

Cheyenne Scenario

Hi, my name's Cheyenne and I'm a 32-year-old woman. I teach middle school science.

I'll just tell you what you already know. I was arrested for drunk driving last weekend for the second time this year, well... ever, really.

For me to get my license back, I had to come to this appointment today. Then, I have to complete whatever treatment you suggest. Can you believe it? The judge took my license for a whole year this time, but I think that if I do well, he might reconsider.

But, listen, I don't have a drinking problem...not really. I know that it's a problem when I keep getting caught, but I remember from my DUI intervention class that women have more sensitive systems. I think that's all it is with me. I only had a few drinks at the bar before driving. I'm sure I was there a long time, at least several hours, so I thought I was okay to drive.

I hope this isn't going to be a problem for me and my job. I teach science and I've been at the same school since I started teaching 10 years ago. I need my job because I'm a single mom and I'm raising two children. They spend half the week with me and half with their father. I never drink...well only a little...when they are home though. Their father doesn't pay child support, so I'm always stressed about money. So, I have to be careful about not losing my job, you know?

And now, I should be **really** careful because I took five sick days in the last 3 weeks. I just wasn't feeling good enough to face my students. They're driving me crazy — I've never had such an undisciplined group of students. It seems like all my students this year are disrespectful, rude, and careless in their work. They don't even bother to pay attention during lab assignments and that is the best part of taking science classes. I asked my principal for help. BIG MISTAKE. He told me to "get it together" and so, I'm avoiding him now.

In fact, it is their fault that I am in this mess! At the beginning of this year, a bunch of us decided to go out on Fridays after work. We needed to blow off some steam before ending the week. Most of them stay for a drink and then go home to their families. However, a few of us stay later and have a few more drinks. I try to get home when my children get home; I have them on Friday nights every other week. On the weeks when they are with their father, I just stay out till everyone else heads home. Probably, I drink five drinks during that time. It's not as bad as it sounds because I am there for about 3 hours.

After a few weeks of doing this, I started buying wine and vodka to keep at home. It was getting expensive paying for those drinks on Friday. I still go out with my friends, but I only buy one drink and then order soda water. Occasionally, I just add vodka that I bring

from home and boy, does it save money! I admit that I never bought alcohol to keep at home before.

I feel like such an adult. When I get home from work, I have a drink or two to relax. I like it — I feel grown up and it helps settle my mind before I have to grade student work. I forget how inadequate I feel at work after a few drinks. Plus, I think it helps my students get better grades because I don't care as much!

If I had to guess and am truly honest with myself, I probably drink three to four drinks a night. It's not much since I drink it over a few hours and never feel real drunk. In fact, that was why I got arrested. I didn't feel drunk at all and that was after four margaritas!

Maybe I drink a lot because my parents did. In fact, my mother was a real alcoholic. That's how I know that I'm not. She was never able to keep a job; in fact, she was barely sober each day when my brothers and I got home from school. I was so angry with her, you know. There were so many school events that she missed.

On the weekends, my father used to drink with her. They had parties at the house that lasted all weekend long. It was awful! I couldn't get my homework done **and** they smoked weed. Ewww! That smelled awful and just made them all even more wasted. I'm nothing like them — I just like to have a drink or two to forget the awfulness in my life.

I don't know what to expect since I haven't been in treatment before — well, just DUI intervention. Am I going to have to be with...drug users? I've never taken any drugs at all, not even in college. I really don't need to be with people who are going to jail or who use, you know, the hard drugs.

I mean, I guess that I need some help. I'm smart enough to know that being arrested for drunk driving twice in a year means I must have some problems. I think that if you can just teach me to maybe reduce my drinking and not drive, I'll be fine. Yeah, I'll be good then. Being arrested is no fun, I promise you that. I had never been arrested before this year.

Okay, so I'll do whatever you tell me so that I can end this nightmare. Who knows, maybe I'll figure out a way to stop fighting with my kids and their father. They keep telling me that I'm a horrible mother because of the arrests. They're not even willing to listen to me anymore. At least, I get to see the kids still. The judge warned that if they had been younger, I would've lost custody. Since they both drive, I guess it's different. I just want to end this nightmare!