

7.9.1. Pragmatic Fallacy Problems

For each of the following passages, identify which **pragmatic fallacy** is being committed.

1. (*Fonzie is listing his requirements for the woman he'll marry.*)

Richie: "Fonz, don't get mad, but how can you be sure about that [requirement] Number Four?"

Fonzie: "About her being a virgin?"

Richie: "Yeah."

Fonzie: "She told me."

Richie: "Well, couldn't she have lied?"

Fonzie: "Virgins don't lie."

Happy Days Season 2, Episode 13: *Fonzie's Getting Married*

2. **Student:** You say I can't write poems on the Logic exam, in place of formal techniques? Fine then: I guess you want us all to be mindless robots just like you.

3. **Professor:** Why do you cheat on quizzes in every class you take?

4. **Jake:** It's clear that scientific methods tell us all the truths there are to find.

Rex: What makes you so sure?

Jake: All the evidence points to that conclusion: after centuries of scientific investigation, the only truths science has detected have been ones detected through scientific methods.

5. **Former Student** (*at reunion, talking to former classmate*): Are you still as much of a jerk as you were in high school?

6. **Mother** (*to her son*): You should come visit me this Christmas – either that, or just go to Vegas with your friends and leave your mother alone on the holidays to die of a broken heart.

7. **Student:** I was planning on skipping the Logic quiz today to spend time with my children. But you don't have to count my absence as excused, if you think spending quality time with one's family is a total waste of time. It's really up to you.

8. **Bill Maher** (*after noting that George W. Bush's daughters didn't volunteer for the armed forces after the 9/11 attacks*): Do your daughters hate democracy in general, or just our country?

9. **Prosecutor** (to defendant): Have you stopped torturing little puppies yet?