

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's the singer James Blunt's turn



'Streaking was a great victimless crime of the 70s and 80s – I'd like it to be a feature at all major sporting events'

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Neglecting friendships. I've been on the road for eight of the past ten years, so I've missed weddings, funerals and the births of dear friends' children.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Smoking when I'm drunk. But I guess if I do it enough I might end up singing like a man!

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Catcher In The Rye. I read it at 15 and related to Holden Caulfield's frustration. It was how I felt about school.

The person who's influenced you most... Elton John has been an amazing guide. I signed to his Rocket Music Management company when I started and he's still my 'over' manager – I have a manager, but Elton's the boss of the company.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I was a reconnaissance officer in the Army for six

years, so I know about trying not to be seen! I'd follow Vladimir Putin and hear what he's planning for Ukraine.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Selfies! If I could go back in time, I'd give the guy who created phone cameras a lobotomy.

The prized possession you value above all others... A tuk-tuk taxi I bought in Bangkok. It cost £300 and I had to pay £2,000 to get it home to Ibiza, but now I drive it everywhere.

The film you can watch time and time again... This Is Spinal Tap. I first saw it when I was 14 and loved it. It's amazing how true some of those clichés are.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Adolf Hitler. I'd try to understand how such evil can exist in a man's mind.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Success should not be measured by fame and fortune, but by happiness and friendships.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Motorbikes. I keep a CCM 450cc at my sister's home in England. It's the best way of getting across London.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... An Iggy and the



Stooges T-shirt that was stolen from my suitcase on a trip six years ago.

The unending quest that drives you on... I love my life as a

musician, so I'm driven to keep on writing and performing.

The poem that touches your soul... Desiderata by Max Ehrmann. It has a good code for life.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm a romantic! Like a lot of men, I'm uncomfortable talking about emotions – I prefer to put them into my songs.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Leaving the Army in 2002 and moving to LA to make the Back To Bedlam album. I'd been saying for years that I wanted to be a musician, so to finally do it was wonderful.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... Streaking was a great victimless crime of the 70s and 80s and I miss it. I'd make it a feature at major sporting events.

The song that means most to you... Fall At Your feet by Crowded House. It was the first song I learnt to play on the guitar, which was like the moment of discovery in music for me.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd wake up à deux [with his fiancée Sofia] and watch the sunrise from an atoll off Belize in Central America, then go scuba diving. I'd have breakfast at NoMad hotel in New York with friends – eggs and corned beef hash. I'd spend the morning skiing the Vallée Blanche in Chamonix, then lunch would be a drive-through takeaway from In-N-Out Burger on Mulholland Drive in LA. I'd be in a convertible and order a Double-Double Animal Style. I'd then park up and eat while looking at the view. After that I'd head to Mexico to surf at Puerto Escondido and stay there until the sun went down. The evening would be at home in Ibiza with Sofia and friends. We'd have dinner at a local restaurant – I'd have fresh fish and start with a few cold beers, then some decent wine. After dinner we'd all head to Pacha nightclub, where I'd hit the vodka and dance. That normally

goes on until dawn and then it's back to mine for a party. We usually crash out at 11am, which is a bit more than 24 hours, but hopefully that's OK!

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Leaving Harrow School at 18. I'd been boarding for ten years, so it was euphoric to finally have freedom.

The saddest time that shook your world... Seeing acts of genocide in Kosovo in 1999 was horrendous and devastating. To witness how people can hurt one another will never leave me.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To play at the Super Bowl – and have the obligatory costume malfunction. I'll never be big enough in the States, although it might be possible if it's ever staged in Luxembourg!

The philosophy that underpins your life... Life is not a dress rehearsal.

The order of service at your funeral... I'm on the fence about religion, so I'll hedge my bets and have a church service. I want to be buried in an environmentally friendly cardboard box under a tree, overlooking the Hampshire countryside where I was brought up.

The way you want to be remembered... As that guy who wrote that song about that girl on the Underground. You know, Wotshisname...!

The Plug... James Blunt plays at Epsom Downs Racecourse on 3 July. Tickets: 0844 579 3004. His Moon Landing arena tour arrives in the UK in November, visit www.jamesblunt.com. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: ALLSTAR, ALAMY, LMKMEDIA



Left: Elton John in 1973. Above right: a tuk-tuk taxi. Far right: Dawn breaking in Belize

PS...

Nicole Kidman's *Grace Of Monaco* has divided the critics – judge for yourself when it hits cinemas on Friday. David Haig stars in his new *D-Day* play *Pressure* at Chichester's Minerva Theatre. And *Led Zeppelin's* first three albums, remastered, are out on Monday



NEXT WEEK

- Kiefer Sutherland takes us on the set of *24: Live Another Day*
- Meet the new *Celebrity MasterChef* contestants
- Star plants from Chelsea Flower Show for YOUR garden
- Britain's best TV listings