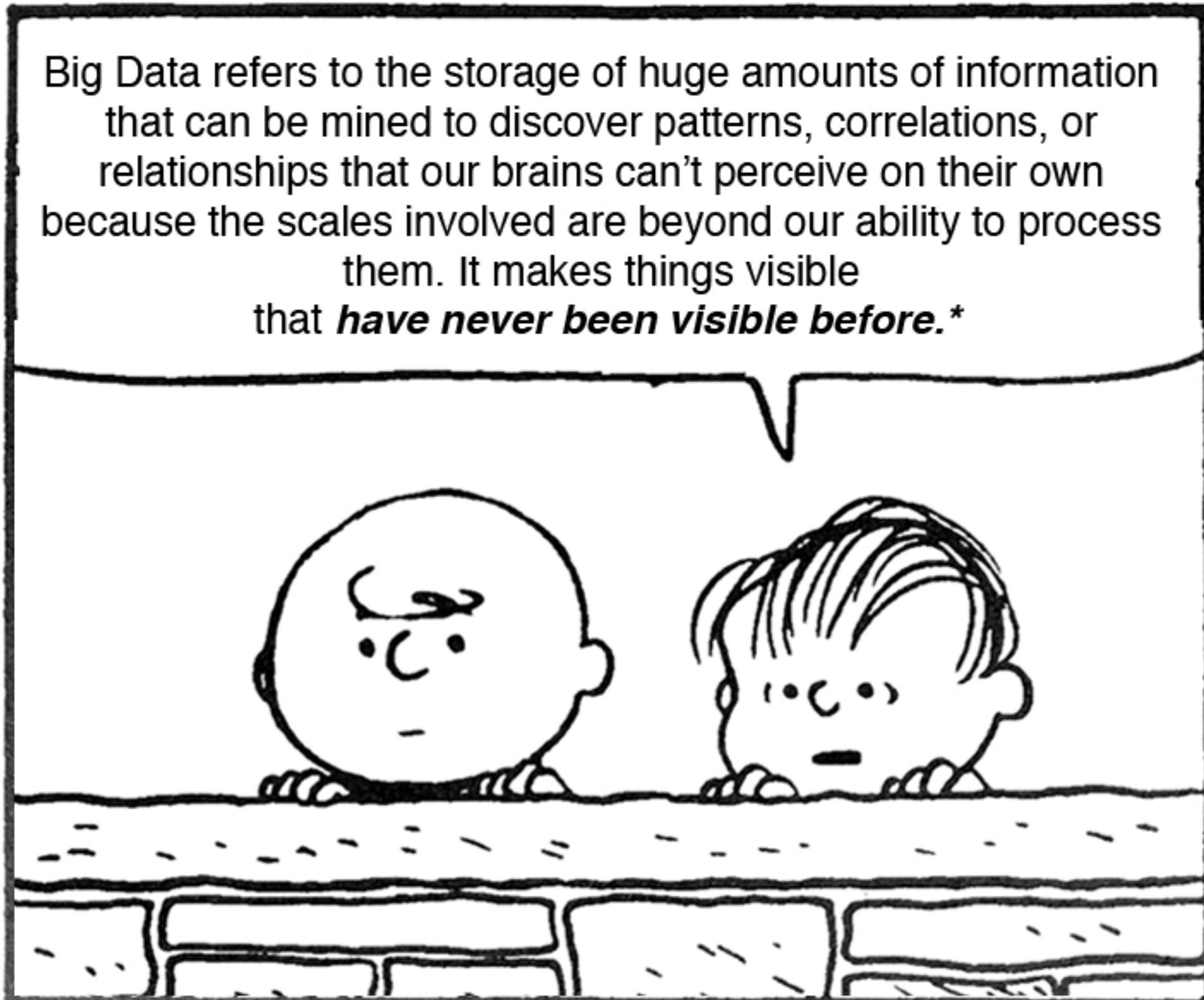


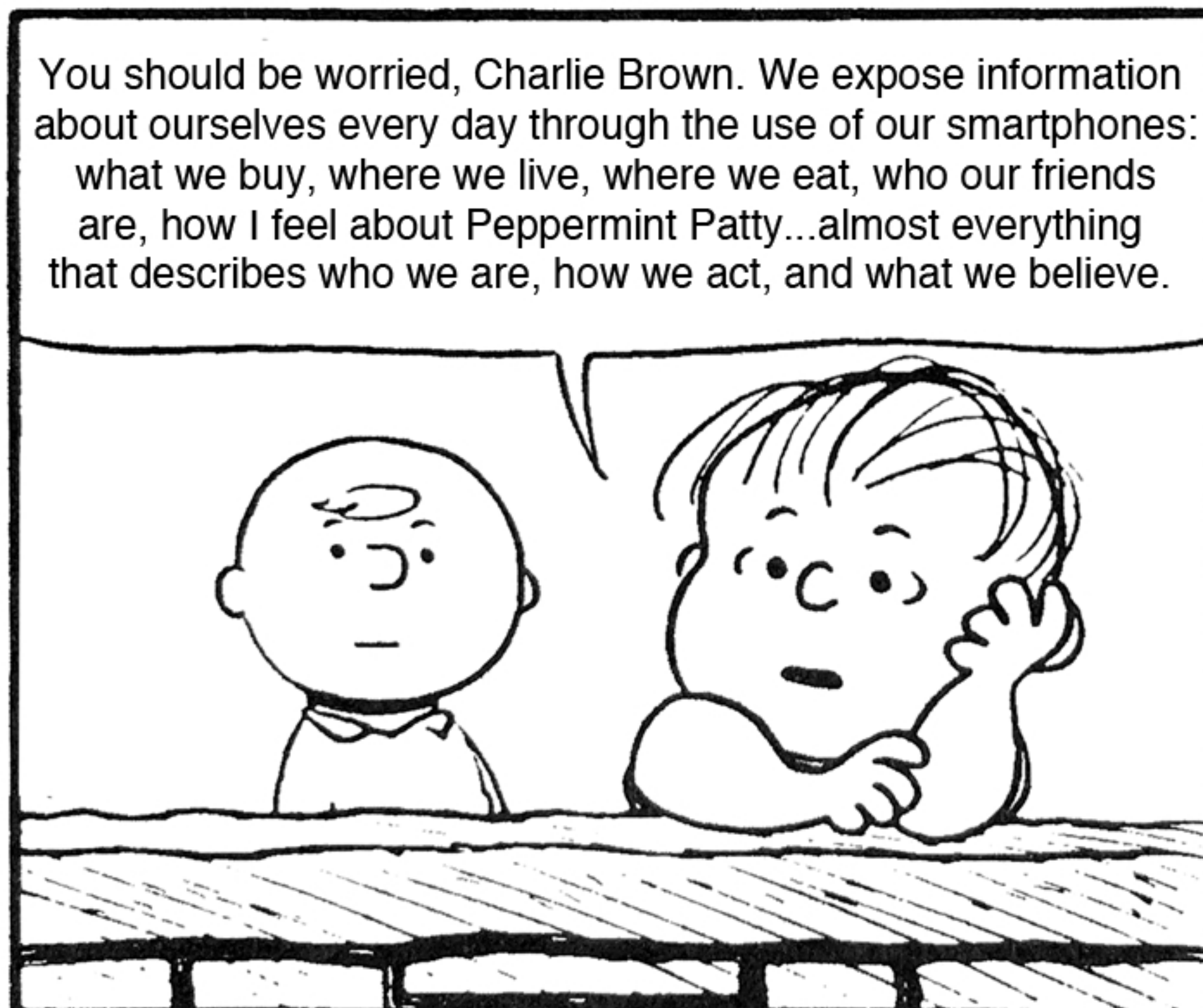
Written by @gary\_schroeder (with apologies to Schultz)



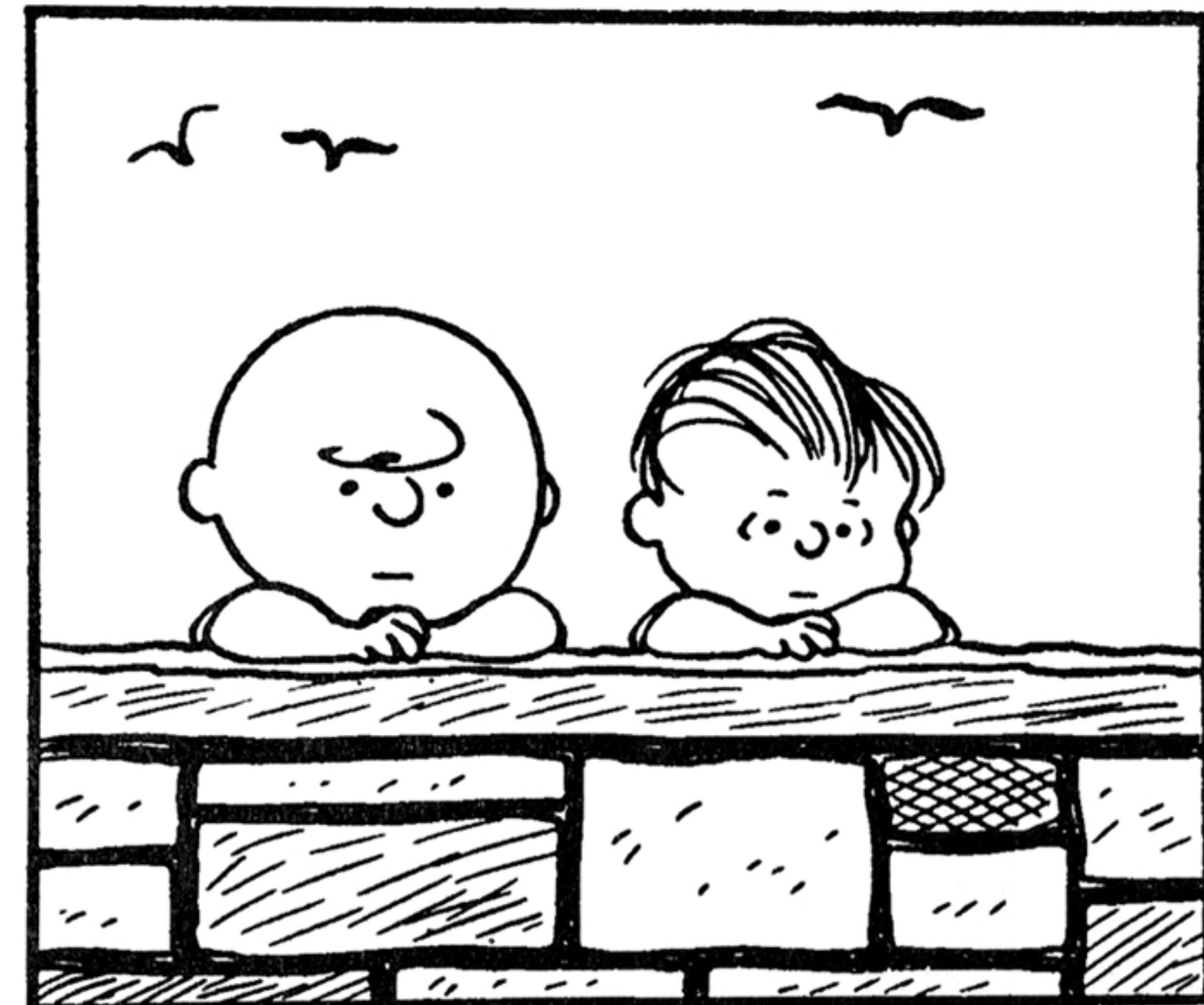
Everywhere I turn, people keep talking about Big Data. Is this just another new thing that I should be worried about? I can't keep up.



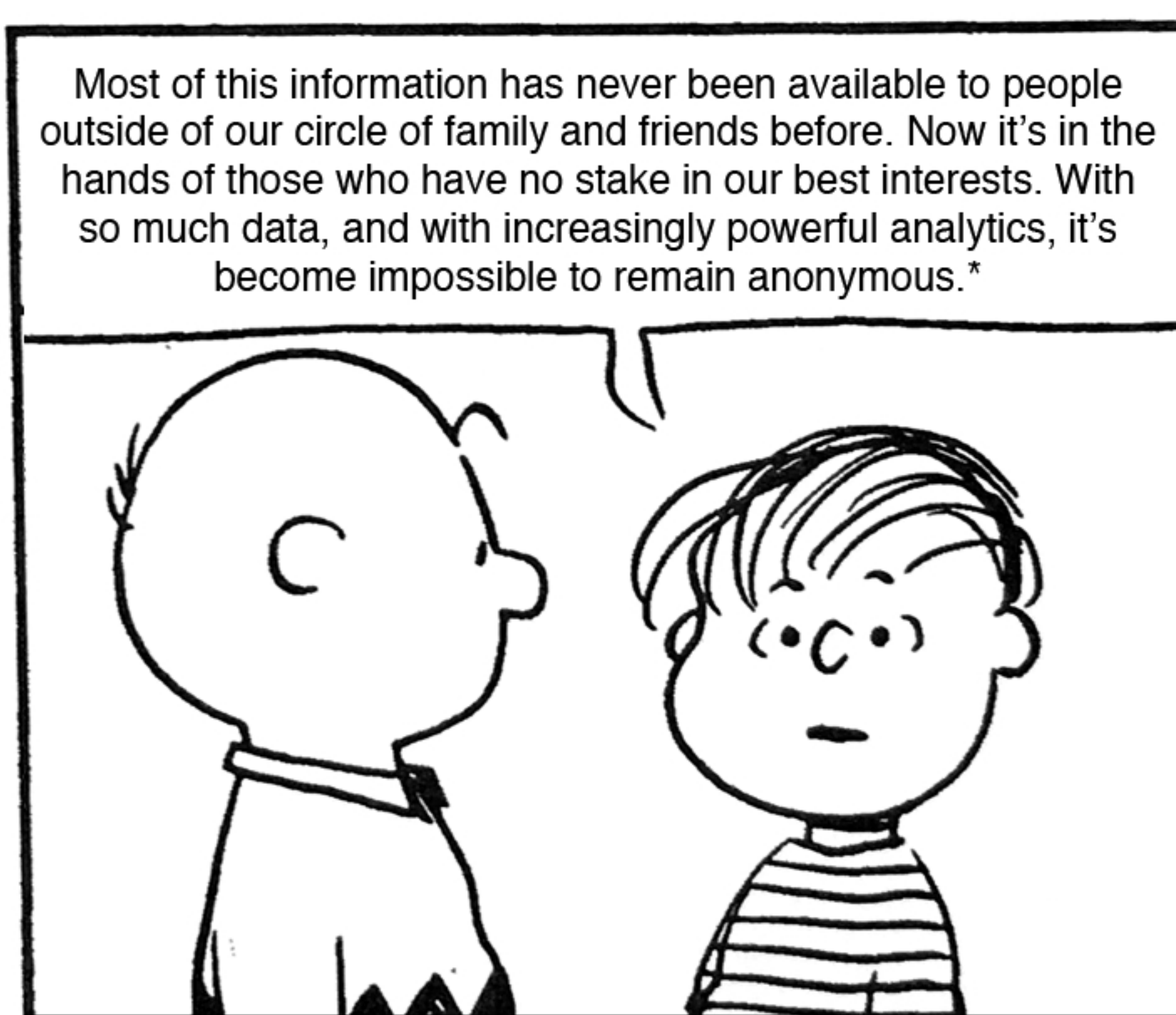
Big Data refers to the storage of huge amounts of information that can be mined to discover patterns, correlations, or relationships that our brains can't perceive on their own because the scales involved are beyond our ability to process them. It makes things visible that **have never been visible before.**\*



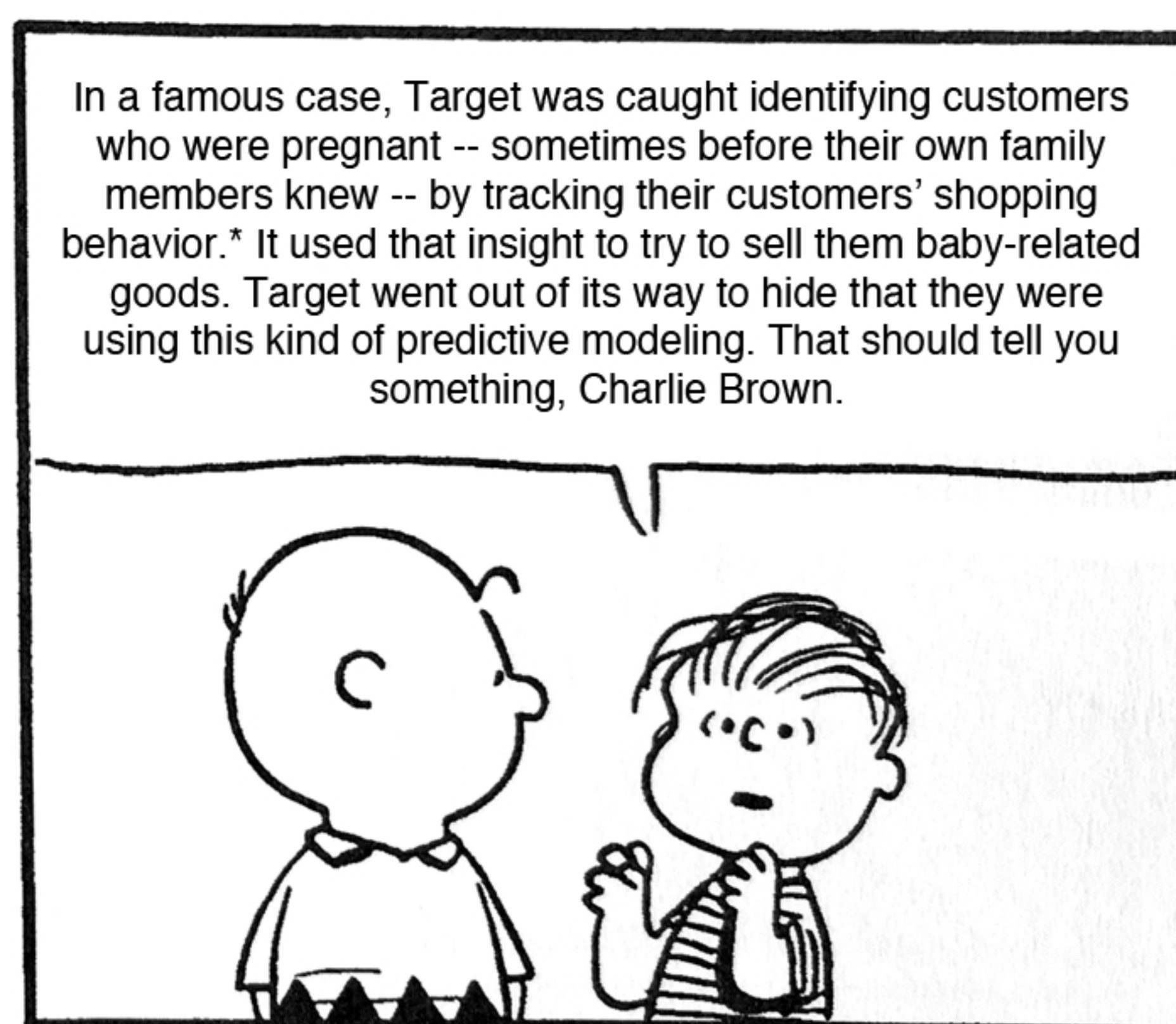
You should be worried, Charlie Brown. We expose information about ourselves every day through the use of our smartphones: what we buy, where we live, where we eat, who our friends are, how I feel about Peppermint Patty...almost everything that describes who we are, how we act, and what we believe.



\*Jay, 2012.

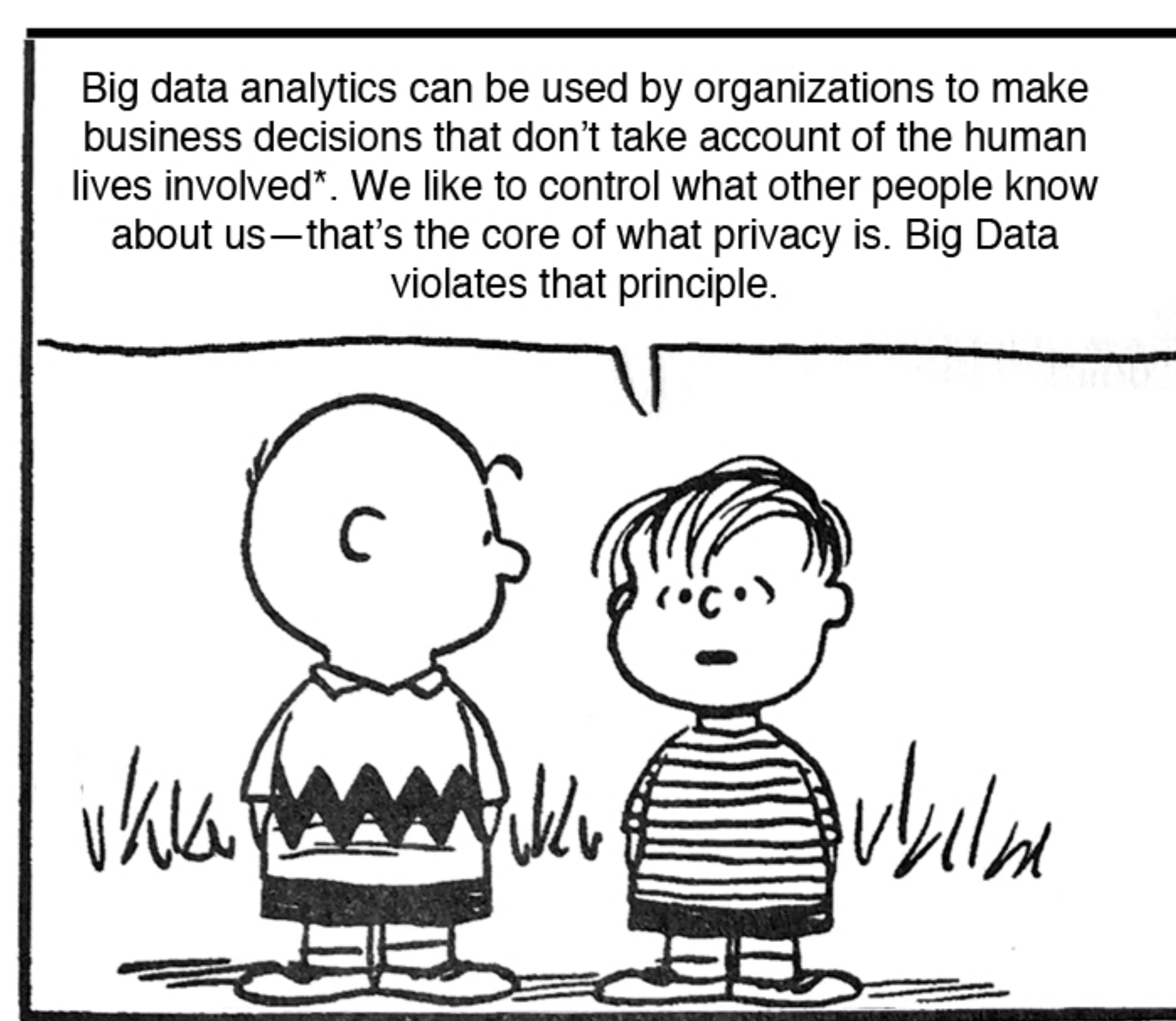


Most of this information has never been available to people outside of our circle of family and friends before. Now it's in the hands of those who have no stake in our best interests. With so much data, and with increasingly powerful analytics, it's become impossible to remain anonymous.\*



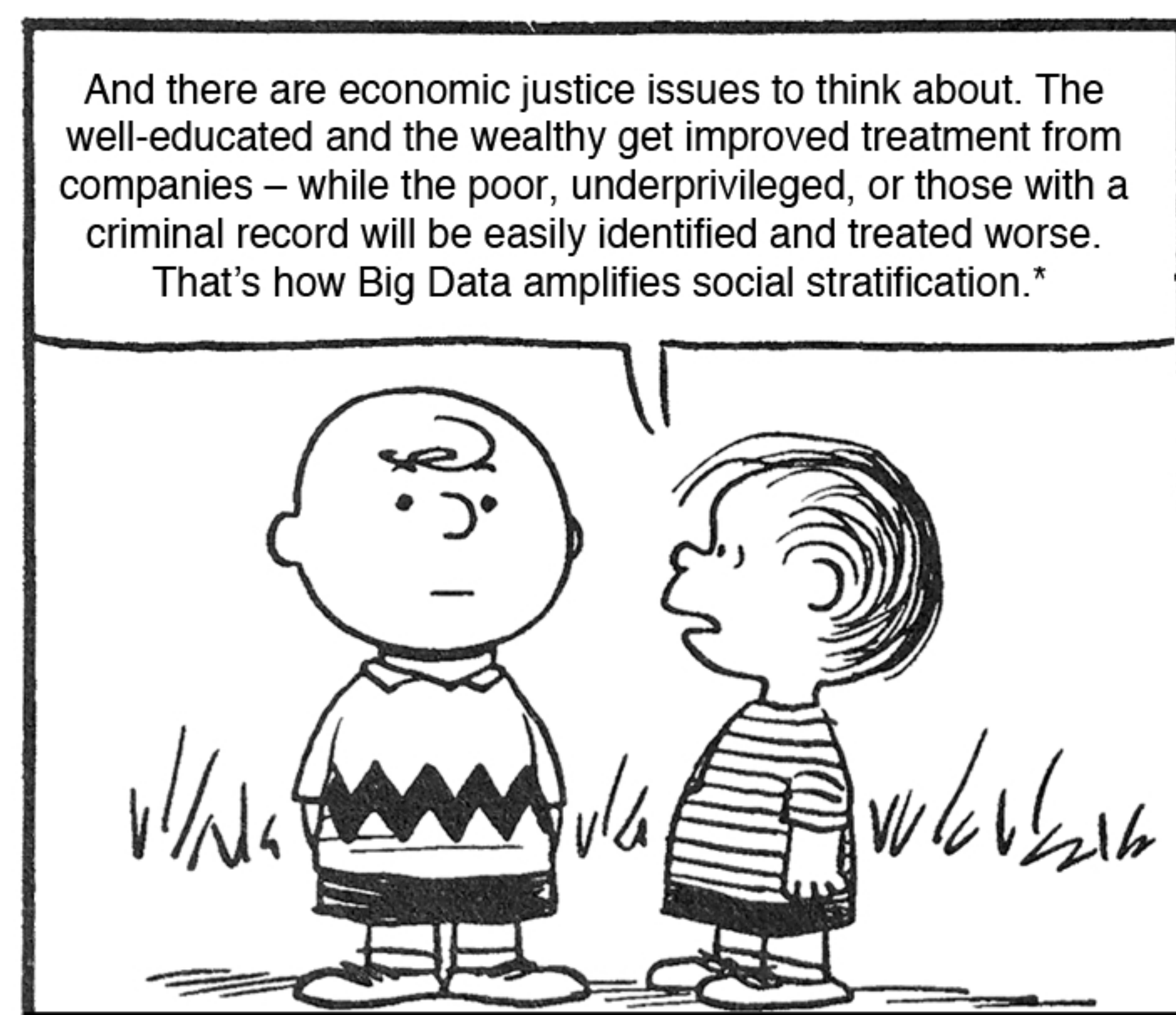
In a famous case, Target was caught identifying customers who were pregnant -- sometimes before their own family members knew -- by tracking their customers' shopping behavior.\* It used that insight to try to sell them baby-related goods. Target went out of its way to hide that they were using this kind of predictive modeling. That should tell you something, Charlie Brown.

\*Duhigg, 2012

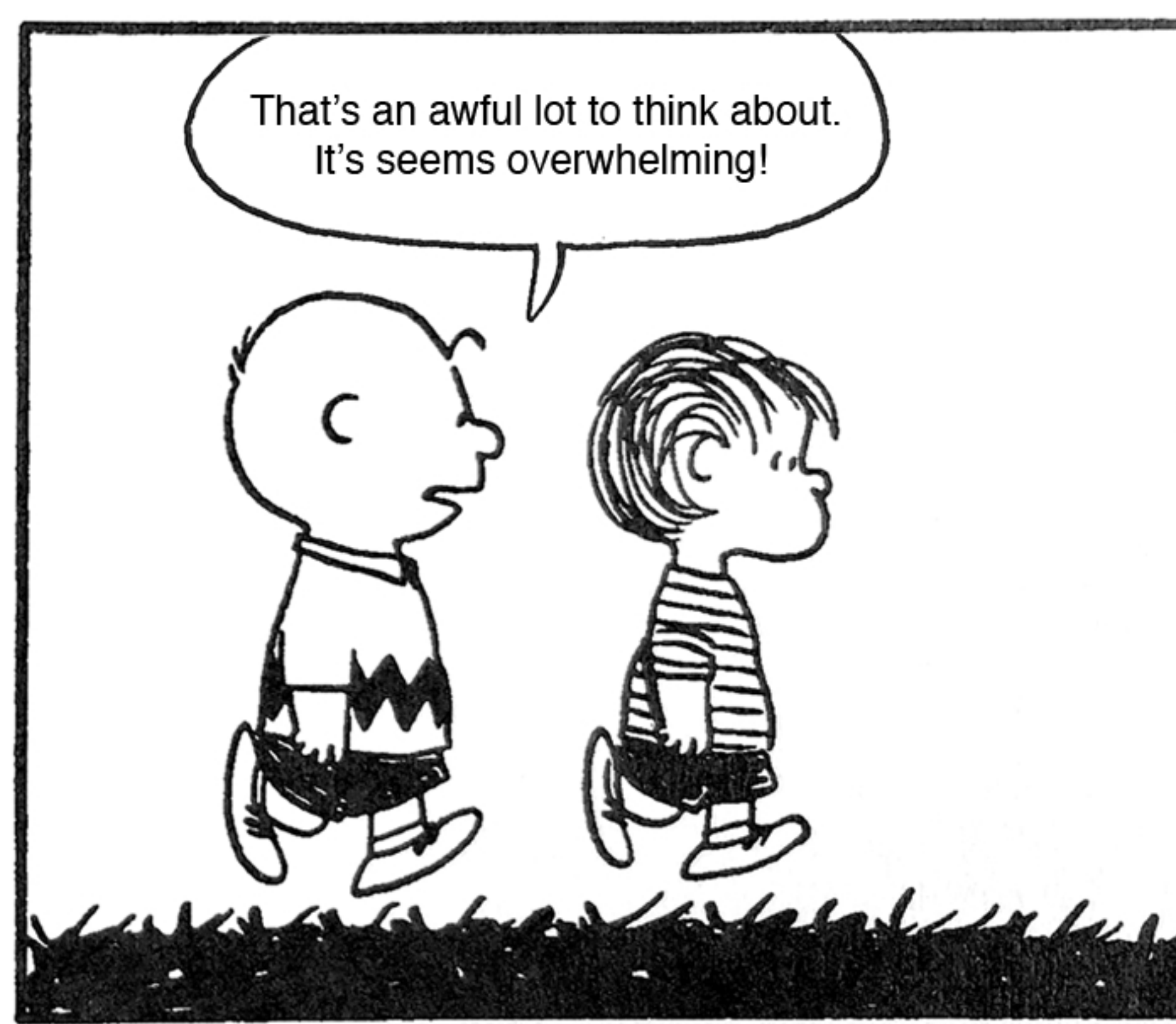


Big data analytics can be used by organizations to make business decisions that don't take account of the human lives involved\*. We like to control what other people know about us—that's the core of what privacy is. Big Data violates that principle.

\*Herold, 2014

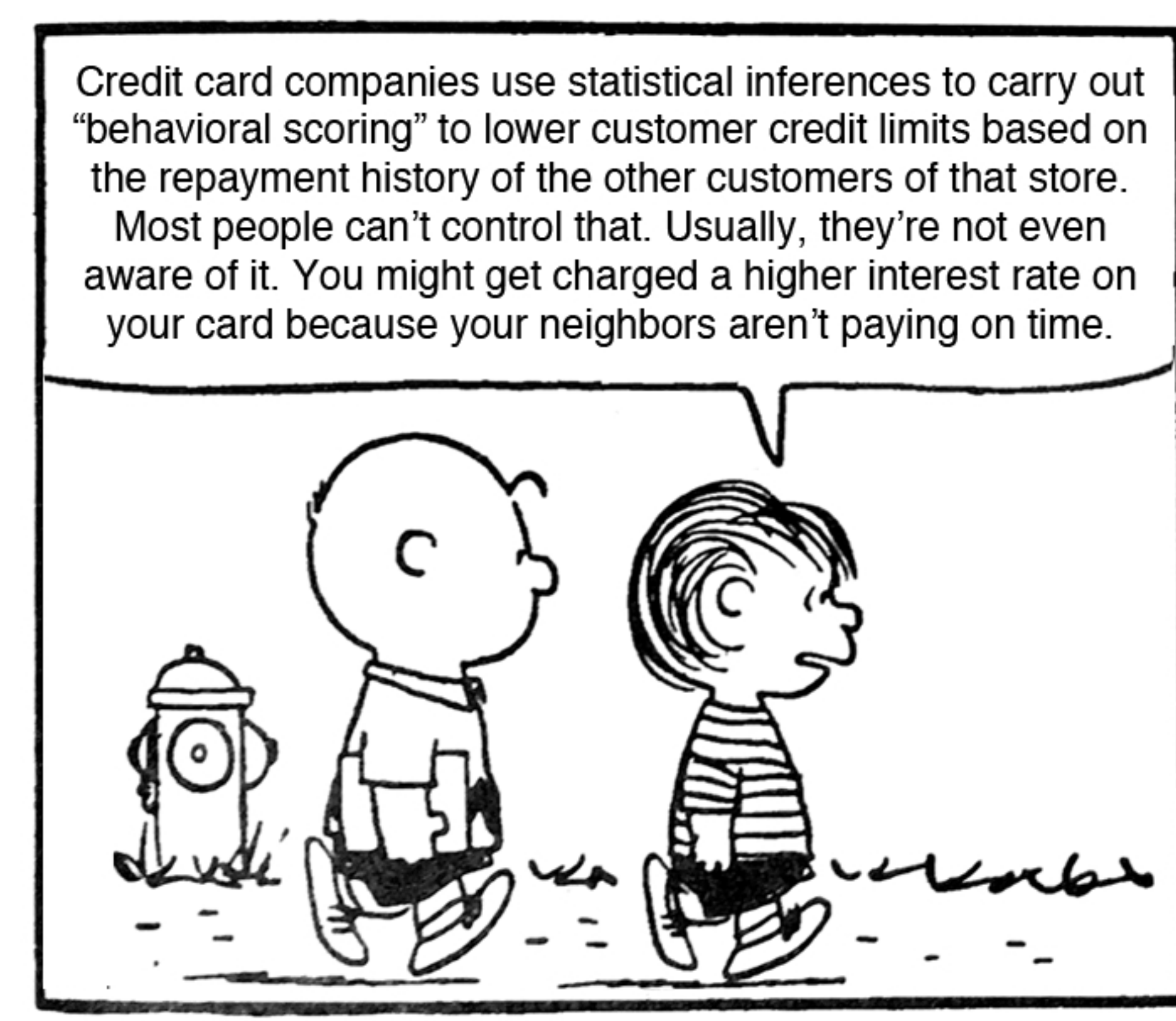


And there are economic justice issues to think about. The well-educated and the wealthy get improved treatment from companies -- while the poor, underprivileged, or those with a criminal record will be easily identified and treated worse. That's how Big Data amplifies social stratification.\*



That's an awful lot to think about. It's seems overwhelming!

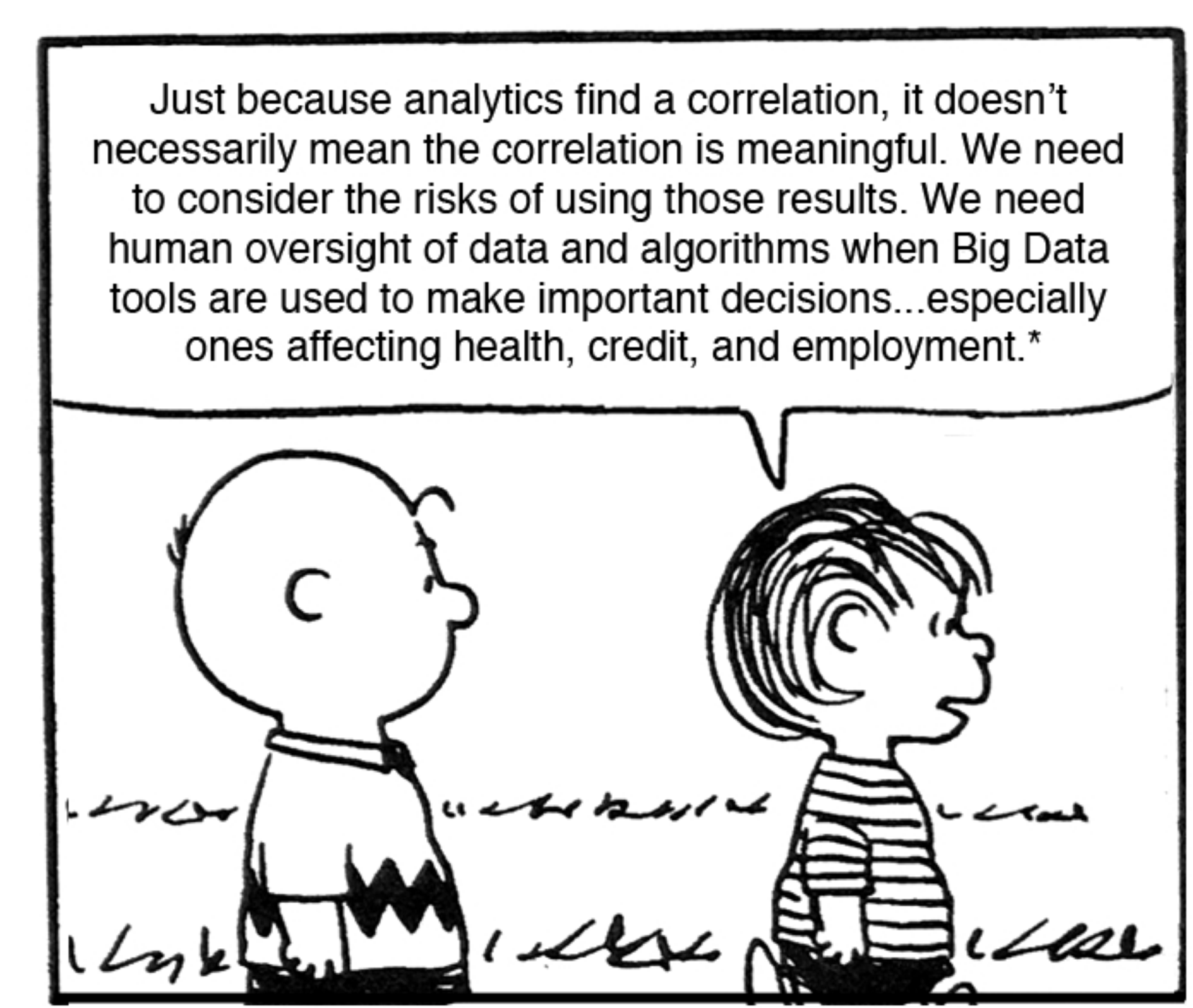
\*Jay, 2012



Credit card companies use statistical inferences to carry out "behavioral scoring" to lower customer credit limits based on the repayment history of the other customers of that store. Most people can't control that. Usually, they're not even aware of it. You might get charged a higher interest rate on your card because your neighbors aren't paying on time.

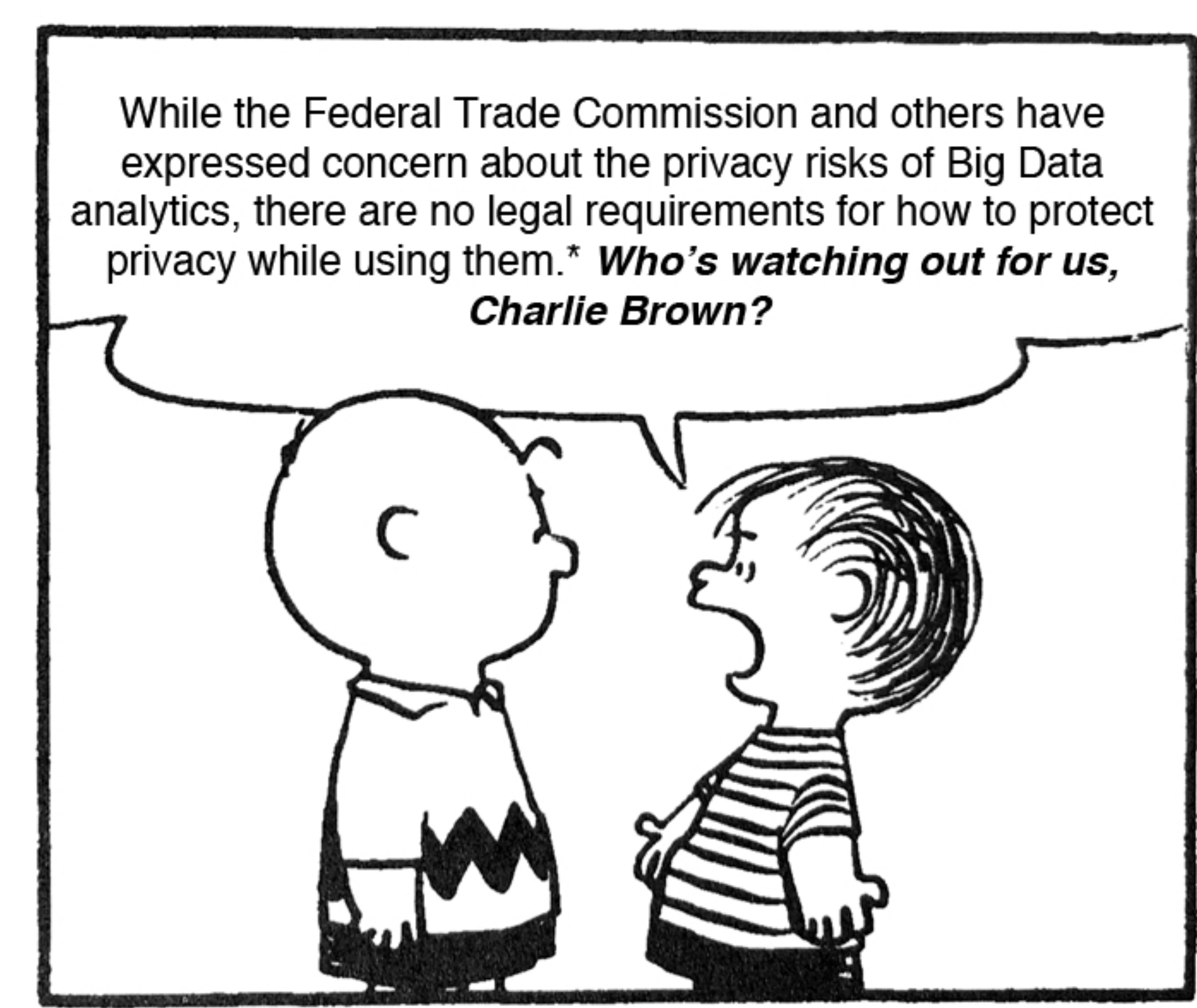


**Is that fair? Don't you have the right to know?**



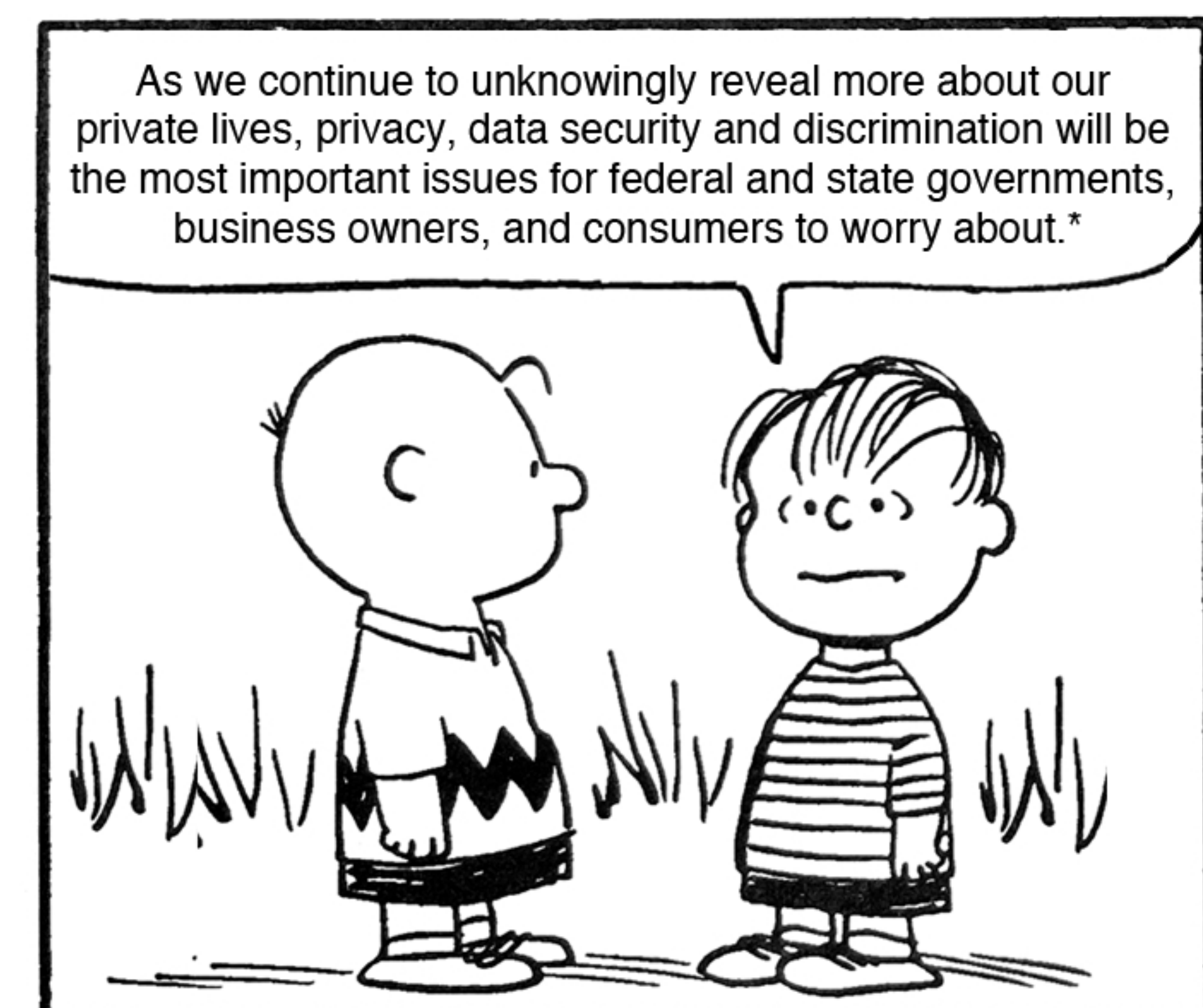
Just because analytics find a correlation, it doesn't necessarily mean the correlation is meaningful. We need to consider the risks of using those results. We need human oversight of data and algorithms when Big Data tools are used to make important decisions...especially ones affecting health, credit, and employment.\*

\*Fair, 2016

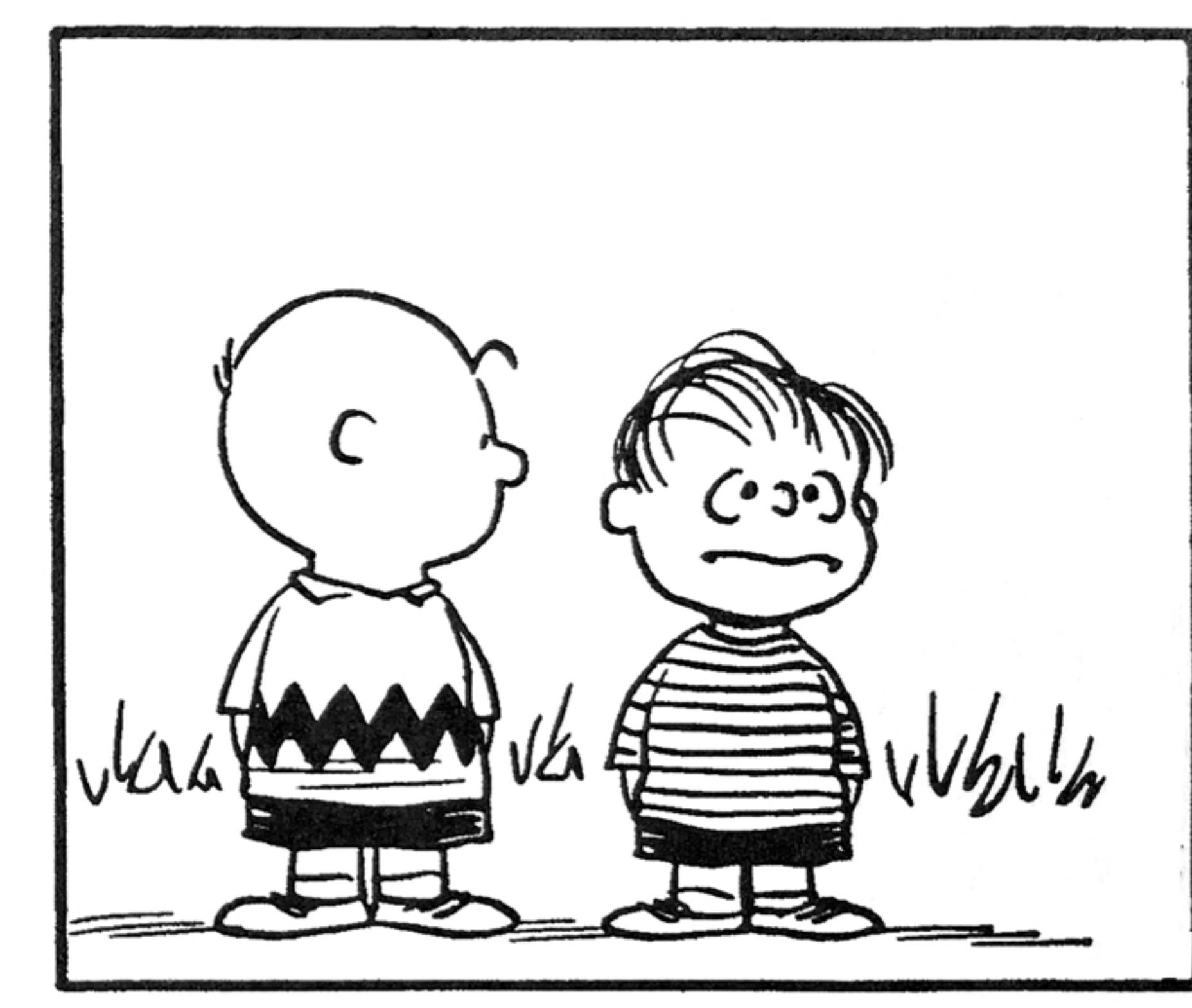


While the Federal Trade Commission and others have expressed concern about the privacy risks of Big Data analytics, there are no legal requirements for how to protect privacy while using them.\* **Who's watching out for us, Charlie Brown?**

\*Fair, 2016



As we continue to unknowingly reveal more about our private lives, privacy, data security and discrimination will be the most important issues for federal and state governments, business owners, and consumers to worry about.\*



**Do you think we're up to it?!**

\*Marr, 2017

All frames scanned from "The Complete Peanuts, Dailies & Sundays, 1957 to 1958" by Charles M. Schulz. Fantagraphics Books, 2005.

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