Howdy. Well, let me tell you I just flew in from New York....and boy, are my arms tired. Ha ha, oh man, I am hilarious. Ok ok, in all seriousness now. I’d like to welcome the parents, teachers, administrators, guests, and the Class of 2004. First, I’d like to thank a few people, on behalf of our class, for helping us get where we are tonight. I’d like to thank the teachers for all of their hard work and dedication, and their persistence in helping all of us to succeed. I’d like to thank the administrators for putting up with our hilarious antics for the past four years, and for ensuring that I never saw a bare midriff to distract me during class. Most of all, I’d like to thank all the parents for their love and support, without which we probably wouldn’t have made it here tonight.

When I was first tasked with giving this speech, I had no idea what I was supposed to write about. So, I did what any normal high school student does when given an assignment for school....I went on the internet and looked for a speech I could copy. Unfortunately that didn’t work out, as all of the speeches I found cost money. I resigned myself to writing this masterpiece on my own. Now I’ve been to a few graduations before. And, while I can say these past
valedictorians have made amazing speeches, standing here today, I have no idea what they were about. I'll try to keep this short so you have less to forget afterwards.

While trying to cheat my way out of this speech, I found this nice little template that told me what I should talk about. In three paragraphs, I’m supposed to talk about the past, the present, and the future. It also recommended I throw in some important quotes from old dead wise men, as many have done tonight. I thought about this template and realized: I don’t want to talk about the past. All of us have already been through it. We all know what happened. Over the past four years there have been good times and bad times. But, the point is, we’re all here tonight. We’ve made it. And that’s the present. The only thing I have to say about the present is, “Congratulations Class of 2004.” I realized if I talked more about the present, I’d be talking about me talking about giving a speech in front of thousands of people, making a fool of myself as I ramble on. So, I’m finished with the present. But what about the future?

I know I can’t tell you what the future holds. But, I decided, that since my grades were the best, meaning I spent the most time holed up in my room over the past four
years, I am obviously well qualified to give advice for the future to hundreds of other students.

Tonight marks the beginning of the rest of our lives. You’re no longer required to show up at school 185 days out of the year. You can choose what you do. My advice to you tonight, revolves around one word. There is one word I want you to remember, from my speech tonight: Cheeseburger…Cheeseburger, Cheeseburger, Cheeseburger. I’d like to go ahead and quote the wisest man I know, and while he isn’t dead like the website recommended, he is getting rather old. In his song “Cheeseburger in Paradise,” Jimmy Buffet sings, “Cheeseburger in paradise, medium rare with mustard’d be nice, heaven on earth with an onion slice, cheeseburger in paradise.” My advice to you, Class of 2004, is find your Cheeseburger in Paradise. The Cheeseburger is a symbol for what makes you happy, its your passion, your dream, your “heaven on earth”, and I say, find your cheeseburger, and pursue it. Achieve it. Forget about money, forget about nice cars, big houses, forget about what your parents tell you to do. Find what you love, and pursue it. My brother has a passion for archeology and is currently studying it at the University of Michigan. Believe me when I say the demand
for archeologists isn’t huge. So, finding a job in his field will not be easy, and he probably won’t make a lot of money; but, guess what, he’s been given $3500 in grant money to go to Italy this summer to work as an archeologist. If something as obscure as archeology can make you a success, anything can. Who could have ever predicted that a song about Cheeseburgers would end up being one of the greatest songs ever? I sure couldn’t have. But for some reason that’s what Jimmy Buffet decided to write about, and its helped make him a success. It’s not about what others say you should do, but rather what you want to do. I bet most people wouldn’t recommend basing a valedictory message on Jimmy Buffet. But, it’s what I wanted to do. It’s what makes me happy, so I do it. And that’s what I ask each of you to do. Jimmy Buffet reminds us, “Cheeseburger in Paradise, making the best of every virtue and vice, worth every damn bit of sacrifice, Cheeseburger in Paradise.” Find your passion, follow your dream, reach for your own, Cheeseburger in Paradise. Thank you very much.