

## Character Profile: Alan (“Al”) Miller

### Demographics and Background

- You are a 24-year-old man.
- You were born in Alabama while your father was stationed at Fort McClellan.
  - Your father was an instructor at the Military Police School on base; your mother worked as a cashier at the base commissary.
  - Your father retired from active duty when Fort McClellan closed but remained active in the Reserves for several years.
  - Your father anticipated you would join the military like he did.
  - You were quite athletic as a boy. Others noted how you could “run for miles.” As you grew older, you developed considerable ability as a long distance runner.
  - Your family moved to rural Alabama after your father’s retirement where you learned to camp, hunt and fish.
  - You were raised knowing how to shoot a gun since you were 5 years old.
  - You have a brother who is three years younger than you; he currently lives in Oregon.
  - Your father was extremely physically abusive to both and your brother as a way to “prepare you for life.” Your mother supported his role as disciplinarian and never interfered, even when the discipline was severe (e.g., whippings with belts and switches).
- You have been married to your wife, Eve, for five years.
  - You met Eve in your rural high school and experienced an instant connection to her because she had been an “Army Brat” like you.
  - You and Eve dated in high school and often had escapist fantasies of leaving the small town where you grew up. You pictured yourself as Eve’s “knight in shining armor.”
  - You and Eve had plans of going to college together wherever you were offered a track and field athletic scholarship.
  - You planned on getting a business degree.
  - Eve became pregnant in the spring of your senior year.
  - Although neither of you felt ready to settle down, you and Eve were “strongly encouraged” to get married. You were told to enter the workforce to support your “growing family.”
  - You and Eve have often thought of your marriage as an “us against the world” situation. You’ve been determined to “make it on our own” and not ask for help from your parents. That hasn’t been difficult since neither set of parents have offered much in the way of help beyond occasional babysitting.
  - Your desire to better provide for your family factored into your decision last year to move from rural Alabama to your current location because you were offered

a highly paid manufacturing job with good benefits. Both you and Eve thought of the new job as the “break” you needed to help you two “keep from just treading water all the time,” even though it meant you would be leaving your family and friends behind. You rented a small house with hopes of saving for a down payment for your own home.

- For the most part, you and Eve have gotten along pretty well. She can get a bit “mouthy” sometimes, especially if she doesn’t approve of some of your lifestyle choices. Your arguments can get pretty loud with both you and Eve yelling. Once she even threw some dishes at you. On two occasions your “nosey neighbors” apparently called the police because of the commotion, but they didn’t do much. You’ve grabbed Eve’s arm a couple of times and “smacked” her cheek once or twice to “make a point.” Usually she settles down when you threaten her with “you want some more of that?” but you’ve never seriously hurt her until several nights ago.
- About two years ago you were involved in a car accident that left you with a pinched nerve. You were given a prescription for medication to help combat the significant pain you were in. You convinced your physician in Alabama to call in several refills for you following the move because you hadn’t found a new doctor yet. If you don’t “stay ahead of the pain” it really gets the best of you and you get really belligerent and mean.
- You have three children:
  - ♦ **Hailey, age 5**  
You really love Hailey and consider her your “little princess” and a

“daddy’s girl.” She can be strong willed, like her mother, but it used to not really be a problem. Lately though, she has been more like a “space cadet” and “staring off into space” and “not listening.” Even her teacher mentioned this at her teacher conference. Although you do not like giving her spankings, you are supportive of using physical discipline because “nothing else seems to work.”

#### ♦ **Jonah, age 2**

Jonah is your “little man;” you were very grateful to have a son when he was born. You weren’t much help to Eve after his birth because you were involved in the car accident shortly after they got home from the hospital and were “pretty out of it” for a couple of months. Jonah is “fearless” and “almost has a death wish;” he climbs into and out of everything. Often, Jonah really gets on your nerves — his tendency to be an “escape artist” has really been causing some problems lately. You’ve had to take some pretty drastic measures to keep him in the house — you found an old dog crate that someone was pitching and you and Eve lock him in there if someone can’t watch him like a hawk. You know already that he is one whose “butt is going to get beat” all the time.

#### ♦ **Tobias (“Toby”), age 3 months**

Toby was a “surprise” baby that no one was expecting. So far, he seems to be a pretty good baby but “he really has a set of lungs on him.” You don’t take a very active role in Toby’s care — instead you leave that mostly to Eve.

- Several months ago, Child Protective Services showed up saying that somebody had made a “child abuse call” about you and Eve saying that you didn’t “watch [our] kids good enough.” You suspect that it was one of your “nosey neighbors” that saw Jonah out in the parking lot behind the house during one of his “escape attempts” when you and Eve were asleep. Eve had told Hailey to watch Jonah but “you know how that goes...” Growing up in the country — you didn’t have to worry about constantly watching kids — “as long as you were home by supper — it was all good.”

The workers made a huge “issue” of the gun you kept on your nightstand “for protection.” You finally agreed to get a safety box for the gun because they were threatening to take the kids away if you didn’t. You had to help get the house “cleaned up” because Eve was very pregnant with Toby at the time. They also told you to keep a closer eye on Jonah; you told Hailey that was her job from now on.

## Relationship with Other Characters

You’ve got one “buddy,” Frank, that you met at a local pub and hit it off with. You two like to “hang out” once or twice a week. He will bring over some beers or a bottle of bourbon and watch TV. He’s even been known to help out by buying some diapers and formula because he knows things are financially tight for you right now. He really seems to like the kids or “the rug rats;” he will rough-house with Jonah to “tire him out” which is something you can’t do because of your back injury. He also has really taken a “shine” to Hailey; he takes her to get ice cream and gave her a piggy bank that she saves the coins he gives her in. He’s been coming around more often now

that Eve is busy with Toby; he is really good at keeping the kids, especially Hailey, “occupied” so you can get some peace and quiet. It was great at the beginning of the school year. He took Hailey shopping for all her school supplies and some clothes. He even got her a digital camera when he found out she liked to take pictures with people’s phones. Other than Frank, you don’t really know anybody else.

## Recent Events Leading to Incident

About six months into your new manufacturing job, the plant lost a big customer and you got laid off; it was one of those “last one hired, first one fired” things. You filed for unemployment but those benefits ran out about a month after Toby was born. You’ve been looking for work off and on but with your back pain “flare ups” you have to be careful that you find a job that isn’t too physically demanding. This has been really hard for you because providing for your family has always been important to you. You’ve gotten more and more depressed over the last few months. The other big problem was that your health insurance lapsed when you got laid off because you couldn’t afford the COBRA payments. Eve was able to get the kids on Medicaid and get into a clinic for when Toby was born. For you, the worst part is that without health insurance, you can’t get the prescription pain medication for your back.

Frank has been a really good friend through all of this. At first he would come over more often bringing some booze “to help drown my sorrows.” Eve doesn’t really like it when Frank shows up unannounced, but you are grateful — sometimes you pass out on the couch after drinking with him and don’t even hear him leave. Frank also has helped with your pain problem — he was able to find you some cheap street drugs that “take the edge off.” Frank also

hooked you up with someone who taught you to make methamphetamine as a way to “supplement” your income. You know it’s risky, but you’re pretty desperate for the easy cash; Frank will send you some “customers” occasionally who come, unfortunately, during all hours of the night and usually wake up the baby when they knock. You’ve been “sampling” the meth you make, you know, for ‘quality control purposes’ and Eve will use a little every now and then when she needs a “boost.”

## Incident Details

Three days prior to today’s interview there was a big “blow up” at the house. That morning, Eve had taken Toby to the clinic for a check up. You woke up needing some “hair of the dog” and decided to walk down to the liquor store a couple of blocks away. You told Hailey to watch Jonah and that you’d be back shortly. When you got back to the house about 20 minutes later, you saw Jonah had “escaped” again and was in the parking lot playing, with your “judgey” neighbor watching through her window. You were PISSED because the LAST thing you need right now is for a bunch of cops to come nosing around. You grabbed Jonah by the hair, picked up a stick that was lying on the ground and, because he has a diaper on, you “switched his legs all the way back into the house.” You found Hailey on her bed in her room, oblivious, just staring at the wall, with a toy doll and some magic markers in her lap. You decided right then and there that she needed to “learn a lesson.” You grabbed an extension cord, wrapped it up with some duct tape to make a handle and gave Hailey “the whipping of her life.” When you finished, you were a little worried that you might have gone too far, judging from the welts you saw on the backs of her legs, but you also thought to yourself, “She has got to learn to do what I say!” You told her to go in her room and stand with her nose on the wall until her mother got home. You

went to lay on the couch and got a good start on the fifth of vodka you just bought.

The next thing you knew, you woke up to Eve hitting you with the extension cord and screaming at you, “How could you do that? That is so disgusting! How could you hurt her like that?” You managed to get off the couch, but Eve kept swinging the extension cord at you. Finally, you grabbed it from her and grabbed her hair. She roundhouse punched you and you punched her in the face twice, bloodying her lip, and multiple times in the stomach and side. Eve kicked you in the groin, grabbed the kids and took off in the car. You haven’t seen or heard from her since.

You feel guilty about the fight; you’ve never lost your temper to that degree before. You are also worried about where Eve took the kids since she doesn’t know anyone in the area. You don’t think she went back to Alabama because 1) she didn’t have money for gas and 2) you would have heard about it by now. You also miss the kids; you’ve been really depressed since they left. You want to make amends and have them return home. Because you’ve been so down, Frank has been spending more time with you. He wants to be as supportive as he can so you can reunite with your family as quickly as possible.

## Personality Characteristics/ Demeanor

- You genuinely want to provide for your family but believe you “F\*\*K things up pretty routinely.”
- You believe it is your responsibility to teach your kids “right from wrong” but beyond spanking them, you would never do anything to hurt them in any other way. You just don’t know how to get them to behave.

- You are also very protective of your family; if you ever thought someone else was hurting Eve or the kids, you would go after them with a vengeance.
- You are very defensive about your substance abuse, seeing the addiction as “a weakness” but as the only way you can cope with your back pain.
- You have, on occasion, visited porn websites but rarely surf for long. “Some of the sick sh\*\* those people come up with is really disgusting.”
- You don’t appreciate people “butting their noses where they don’t belong” and questioning your lifestyle and parenting.
- You don’t have a lot of faith that the “system” will do anything for you and your family but “make things worse;” after all, “they didn’t do anything last time to help.”
- You think it is important to have firearms in your home for protection. You never know what these “crazy idiots” in the City are capable of.

## Notes

**Interview Guidance/Decision Points**

The simulation participants will be interviewing you following their “investigation” of the mock house to collect evidence following a hotline call made by Hailey’s school.

- If asked about.....
  - The current hotline call
    - ◆ You have no knowledge about the call but suspect it’s probably about the spanking you gave Hailey. You haven’t seen Hailey for three days.
  - The argument you had with Eve
    - ◆ Your memory of the beginning of the fight is vague because Eve woke you from an alcohol induced slumber. She was screaming “How could you do that to her” etc; you assume Eve is angry that you spanked Hailey. Since she was focused only on Hailey, your guess is that either the switching you gave Jonah didn’t leave any marks, or Eve had not yet seen any marks on him.
  - The digital camera in Hailey’s room
    - ◆ The camera was a gift for Hailey from Frank; you thought it was a bit “over the top” for him to give her such an expensive gift, but Frank really enjoys spending time with Hailey and wanted to have some “memories” of the things they did together. You think it is good for Hailey to know “someone else really cares about her” since you can’t afford to give her presents. You’re embarrassed that it had crossed your mind that maybe you could pawn the camera for a little extra cash and tell Frank that Hailey lost it.
  - Sexual abuse allegations
    - ◆ The thought of sexually abusing a child repulses you; you have never done anything remotely sexual with Hailey. You won’t even give her a bath!
    - ◆ If you ever suspected that someone was doing something “vile” to “my little girl” you would react with rage and threaten to kill that person.