

## **The Real World: Cali Pre-Trip!**

Alex Castillo, Alex Karaman, & Lindsey Dooner

What happens when 30 strangers who (kind of) know each other are picked to ride on a bus, write proposals, have their lives not taped at all, stop being Californian, and start being real? The Real World: Cali pre-trip!

In order to overcome the stereotypes of Californians as isolated fashion mongers, consumed by liberalism and devoid of patriotism, the 2007 California CONA delegation toured a Southern state chock-full with history: Virginia.

On their first day in Virginia, the delegates sauntered bravely outward into the suffocating humidity, ruining their hours of hard work in front of the mirror. They traveled to Monticello, home to President Thomas Jefferson. Despite the fact the delegates were amazed by his invention like the swivel chair and indoor weather vane, they had trouble understanding how he could make do without such necessities as air conditioning, a local mall, and Chipotle Mexican food.

They then got in touch with their roots by visiting Colonial Williamsburg. The bonnets, dirt roads, and horse-drawn carriages prompted one delegate to exclaim, “what, are these people like, Amish?” Later, they learned that the people in Colonial Williamsburg are not Amish at all, but re-enactors who accurately depict colonial life in Virginia. Delegates left with colonial accessories and a newfound understanding of what it meant to be an American on the eve of Revolution.

On their final day, the delegates made their way to the Confederacy museum and White House. The delegates were surprised to be enthralled by someone other than themselves as their tour guide retold the lesser-known side to an often-told story.

Ultimately, while the trip did not bring many elements of other Real World experiments (name-calling, screaming, crying, etc.), it did bring change. It offered the California delegates the chance to take off their stunna-shades and see themselves and this country in a whole new light.