

# The Physicist's Bill of Rights

We hold these postulates to be intuitively obvious, that all physicists are born equal, to a first approximation, and are endowed by their creator with certain discrete privileges, among them a mean rest life,  $n$  degrees of freedom, and the following rights which are invariant under all linear transformations:

1. To approximate all problems to ideal cases.
2. To use order of magnitude calculations whenever deemed necessary (i.e. whenever one can get away with it).
3. To use the rigorous method of "squinting" for solving problems more complex than the addition of positive real integers.
4. To dismiss all functions which diverge as "nasty" and "unphysical".
5. To invoke the uncertainty principle when confronted by confused mathematicians, chemists, engineers, psychologists, dramatists, and other lower scientists.
6. When pressed by non-physicists for an explanation of (4) to mumble in a sneering tone of voice something about physically naive mathematicians.
7. To equate two sides of an equation which are dimensionally inconsistent, with a suitable comment to the effect of, "Well, we are interested in the order of magnitude anyway".
8. To the extensive use of "bastard notations" where conventional mathematics will not work.
9. To invent fictitious forces to delude the general public.
10. To justify shaky reasoning on the basis that it gives the right answer.
11. To cleverly choose convenient initial conditions, using the principle of general triviality.
12. To use plausible arguments in place of proofs, and thenceforth refer to these arguments as proofs.
13. To take on faith any principle which seems right but cannot be proved.

*Author unknown*