

CAP Cadet Protection Basic Course

Case Study Handout

Stan

“Stan” was awesome with cadets and possessed impeccable credentials. An federal official with a top secret clearance, in his “day job” he was entrusted with big responsibilities. People admired Stan. He was exactly the type of leader you’d want in your squadron.

Name a cadet activity in his area, and you’d find Stan participating. He was ubiquitous, and it seemed everyone respected him for constantly going “above and beyond.” That’s one great thing about CAP – the people are incredibly generous and civic-minded.

Abuse was never suspected. Sure, sometimes Stan told R-rated jokes, but only to older cadets. Adults who were new to one activity that Stan frequented voiced mild concerns with Stan’s leadership methods, complaining that he’d keep some older cadets at his side like pets, but that was a minor problem that surely could be addressed over time.

Because CAP activities cost money, a disadvantaged cadet mentee often was in need of help, so Stan offered to pay the cadet’s way, or lend him money, sometimes into the hundreds of dollars. But it was always kept quiet to save the cadet from embarrassment.

Stan’s relationships with his mentees extended outside CAP. Facebook and smart phones enabled Stan to keep in touch, sending his favored cadets dozens of texts each week, at all hours of the day or night. By talking with one cadet so frequently, it was easy to begin with official business, then move into topics only tangential to CAP, to topics purely personal in nature, and finally to the adults-only topics Stan really wanted to discuss.

When CAP conferences or staff visits sent Stan out of town, he would sometimes have his favorite cadet in tow. (At the time, CAP allowed one-on-one contact, so there was nothing technically wrong with Stan and a cadet driving alone together for several hours en route to a conference, and besides, the cadet’s mom gave permission.)

For long distance trips, he’d rent a hotel room. Knowing that his cadet travel partner could not afford a room of his own, Stan would share. At night, to wind down, Stan and the cadet would watch TV, or just for harmless fun, Stan would turn to the pornographic channels. And after watching for a while, well, he’d go just a little further.

Then, during one Facebook chat, Stan reminded the cadet of the fun they had watching movies and asked if the cadet wanted to meet up again, go to a hotel, drink beer and have “some more fun” together.

Little did Stan know that the cadet came to realize that this was an abusive relationship. The cadet had found the courage to tell Mom, who called the police. With the family’s permission, the authorities had taken control over the cadet’s Facebook. When Stan messaged the cadet, proposing they meet up, the police were waiting.

“I know how it looks and how I’m labeled,” Stan said in response to news reports of his arrest, “but it’s not what it appears.” A month after making this statement, Stan pled guilty to charges that sent him to prison for ten years.

Capt Arnold & Cadet Curry

Cadet Curry was a troubled young woman. Fortunately, CAP's structure and positive role models were a good influence in her life.

Capt Arnold, her squadron commander, wanted to help. A longtime CAP volunteer, he had seen other troubled youth come through the program and knew that adult leaders could make a real difference in kids' lives.

Aware that the Curry family could not drive their cadet to CAP, Capt Arnold routinely brought her to and from CAP meetings. It was so important, he believed, for Cadet Curry to stay active as a cadet. Her cadet peers were pretty good kids. Many were college-bound. Every way you looked at it, CAP had much to offer to Cadet Curry.

One day, Cadet Curry was talking with Capt Arnold when she let slip the fact that she often spent Saturday nights drinking with some older boys and having sex. Was this a plea for help? Evidence that this disadvantaged kid was at risk for big trouble in the near future?

During Capt Arnold's and Cadet Curry's drive home together, Capt Arnold suggested they stop for ice cream. They each got their sundae and sat down at a picnic table, in full view of several other restaurant patrons. As gently as he could, Capt Arnold told Cadet Curry, "The drinking and the sex you mentioned . . . You're on the wrong path. You're hanging out with the wrong crowd. You'll be happier and more successful if you break ties with that group and instead focus on school and CAP activities. I think you've got a lot of friends in the other cadets."

Two weeks later, Cadet Curry tells her mom that Capt Arnold had been pressuring her to discuss details of her sex life. She claimed that Capt Arnold was a dirty old creep who wanted her to watch porn on his home computer so she would see how vile and disgusting pre-marital sex is. The next day, on the mother's complaint, the police arrest Capt Arnold for contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Capt Arnold denies any wrongdoing. He's the good guy, the role model trying to steer this cadet toward a positive, safe path. "I never asked her details about her sexual history, I never suggested she come to my house, let alone watch porn with me," he tells the police.

"But you did spend a lot of time alone with her?" asks the police officer.

"No," Capt Arnold replies.

"The family says you gave her rides to CAP, on your own, all the time."

"Yes, just to be helpful."

"We've found several emails and text messages where you're asking her where she is, what she's doing, and if you can see her. Isn't that a little strange? Do most men your age exchange frequent texts with fifteen-year-old girls?"

"I was just trying to get her to stay active in CAP, and to show her that I care about her well-being. I've been married for forty years and have grandkids her age. Don't be sick."

"And you've been seen talking with her at the ice cream shop, alone."

"Yes. But I didn't do anything wrong."

"And yet she says you know about her boyfriends and you always want her to tell you about her sex life."