

## THOMPSON/JACOBS SCRIPT Part I

Read along as caseworker Isaac Thompson makes his first face to face contact with father Chuck Jacobs. The use of the various Shulman skills will be noted throughout the interview process.

Caseworker I appreciate your willingness to meet with me. Mr. Jacobs. What would you prefer that I call you?

Mr. Jacobs I go by Chuck. You can call me that.

Caseworker Chuck it is then. As I previously discussed with you on the phone, I'm here to discuss your daughter Katie and our involvement (clarifying purpose). From what you told me, you haven't been actively involved with your daughter for some time. Could you tell me how that came about (open-ended question)?

Mr. Jacobs Well it's kind of a complicated story. Jennifer and I dated in high school. She got pregnant her sophomore year. I was a senior. We married shortly after Katie was born. Jennifer tried to stay in school but she eventually dropped out. I finished school and got some work. The marriage didn't last. She was just impossible to live with. Nothing ever satisfied her. Drugs and other guys were always more important to her than having a family. She stayed home to raise Katie. It didn't seem like she put much effort into it though. The house was always a mess. When I came home, she expected me to care for Katie even though I'd been working my butt off all day. The marriage didn't last much more than a year. We've been apart for four years now.

Caseworker So after the two of you called it quits, can you describe what happened regarding your relationship with Katie (open-ended question)?

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- Mr. Jacobs I stayed involved for awhile. Jennifer kept throwing crap my way. She always wanted more money from me. That's all I ever heard from her. She told me, no money, no kid. Then she started seeing this guy for awhile. He would actually threaten me when I came over to spend time with my daughter.
- Caseworker Sounds like it was a very difficult time for you. It must have hurt not being able to see your child as much as you would have liked to (reaching for feelings, tuning in to self)?
- Mr. Jacobs No Kidding! It hurt like hell. No one would help me. I tried to get an attorney, but who has that kind of money.
- Caseworker I appreciate your willingness to share this information with me (reaching for feedback). It's important for me to get information from both of the parents.
- What I'd like to do today is discuss with you how we are planning for your daughter's permanency (clarifying role and purpose). State and federal laws require us to ensure that Katie has a permanent home within 15 months. She has been in a foster home the last three months. Are you interested in reconnecting with your daughter (closed question)?
- Mr. Jacobs It's Jennifer that you have the problem with (reacting defensively). You took Katie away from her! What do you want from me?
- Caseworker I understand that this has to be upsetting and confusing for you (reaching for feelings). We felt the need to ensure your daughter's safety. At times, that involves removing a child from the home (issue of authority). Our goal, whenever possible, is to return a child to their home (clarifying purpose). In this case that would be Jennifer's home. If that is not possible, we need to look at other relatives as a permanent placement. That certainly involves you as the father as well as other relatives. We

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feel that it is important for a child to have a relationship with her father and other family members (conveying information).

Mr. Jacobs Well I certainly don't think Katie should be returned to her mother. It sure doesn't sound like she's changed any. She can't handle her own problems. How's she going to care for a five year old little girl?

Caseworker It seems like you have concerns about mom's parenting ability (tuning in to others). I would like to spend some time explaining how we are planning for Katie's permanence. Remember when I said we are required to place your daughter in a permanent home within 15 months (closed question)?

Mr. Jacobs Yeah, I remember.

Caseworker In order for Katie to have a permanent home in that time period, we develop what is called a concurrent plan. That just means we work on two things at once. The first thing we work on is making her mother's home a safe and stable place so that Katie can return. But, in case Jennifer isn't able to provide a safe and permanent home we will also be working on an alternative permanent plan. By law, Katie must have a final permanent plan within 15 months. This could be with mom, you, adoption, or being placed permanently with a relative or guardian. So, the second part of the plan is helping prepare Katie for another permanent home in case our efforts to return her home are unsuccessful (communicating information).

Mr. Jacobs Whoa! Just slow down a minute here. Are you saying that my daughter is going to be adopted?

Caseworker I know this might seem a bit confusing and scary (tuning in to others). Concurrent planning just means that we are work on two placement options at one time. It's kind of like car or life insurance. You hope you don't need it but it's good to have just in case. Our goal is, whenever

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possibly, to return children to their families (clarify role and purpose).

Mr. Jacobs            Okay, but don't expect me to fix this mess. I didn't make it. I don't know that I can take care of Katie full time. Sure, I want to see her and be involved but full time! Where were all you people when mom was playing her games with me? Maybe if I had a little help back then, we wouldn't have to be talking about this today.

Caseworker            I appreciate your anger (tuning in to others). I'd probably feel the same way if I'd been through what you have (tuning in to self). Let's not get too far ahead in the process (redirection). We're doing the first step now by talking about Katie's concurrent plan. We next develop a Family Service Plan that will outline goals to be met so that Katie can come back home. We can talk about that later. We'll work out a plan for you to visit your daughter while she's in placement. We'll also be preparing Katie for permanent placement in another home if she cannot be returned to mother (communicating information).

Mr. Jacobs            So what if I decide not to participate in this whole thing? I've got a girlfriend now. We're talking about getting married and having children of our own.

Caseworker            That is an option you have. It seems that after all this time you're a little hesitant about getting involved in Katie's life but you also care about her a great deal (tuning in to others). I'm hoping that we can develop a plan together that works for you and is good for Katie (clarifying purpose). As I said, it is important for Katie to get to know her father and it seems you'd like to get to know her better too.

Mr. Jacobs            I care about her a lot. I just don't know that I can raise her.

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Caseworker We can find that out though the visits you'll be having with your daughter and our meetings. For today, it's important to know the real consequences if Katie cannot be returned to her mom and you cannot provide a permanent home for her. You and Jennifer will be asked to give up your rights as her parents so we can pursue an adoptive home for her (Summarizing).

Mr. Jacobs And if for some reason I do decide I want Katie to live with me?

Caseworker That is a plan we can work on together. I know this is all new information to you. I will be available to support you through the process.

