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The prized possession you value above all others... A series of three photos of

me with Keith Richards, taken as he signed a copy of his memoirs for me in 2010. I'm a huge Stones fan. The unqualified regret you wish you

could amend... That both my parents didn't live to see me become a success. I was 19 when my mum Isabel died. She was only 58 and was seriously ill for six months. My dad James saw my first couple of books published before he died at 72, but they weren't a success. The way you would spend your fantasy

24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd start the day walking with my wife Miranda through the temperate rainforest at Tofino on Vancouver Island. Then we'd take our children - Jack, 20, and Kit, 18 - to Chanonry Point on the Black Isle in northern Scotland to watch the dolphins. They come within yards of the shore. Kit is in a wheelchair, but he loves the wind in his hair and the rain on his face. For lunch, we'd have fresh langoustines at a fish restaurant called Sutor Creek ten miles away in Cromarty. Then I'd take Miranda to Venice. We'd head to the Zatterre promenade for a fish dinner with local white wine at the Riviera restaurant, and stay the night at the Hotel Cipriani. The temptation you wish you could resist... I devour no end of Snickers and Caramels while I'm writing.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Prime Of Miss Jean Brodie by Muriel Spark is the archetypal Edinburgh novel. It gets to the

underbelly of the city. The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd follow Nick Clegg to see what he's useful for! The pet hate that always gets your back **Up...** The litter situation in Edinburgh. The film you can watch time and time again... Blade Runner from 1982 with Harrison Ford. Although it's set in the future, it's a great old-fashioned private eye story. I've seen it about 20 times. The person who has influenced you most... Ron Gillespie, my English teacher when I was 15. He was the first person to encourage my writing. The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... The author Robert Louis Ste-

venson. Apparently his wife, Fanny, threw the first draft of Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde on the fire because she didn't like it. I'd love to know if that's true.





We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's Rebus author Ian Rankin

The piece of wisdom you would pass The unending quest that drives you on to a child... Believe in yourself. The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Killer Sudoku puzzles. I do one everyday because I think they are good for my brain, but it's probably just

a way of postponing work. The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A load of miniature comics I made when I was about nine. They were my earliest writings but were thrown out years ago.

on... To write the perfect novel.

The poem that touches your soul... Meeting The British by the Irish poet Paul Muldoon. It's about the British Army meeting the Native American Indians in the 18th century, written from the perspective of the Indians. The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I can be found every day at The Oxford Bar in Edinburgh where Rebus drinks!

'I was in a band called The Dancing Pigs when I was 19 – we did about six gigs but we weren't very good'

The event that altered the course of your life and character... When Kit was one and was diagnosed with Angelman Syndrome – a chromosome disorder which means he doesn't develop normally. I dealt with my anger and frustration by writing the Rebus novel Black And Blue, which was the book that took off. If Kit hadn't come along the books may not have succeeded and we wouldn't have the money for the things that make his life better.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it ... I would steal Francis Bacon's triptych, Three Studies For Figures At The Base Of A Crucifixion, from Tate Britain.

The song that means most to you... Solid Air by John Martyn reminds me of my teenage years.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Winning the Gold Dagger award for Best Crime Novel in 1997 for Black And Blue. It sold four times more than my previous books and suddenly I was a bestselling author.

The saddest time that shook your world... My dad dying. He taught me my life skills after Mum died.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To be the lead singer of a rock band. I was in The Dancing Pigs when I was 19 - we did about six gigs but we weren't very good.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Just do it and keep going at something until you get good at it.

The order of service at your funeral... I'm not that religious but I still want a church funeral. I would come in to The Rolling Stones' You Can't Always Get What You Want. There'd be an acoustic version of Solid Air and everyone would leave to Silver Machine by Hawkwind. I'd like to be laid to rest beneath a rose bush at Chanonry Point.

Just as a good husband, father, friend and writer. **The Plug...** Standing In Another Man's

Grave is published by Orion, priced £18.99. Visit www.ianrankin.net. As told to Rob McGibbon

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