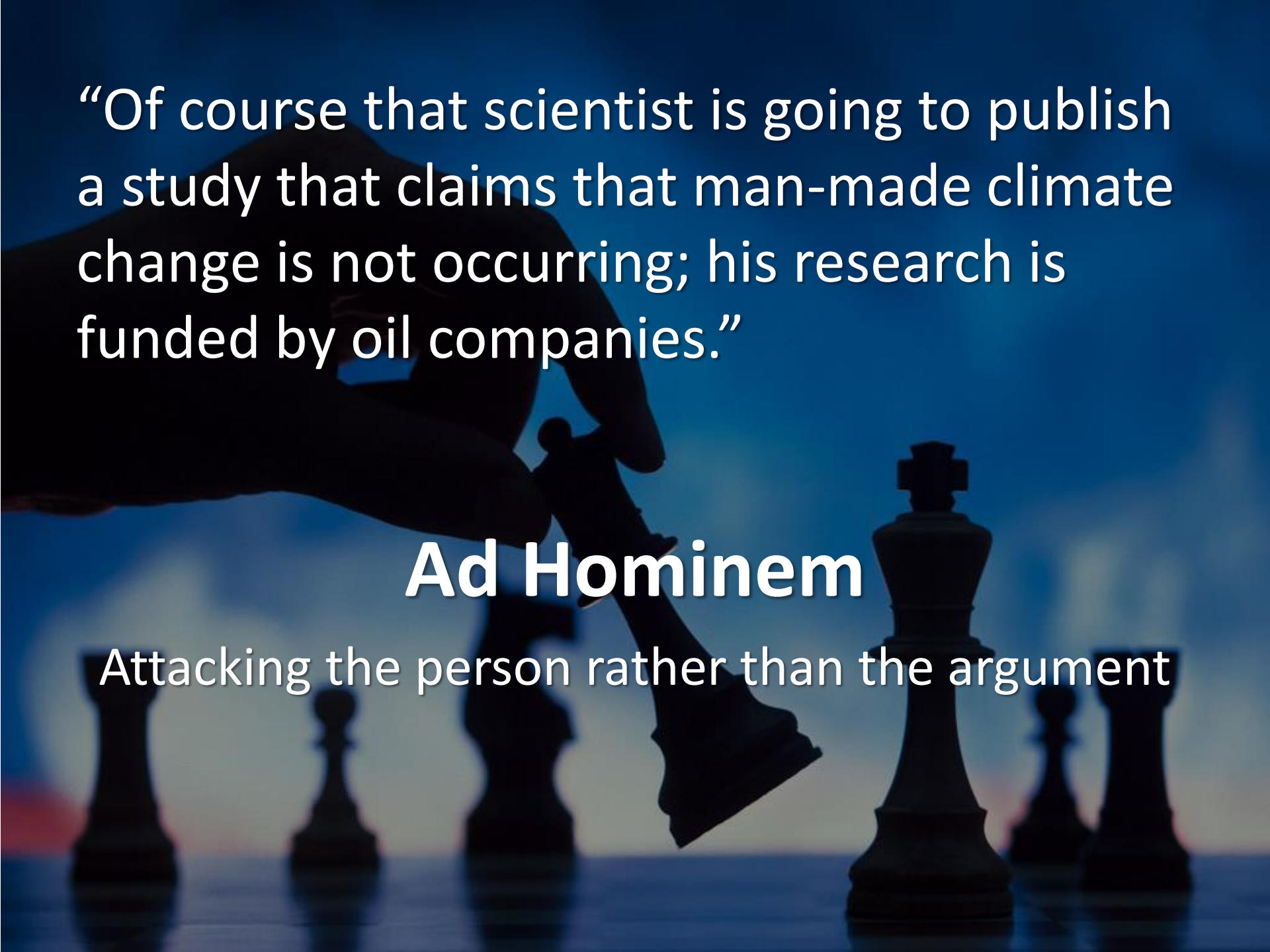
"You just believe that because you are a man."

Genetic Fallacy

Belief that argument is refuted because they discover the psychological reason why someone believes it. Assumes the argument is invalid because of who is making the argument.


“Similarities in organs and body parts among a wide variety of animals are due to them having evolved from a common ancestor. These similarities, called homologous structures, prove evolution.”
Circular Reasoning
(aka “Begging the Question”)
Assume the conclusion in the premise


“Science has given us computers, medicine, the space program, and so much more. Why then do you deny the science of evolution?”
Equivocation
Changing the meaning of a word mid-argument


“Of course that scientist is going to publish a study that claims that man-made climate change is not occurring; his research is funded by oil companies.”
Ad Hominem
Attacking the person rather than the argument

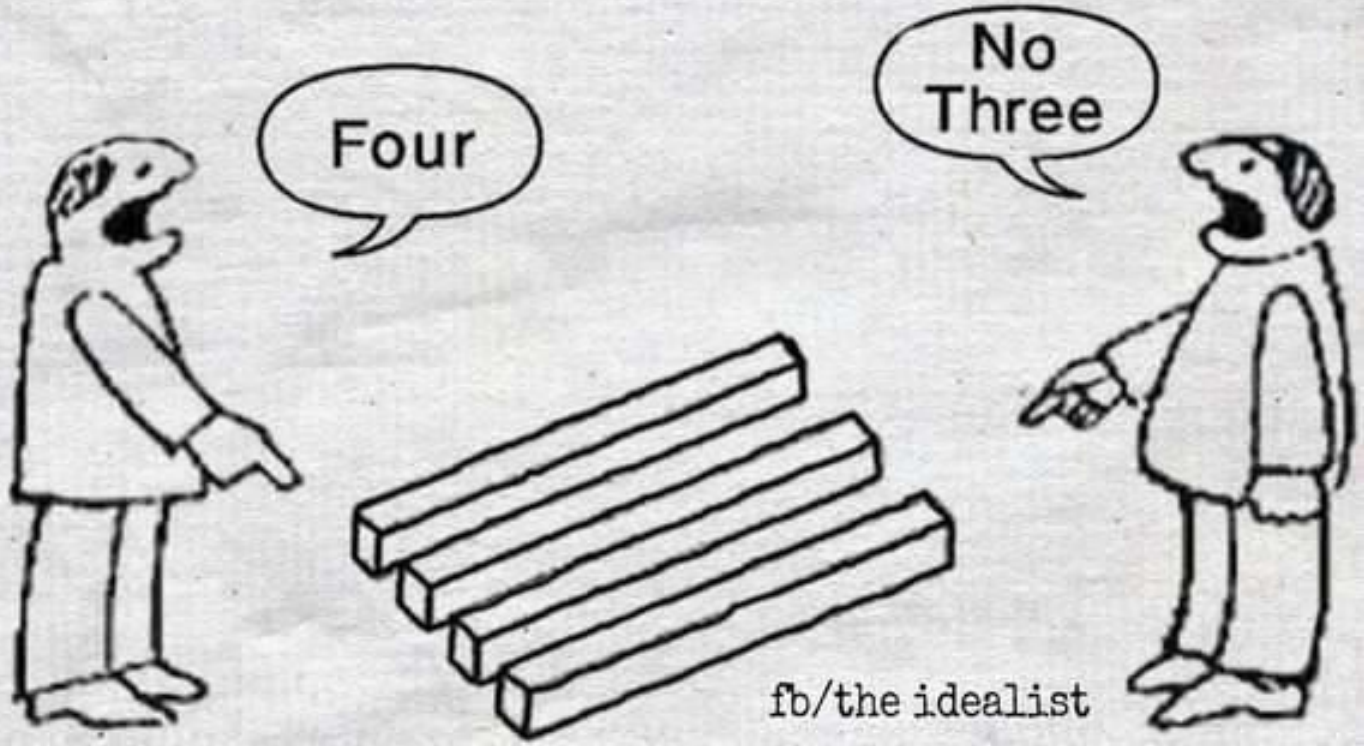
"Creationists don't believe that animals change over time. Scientific evidence shows that animals can and do change over time. Therefore, creationism is false."

Strawman

Attack a weak or exaggerated version of your opponent's position, then declare them to be wrong

"Everything we hear
is an opinion, not a fact.
Everything we see
is a perspective, not the truth."

- Marcus Aurelius



Formal Suicide

- Statement is self-refuting (violates the Law of Non-Contradiction)
  - It fails to meet its own criteria for validity

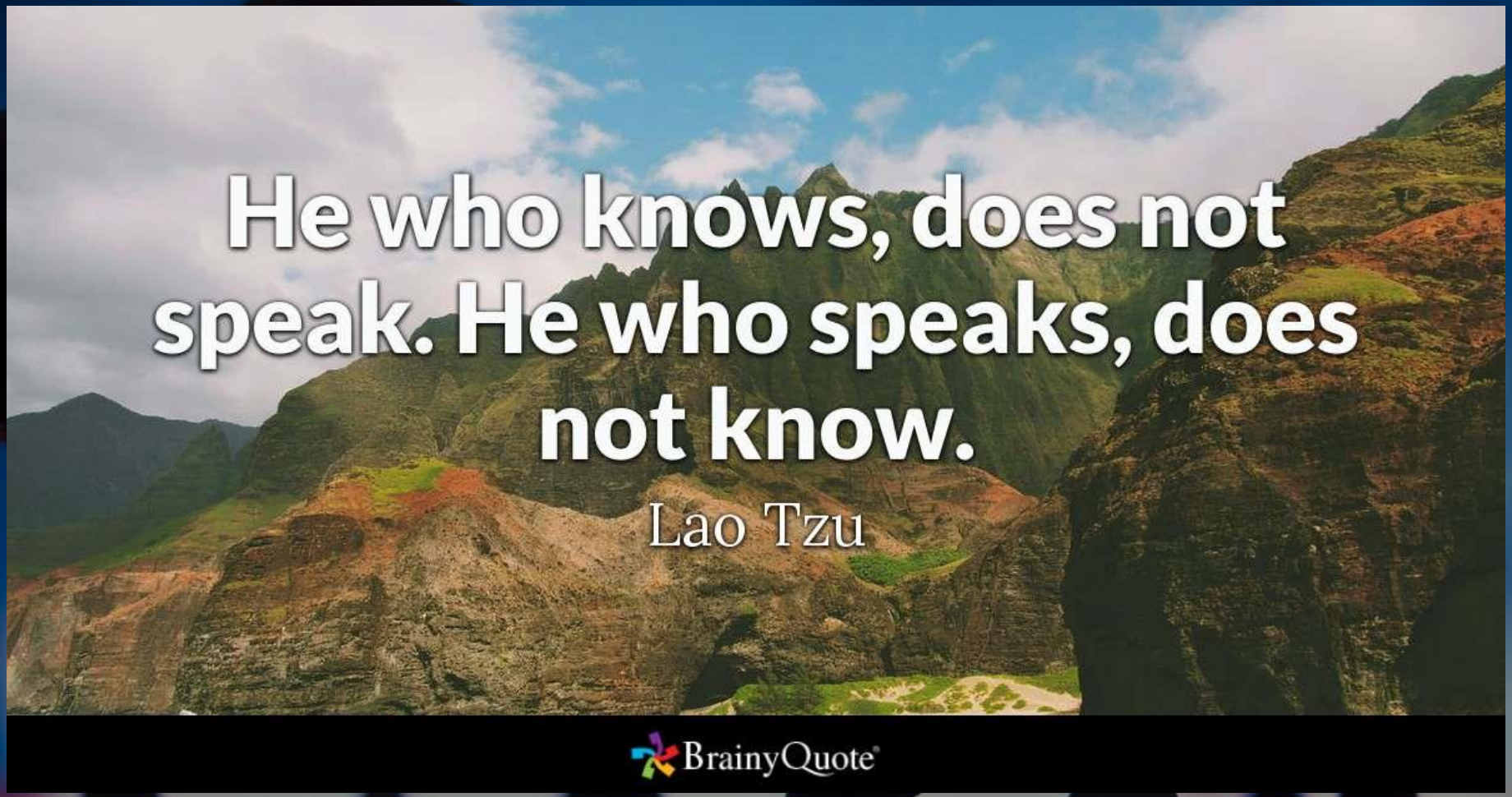
Statement

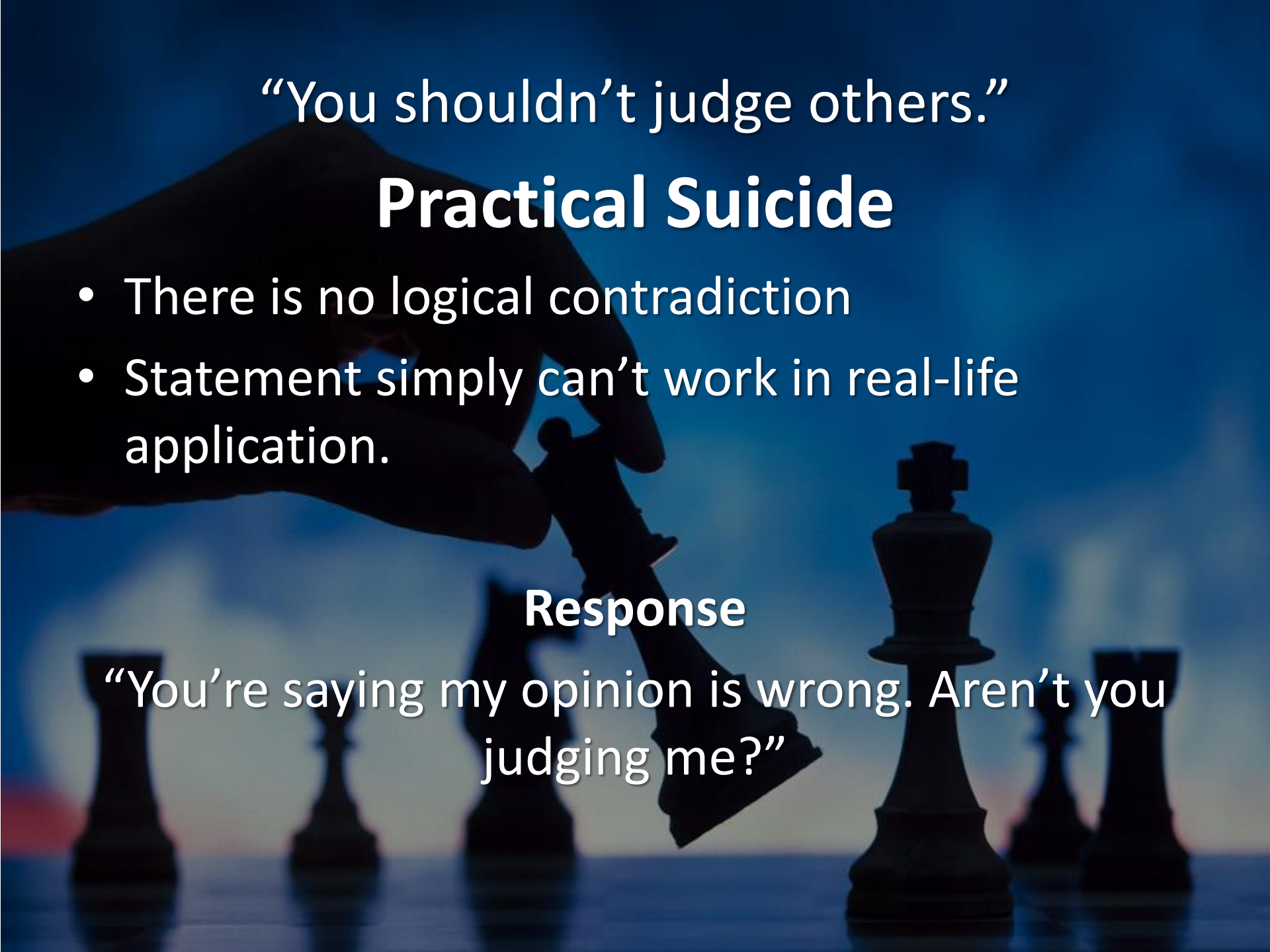
"Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth."

Response

"Is your statement an opinion, or are you presenting it as a fact?"

"Is your statement only your perspective, or are you presenting it as the truth?"


He who knows, does not speak. He who speaks, does not know.
Lao Tzu
BrainyQuote



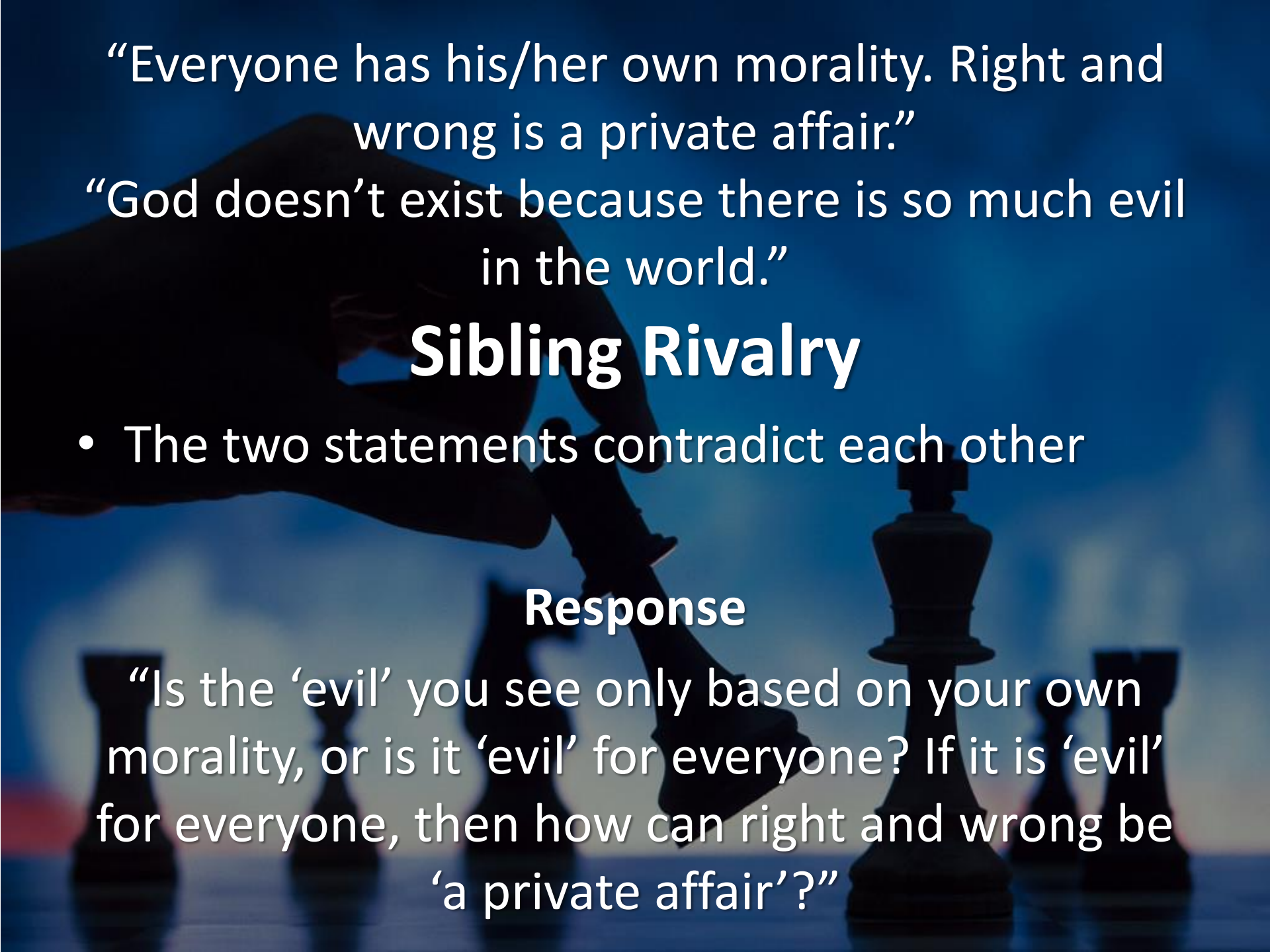
"You shouldn't judge others."

Practical Suicide

- There is no logical contradiction
- Statement simply can't work in real-life application.

Response

"You're saying my opinion is wrong. Aren't you judging me?"



"Everyone has his/her own morality. Right and wrong is a private affair."
"God doesn't exist because there is so much evil in the world."

Sibling Rivalry

- The two statements contradict each other

Response

"Is the 'evil' you see only based on your own morality, or is it 'evil' for everyone? If it is 'evil' for everyone, then how can right and wrong be 'a private affair'?"

Not a brain disorder.
They are just
"born this way."

Is a brain disorder,
even if they are
"born this way."

Random Fact **#2018**

Getting angry at people when we listen to them breathing or eating is called Misophonia, which is an actual brain disorder.

psychofactz.tumblr.com

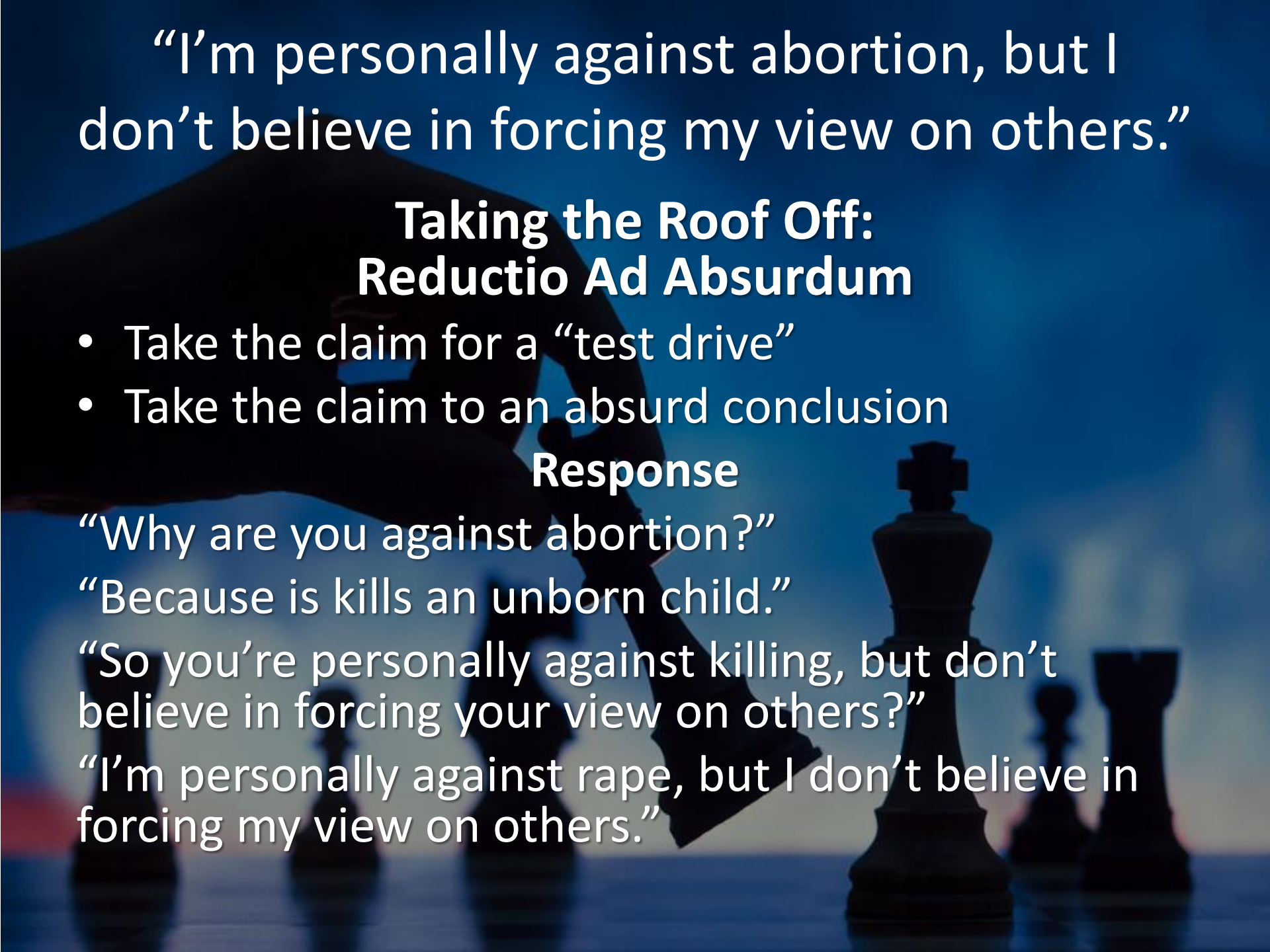
“God doesn’t exist because there is so much evil in the world.”

Infanticide

- The claim cannot be made unless the parent concept on which the claim depends is true, yet the claim denies the parent concept.

Response

“What is ‘evil’? On what basis do you judge something as ‘evil’? Why is that a valid standard for judging something as ‘evil’?”



“I’m personally against abortion, but I don’t believe in forcing my view on others.”

Taking the Roof Off: Reductio Ad Absurdum

- Take the claim for a “test drive”
- Take the claim to an absurd conclusion

Response

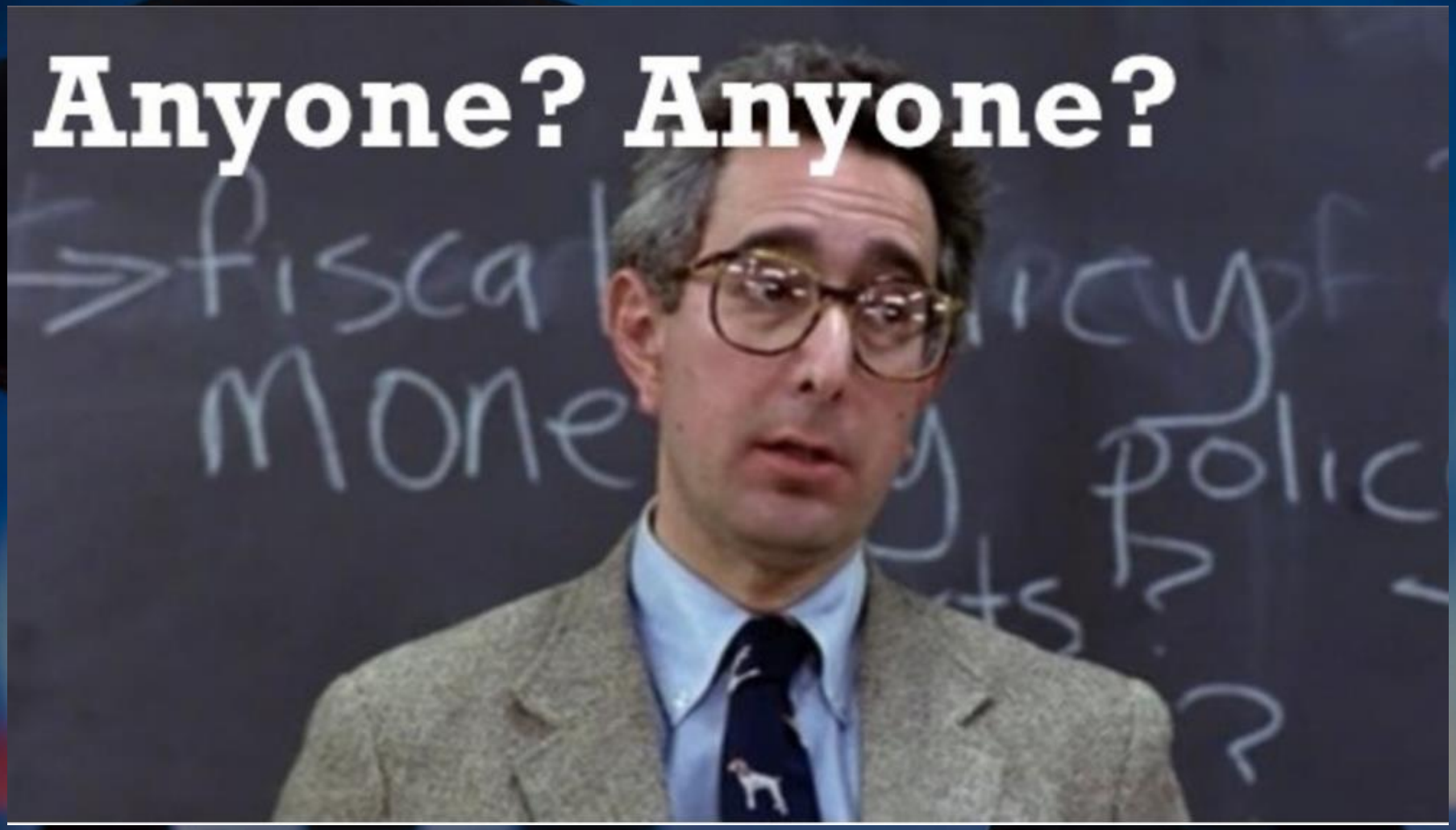
“Why are you against abortion?”

“Because is kills an unborn child.”

“So you’re personally against killing, but don’t believe in forcing your view on others?”

“I’m personally against rape, but I don’t believe in forcing my view on others.”

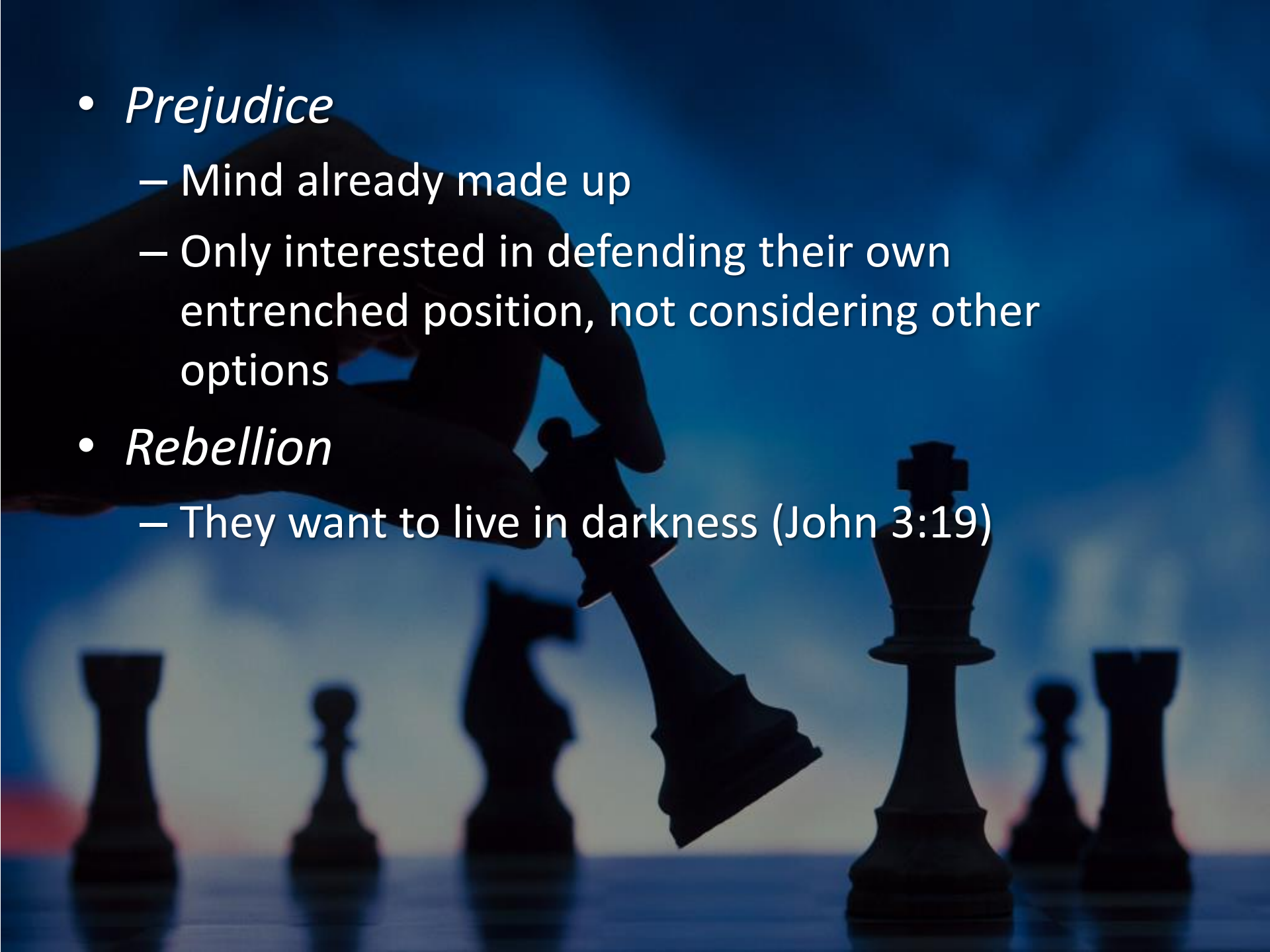
Homework?



Steamroller

When Arguments Don't Work

- *Rational* barrier
  - Christian message may be hard to understand or bring up counter-examples that must be addressed
- *Emotional* barrier
  - Past experiences with Christians or thought of loved ones suffering eternal damnation too hard to bear



- *Prejudice*
  - Mind already made up
  - Only interested in defending their own entrenched position, not considering other options
- *Rebellion*
  - They want to live in darkness (John 3:19)

The "Steamroller"

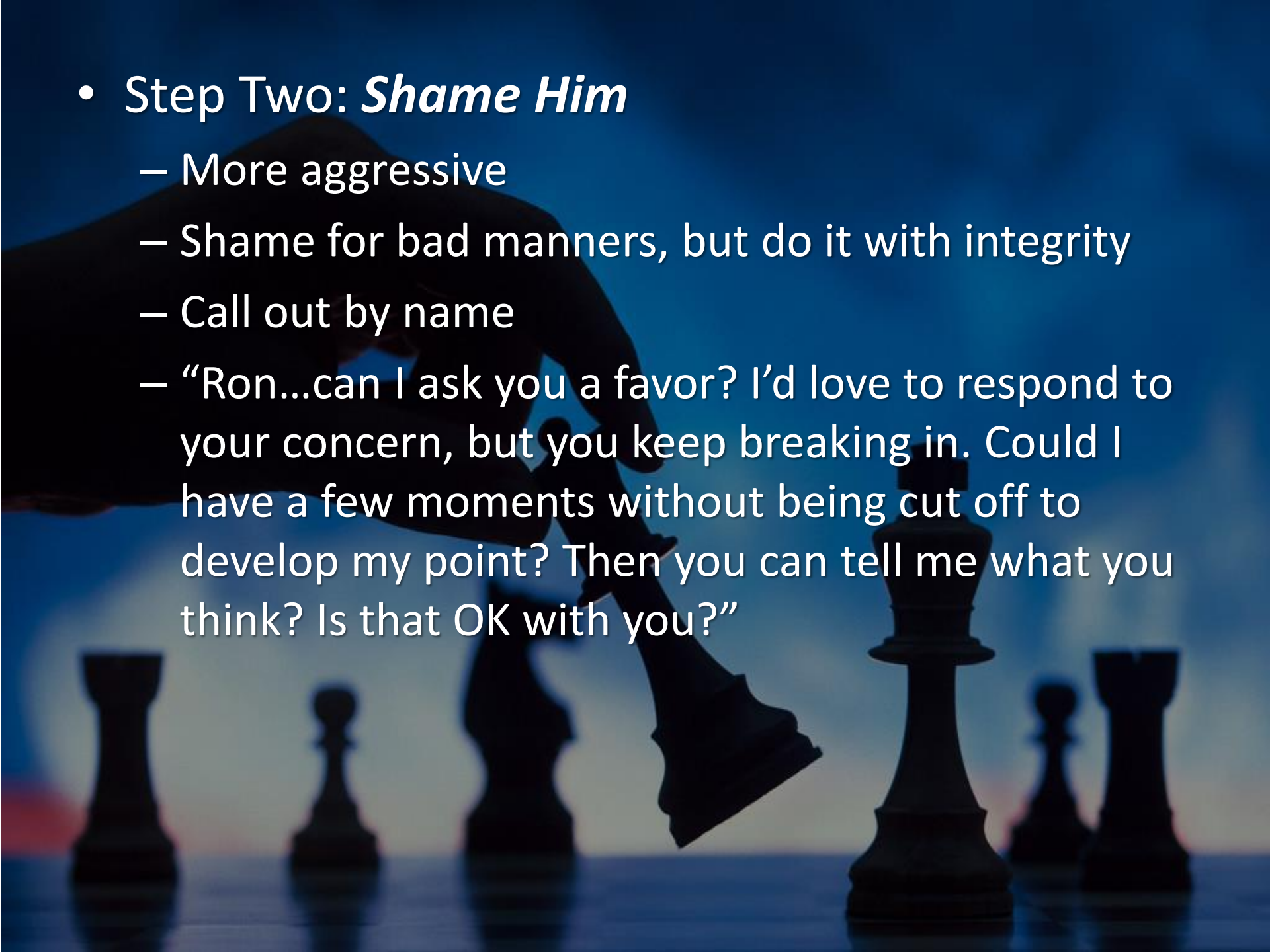
- Challenges come quickly
  - Can't collect your wits and give thoughtful answer
- Defining characteristic

They constantly interrupt

- They hear something they don't like:
  - Interrupt
  - Offer new challenge
  - Change the subject

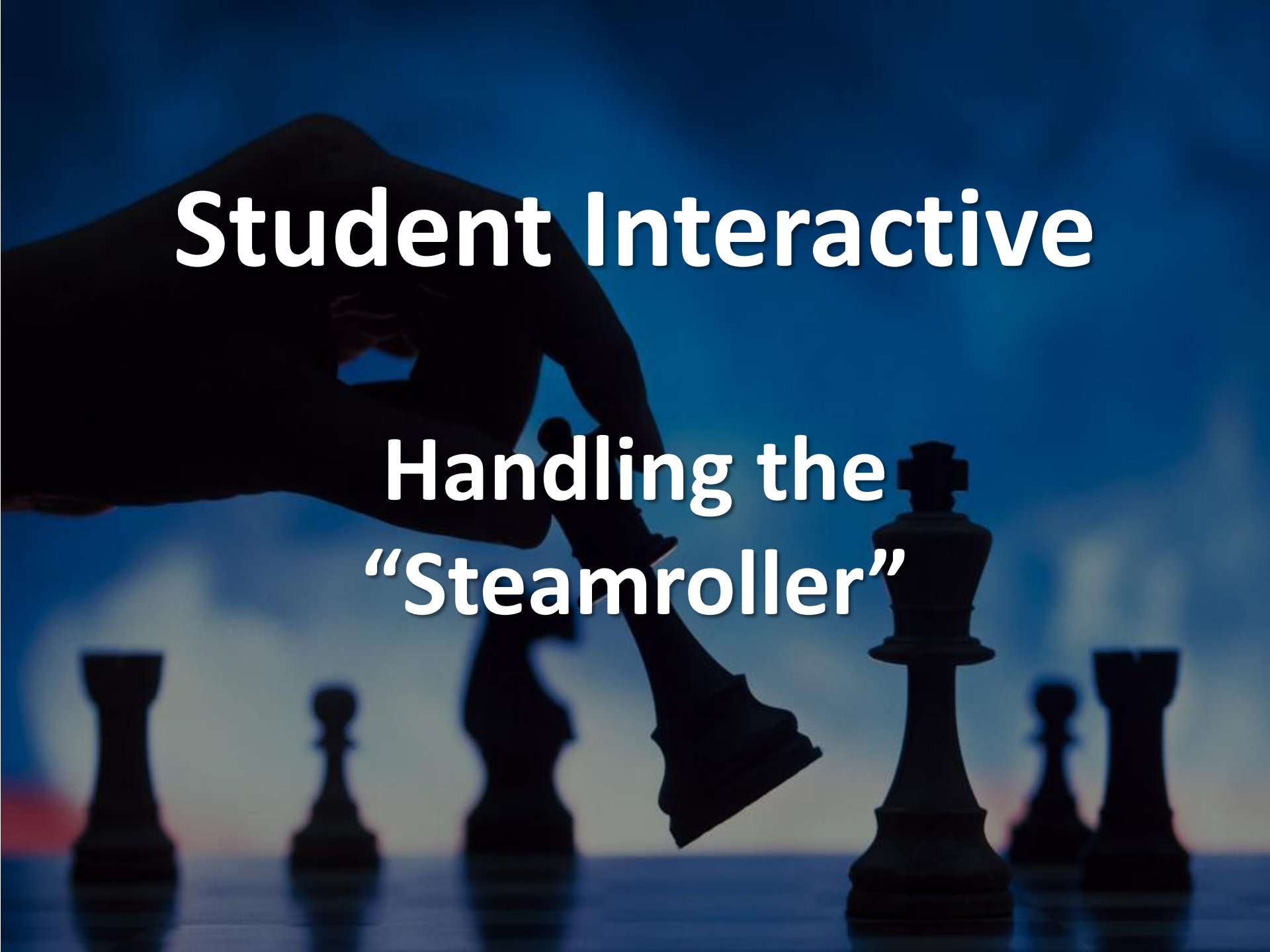
How to Manage a "Steamroller"

- Step One: ***Stop Him***
  - General request for courtesy
  - Negotiate an informal agreement
  - "Is it OK with you if I take a few moments to answer your question before you ask another? I'll give you a chance to respond when I get done. Will that work?"



- Step Two: ***Shame Him***
  - More aggressive
  - Shame for bad manners, but do it with integrity
  - Call out by name
  - "Ron…can I ask you a favor? I'd love to respond to your concern, but you keep breaking in. Could I have a few moments without being cut off to develop my point? Then you can tell me what you think? Is that OK with you?"

- Step Three: ***Leave Him***
  - Let him finish his point, then walk away
  - “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.” Matt 7:6



Student Interactive

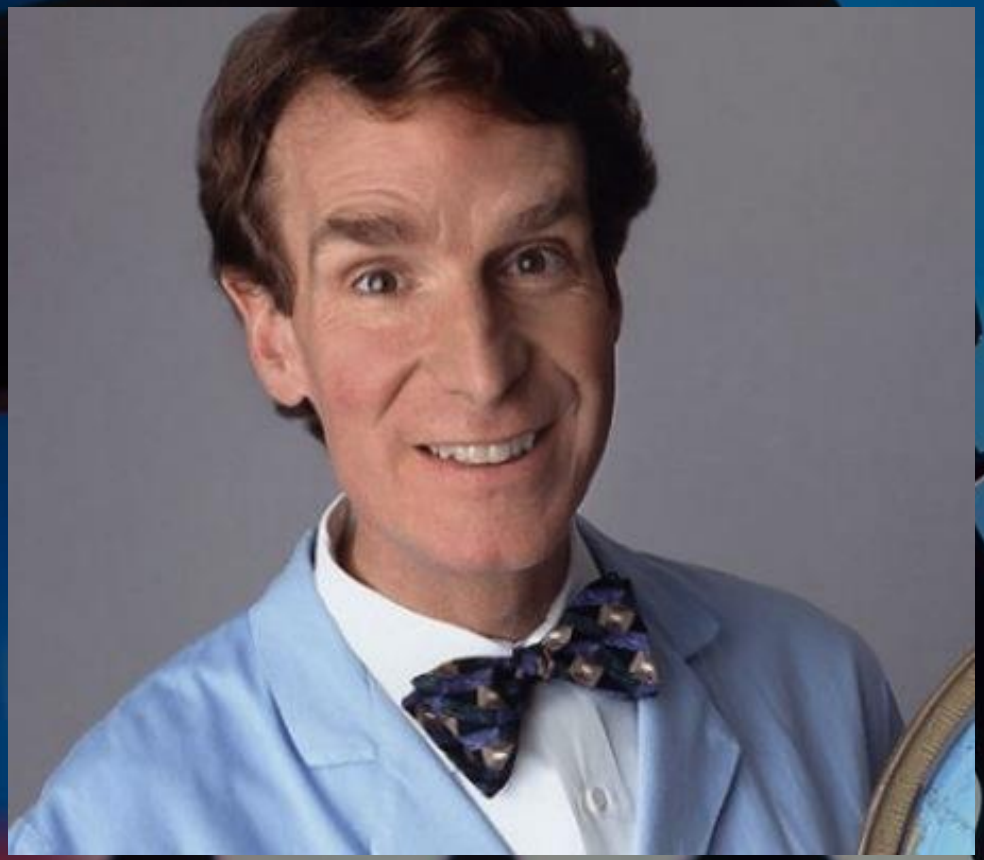
Handling the "Steamroller"

Rhodes Scholar

Fallacy of the "Expert Witness"

- Used when someone is making an appeal to authority as a reason to support their position
  - "97% of all scientists believe that climate change is real."
- Tells ***what*** the "scholars" believe
- Does not tell ***why*** they believe it
- Must simply take "scholars" word for it

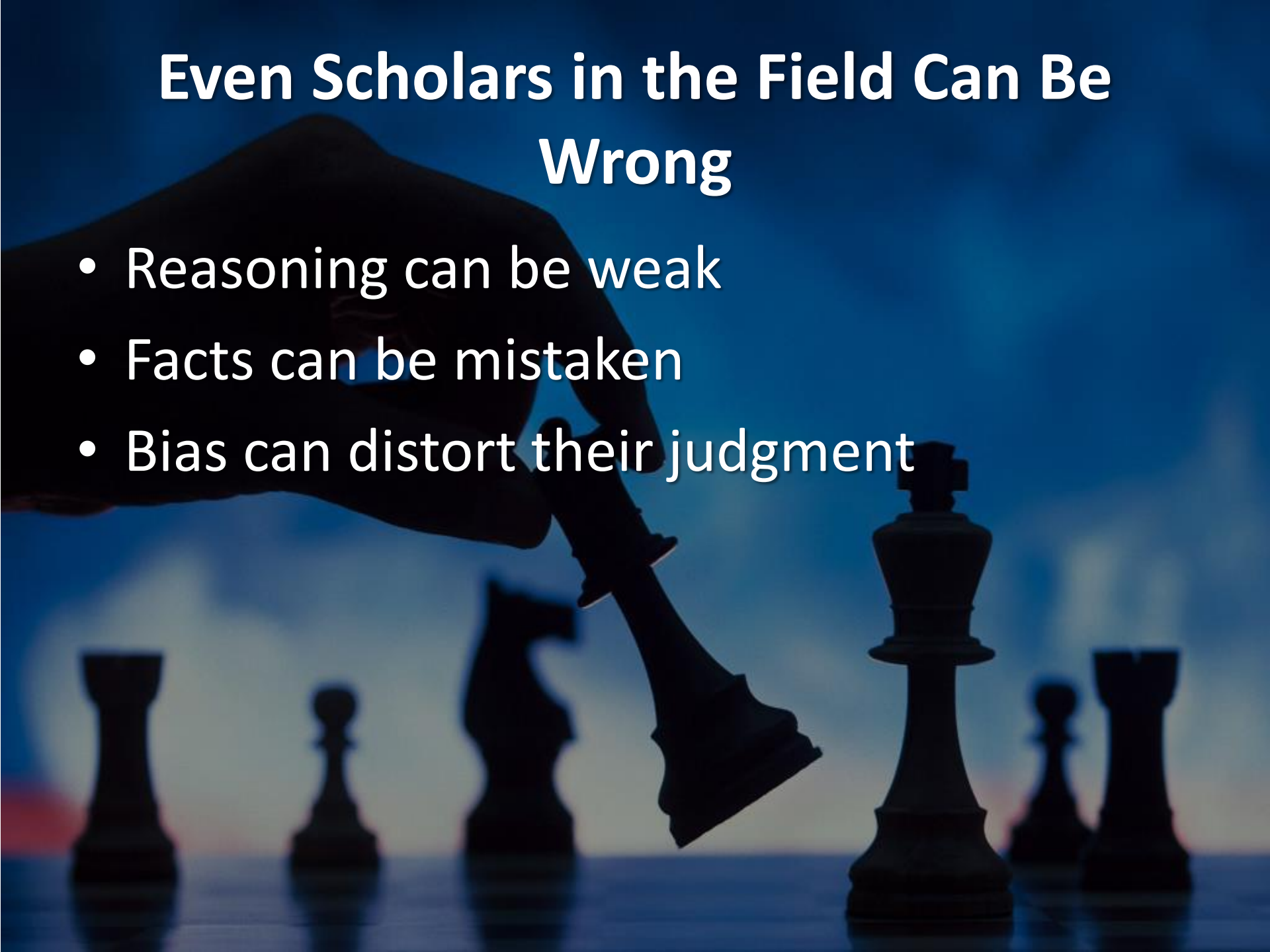
Is Scholar Actually an Expert in Field Discussed?



- Has a degree in ***mechanical engineering***
- Holds himself out as an authority on:
  - Climate science
  - Evolution
  - Abortion
- Doesn't automatically discredit him
  - Must look at the ***evidence*** he uses to support his claims

Even Scholars in the Field Can Be Wrong

- Reasoning can be weak
- Facts can be mistaken
- Bias can distort their judgment



Rhodes Scholar

- Don’t settle for opinions
- Always ask for ***reasons*** why they believe it
- Even when scholars speak within their field, they still owe us an accounting based on sound reasons
  - In a court of law, the expert witness is *always* cross-examined

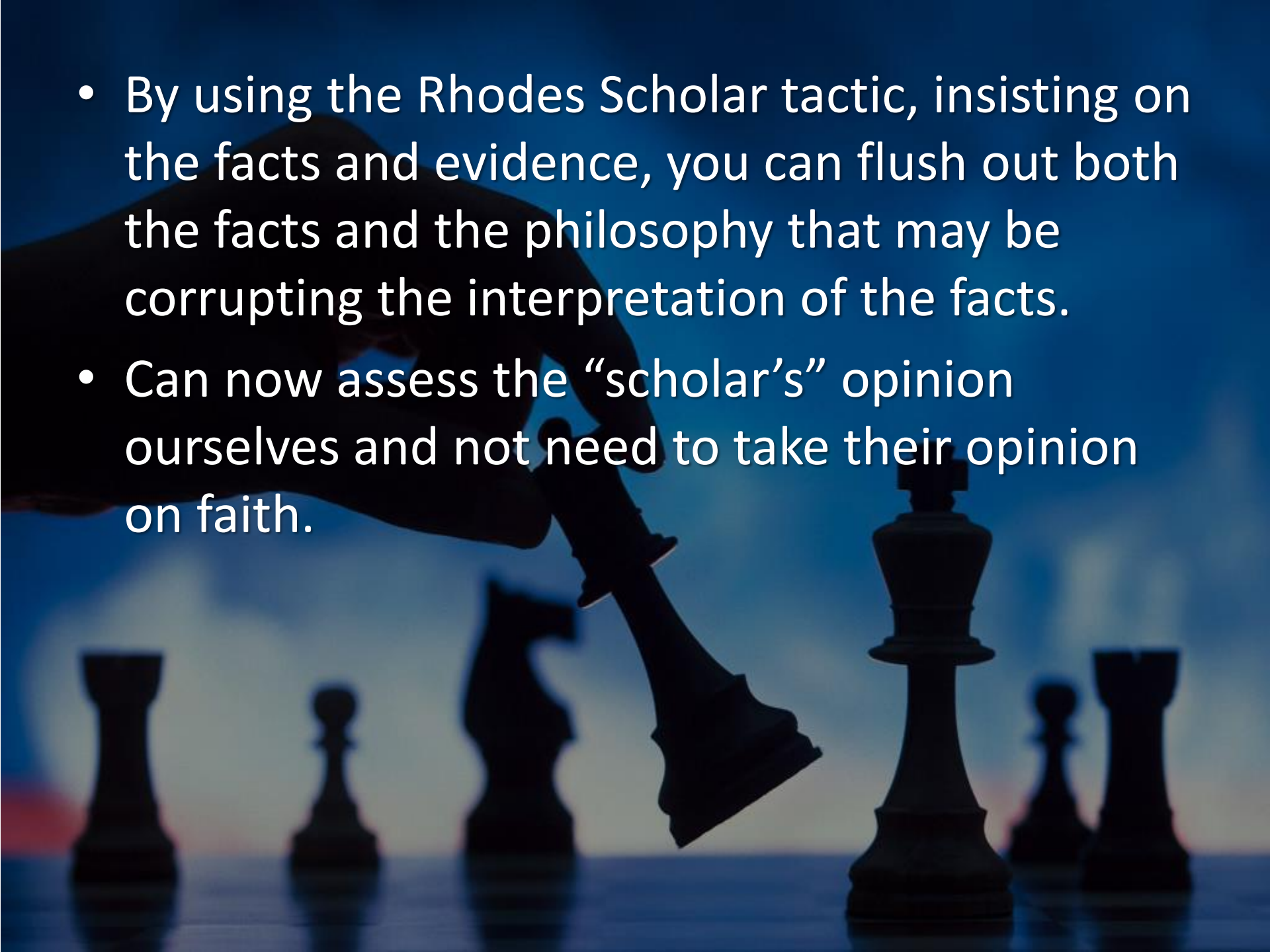
Rhodes Scholar Question: "Why should I believe this person's opinion?"

- Scholar may be in special position to know the facts
  - If so, he/she should be able to point to the ***evidence*** to convince us he/she is right
- Scholar may be in unique position to render a judgment
  - Scholar's judgment may be distorted by his/her underlying philosophical considerations

Is There a Bias that Distorts the Facts?

- Those who claim Creationism is not science base that on the assumption that science insists on material, mechanistic causes that can be understood by physics and chemistry.
  - Automatically assume that anything supernatural is impossible and is dismissed out of hand

- Bible “scholars” who claim to have used the “scientific method” to discover the “real, historical Jesus” assume:
  1. The Gospels contain fabrications because they record events that are inconsistent with a “scientific” (i.e. materialistic) view of the world.
     - Since the Gospels record miracles, and miracles are dismissed as impossible, these events as recorded in the Bible must be made up.
  2. The Gospels have been embellished by mythic elements that express the church’s faith in him.
  3. The Gospels contain plausible fictions to enhance the telling of the Gospel story for first-century listeners.



- By using the Rhodes Scholar tactic, insisting on the facts and evidence, you can flush out both the facts and the philosophy that may be corrupting the interpretation of the facts.
- Can now assess the “scholar’s” opinion ourselves and not need to take their opinion on faith.

Just the Facts, Ma’am

Just the Facts, Ma'am

- Many challenges cite facts to support their claim
  - Facts may not be true
- "Just the Facts, Ma'am" tactic has two key elements:
  1. An awareness that many challenges to Christianity are based on bad information that can be overcome by an appeal to the facts.
  2. A knowledge of the actual facts

Two Steps to "Just the Facts, Ma'am" Tactic

1. Identify "What is the claim?"
   - Isolate the claim
   - Use Columbo 1 questions to identify what is specifically being claimed
2. Determine "Is the claim factually accurate?"
   - If you don't already know what the actual facts are related to the claim, ***research it***
   - If the facts are false, find out and use the actual facts to refute their claim

Review

- Steamroller
  - Constantly interrupts
  - Step 1: Stop Him
  - Step 2: Shame Him
  - Step 3: Leave Him
- Rhodes Scholar
  - Used when evidence for someone's argument is someone's (including their own) "expert opinion"
  - Insist on actual factual evidence, and look for bias
- Just the Facts, Ma'am
  - Someone presents false facts to support a claim
  - Find the real facts and use them to refute