

PART ONE

Read the following text. For items 1 to 5 choose the option (a, b or c) which fits best according to the text.

INSTANT RECALL

I was idly flicking through blogs when I stumbled upon a website. It was a collection of polaroid photographs and gradually I began to realize that there was one for every day between March 1979 and October 1997. There was no way of telling who they belonged to, no commentary or captions, just the photos, arranged month by month like contact sheets. There was a sense, too, that I was not supposed to be there, browsing through these snaps of friends and family, of baseball games and picnics, but they were funny. There were pictures of things that did not exist any more as well as car parks and swimming-pools.

Slowly it became apparent whose collection it was – friends would come and go but one man regularly popped up over the 18 years documented, doing ordinary stuff like eating dinner or unusual things in faraway countries. In one picture he is proudly holding a skinned goat, in another he is on stilts. A lot of the time he looks serious while doing ridiculous things. During the 80s there are lots of pictures of him playing music with an avant-garde street performance outfit called Janus Circus. There are pictures of TV screens – ball games, Frank Zappa's death, president Carter, Reagan and Clinton.

Then, in 1997, events take a dark turn. There are pictures of the photographer in hospital, then with a long scar across his head. He is gravely ill. For a short while his health appears to improve and he returns home. In October there is a picture of a ring, then two days later a wedding ceremony. But just a few weeks after that he is back in hospital with some friends from the early photos. On October 25 the series ends. The photographer has died.

Of course I was not alone in discovering this remarkable site. Since the end of May it has been passed from blog to blog across America. "The first I knew about it was when all my other websites started to closing down under the strain," says New Yorker Hugh Crawford, who was responsible for putting his friend's pictures on line after his death.

"Initially it was not meant to be looked at by anyone. A group of us were putting on an exhibition of the photos and the site was a place where we could look at the pictures while we talked on the phone."

The photographer's name was Jamie Livingston. He was a film maker and editor who worked on public information films, adverts and promo videos for MTV. Taking a single photo every day began by accident when he was 22 and studying film with Crawford at Bart College, in upstate New York. "He'd been doing it for about a month before he realised he'd been taking a photo about one picture a day, and then he made the commitment to keep doing that," says Crawford. "That's what he was like. There are some people who have flashes of

brilliance and do things in a huge rush or creative burst but he was more of a steady, keep-at-it kind of guy and he did amazing stuff. Part of the appeal of the site is that Jamie was not this amazing-looking guy. He led an incredible life, but there's an everyman quality to the photographs."

There are a lot of visual jokes, funny shots and fluted self-portraits, but the plan was to take one picture and keep it no matter how it turned out. Once they found themselves walking with a circus of elephants through the heart of New York, late at night. Crawford turned to his friend and suggested this could be the picture of the day. "He was like, "No, I took a picture of my lunch, it's already been taken," laughs Crawford. • [...]

Only one mystery remains about Livingston's life: "There's one woman who appears a lot (in the earlier photographs) who seems to have been a girlfriend but no one knows who she is," says Crawford, much of whose own life story is told within the pictures as well. The more famous the pictures become, the more likely it is that one day he'll find out.

1) When looking at the photos, the writer

- a) felt confused.
- b) felt like an intruder.
- c) saw they were focussed on places.

2) The protagonist of the photos

- a) had a boring life.
- b) had a varied life.
- c) lived close to celebrities.

3) As far as the photo collection is concerned, Hugh Crawford

- a) admits that its use didn't turn out as planned.
- b) claims that he published his friend's pictures without permission.
- c) is unhappy about the attention it is getting.

4) According to Hugh Crawford, taking a photo on a day-to-day basis

- a) proved Livingston's huge talent.
- b) showed Livingston's commitment.
- c) was Livingston's dream.

5) According to Hugh Crawford, when making his collection, Livingston

- a) didn't like being given advice by others.
- b) didn't like taking surprising photos.
- c) wouldn't go back on what he decided.