**[Really Dad? The Adventure: Looking at Colleges](https://www.ctworkerscomplaw.com/really-dad-the-adventure-looking-at-colleges/)**

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**The Adventure: Looking at Colleges**

**Michaela**

If you are like most of my friends, you had your first, second, and third dream colleges, along with safeties, memorized since you were a freshman. However if you’re like me, when someone asked where you were looking, you spontaneously chose names that rolled off of your tongue like “Quinnipiac” or something that matched your outfit like “Brown,” until you actually looked at schools and formulated an idea of what you were looking for.

In April, my parents took me on a five day college road trip. My mom and I had planned the trip months before, scheduling tours at several schools in Delaware, D.C., Virginia, and North Carolina. We made sure to coordinate our agenda in such a way that we would have time for a guided tour of each school with extra time to explore the campuses on our own.  Well, we certainly had extra time to explore as we successfully missed every single tour that we had scheduled. My dad likes to blame me for missing the tours, claiming that my inability to get dressed and ready quickly was the ultimate cause of our tardiness at the schools. However, if we didn’t have to circle around the parking lot of our hotels four times every morning while the dinosaur learned how to use his “iPhone GPS”  we may have had a better chance of making it to a tour on time.

Surprisingly, making it to the schools was the easy part: maneuvering through the campuses while attempting to pretend that the weird, tall guy in the bright orange shorts and the fur-lined crocs was not my father was the harder part. It only got worse when he opened his mouth. One morning, we arrived at the University of Virginia, late of course, where hundreds of people spilled out of a huge auditorium, but somehow the three of us managed to cram into a nook in the vestibule. After a few moments of looking around and sizing up everyone, my dad turned to me with a mischievous grin and not-so-quietly remarked: “Hey, I’m pretty confident that I am the coolest dad in this room right now. I mean, look at me!” Come on dad, I would like to say that there was a time when the “Hairless Potter glasses” and  hiked up-shorts were in, but Mom assures me there was never such a time.

After missing our tour and latching onto someone else’s already over-crowded tour in progress, we wanted to get a quick bite to eat on the patio of a Georgetown café overlooking the Potomac.. After waiting for nearly 45 minutes, my dad asked me what I ordered, insinuating that my order caused the delay.

“A quesadilla and a salad.” I answered.

“Quesadilla. That means ‘house of the day’ in Spanish. Casa día.”

No Urkel, not even close.  Really Dad?

**Michael**

“Dad, can you please not yell: ‘Hey Mick, are you okay?’ when I don’t come out of the bathroom instantly?” my daughter pleaded as we walked into the lobby of the Walt Whitman rest stop of the New Jersey Turnpike.  Like I’m some kind of over-protective weirdo.  We were on our way home from our college tour through some of the Southern Atlantic colleges on the Thursday before Easter.  I hit the men’s room, shuffled around the lobby watching the steady progression of humanity flow through the rest stop, thinking it was not a safe place to linger.  I poked my head into the foyer of the ladies’ room, if that’s even the correct name anymore, and shouted: “Hey Mick, you okay?”  More than a couple sets of eyeballs glared at me.

Someone from the recesses of the bathroom yelled “Freak!” although I couldn’t tell whether it was Michaela.. Usually, I just enlist the assistance of a good Samaritan to wander in and ask if there is a Michaela in the bathroom, but with the irritated looks I was getting from the potential volunteers, I  had no choice but to call again, “Mick?”

“You freak show, dad,” was the hoarse whisper that was unmistakably my daughter. .Now I could relax.

Like all the best laid plans, our meticulously “Mapquested” adventure was doomed from the get-go by a combination of factors that conspired against us.  We missed our official Georgetown tour because of DC’s tangled traffic, but managed to merge inconspicuously (or so I thought) with a tour already in progress.  The ebullient guide interrupted her canned spiel when she spied our arrival saying: “Welcome. Glad you could join us!”  I fought off the urge to introduce ourselves as the Griswold family, but my little Audrey, I mean Michaela, was already looking for a large rock to crawl under, so I settled for a dorky wave.

We missed the American University tour later that afternoon because of a lackadaisical waiter.  No great loss because as soon as we rolled onto campus Michaela crossed the school off her list.  “How did you spend two years here, Dad?”  I wondered the same thing as we sliced southwest across Virginia to Charlottesville where we checked into a hotel three mile from the campus of the next school, confident we would be on time for our 8:30 am tour the following morning.

Wrong again.  Despite my repeated entreaties to coax my girl out of the hotel, I couldn’t end the fashion show in front of the mirror quickly enough.  My stylish daughter was one of the last prospective students to saunter into the UVA amphitheater, where the Dean of Admissions reminded us that in 16 months we would be saying goodbye to our daughter as she embarked on her academic journey.  I could feel Michaela looking up at me, reading my thoughts, as she looped her arm through mine, oblivious to the crowd of her peers surrounding us.