



**CASA CASE
STUDIES**

RHODES CASE STUDY

TMC - CASA Appointed at the Ex Parte Hearing

Reason for Intervention: *Youngest child makes outcry of sexual abuse to a neighbor who often babysits for the family; prior CPS referrals for neglect and neglectful supervision for all three children with documented domestic violence and criminal history regarding the father of the two oldest children.*

Children: Rocky, age 10; Dusty, age 8; Angelica, age 5

Ethnicity: Hispanic

Early evening as Ms. Rhodes is putting the youngest child to bed, a CPS investigator along with a DFPS officer knocks on the door. They introduce themselves and request permission to interview all of the children and ask who else currently lives in the home. Ms. Rhodes answers "no one." She has significant bruising visible. Interviews are conducted and after asking about other relatives who might care for the children, and being told there isn't anyone, all of the children are removed and placed together in a shelter.

At the 14-day hearing, Ms. Rhodes attends with another neighbor and friend. The boys' father has been served, but is in jail from a recent DWI arrest. The girl's father has not been located or served. The children now reside in separate foster homes. The boys' foster home is in a small rural community nearby, while Angelica's foster home is two hours away. Ms. Rhodes lost her job and is at risk of losing her apartment. She cried during most of the hearing. She is on a waiting list for some of her services and has missed appointments for others. She appears sad and confused. It is three weeks until Christmas, and she asks to take the children with her to visit her maternal aunt in New Mexico where she reports having lived for most of her life. The paternal grandfather for the boys requests placement in his home in Oklahoma. His last contact with the children was six years ago.

The AAL advocates for increased visits with Ms. Rhodes at his clients' requests. The AAL reports the oldest child, Rocky, is very sad that his sister is not with them. The CASA/GAL reports visits with all of the children and agrees, stating the boys asked several times why their sister could not be with them. The CASA and the CPS caseworker share a genogram providing names and locations of more than 20 members of the maternal family and eight members of the boys' paternal family. The Mexican Consulate is assisting with the search for Angelica's paternal relatives. No family meeting has been convened but one is planned.

RIVER CASE STUDY

PMC Case

Reason for Intervention: Six years ago, four siblings were removed from home for physical abuse and neglect. Three years later, parental rights were terminated on the mom, a serious drug user. The oldest child's father was never located. The other two fathers relinquished their rights. All of the children were adopted by the foster family. Jeremy, the oldest, came back into care very soon after the adoption was finalized. Since that time, Jeremy has had many placement changes and moves – one RTC, two foster homes, three shelters, one group home.

Children: Jeremy/Jennifer, age 16

Ethnicity: African American

CASA is appointed at Jeremy's most recent Review Hearing. Jeremy, who has since asked to be called Jennifer and now uses feminine pronouns, requested a CASA. Moving forward, CASA will refer to Jeremy as Jennifer.

Jennifer also told her caseworker that she wanted to live with her paternal aunt Rochelle, and that she wanted to know where her brothers and sister were so that she could see pictures of them. The caseworker reported that the aunt is someone Jennifer remembers from childhood, but that CPS records indicate that she was contacted at the time the children were initially removed and stated that she did not wish any involvement. The adoptive family moved out of state, and there has been no contact with Jennifer for years.

Jennifer has a history of cross dressing and running away. The last time she came back into care she "shut down and did not speak" according to case records. Two foster placement changes occurred because she did not "fit in with the family," and was not "safe" in the group home. Her current placement is an RTC. Jennifer will begin 9th grade next month. Although very bright, Jennifer has struggled in school. Jennifer did not attend this court hearing as her RTC placement is four hours away, but she did talk to the Judge via video conference.

STONE CASE STUDY

TMC Case - Show Cause Hearing

Reason for Intervention: *Following an FBSS case intervention, CPS is requesting removal of the two children for medical neglect and neglectful supervision.*

Children: *John, age 3; Kim, age 2*

Ethnicity: *Mother-Caucasian, Father of John-Caucasian, Father of Kim-African American*

Ms. Stone, the children's mother, is 20 years old and aged out of foster care at 18. John was born drug exposed and placed in a separate foster home from his mother for four months after birth. Ms. Stone and John then lived together in a foster home until moving into an independent living apartment in Houston where Kim was born.

Shortly after Kim's birth, Ms. Stone took the children and abruptly left and moved out of state with a boyfriend. A few months ago, however, Ms. Stone returned to Houston and moved in with a "friend." CPS opened a Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS) case when John was taken to an emergency room with breathing problems. CPS is requesting removal of both children. One of Ms. Stone's former foster families has been contacted and is willing to take both children. Ms. Stone's oldest brother has also requested the children be placed in his home.

Having been in and out of care since the age of 4, Ms. Stone is adamant that her children not be placed in care. Her case file is extensive. She is the youngest of six children, all of whom were removed at one time or another and placed in foster care or in kinship care. Parental rights were terminated for her and one other sister. Her parents voluntarily gave PMC of her other siblings to paternal relatives. Ms. Stone's history in care included numerous runaway incidents which included sex trafficking. She was given a bipolar diagnosis at the age of 16. She disputes this and refuses medications. Her sister, Sonja, was adopted by her foster mother and is graduating college this year. John's father is "unknown," and Kim's father has been served in prison.

CASA is appointed as GAL at the Show Cause Hearing. Ms. Stone's attorney asks for both children to be returned as Ms. Stone has secured an apartment on her own and has reached out to her sister Sonja for help.