

Protagonist Dossier By: Anitra Cherie

## Quick Profile

### **Revised One-Sentence Screenplay-style Character Description:**

MAXWELL DOUGLASS, 30's, poser, yet lovable, once prominent artist.

### **Character Stats:**

**Name: Maxwell Douglass**

**Age:** 38    **Height:** 5'9    **Weight:** 175    **Hair Color:** Dark Brown

**Race or Ethnic Background:** Mixed ethnicity: African American and Caucasian

**Attractiveness degree (from wart-infested troglodite to va-va-voom, you fill in the in-between descriptions):** Seductive eyes, handsome, physically fit

**Outfit most seen wearing:** Ed Hardy T-shirt, leather jacket, jeans.

**Profession:** Abstract artist

### **What is in his, her, or its fridge (or wherever he/she/it keeps nutritional items)?**

Maxwell mostly keeps take out containers from fancy restaurants, beer, and wine.

### **What is his, her, or its greatest fear?**

Maxwell's greatest fear is not being able to live up to his own definition of success.

### **When was the last time he, she, or it called mom (or mother-type figure), and what did they talk about?**

Maxwell last spoke to his mother a week ago when she got back from the Jamaican Cruise he sent his parents on. She filled him in on the highlights of the trip and thanked him for such a thoughtful gift. It's my goal to do nice things for my parents, no matter what my financial situation might be.

### **Where did he, she, or it grow up? Describe the location, the home, and who lived with the character.**

Maxwell grew up in a middle class neighborhood in Atlanta, GA with his mother and father. His best friends lived just a couple of doors down the

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street. All of the homes were similar and uniform in size and style while the lawns were well maintained.

**Where does he, she, or it live now? Describe the locations, the home and who lives with the character.**

Maxwell now lives in Atlanta in a luxury sky-rise apartment with panoramic city views.

**What is his, her, or its current socio-economic status, and what was it when the character was growing up?**

Maxwell is now in the upper-middle class and grew up in a middle class family.

**Twenty Questions with Maxwell Douglass.**

**10-questions by Bernard Pivot from the James Lipton Interviews on *Inside the Actors Studio*:**

1. What is your favorite word? Why?

My favorite word is “success” because it is what I strive for in all things, everyday. I need to feel accomplished at the end of everyday. Also, I need the confirmation from others that I am successful. It is the gas in my tank that keeps me moving forward. Without success, I feel useless.

2. What is your least favorite word? Why?

My least favorite word is “failure” because I thirst for success. It signifies the inability to achieve or accomplish something which I tend to beat myself up over.

3. What turns you on creatively, spiritually or emotionally? Why?

Beautiful things turn me on creatively and emotionally. I am not just speaking on beauty in a feminine way, but it could also be a smile, an act of kindness, or even a bluebird catching a nap in a tree.

4. What turns you off? Why?

Fear of failure turns me off. Sometimes I stress too much about completing a project or not producing my best work that it ruins me creatively.

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5. What is your favorite curse word? Why?

I don't have a favorite curse word as I see cursing as the inability to express myself creatively. However, I do find myself saying "shit" every now and then. Usually, this only happens when I've screwed up something.

6. What sound or noise do you love? Why?

In the springtime, I usually sleep with my bedroom window open so I can hear the birds chirp in the mornings. I love waking up to this. It symbolizes all is right with the world.

7. What sound or noise do you hate? Why?

I hate the sound of rain. When I was kid, I envisioned Mother Nature crying when it rained. As I got older, I found that it distracts me from painting. It's an annoying sound that I can't control. The only thing I can do is wait until it stops.

8. What profession other than your own would you like to attempt? Why?

I would like to attempt photography, since I think I have a good eye for capturing the beauty in any setting. It's similar to what I do as an abstract artist. However, there is nothing more thrilling to me than breathing life to a blank canvas with a paintbrush.

9. What profession would you not like to do? Why?

I could never see myself in any type of service position such as waiter, valet, or driver. I think I would feel that I am somehow beneath the people I wait on. I need to feel as if I am the only person that can do that particular job, for that particular client.

10. If Heaven exists, what would you like to hear God say when you arrive at the Pearly Gates? Why?

I would love for God to tell me he's a fan of my work, because it would be the greatest validation of my success as an artist. I would finally know that I made good use of the gift I'd been blessed with.

### **Investigation Questions:**

11. How do you define "happy"? Provide an example.

I define happy as a state of delight in a particular situation. My example of happy would be the joy I experienced at the opening celebration of my new art studio. Atlanta's

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most elite residents were in attendance, from Hank Aaron to the Mayor. Everyone was in awe of my work. I was so happy, I felt as if I were floating on a cloud.

12. How do you define “sad”? Provide an example.

Sad is a state of depression for me. When I lost a commissioned project to another artist, I felt like a failure because someone thought I couldn't measure up to the next person. I laid on my couch in boxers for two days. I just didn't feel like I could face the world again, but eventually I did.

13. Describe the last time you laughed out loud in detail.

The last time I laughed out loud was last night when I spoke with my best friend Tim. He reminded me of the time we both got Jerry curls when we were kids. His curl turned out fine and my hair fell out. What was even worst was that the next day was picture day at school. For our seventh grade year book, I have a bald head and he has a greasy curl. Not sure which one of us looked the most ridiculous.

14. When was the coldest (in temperature not attitude) you have ever been? Provide details. Describe the specific moment, not the general time frame or reason for it.

The first year I lived in Los Angeles, I came home for Christmas in a t-shirt, no coat or jacket. It was 20 degrees and I was sucker punched the moment I exited the airport. My boy Tim picked me up, but his heat had just stopped working in his car. It was the longest ride ever. By the time we got to my parents' house, I couldn't feel my toes or fingers. I ran in the house so fast, I don't even think I thanked him.

15. What's the worst thing someone ever said to you? Who was it, and why was it the worst?

A client once told me I sucked. It hurt my feelings because he was basically saying you failed to meet my expectations. Failure is the worst thing that can happen in my eyes. Looking back on it, the client had asked me to use a color pallet that I knew would clash and patterns that made no sense. I tried to explain it to him, but he wanted what he wanted. At the end of the day, I gave him exactly what he asked for. It is still hurtful to me just the same because I never want anyone to say I do awful work, or that I suck. I should have just refused to do it, so there wouldn't be this hideous thing out there with my name on it.

16. What's the best thing someone ever said to you? Who was it, and why was it the best?

In College, my art professor said I was the most talented artist he had ever worked with. It was the best thing anyone had ever said because he was a tenured professor nearing retirement. He must have taught hundreds of students in his career, yet he thought I was the best. Also, this was a very impressionable time for me as I was contemplating if I had made the right career choice. It was the confirmation I needed to

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continue. I probably wouldn't be an artist today had he not said that to me.

17. Take the unofficial Myers-Briggs test: <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp>. Read the section on MBTI personality types and traits on the Myers-Briggs Foundation website: <http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/> Be sure to follow the links for each of the "letters" in the test code: Sensing (S) or Intuition (N), the link to the "16 type descriptions." Report the results. Include the percentages. Do you agree with the results or no. If not, why not? If so, why?

The following are the results of the MBTI:

### **INFP**

Introvert(33%) iNtuitive(62%) Feeling(75%) Perceiving(56%)

- You have moderate preference of Introversion over Extraversion (33%)
- You have distinct preference of Intuition over Sensing (62%)
- You have distinct preference of Feeling over Thinking (75%)
- You have moderate preference of Perceiving over Judging (56%)

I am not surprised at my results on the MBTI because I have spent many hours analyzing myself. I am extremely idealistic as suggested in my type description, INFP. Every morning before I get up, I lay in bed in deep thought over something. Usually, it's to develop a solution for a problem I need to deal with or waiting for inspiration on my next painting.

18. What kind of pet did you, do you, or would you have and what was, is, or would be its name?

As a kid, I had two pet Chihuahuas, Fluffy and Lil Bit. They were hyper little dogs. The highlight of my day was coming home from school to play with them.

19. Do you consider yourself a success or a failure? Why or why not?

Honestly, I consider myself a failure at this point. I spent a few years in Los Angeles with one of my best buddies, who is now a successful actor. He hooked me up with many A-list celebrities and I worked a lot. My phone was always ringing, however, I was afraid that my success was based on the word of my beloved friend and not my own talent. I moved back to Atlanta and opened my art studio. I was doing well when it opened, but the stress of finally doing this all on my own is getting to me. I am experiencing a bit of a creative block, which has lasted for a few months now. I have clients that are eagerly awaiting masterpieces I'm afraid I can't produce. What's worst, I took out a loan from this dude my buddy and I use to party with in Los Angeles so I could afford the location that I wanted. I'm really in over my head, and I'm not sure I have the talent or the courage to dig my way out.

20. What was best moment in your life so far, and why? Describe it. Focus only on telling us about that moment.

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I mentioned the opening of the art studio earlier. I would have to say that was the best moment in my life. While there are some financial issues there, I have to say it is the greatest thing I have ever done. That night, as everyone patted me on my back, shook my hand, and congratulated me. I realized I had done something big. Something the young Maxwell may have never had the courage to do. I believed in myself and everyone was there because of me, not because my famous friend asked them to be. He wasn't even invited. My artwork was revealed and raved over. It was my proudest moment ever.

### **The Dossier Writer's Analysis**

**These should be answered in your voice as the writer. This is not an interview with your character.**

1. What does the character want, and why? (This answer will be about the external world, and/or it will be about another person or situation changing.)

Maxwell wants to be a renowned successful abstract artist on his own mite.

a. Why?

Because his current success isn't good enough.

b. Why?

Because his friend helped him achieve his current level of success.

c. Why?

Because his friend, Haywood Rich, has always been more successful than him and has always beaten him at everything. Maxwell has competed with Rich since they were children. Now that they are grown, Haywood is a famous Oscar winning actor and Maxwell's notoriety is based on him being Rich's best friend, the artist. He no longer wants to live in his shadow. He wants his own fame.

2. What does the character need? Give a one word response about their internal need, and then explain why this is. Think of need as the hole the character is trying to fill. It is something internal they are missing. Watch Mama Odie. She will sing to you the difference between "want" and "need." Don't overcomplicate it. What is driving your character from the inside?

Self-esteem. Now that he's on his own, Maxwell begins to doubt himself and develops a creative block that prevents him from producing new work.

3. Give us the Defining Moment when he or she has an opportunity to face up to his or her "truth" and either rise to the challenge or fail? This may or may not be a part of the movie. It could be before, during, or after the time the audience has with this character.

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Review your Glossary of Terms. A defining moment is rarely a wedding. It is not the same as the “happiest day of my life.” It is when the character is challenged to “walk the walk.” He or she will either do it or not. This defines “who they are.” **Give us a clear statement of why this is a defining moment for the character, who they were before the moment, and who they were/are after the moment.**

Darkman kidnaps Maxwell's friends. The only way Maxwell can save them is by completing his commissioned artwork. He needs to get it to his client and collect the money to pay Darkman. Knowing his friends would be killed if he goes to the police, he toils all night to finish the project. It is the defining moment because he has no choice but to overcome his fear of failure and believe in his ability to get the job done. He goes into this moment insecure, with a creative block and walks away confident and successful.

**4. From Michael Hauge’s “Writing Screenplays that Sell,” what is the character’s Inner Motivation and what is the character’s Outer Motivation? What is the character’s Inner Conflict and Outer Conflict?**

Maxwell’s inner motivation is recognition and admiration while his outer motivation is to become a renowned abstract artist.

Maxwell’s inner conflict is his insecurity and creative block while his outer conflict is that Darkman has taken his last decent painting from his studio as collateral for his debt.