

Math Diversion Problem 380

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All my life I kept running into smart people.... In school there were lots of smarter kids. And when I first joined the force, sir, they had some very clever people there. And I could tell right away that it wasn't going to be easy making detective as long as they were around. What I figured that... if I worked harder than they did. Put in more time. Read the books. Kept my eyes open. Maybe I could make it happen. And I did!
— Lt. Columbo to his prisoner
(from the TV show *Columbo*)
("The Bye Bye Sky High
IQ Murder Case")

The YouTube video is found at:

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqCShAtKawY>
Title: A Curious Exponential Equation
| Problem 227
Presenter: aplusbi

1 The Problem

Given the relation

$$8^z = -1 + \sqrt{3}i, \tag{1}$$

find the values of z .

2 The Solution

Let's begin by reframing the RHS of (1):

$$8^z = 2\left(-\frac{1}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}i\right) = 2e^{2\pi i/3}. \tag{2}$$

Now we take the logarithm across this equation:

$$z \ln 8 = \ln 2 + 2\pi i/3 + 2\pi in \quad \text{where } n \in \mathbb{Z}. \quad (3)$$

Dividing through by $\ln 8$, we get

$$z = \frac{\ln 2}{\ln 8} + \frac{2\pi i/3 + 2\pi in}{\ln 8} \quad \text{where } n \in \mathbb{Z}, \quad (4)$$

or

$$z = \frac{1}{3} + \frac{2\pi i/3 + 2\pi in}{\ln 8} \quad \text{where } n \in \mathbb{Z}, \quad (5)$$

where we used that $\ln 8 = 3 \ln 2$.