



# “that’s what she said”

a ford & harrison blog about the popular television series “the office”

## A Man of Great Confidence

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With summer officially upon us, we resume the daunting task of helping the search committee sift through the would-be successors to [Michael Scott](#). Turning our focus to outside candidates, this post evaluates a man whose ego is as big as the state for which he is named: [Robert California](#).

Delivering a [Walken](#)-esque performance, [James Spader](#)’s character dominates the interview process. When it appears that his experience selling deep-sea drilling and other refinery equipment has little to do with Dunder Mifflin’s paper business, he deftly shifts the discussion to “universal truths,” literally defining away the very existence of products. By interview’s end, Mr. California has the committee members answering his (largely rhetorical) questions, lending credence to Gabe’s assessment that he may be overqualified.

If this steamroller of a personality were hired to run the Scranton branch, a company attorney would cringe at the prospect of having to defend his deposition at some point in the future. A [witness](#) who thinks he’s the smartest person in the room rarely is. A piercing gaze and lofty talk of respect, love and lost youth might carry the day at a job interview, but such flourishes are less effective during sworn testimony. Unlike [a grizzled Dwight Schrute](#), a skilled examiner across the table would not be unnerved by Mr. California’s attempt to figure him or her out.

<http://blogs.hrhero.com/thatswhatsheaid/>

And, there is every reason to believe that having Mr. California in the manager's chair would invite employment litigation. His proclamation that "there is only sex" and "everything is sex" (perhaps with [lies and videotape](#)) does not lend itself to a workplace free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. Showing his [true colors](#), he would likely tell his [secretary](#) and other female co-workers that they look [pretty \(in pink\)](#), while serving as a [bad influence](#) upon his male subordinates.

Ultimately, Jim's assessment seems to sum up the candidate well: "He creeps me out, but he might be a genius." IQ aside, Mr. California doesn't seem to be a good fit to succeed Michael. His domineering presence would cast a [shadow of fear](#) over impressionable employees like Kevin, lowering workplace morale to a level [less than zero](#). So, like a piece of [driftwood](#), Mr. California will likely move along with the current to seek other opportunities. But, his brief [crash](#) on the shores of Dunder Mifflin sure was entertaining, wasn't it? Let us know your thoughts.