

Dennis Chang
March 13, 2017
4th Period

A Lonely Happiness

Click! The television changes to an Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) match starring Conor McGregor. Locked away in his room, Douglas Vohun finds contentment in watching this man land a barrage of punches and kicks upon another. The banter and taunting from the Irishman's mouth induce laughter from an otherwise quiet person. In many ways, Douglas is an average teenage boy: he plays a team sport (lacrosse), does decently in school, enjoys watching action-packed television programs, and plays video games. In other ways, he is incredibly different from his peers; he admittedly has no close friends, does not enjoy anyone's company, and remains entirely complacent with isolation.

In 2001, Douglas Vohun's family moved from Salem-Winston, North Carolina to Atlanta, Georgia, the seventh-loudest city in the United States. Vohun developed in sharp contrast to his environment. The "big crowds and constant traffic" deterred him from participating in many social events (Vohun Essay). Instead he spent most of his time indoors, sitting on his bed and fiddling with an Xbox One controller. Whether he was shooting at enemies on the battlefield or throwing touchdown passes to his favorite receivers, Douglas always found himself engulfed in the virtual world.

As he grew older, Douglas Vohun's Insignia television set became an increasingly important part of his life. It was an escape that molded him into an independent person, allowing him the "absolute freedom" of choice and control – multiple settings, a myriad of channels, and Internet access were all readily available at his fingertips (Vohun Essay). He did not develop close relationships with anyone, instead preferring to listen to music at obnoxiously loud



volumes to drown out the voices of others and taking “late night walks” by himself (Vohun Essay).

In terms of personality type, Douglas differentiates himself from the conventional introvert. According to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, an introvert would “prefer to know just a few people well,” but Vohun takes it a step further: he holds no close relationships with classmates, teachers, or any family members (MBTI Basics). He views most people as annoyances deserving of a “mute button.” He would rather blast Taylor Swift or Adele on his “Beats by Dre” headphones and sit inside on a Friday night than go to a party with swarms of people eager to socialize. On the short ride home from school every day, Douglas has just enough time to blast two of his favorite songs through the stereo in his 2007 Ford 500.

According to Public Health Haverling, loneliness and social isolation may have adverse health effects equivalent to smoking fifteen cigarettes a day. However, the website also makes the point that isolation is “a subjective experience,” mainly harming those who actively seek social and emotional connections with others (Mental health impact of loneliness & social isolation).

Vohun, unmotivated to develop deeper relationships, does not exhibit any signs of mental illness. He functions normally and has a set routine: he wakes up, goes to school, occasionally attends lacrosse practice, and returns home.

Despite his isolationist self-policy, Vohun aspires to be a successful broadcaster, which can loosely be defined as “a member of the media who works in either radio or television” (The Role of a Broadcaster). This would mean airtime in front of thousands, perhaps even millions of people. Last year, he took a step in the right direction, creating a short-lived YouTube channel – through which he interviewed several of his classmates about the educational environment at Lakeside High School.



In fact, many of Douglas's interests include loud noises and expressive behavior. His favorite UFC fighter, Conor McGregor, is in many ways his opposite: he is short, loud-mouthed, angry, and extraverted. Douglas also enjoys playing *Call of Duty: Black Ops*, a game notorious for loud guns and explosions in war-like settings. His favorite television series include *Lost*, *The Walking Dead* and *Survivor*. All of these shows are filled to the brim with exciting plotlines and violent action scenes.

In conclusion, Douglas Vohun is a unique teenage boy. His extreme introversion is not characterized by fear of social interaction; it arises instead from a desire to be alone, a desire to be isolated. He is a recluse through and through. He is entirely different, and perhaps this makes him more human than most. Of course, Vohun's acquisition of a television set was not actually the most significant event in his seventeen years of life, but he holds many memories that are too personal to be made known. As an escape from life's troubles, Vohun can take to his television set and flip to the local sports network, go on a long walk on his own, or simply drift off in his bed. If he feels angry or overwhelmed, he can always flip the channel to a UFC match – in which he can almost assuredly guess Conor McGregor is dominating the competition.

Works Cited

- Battis, Lila. *The Loudest Cities in America*. Men's Health, 6 August 2013.
- MBTI Basics*. The Myers & Briggs Foundation, Gainesville, FL. *Mental health impact of loneliness & social isolation*. Public Health Havering, November 2015, London, England.
- The Role of a Broadcaster*. Exforsys Inc. 26 Sept. 2006.
- Vohun, Douglas. Personal Essay. 2017. Vohun, Douglas. Personal Interview. 28 Feb. 2017.

