

## **C.J. Smith Script**

### **Background Information:**

Mr. C.J. Smith is a 37-year-old man with a quick temper and a criminal history. Police arrested Mr. Smith and convicted of assault and battery after a barroom fight in which Mr. Smith left another patron with a serious head injury. Mr. Smith served eight months in the county jail. An auto towing and salvage company employs C.J. Smith as a driver.

Mr. Smith came to the attention of CYS after he beat his 14-year-old son, Brian, for repeatedly staying out beyond curfew. Mr. Smith is divorced and raises his son alone because of his wife abandoning the family. Mr. Smith has a girlfriend, whom does not live in the home.

Brian is in a CYS foster home and visits with his father weekly at the office. Agency representatives supervise the visits. The visits occur from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. to accommodate Mr. Smith. The ending of the CYS business day is typically 4:30 p.m. Mr. Smith attends a court-ordered anger management program. The case goal is the return of Brian to Mr. Smith.

Stacey Logan is the CYS caseworker. This is the caseworker's second interview with Mr. Smith. The **purpose of this interview** is to review Mr. Smith's progress in anger management classes and to update the visiting schedule between Brian and Mr. Smith, including a make-up visit for the visit that did not take place the previous week. A case aide, who was to transport Brian to the visit, became ill at the last minute and was unable to transport Brian. Mr. Smith was already on his way to the visit. No one could reach Mr. Smith to cancel. He became irate when he arrived at the office and an agency representative told him that Brian would not be coming. Mr. Smith took unpaid time off from work. Stacey Logan was on vacation that week. The caseworker covering the visit felt very intimidated by Mr. Smith and his verbal abuse of the worker and agency.

### **Tuning in to Self:**

Worker is anxious; every contact with Mr. Smith generates some apprehension because of the possibility of an angry confrontation

### **Tuning in to Others:**

Worker can appreciate that Mr. Smith would feel upset taking time off from work without pay, then not seeing his son

### **Tuning in to the Environment/Situation/Safety:**

Safety is always a concern with Mr. Smith. The agency prefers that representatives hold interviews and visits at the office. The worker's supervisor instructed the worker to alert a supervisor and receptionist whenever Mr. Smith is in the office. The receptionist, and many of the agency staff, leaves at 4:30 p.m.; however, the supervisor remains at the office until the end of an interview or visit.

## C.J. Smith Script (cont'd)

### The Interview:

Mr. Smith arrives at the office at 3:55 p.m. The receptionist shows Mr. Smith to the interviewing room. The caseworker enters the room at 4:00 p.m. and greets Mr. Smith.

**CW:** Hello, Mr. Smith, how are you this afternoon?

**Client:** I'll tell you after we talk.

**CW:** Okay, I would like to work out the visiting schedule for ... *(Mr. Smith interrupts)*

**Client:** Visiting schedule!, where the hell were you last week when the visit got all screwed up because your people can't communicate?

**CW:** I'm sorry that happened.

**Client:** Sorry? Is your agency going to pay me for the work-time I lost for coming here for nothing?

**CW:** I don't think so, but I'll check on that for you. *(Worker pauses and writes down a note to check on reimbursement possibility)*. How much time and money do you think you lost?

**Client:** Forget it. You folks can't get a damn thing right. You'd probably screw-up any payback too.

**CW:** I can see how you might feel angry losing time, money, and the chance to see Brian last week. I'd like to work on rescheduling that visit and setting up a plan to avoid a repeat of what happened last week.

**Client:** I'm sick of CYS promises. You have no right keeping Brian in foster care. His broken arm was an accident and you know it. I shouldn't have to schedule any visits. Brian should be home.

**CW:** You have an important choice Mr. Smith. You can decide to stay mad and focus on what you think is wrong with CYS or you can calm down; and, we can get to the business of Brian's visit.

**Client:** You don't have a clue about the crap I've had to deal with in my life.

**CW:** I know I don't; however, I'd like to be a part of helping you deal with that "crap" in a way that keeps Brian safe and you out of legal trouble. What can you use right now that you learned in anger management?

**Client:** That's a joke. Those classes are worthless. Have you been to any of them?

## C.J. Smith Script (cont'd)

**CW:** I'm trying to get to the business of getting you the visits that you say you want, but you don't seem interested. What do you really want?

*(Mr. Smith doesn't answer. He sits back in his chair. He has a sullen expression on his face.)*

**CW:** Tell you what. I'm going to take a five minute break. If you want to get a smoke, a drink of water, or walk outside go ahead. It's 4:10 now. At 4:15, we'll start over and try to work on the business of getting you your visits. Does that work for you?

### Client Response Option#1& CW Reaction #1

**Client:** *(No response)*

**CW:** I need your feedback. I don't want to waste your time and mine if you don't think you can work with me today.

**Client:** *(Pause)*. See you in five minutes.

**CW:** Okay, five minutes and we'll get to work.

~~~~~

### Client Response Option#2 & CW Reaction #2

**Client:** Maybe what works for me is kicking some butt.

*(The worker determines that the risk to personal safety, while elevated, is not at a point that the worker needs to terminate the interview or seek assistance.)*

**CW:** How has kicking butt helped you to keep your freedom and have your son with you?

**Client:** At least people know I mean business.

**CW:** Even if that message gets you eight months in jail and the placement of your son? There is a saying that goes, "If what you are doing doesn't work, stop doing it, and do something else." You have an opportunity right now to do something else instead of threatening me. It's now 4:15. Let's take a five minute break and try to get to the business of working on your visits. Are you willing to do that?

## C.J. Smith Script (cont'd)

**Client:** *(Silence)*

**CW:** Silence isn't good enough. I need to know if you will control your anger, not threaten me, and begin to work with me.

**Client:** *(Pause)* All right, see ya' in five minutes.

**CW:** Thank you.

---

### Client Response Option#3 & CW Reaction #3

**Client:** Maybe what works for me is kicking some caseworker butt.

*(Based on the client's words and increased agitation, the worker determines that the risk to personal safety is high, and that the worker cannot safely continue the interview.)*

*Without comment, the worker gets up and leaves the interviewing room. The worker goes to the supervisor and conveys concerns. The supervisor calls the police. The supervisor alerts the remaining staff and tells them to use an alternate exit from the office.*

*The caseworker returns in ten minutes with the CYS supervisor and Deputy Bentley from the County Sheriffs Office.)*

**Supervisor:** Mr. Smith, your last comment about "kicking some caseworker butt" is a clear threat with the intention to harm. I asked Deputy Bentley from the Sheriff's Office to be present so you understand the consequences of those kinds of threats.

You have another appointment with Caseworker Logan at 2:00 p.m. next Wednesday at this office to discuss visitation with Brian. *(Hands Mr. Smith the appointment notice)*. Deputy Bentley agreed to be present. If you fail to arrive at this appointment or cannot manage your anger in the future, CYS will request a hearing in Family Court to review visitation. If a caseworker believes him or herself unsafe in your presence, then Brian is also unsafe in your presence. You are to leave the office now.

*(Deputy Bentley escorts Mr. Smith out of the office and off the premises.)*