



# “that’s what she said”

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

## Southern Exposure

September 30, 2011 - by: [Joshua Drexler](#)

**Litigation Value:** The exposure promises to be vast when California finally takes the plunge.

Who is this Robert California? What are his credentials? When did he arrive in Scranton? Where did he come from? How long until he does something highly illegal?

Clearly, a lot of mystery surrounds Mr. California. Whatever his secret may be, he is inspiring the members of the Scranton branch to rise to new and greater levels of productivity, camaraderie, and ultimately and most importantly, sheer lunacy. For example, Andy has taken to motivating the team by offering up his buttocks as a personal billboard. Lucky for him, his subordinates were merciful and chose not go with their initial choice for Andy’s tattoo – the image of a baby crawling out his derrière.

And it is not only grand acts of lunacy that Mr. California is inspiring. There’s an uncomfortable buzz around him that affects everyone in his path. Erin kisses him on the cheek after handing him a cup of coffee. Andy calls him dad. Kevin is prone to shouting and angry confrontations.

The Office has a great tradition of awkward comedy. Michael Scott’s social ineptness previously supplied much of the tension needed for the show’s formula. Now, others are stepping in to fill the void left by Michael’s absence, including Andy, whose juvenile behavior rarely fails to produce awkward moments – and of special interest to this blog, potential liability for the company. This week Andy managed to “drop trou” in front of the entire office and offer a vibrator as a sales incentive. These acts give new meaning to what some lawyers call “exposure.” It’s hard to imagine a supervisor keeping his/her

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position after such a display. For more insight on why Andy was chosen as the new branch manager, follow [this link](#).

While Andy's leadership clearly has the potential to produce big ticket liability for Dunder Mifflin/Sabre, my money is on Mr. California to come out on top in that department. While he appears competent, he is extremely unpredictable. He is a big risk taker who cares little for the sensitivities of others. While Michael stepped on people's toes by accident, Mr. California does it with purpose. We continue to get hints that a darker side looms just beneath the surface of Robert California.

I would not be surprised to find out that the show's writers were familiar with [recent studies](#) finding that the personality traits typically characterizing psychopaths are far more likely to be found in high-level corporate executives than the average person. There is even a push to weed out such individuals from the corporate candidacy pool through personality tests. While such efforts may be wise for your company, I'm glad Dunder Mifflin/Sabre took no such precautions with Mr. California, as I'm looking forward to seeing what kind of trouble he gets himself and the company into.