

# IS THIS THE SMARTEST MAM IN THE WORLD?

Words: Sam Rowe  
Photography: Steve Schofield

With an Einstein-crushing IQ and his own theory of the universe, Rick Rosner is officially the world's second-cleverest man. *FHM* travelled to LA to spend 24 hours in his company...



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he beta-blockers were not working. Bouncing from his chair in a New York TV studio, Rick Rosner let

out a Neanderthal roar. He punched the air with such ferocity that adrenaline – usually suppressed by the pills – coursed through his bloodstream in rapid squirts.

You could probably forgive the hyperbolic reaction. Rosner, a bona fide genius with a one-in-three-billion IQ, had made it his life's goal to become the smartest individual on Earth. Now, 8,000 books, eight college majors and more than 20,000 hours spent

cramming for quiz shows later, he had a chance to prove it.

Rosner took his place in the *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* hot seat – still feeling like he'd sunk a cocktail of Red Bull, espresso and cocaine – and began answering questions. If anyone was to leave with a cheque for \$1 million on that summer's night in 2000, surely it would be him?

The early rounds were child's play. Rosner waltzed to \$4,000 in three minutes flat, with the bookish poise of Plato sitting his GCSEs. Then, at \$16,000, host Regis Philbin – America's answer to Chris Tarrant – asked him to name the capital city located at the highest

altitude above sea level. The choices were Mexico City, Quito, Bogotá or Kathmandu.

A correct answer would have taken him one step closer to a million, and the Godlike status of our planet's foremost brain. Instead, Rosner's next move led to a million-dollar lawsuit and five-figure debts. But who said being a genius would be easy?

### Tests and theories

Fast-forward to November 2015, and *FHM* is standing on the doorstep of Rick Rosner's LA home. Day-old remnants of Halloween litter the porch, with the pavement strewn with the guts of a disembowelled pumpkin. Dragging open the door, a massive tub of vitamins in one hand and Frida, his yipping Maltese-Westie in the other, Rick ushers us inside.

"I felt like I'd been kicked in the balls," admits Rosner, now 55, recalling that fateful night. "I spent 22 minutes on that question. I phoned a friend, a travel writer who has been to three of the cities, and he agreed the likely answer was Kathmandu, as it's very close to the highest point on Earth." Sage logic. Wrong answer. He should have said Quito, Ecuador's capital.

Rosner left the *Millionaire* studio ashen-faced, 1,000 bucks in hand ("It's not nothing, but less than minimum wage when you consider how much time I'd spent prepping"). He promptly sued ABC, the TV channel behind the show, for what he claimed was an unfair question. He said the world's highest city is La Paz, Bolivia – plus none of the four answers even had a fixed altitude. But Rosner lost the case. And an appeal.

Rick Rosner is clever. The stacks of physics tomes, Martin Amis novels and academic quarterlies stuffed into every nook of his home tell you that. Ditto his IQ of 199 (compared to Stephen Hawking's measly 160, or the global average

of 100), recognised as the second highest in the world. His passion for IQ tests, so impenetrably complex that not even Google can help, teeters on obsessive. Some take more than 200 hours to finish. Rick's completed around 40. His latest – the one he hopes will crown him Earth's smartest – has so far taken three years, and is still months from completion.

There's also the small matter of Rosner's theory of the universe. He swears it could one day rank as one of mankind's finest discoveries. "It's a variation on the Big Bang – steady bang, or a bunch of smaller bangs," he explains. "The universe is rolling along, instead of the result of a single explosion." He reclines in his chair behind a tower of dog-eared notebooks. It takes 16 minutes for him to unpack the theory's intricacies to *FHM*. The word "consciousness" crops up a lot.

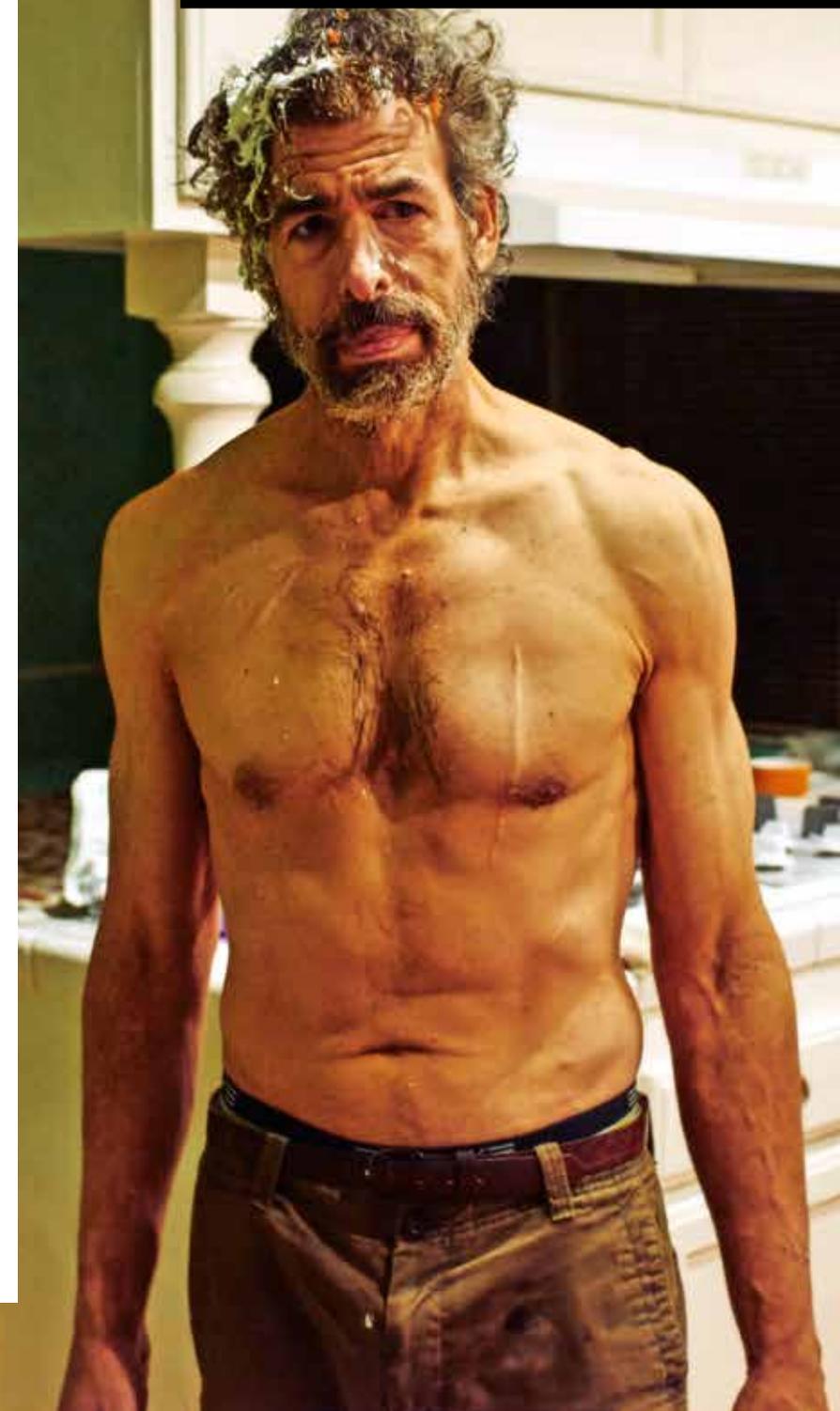
Yet Rosner's genius is not always a gift. It might also be a curse. His wife and daughter (a Cambridge undergrad) certainly think so. Currently unemployed – he worked as a writer on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* for 12 years until recently, and according to head writer Molly McNearney was "the strangest human being I've ever met" – Rosner now occasionally pens jokes for a rival show. At least he will do, if they ever buy one.

### Brainier than Einstein

Since the whole *Millionaire* debacle, Rosner has become a sort-of celebrity. He has 3.6 million Twitter followers; a list of past jobs that includes a stripper, stand-up comic, bouncer and roller-skating waiter; and an outrageous health regime that involves taking up to 70 pills a day – from S-Adenosylmethionine (for liver function) to Glisodin (to slow the greying of hair) – and 35 gym visits a week. Why?

"I think we're about the last generation that has to die," Rosner says, handing *FHM* a pint glass

**"I felt like I'd been kicked in the balls when I lost on TV"**



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sporting the Pi symbol, filled to the brim with hot coffee. He notes a futurist theory that predicts immortality will be unlocked by 2040. "I wanna live into the future, where all the cool stuff is," he admits.

Rosner eyes the clock. "We're gonna be late. We should go." So, after wrestling a greyish tablet from Frida's jaws and popping it in his mouth ("Waste not, want not"), we do. After a fraught two hours in Rosner's garbage-strewn motor, made comical by our host giving the finger to other drivers, a California art centre comes into view.

Out of the checked shirt, tracksuit bottoms and trainers he walked in wearing, Rosner gets down to work. He arranges himself on a plastic chair, squeezing a wooden pole for leverage. His bushy, grey-flecked beard frames his caveman features, the unruly mane that's undergone 13 "pizza cutter" transplants making his face

almost cartoonish. His variety of self-inflicted scars across his chest (back when he thought "chicks would dig it") make for fantastic detail, as would the road map of varicose veins on his left leg, if only he'd remove the knee-high sock. As Lance – a hyper-conservative artist who'd make Donald Trump seem compassionate – limps away from the easel to sharpen his 2B pencil, *FHM* looks at Rosner's charcoal image, in his sometime-job as a life model. Is this really the life one would expect from a man born with more brains than Einstein?

A pint-sized Jewish forerunner to Sheldon Cooper, Rosner was dubbed a genius at kindergarten. At two he pieced together a 50-piece puzzle of the United States, and by three he was reading *Esquire*.

In a quest to fit in during high school, Rosner lifted weights, adopted a John Travolta-esque drawl and tried out for wrestling. He even began running 25 miles a week and chomping on dog biscuits to lose weight ("The box said they were low in fat, high in fibre – it seemed like a good idea") until he

was struck down by haemorrhoids. Surgery followed, as did "a maxi-pad in my underwear" and, perhaps unsurprisingly, Rosner graduated from high school a virgin.

Crippled by insecurity, Rosner abandoned his quest for intellect – and a place at Harvard – and "committed to life as a regular guy".

For him, this meant becoming a bouncer and male stripper, in the blind hope of getting laid. "The word cougar wasn't around then," Rosner recalls, now thankfully fully clothed. "But I hoped a jaded, sexually experienced woman would teach me all kinds of tricks."

After finally popping his cherry just shy of his 20th birthday ("I later learned she was a specialist in de-virginising nerds"), the 1980s whizzed past in a blur of forged documents, pseudonyms and wacky cover stories, as Rosner bluffed his way back into high schools in Colorado, New Mexico

and New York. He'd had a eureka moment about the universe, while eating jelly in his college cafeteria, and wanted somewhere to sit and think. "I figured I could do high school again, while I still had my hair," says Rosner. By the time he graduated for the final time, aged 27, Rosner's then-girlfriend (now wife) posed as his legal guardian. He was also voted 'Most bald' by his classmates.

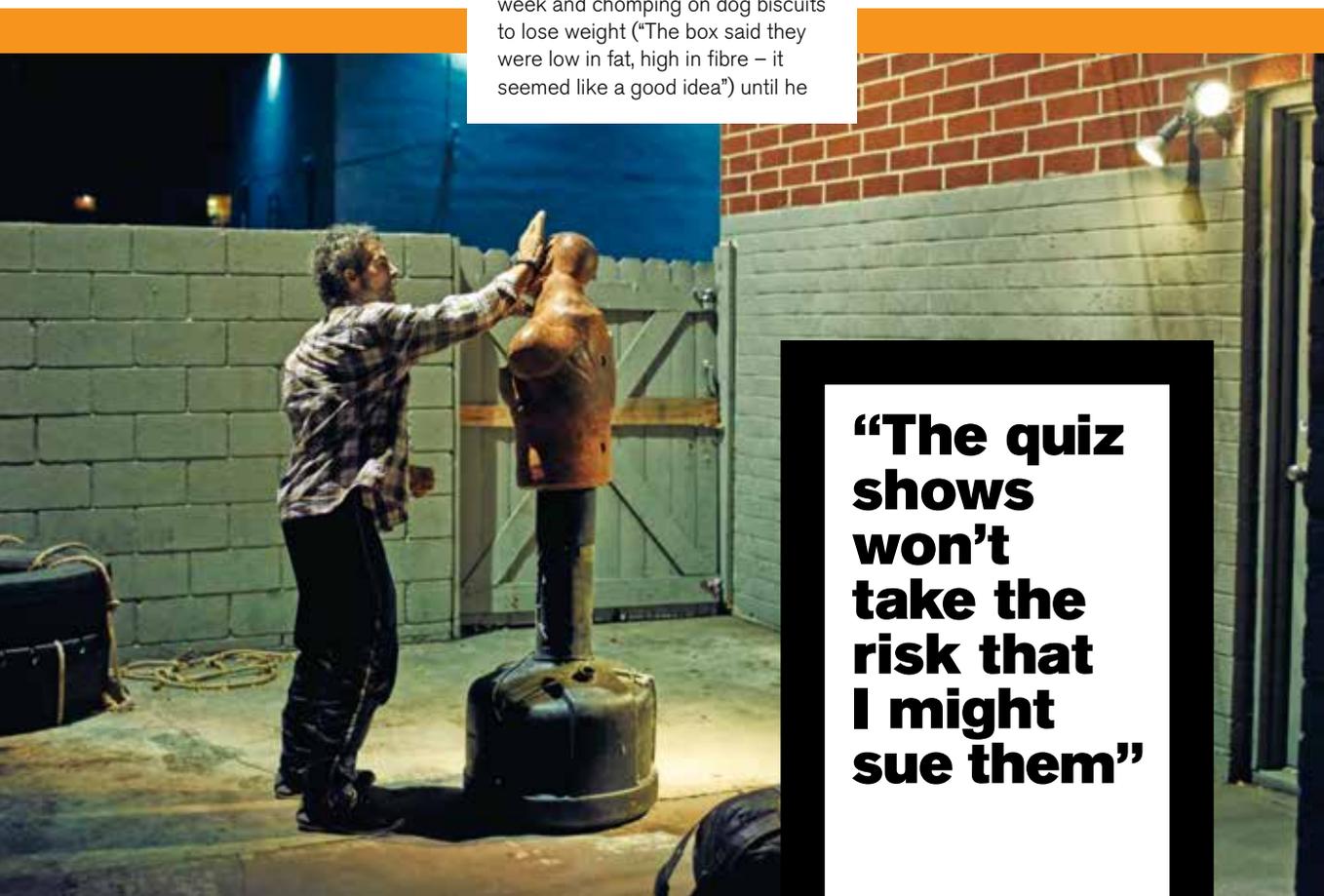
## Everything or nothing?

The only man in the world cleverer than Rosner is 39-year-old Evangelos Katsioulis. A well-respected doctor, psychotherapist and writer from Greece, Katsioulis has the highest IQ on the planet: 205. Focused, single-minded and seemingly triumphant in anything he does, Katsioulis even wrote two celebrated drama scripts, as a mere 'psychological experiment'. We tracked him down to his office, via Skype, to ask how it feels to be Earth's smartest being.

"Well it's not embarrassing, for sure," he laughs, the shelves behind him bending under the weight of books. "My profile can be an aphrodisiac for some people. Beautiful women ask me directly if I'm interested in giving genetic material, making kids. Just to do that and leave. Or for money. Mainly it's for reproduction, but not always." Such indecent proposals make it tricky for Katsioulis to find the right woman – someone who craves more than just his DNA.

As for his American rival, he thinks they might be friends on Facebook. "I know he made some announcement and claims he's going to be number one. So good luck with that." But Katsioulis remains unconvinced by Rosner's universe theory. "That's an American habit – all Americans with a high IQ have a theory of everything. We don't have that in Greece."

Back in Los Angeles, Rosner frantically darts around his house,



**"The quiz shows won't take the risk that I might sue them"**

gathering jars of gravy, baked beans, minestrone soup and other grocery items. "I want to be number one," he confesses. "That's why I've been working on this IQ test for years." Tonight, he is shooting *The Smartest Guy In The World Show*, a web series he films with former *Kimmel* colleague – and wrecking ball of testosterone – Ray Oldhafer.

The format sees Oldhafer quiz Rosner on general knowledge, before pelting him with food every time he answers incorrectly, while a Jack Sparrow lookalike strums Flight of the Conchords-ish melodies. *University Challenge* it ain't. But along with compulsive gym-going and gruelling IQ tests, Rosner sees any mental workout as training in his pursuit of genius. Besides, since *Millionaire*, he can't get on another quiz show.

"I've tried out for some," Rosner admits, "but then they Google me. They don't wanna take the risk with a famously disgruntled A-hole, who

might look for an opportunity to sue them – even though I tell them I'll sign something to say I won't."

## Curse of the genius

Rosner lays down a sheet outside, ahead of the inevitable food-fight. His wife Carole can't bear to watch. Last time, there was blood. Nonetheless, she pours salsa into a bowl and gives him a hug, before retreating to a safe distance.

"I can only speak from my point of view," sighs Carole, who first met Rosner at a Jewish singles dance almost 30 years ago, "but I don't think he's fulfilling his potential. I think [his IQ] can be a blessing, and also a curse." A surprisingly normal woman – given her spouse – Carole's watched from the side as Rosner has bounced bars, choked on quiz shows and spent a lot of his working life in the nude, instead of earning a world-beating IQ, or figuring out the universe.

Spending time with Rosner, we

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can't help but wonder if he is hampered by the genius for which he's become known. Just like fame eats away at the superstar celebrities who implode as their star rises, is his intellect more an affliction than gift?

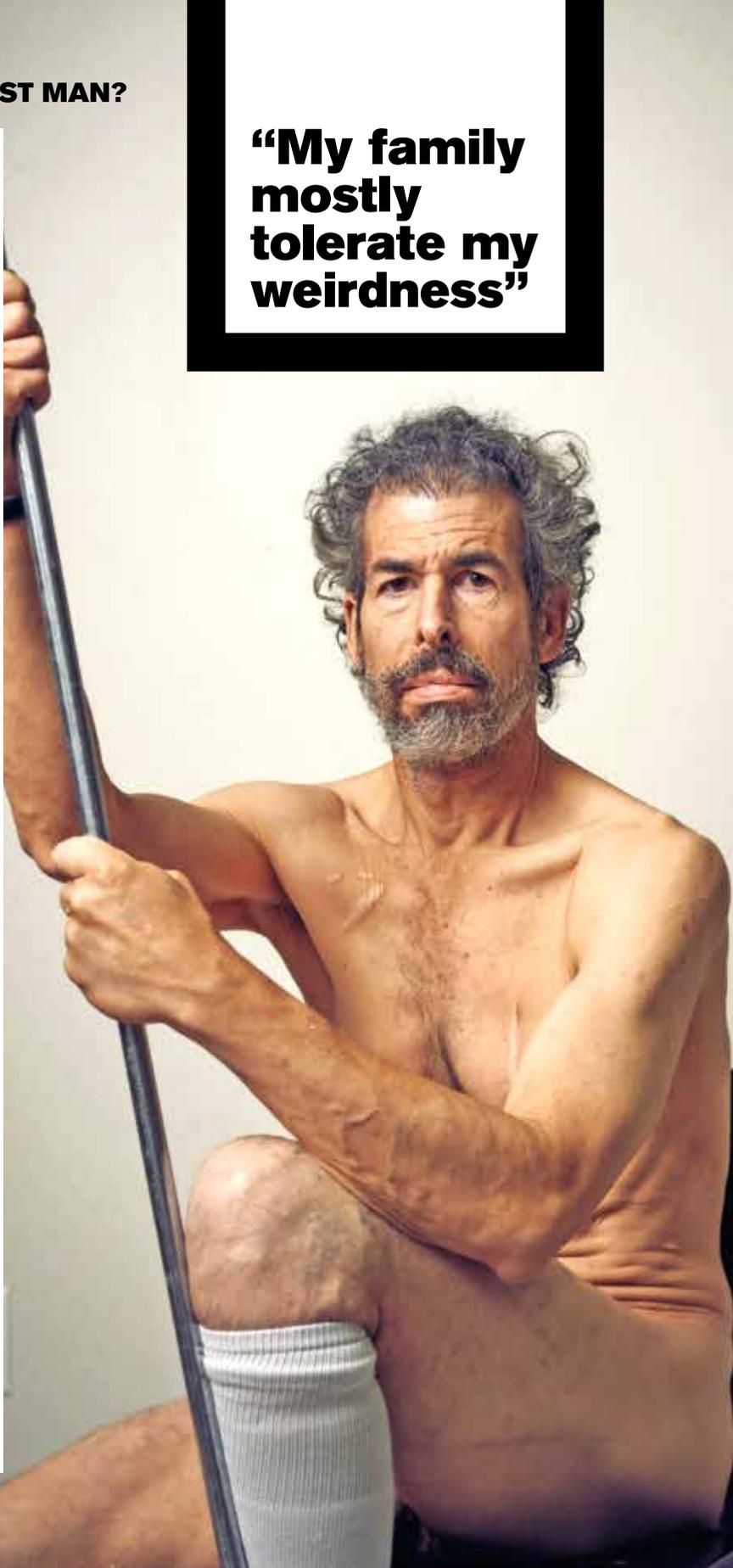
"I'm still his biggest fan, even if sometimes he doesn't believe it," Carole says, wiping away tears. "I don't think I'd still be sitting here nearly 30 years later if I didn't believe in him." Just then, Rick emerges from the garden, his hair matted with whipped cream as beans squelch underfoot. His once-white shirt has gone a gooey shade of brown. Seems he didn't win tonight's quiz, either.

By the time you read these words, Rick Rosner might have done it. Completed the test. Scaled his intellectual Everest. Become the undisputed mastermind of our vast planet. Even if, at heart, he's fully aware it's all a little bit silly. "A guy like Bill Gates isn't going to spend 250 hours on an IQ test," Rick admits. "He'll spend it doing something that'll make him tens of millions of bucks."

And yet, in some respect, Rosner needn't worry. He's already bested his rival – the brooding Greek doctor and his planet-sized brain – in two key areas. "I don't have hair," admits Katsioulis, rubbing his scalp with his palm. "And, in terms of life goals, I always wanted a family. To feel love. To be loved. I don't have that."

As Carole mops up a stew of salsa, cream puffs and turkey gravy, Rosner peels off his sticky clothing and stands naked before *FHM* for the second time in a day. "There's a sitcom feeling to my family life, which is satisfying," he says, picking cream from his beard. "I'm part of a family where they mostly tolerate my weirdness, but also think I'm a doofus. If I didn't have a family to anchor me I'd likely be spinning out of control in a series of stupid, pointless, not-quite adventures." He swabs the last dots of dairy from his buffet-cart face, and eyes himself in the mirror. "To be honest, *they're* my gift." **FHM**

**"My family mostly tolerate my weirdness"**



## ARE YOU AS SMART AS ROSNER?

Rick Rosner has devised a mini IQ test exclusively for *FHM*. Come and have a go if you think you're smart enough – needless to say, we didn't get any right

### QUESTIONS

**Q1** What **two numbers** multiplied together make the following number? (Note, they both have historical significance.)  
**1,295,190**

**Q2** Work out the **well-known phrase:**

N	D	E	N	N	D
O	A	T	F	G	A
Y	U	S	H	O	L
L	E	R	E	I	K
C	O	S	E	Y	N

**Q3** Find the **missing numbers** in this sequence: (Hint – it's easier with a calculator.)  
7, 10, 12, 13, 19, 20, 21, 30, 35, 37, 38, 40, 44, 50,  
?, ?, ?, ?, ?

**Q4** Find the **missing letter** in each of these related sequences:  
E N D ? M E B T H  
B D C C U B R B ?

**Q5** Find the **missing numbers** in this sequence: (Hint – this could be easier if you figured out Q3.)  
12, 13, 14, 16, 21, 25, ?, ?, ?, 44, 49, 64, 98, 99

### ANSWERS

97	9409	97
90	8100	90
80	6400	80
70	4900	70
60	4225	60
60	3600	60
50	2500	50
44	1936	44
40	1600	40
38	1444	38
37	1369	37
35	1225	35
30	900	30
21	441	21
20	400	20
19	361	19
13	169	13
12	144	12
7	49	7

**Q1** 1, 1066 (the year of the Norman conquest of England) x 1215 (the year the Magna Carta was signed).

**Q2** The phrase winds back and forth diagonally, starting in the lower left corner. It spells CLOSE YOUR EYES AND THINK OF ENGLAND.

**Q3** This sequence lists the numbers that have squares that are made up of two or more integer squares.

**Q4** The missing letter is the 7th, which is C. The second sequence lists the letters in his name that include curved lines. The missing letter is again C.

**Q5** This is the list of all the two-digit numbers whose squares contain the same digits in a different order to the square of another two-digit number.

**Number**      **Number squared**      **Same digits as the square(s) of**

12	144	21
13	169	14 and 31
14	196	13 and 31
16	256	25
21	441	12
25	625	16
37	1369	37
44	1936	44
49	2401	32
64	4096	98
98	9604	64
99	9801	33

**The missing numbers:**

31	961	13 and 14
32	1024	
33	1089	
37	1369	44