

# Headphones

By Gabriel Rowland

Grade: 10th

Age 16

School: Kirkwood High School Clarksville TN

May 1st, 2021

"Hi," my name is Ryan Forte, and I'm just going to get straight to the point. I'm writing this in hopes someone will hear my story if I don't make it. Something is attacking us. I do not know what or where or how large the radius is but anyone who hears it just stops and just starts walking in the direction of whatever it is. I got mattresses on the walls, and I stuffed as many towels as I could under the door, but I don't even know if it works. The fact that I even survived the first day was pure luck. I just happened to be wearing headphones at the time. I still have them on but I'm running out of battery I have a few portable chargers, but they won't last more than a couple of weeks. I will cross that bridge when the time comes. Again, my name is Ryan Forte if you're reading this, just know that I'm here.

May 3rd, 2021

Things are getting bad. Thankfully, the internet still works. Every article I can find is just warnings to stay indoors and cover your ears or cobbled together conspiracy theories saying it's a host of influence, or some sort of pied piper. Some even state it's an act of God. I just don't know but I think it's hopeless to try to find an answer. I'm just interested in how to get rid of it and get back to my life. I'm starting to go stir crazy in here all alone, and my foods starting to run out and soon I'm going to need to venture out and get some. I look outside from time to time but all I see is the empty street and people entranced all walking in the same direction. It's freaky seeing those people shuffling around. I wonder what would happen if they saw me. I think it's best if I just avoid them.

May 4th, 2021

Someone was banging on my door today. I didn't even realize until I saw their silhouette through the curtains. I pulled them back to get a better look and saw it was a girl. She seemed scared as if she was running from something. Her long blonde hair flowing in the wind and beige earmuffs covering her ears as she continued banging asking for help. I was debating letting her in before I saw a group of people running up my driveway. Suddenly a look of terror stretched across her features, and she ran off. The people following after her, I don't know who they were but their features, there was something off with the way the group was running. It was too uniform and that's when it hit me that these people must be controlled by whatever that strange force is out there. I didn't see what happened to that girl but hopefully she is ok.

May 6th, 2021

My ears hurt but I am too scared to lower the volume. What if I lower it too much?

May 7th, 2021

I'm out of food. I need to go out, my headphones are almost dead, and my portable chargers are dwindling. I know I have to go out for supplies, but I still need to work up the courage. What if one of those people sees me? The other day I saw a group get spotted and the whole street chased after them. I don't know if they shook them or not, but it solidified my fear of the

controlled individuals. I hope that girl made it. I could have helped her if I had opened the door in time but, I still hold out hope she survived.

May 8th, 2021

I'm doing it, I'm finally doing it! After hours of psyching myself up, I'm going out there. I just need to be quick, get supplies, and hopefully I can get back before sundown. Anyways, I need to go before I change my mind.

May 9th, 2021

I finally made it back. Gosh it felt like forever. I managed to get a few cans of food from a few abandoned houses. It was weird walking into houses so casually but almost every house on the block had their doors wide open. Walking through the houses, you could almost put the story of what happened to the previous inhabitants together. Some I even recognized in pictures because I saw them walking down the street mindlessly controlled like a puppet on a string, but I can't shake the feeling that it's more than that. More than just pure control. What if the people are still in there and are just unaware of what they are doing? The thought chills me. I also couldn't find any more portable chargers, which was annoying, but I had to run after I saw a group of controlled people running after something or someone. Anyways I hope this all ends soon because I don't want to leave this house again.

May 11th, 2021

I was looking outside the window, and I saw that girl from a few days ago. I was almost relieved until I saw her walking straight into a group of controlled people. I almost ran out to warn her but then I saw that the earmuffs she had been wearing were weirdly missing. Her long blonde hair messy and unkempt flowing in the wind. I realized it was too late, she had heard it, and there was nothing I could do but just close the curtains.

May 14th, 2021

I've been thinking. Well, I've actually been thinking this whole time. It's hard not to with all that's happening, but I've been thinking about death, I know that probably sounds weird, but I don't know. When it comes to death, I have come to realize it's not death itself that is scary to me. It is the aftermath. I don't like the idea of being forgotten and left behind in history like I never existed. It is too early, I must make a mark before I get left behind, and that might be the real reason I am writing this after all, or me being alone so long has made me crazy. Figures.

May 15th, 2021

I screwed up. I went out again to get some more food and one of them saw me. I was in a house when suddenly a man in a plaid shirt walked in and spotted me making my way out the back and he lunged for me. It looked like he was speaking, but I couldn't hear over the sound of my headphones blasting music. I sprinted down the road toward my house thankfully only drawing the attention of the one. But when I got back inside, I saw that he was just standing there not moving just staring at me, waiting. It's been a few hours and I'm afraid he's not going to leave.

May 16th, 2021

He's not moving. My eyes are practically glued to the window hoping he will lose interest, but he won't leave. I don't know what I will do if I have to leave again but I just hope he will be gone by then.

May 18th, 2021

I don't know how much longer this can go on. The meager cans of food I was able to stock up while outside are depleting, but the man won't leave. He has not moved an inch since he stood there a few days ago. What does he want? None of the other controlled people I have seen acted this way. Why is this guy so different? I just do not know.

May 19th, 2021

The man is on my porch now he is just staring at the door unmoving; I'm scared.

May 20th, 2021

A note was slid under my door last night it was crumpled against the towels, but it must be from the guy, who else could it be?

All it says is "it shall bring you salvation" over, and over again, line after line. It's honestly disturbing. I think I'm losing my mind.

May 21st, 2021

SCREW THIS GUY! SCREW THIS NOTE! SCREW THIS NOISE! JUST SCREW EVERYTHING!

May 22nd, 2021

I'm on my last portable charger and my headphones are at 20%. The man hasn't moved from my porch. His note is running through my head over, and over again, "it shall bring you salvation." I don't want to die. I don't want to be controlled. Please, just please! Anyone please help me.

May 23rd 2021

My headphones are at 10%.

May 24th, 2021

Please anyone, I need you to listen to me and just know that I was here, I was alive. Please, if you are reading this don't forget me. I was here.

May 24, 2021

I hear it, it's beautiful.