

UNKNOWN WHITE MAN

On 3 July 2003, a 35-year-old Englishman called Dough Bruce walked into a police station in Coney Island, New York, and told the police that he did not know his own name. He had woken up a few minutes earlier on a subway train, with bumps on his **skull** and a headache, and had found he had no idea where he was going, where he had been, or who he was. 'I was scared,' he said later, when talking about the experience. 'I didn't know anything. It was frightening, it was like being in darkness.'

Doug went to a police station because he had nowhere else to go. He was wearing a T-shirt, shorts and **flip-flops** and he had a **rucksack** with a few possessions in it: a Spanish phrase book, a bunch of keys and a map of New York. The police were **baffled**. 'We'd never had anything like this before,' says Lieutenant Pete Pena. They sent Doug to Coney Island Hospital. On his name **tag**, the nurse wrote 'Unknown white male'.

The Doctors were surprised at the severity of his memory loss. Although Doug could form sentences without difficulty, he remembered nothing about his own past and seemed to know little about the world. One specialist at the hospital, Dr Leonid Vorobyev, admitted that he had only ever seen such serious **amnesia** 'in the movies and in my textbooks'. Doug was diagnosed as suffering from 'total retrograde amnesia', which is extremely rare.

The hospital authorities would not **discharge** Doug until he had been identified. Eventually, hospital staff found a phone number inside the phrase book in his rucksack. It was the number of an ex-girlfriend's mother, but she didn't know who he was. However, when Doug spoke to his ex-girlfriend, Nadine, she recognised his voice **at once**. 'Is that you, Doug?' she asked. 'I don't know,' came the reply. Nadine went to the hospital, told the doctors who Doug was, and **escorted** him home.

'Home' turned out to be a **stunning** apartment in downtown Manhattan, which he shared with two dogs and three parrots. Doug discovered that he had previously lived in Paris, where he had made a lot of money working at the stock exchange.

Now that Doug had discovered his identity, he had to cope with other challenges. He was worried about meeting his family and friends. They seemed like strangers to him. His sisters told him that he had changed: before his memory loss, he had been very sociable and **outgoing**, but rarely showed his emotions. According to them, he has now become much more relaxed and isn't scared of showing his feelings.

For Doug, life has started all over again. He has tasted chocolate mousse and strawberries for what he believes is the first time. He has seen snow fall, and fireworks explode 'for the first time'. He's happy with his new life. His story has now been **portrayed** on film. An old friend of his, director Rupert Murray, has made a documentary about Doug's extraordinary experiences called *Unknown White Male*.

1 Read the text quickly. Which sentence is not true?

1. Doug lost his memory and has never recovered it.
2. Doug lost his memory but later remembered who he was.
3. Doug lost his memory but has found his family and friends again..

2 Put the events in the correct order.

1. Staff at the hospital found a phone number in Doug's bag..
2. Doug woke up on a subway train in New York.
3. Doug met his family and old friends.
4. Doug worked in Paris.
5. An old friend made a documentary about Doug's experiences.
6. Nadine took him home.
7. Doug went to a police station.
8. Doug's ex-girlfriend, Nadine, identified him.

3 Are the sentences true or false?

1. Doug was wearing warm clothes when he woke up on the subway
2. Very few people have ever had such serious memory loss as Doug.
3. The hospital authorities didn't want to release Doug until they knew who he was.
4. Doug discovered that he was quite rich.
5. Doug recognised his family and friends immediately.
6. Doug's sisters think that his personality has changed since his memory loss.

4 Match the words (1-12) which are highlighted in the text with their nearest equivalents.

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| 1. skull | beach shoes..... |
| 2. flip-flops | memory loss..... |
| 3. rucksack | confused..... |
| 4. baffled | beautiful..... |
| 5. tag | send home..... |
| 6. amnesia | shown..... |
| 7. discharge | accompanied..... |
| 8. at once | head..... |
| 9. escorted | confident..... |
| 10. stunning | bag..... |
| 11. outgoing | immediately..... |
| 12. portrayed | label..... |