**[Really Dad? While Mom Was Away](https://www.ctworkerscomplaw.com/really-dad-while-mom-was-away/)**

Posted on [**November 3, 2016**](https://www.ctworkerscomplaw.com/really-dad-while-mom-was-away/) by [**Robert Lloyd**](https://www.ctworkerscomplaw.com/author/robtechnetcomputing-com/)

From the [Milford Mirror](http://www.milfordmirror.com/66565/column-really-dad-while-mom-was-away/)

**Michael**

My wife, Lisa, had to go out of town on short notice a couple of weeks ago. It was just Mick and me for seven days. I felt a niggling doubt that I hadn’t experienced since we left the hospital 16 years ago with our baby girl when I wondered: “Now what do I do?” How hard could this be, I wondered. Single parents do this 24/7/365.

So on Monday morning I get up at 6 a.m., knock on Mickey’s door, hear her muffled plea for “five more minutes” then brush my teeth, knock on Michaela’s door again, hear her mutter “I’m up” in a husky voice. I shave, rap on the door again, flip on the light in her room and yell: “Michaela Elise!”

“I’m getting up, Dad,” she mumbles, but there is still no movement from behind the door.

It was apparent I had to roll out the big guns. If you don’t get up right now, your boyfriend can’t come over.” A nanosecond later I hear her feet padding across her bedroom. And then, just as predictably as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, Michaela asks, “Dad, can you let T-Bone out for me?” I see the fluffy fury circling around the braided rug in the hallway, like a plane looking for a place to land. I scoop him up to bring him down the stairs, not willing to mop up or pick up one of his premature releases.

About the time I get back inside with T-Bone, Mickey yells downstairs to ask if I can make her a chai and some cinnamon toast which she will undoubtedly leave unfinished in the truck after she disembarks for school. I stumble around the kitchen flipping her bread into the toaster, blending my banana, berries and protein in the Ninja, stepping over our golden retriever who is, as always, camped out in the middle of the kitchen floor. Then I select my suit, tie, shoes and towel so that I can shower after my track workout. I pack my soup, sandwich and apple in a paper bag, just as Michaela flitters past me, a supermodel lithely stepping off the runway in Paris. She stuffs her books in her backpack, grabs her coffee and toast, as she makes a beeline for the door.

“Can you put T-Bone in his kennel?” she asks, slamming the storm door before I can respond. I am just latching the door to the kennel when I hear the horn blasting in the driveway. I fill dishes with water and food when the horn blares again.

I lock the front door and stride across the driveway to the driver’s side of the truck, but Michaela is already behind the wheel, anxious to get in as much practice as possible before she takes her driver’s test in January. I walk around the truck to the passenger side.

“You are going to make me late, Dad,” she snarls.

When we arrive at the rear entrance of the school, I ask her to park in the back lot so that I can run on the track before going into the office. It is the only hole in my schedule today. We get out of the truck, and I walk with her the hundred yards to the track, donned in my shorts, fluorescent green shirt and loud running shoes, as a steady procession of cars passes us. Michaela hangs her head as if it is raining, walking at a brisk pace.

“Do you have an exam this morning?” I ask, wondering why she seems so somber. She grimaces as if to say, “Really, Dad?” But instead, she says: “I KNOW all of these kids!” cutting her eyes over to the line of cars slowly rolling toward the school. “And you’re dressed like a freak show.”

“So I guess a kissing hand is out of the question?” I ask, grabbing her hand and pulling it half way up to my lips before she twists away from me and jogs ahead.

“You’re such a goober, dad.”

An hour and a half in the books, and, yep, I am crushing this Mr. Mom thing.

**Michaela**

A few weeks ago, my mom went to visit her family in L.A., lower Alabama that is, or the “Redneck Riviera” as my dad likes to call it. With mom away and the boys at college, I was on my own. Technically, I was being “supervised” by my father, but as the week unfolded, it became clear that his supervision was neither super nor sighted: in fact, I felt like I was on a ship being steered by a blind captain. Suffice it to say, the week without mom was a little bumpy.

Recently, in a television show that I like to watch, a woman gifted to her significant other a plant as part of a test to see whether her partner would make a good parent. She was going away for a business trip and wanted to see how well he would and/or could take care of the plant. Based on the way our week went, my mom DEFINITELY should have invested in a daisy or two before starting a family with my dad.

The seven days can be summed up in one symbolic scene: Dad feeding the dog. One night I was sitting at the bar table doing some homework when my dad came in and offered to feed the dogs since I was engrossed in my work. Don’t be fooled, he only made this gesture because he was sucking up after not allowing me to have a friend over because I “had too much work to do.” That was a pretext—the real reason being there wouldn’t be enough time for us to have a “cuddle session” while watching TV later if I didn’t get my work done.

A few minutes after my dad had banged around near the dogs’ bowls, I heard T-Bone whining. A frustrated T-Bone was frantically trying to consume the perfectly-oval-shaped chunk of meat that had been carelessly plopped onto a paper plate and tossed onto the floor. He was futilely pushing the plate across the floor because he couldn’t sink his teeth into the pre-formed hunk of meat.

Really Dad?

T-Bone is a smart dog, but he hasn’t quite mastered the use of the fork and knife. I mean, come on. I tried to give him the benefit of the doubt, by patiently asking: “Dad, did you consider cutting up the food for T-Bone so that he could chew it?” After all, I always mince up the food with a disposable spoon before offering it to my Bobo.

“The dog can’t bite it? Maybe I should have put it in one of my shoes—he rips those apart with no problem.”

I can only imagine what it was like when I was a baby. “What Li, she can’t eat an apple on her own? I see some teeth breaking through her gums. Why doesn’t she use them?”

It’s common sense. If the object of consumption is bigger than the consumer’s head, chances are, they cannot eat it.

Speaking of eating, the meals while mom was away were interesting, to say the least. One night, my dad asked if I wanted “vegetarian Thai curry,” which sounded great. I was puzzled when my dad placed a black plastic container filled with a soupy swirl of chickpeas in front of me. I forced a smile and held my nose so that I could swallow a few bites of the steaming mess.

You’d think that after all of the time my dad spent in postgraduate study, racking up the degrees, he would at least know how to pick out some good microwaveable meals.

Really Dad?

One day during my mom’s absence, my dad bought a cluster of bananas and instead of hanging them on the hook, he skewered one of the bananas through the skin, so that by the next morning all five of the bananas were partially unpeeled, and blackening as a swarm of fruit flies descended upon them.

I realized this was a perfect metaphor for my mom’s place in the family. She is the hook that holds our bunch of bananas together: without her we are unhinged.

I still let my dad think he’s top banana. Sometimes.

**Mike Kerin is a lawyer in Milford, and his daughter, Michaela, is a student at Amity High School. In their column, this father and daughter bicker and banter about boys, curfews, homework, stress at school, dress codes, and a host of other issues that represent the jagged edges of adolescence which they must navigate every day, sometimes with humor, sometimes with sarcasm, always with love.**