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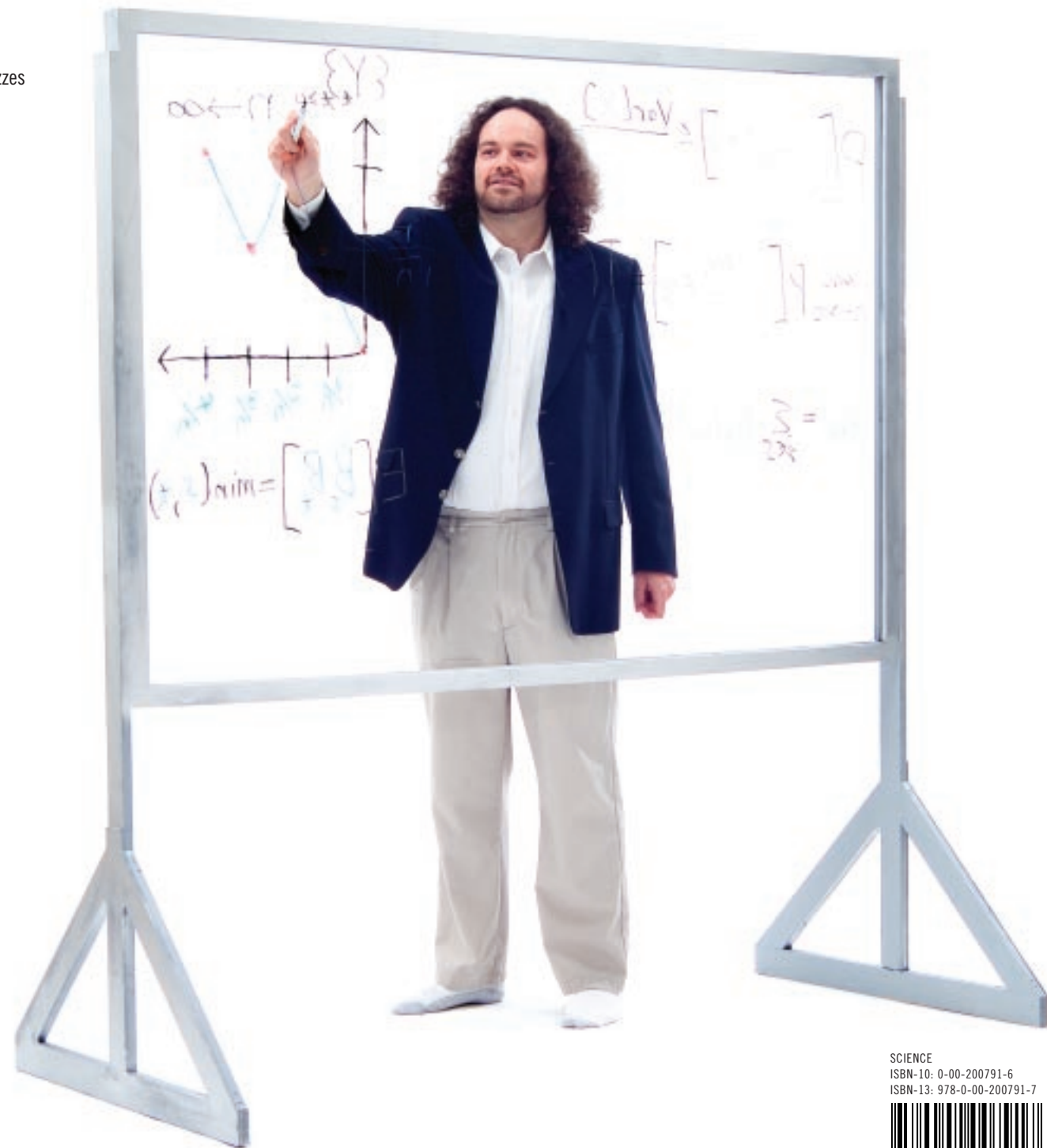
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Humans have always been fascinated and frightened by randomness, and inexplicably delighted by strange coincidences. We buy lottery tickets despite the infinitesimal odds of winning. We watch the roulette wheel spin and think that somehow we can influence the outcome. We hear about the latest crime spree, terrorist attack, airplane crash or disease outbreak and fear that we might be the next victim. We resent the feeling that circumstances are out of our hands.

While no one can predict uncertain events with certainty, we can at least understand the uncertainty itself. Jeffrey Rosenthal reveals the probabilities associated with a variety of situations: how we can defeat the onslaught of spam; the odds of running into an acquaintance while on vacation; whether we really need to buy insurance; and how to increase our chances of winning games: from poker to Monopoly to Rock Paper Scissors.

In cogent, often humorous prose, Rosenthal shows us that once we understand the rudiments of probability we will no longer scramble to lock our doors every time the newspaper headlines shout that burglary rates are on the rise. And maybe—just maybe—we'll finally realize that despite a run of good luck at the casino, the house always wins. What are the odds of that?