

"I couldn't think of an excuse for swimming alone in the pond — across the interstate — several hours after my designated return time!"

FELSHER: That growl came not from bear or lion, but from my dad

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adventures. Before I left home on that hot summer day, my dad gave me three very explicit instructions: 1. Be home at a certain time. 2. Don't cross the interstate and 3. NEVER SWIM ALONE!

The trail following the canal led to a new pond dug across the interstate, but far enough from the highway that people in passing vehicles could not see it. At the pond, refreshing water beckoned on this sweltering day. My dad could not possibly know about this pond and I couldn't image him hiking a couple miles through the forest on such a hot day. If my clothes remained dry, no one would ever know, right? I decided to go skinny dipping, or more accurately, "fat flopping" for a "husky" boy like me.

Enjoying myself so much, I lost track of time. My dad did not lose

track of time! Several hours after he expected me home, I made one last dive into the cool water. When I surfaced, I heard a rather angry growl coming from behind me. Unfortunately, it was no bear or lion waiting to eat me, but something much more frightening. On the beach, my dad stood holding my clothes and not looking very happy!

I couldn't think of an excuse for swimming alone in the pond — across the interstate — several hours after my designated return time! I couldn't escape without my clothes or stay in the pond indefinitely. Technically, I didn't "cross" the interstate. I went under it, but that detail didn't seem to matter to my dad steaming in the broiling sunshine! All I could do was take my lumps — and Dad knew just how to give them — all the way home through the woods and then some!

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