



## An Aside with Joe – It may be brutal, but it's logical

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Mr C: Welcome to an Aside with Joe - It may be brutal, but it's logical. It has been so long since we last spoke to Joe Saward, I think people were beginning to get worried. I don't know where he's been, I don't know what he's been up to. Let's see if we can find out right here right now. Hello Joe!

Joe: Hello. I'm alive and well. Actually, I'm very well and very alive. I was in London with an audience. You were supposed to attend incidentally and you didn't show up because the traffic apparently went wrong so they tell me.

Mr C: I had a terrible day that day. But let's gloss over that. What we really want to know about is what you've been up to. I do believe that you're now a married man.

Joe: Yes. Well I have been married on occasion and I'm definitely married again [laughter]. Yes, that was in December, the end of December. Strange date maybe but it's all to do with school holidays and things. Yes, and I spent a little while on honeymoon in the one place I could think of where Grand Prix racing doesn't exist which is Cuba. It's in this strange microcosm of its own. Almost in another century. I mean it's fabulous, you go there and there are 1950s American cars. Not just ten or twenty of them, thousands of them, running around the streets as though it's quite normal to have cars that were built in 1952 running around the streets. If the engineers in Detroit knew the cars that they built back then would still be running nearly 70 years later, I'm not very good at maths, is that 70 or 60? Anyway, whatever it is ... 60 years later, they wouldn't believe it. But it is. There are all these beautiful old cars with their ridiculous wings and beautiful curves and they're still running around. I was trying to find somewhere to really go which was different and that certainly wins the prize for different.

Mr C: [Laughter]. There's no chance I assume that there will be a Formula 1 Grand Prix there any time soon?

Joe: Not a chance in hell.

Mr C: And is that, I guess, factored somewhere into your equation into your decision to go there?

Joe: Err, not really, I always wanted to go there and see what it was like. And it was pretty much what I expected. It's a beautiful place but it's all falling down. Proof positive if you need it that revolutions never work. But in a way that was quite nice because it's not horribly spoiled either. There were bits of it that were spoiled, it was just a very nice place to go, something a bit different and the opportunity to shut down the blog and go away for a while.

Mr C: Well, we have missed you. Have you been up to anything else exciting between then and now?

Joe: Err, well I went, well I didn't go skiing, I went to a ski thing with Ferrari in January. I don't dare go skiing because I don't want to break my legs and then I was a week or two in London I think, just whizzing around doing lots of different things, pre-season getting it all together. But otherwise I've just been sort of freezing in France really.

Mr C: [Laughter]. But you're not freezing now, you are no longer in France you have escaped to a sunnier part of the world. You are already in Australia.

Joe: Yes, I nearly had trouble getting away because as I was leaving the blizzard arrived in France and they spent an hour de-icing the plane before we could take off which was on Monday night. Fortunately we were able to take off and all the connections worked and I got here in time. I was doing my audience last night down on the beach in Saint



Kilda, which was a bit windy but nice and hot. Apparently it has gone rather cool here because it has been some ridiculous temperature in the last few days like 36 degrees or something. It's down to a rather more pleasant 22 today.

Mr C: With an audience in London and an audience in Australia, presumably you must be sick of talking about Formula 1 pre-season. You must be desperate for the racing to get underway.

Joe: What can I say [laughter]? I like talking about Formula 1. Always have done, you can't stop me you know. Press the button and I'm off. I like to answer people's questions, I like to hear what people want to know. I find them rather illuminating experiences and actually enjoy them. That was one of the purposes of the audiences, obviously to educate, inform and amuse. But it educates, informs and amuses me as well. So, you know, it's quite fun. And last night we had Steve Hallam, former McLaren engineer of many years. Used to be racing engineer for Senna and is now running the Holden racing team down in Australia and he turned up and gave some insights into Formula 1 from the era that he knew best. He's been out of it now for four or five years but interestingly did a year in NASCAR. Actually more than that, he did several years in NASCAR and then came down to Australia. So he's got a very broad education and very interesting guy on the subject. And a great, you know, passionate about the sport. He knows incredible amounts about the history of the sport, which is quite rare these days.

Mr C: I have many questions to throw at you today. Let's see if we can cover something maybe...

Joe: We'll have a little one to one audience that all those other people will listen in to.

Mr C: [laughter] Indeed. I tell you what I've never had such a haphazard collection of discussion topics. There seems to be no single thread running through all of these. We will see whether we can sort of put it together in some sort of coherent manner. You're attending your first race of the year this weekend and it is...

Joe: I couldn't do it before now sadly, 'cause they hadn't bothered to put one on yet.

Mr C: it is one of 19 races, not 20.

Joe: Yaaaaaay, yippeeaaaaa. 20 was a race too far I think. It was great for Bernie and the people to earn some more money but you have got to think of the human damage involved. I know they'll go back to 20 next year I'm sure. But when people are making the calendars are not living the calendars they need to think a little bit about human beings and their health – mental and physical, and their ability to have normal, as much as is possible, normal lifestyles. One has to think about that sort of stuff because last year was brutal and a lot of people were pretty sick by the end of the year. I'm sure there are quite a few divorces and things as a result of all this travelling, you're always away so much that it gets very, very hard and in Formula 1 terms every so often you'll hear people talking about Formula 1 widows. That is absolutely true, if you're married to someone in Formula 1 you are a widow for 9 months of the year.

Mr C: And it is another 9 months but it does sound like you should have a slightly easier summer.

Joe: Yes it's a very nice summer this year. Just by pure fluke I think, but we do have some monumental breaks, which is very unusual for us, and actually it's very pleasant to be able to have that. So I'm going to make use of that and do something ridiculous like go on a road trip in the States or something.

Mr C: Oooh, ok. You're planning already.



Joe: Err, yes. You know, I like to whizz around and see my son who lives in California, so it will be fun just to go off and do a boys thing. We haven't really decided where we're going to go but, you know, just to have some time out. I dare say I'll be stopping by at motels every evening to check in with the readers. But things like that are nice things to do.

Mr C: This race weekend, talking about people who don't live the calendar you've got the first race, the opening race of the year and rumour has it that Bernie is not in attendance. Is that surprising given that the contract for this race runs out next year and there is a Concorde agreement still to be signed?

Joe: Not really because Bernie does tend to pick and choose these days on the long hauls. He's not always in Australia by any means. In fact I think he might have been here last year but for a long time he didn't show up at all. I think it depends what's going on in his world. But when you're 82 years old you don't necessarily want to do 25,000 more flying miles and he probably doesn't want to come up here and spend any time kicking around in Australasia or Oceania or whatever you want to call it, because we have another one in Malaysia next week. What do you do? Do you go home between the two? If you're a multi-squillionaire running a business do you just sit down... Bernie is not good at sitting on beaches, it's not his thing. So can you run the business from out here? I think he'll do one or the other where most of us come out simply from a financial point of view it's cheaper to stay, and even if it's not, the brutal damage of flying back to Europe and then two days later turning around and flying back again... I don't know if anybody out there has tried that sort of thing but it is... I've tried it and it's an absolute killer because you're into major league jetlag for quite a long time. Not that we're not anyway.

Mr C: Why did you try that?

Joe: Oh, I tried that first in the 80's I think it was one of my sisters got married between the Australian and Japanese Grand Prix or something. When I heard the date I sort of groaned loudly and said I can't come. And then I didn't tell her but I did turn up. She didn't know I was going to be there which was quite fun. And so first time she saw me was when she was walking up the aisle, it all got very teary and sweet, you know.

Mr C: [laughter] This is why you get married in December.

Joe: You know, it's just a sensible time of year when one is in the same place for more than three days at a time. It's definitely the way to go, but it's better than... it's a long way 12,000 miles and once you've seen all the movies what to you do next? I mean these days we're beginning to have internet on planes but I'm not always sure that's a blessing.

Mr C: [laughter] Do you fancy talking, there's many topics to go over today, do you fancy talking drivers, teams or testing?

Joe: Well testing is very simple. Which is, I can sum that up in one short paragraph which is: nobody's got the faintest idea what's going on. And that's true right through the whole paddock. I went down the paddock yesterday just chatting to a few people who've been doing all the tests and saying what do you make of it all and they all say we haven't got a clue. We'll see, we think Mercedes have been doing this, we think that's been happening, but we don't know. It may be that the Mercedes is very quick over one lap but the tyres die after one lap. Therefore it's not really about that, it's about how they are over twenty laps which is important. There's all kinds of elements we just don't know. We don't know how much fuel was being run. One point that several teams have made to me is that the absolutely vital element these days is to have the correlation between the race car and the simulator software exact. If you have that then you can go on testing all through the summer on your simulator knowing that you can trust it. Because everything you do will then translate onto the car correctly. So a lot of them haven't been doing any of the



showboating that may or may not have been going on, they've just been working their way through systems checks and data gathering just to make sure everything is correlating correctly. And you've got to do that, at any number of different settings and different... It's amazing the level that these simulators is now at. It really is extraordinary what they can do with them. You've got to have the data to back it all up. So they haven't been necessarily going out trying to set fast times, it's just been gathering data as much as possible.

Mr C: And the reason that testing is the way it is, because it's now a more virtualised environment is that why people have less need to go out and show their hands ahead of the season, they can rely so much on this data that they don't have to put in these super-fast laps because they know genuinely how fast they are without them.

Joe: I think that's certainly part of it but... yes there's always a certain amount of gamesmanship. We just don't know. We don't know if Red Bull are in a panic or not. Ferrari seem to be quite confident. Mercedes is obviously beating the drum and beating their chest and it all looks great. But a lot of people who understand these things are saying how can a team have made this big a leap forward in the space of time available. Because it's just science and there's a limit to what you can do. Are we to believe that you can leap ahead a second a lap, when the rate of progress doesn't really work like that? But you know we'll find out. We may not find out on Saturday but we'll certainly get an indication on Saturday. We'll get a better indication perhaps on Sunday. But I think in the finest traditions of modern Formula 1 we want to be looking at the first three races before we start to see any patterns. We may see no patterns at all. Last year we had no patterns for about six races.

Mr C: Yes.

Joe: Seven races, eight races I can't even remember. The interesting thing in testing is that the first... I did work it out... I think the first nine days of testing had nine different drivers fastest.

Mr C: Right. Everybody had their turn.

Joe: Well that tells you where we're at, which is we haven't got a clue. And the other thing is of course that these are regulations that are, I suppose, what the best way of describing them would be mature. Some people would say old, and the law of diminishing returns means that the longer you have the same set of rules the closer everyone's going to get. Which is good for the show and when you have a new set of rules the fields tends to spread out because the richer teams are able to do more than the smaller teams.

Mr C: For example next year, when there's a major change of regulations, you expect there to be a completely different from the season we're seeing now?

Joe: I don't really know what to expect next year but I think what you can say is that for the last few years in Formula 1 the power of the engine has been fairly minimal compared to the importance of aerodynamics. I think next year we will see engine power becoming much more important and as a result of that you might have three Mercedes teams for example at the front. You might have three Renault teams at the front, you might have three Ferrari teams, we don't know. But what we do know is that the chances are that there will be bigger gaps next year than there are this year and that the engines will have a lot more influence on that.

Mr C: And if you had to, if you were a driver and you were thinking about moving teams for next year which team would you go for, which engine would you say has got the best chance?

Joe: Not a clue! I don't know how anyone can say that because, Ferrari has got some great engine men, Renault has got some great engine men, and years and years of experience. Mercedes – it's the same thing. These are all guys





who know how to do the job but the question is for a new set of rules with a whole bunch of criteria that are different and all of them interplaying with one another we have to wait and see what the right combination of systems is going to be. We just don't know because you have electric power when do you feed that into the system. Do you have electric power feeding the turbos? Do you have electro-turbos? There are all kinds of questions we don't know. One fascinating insight I got at Renault, we were talking about the turbo lag which is basically how long does it take for the turbo to spool up to give you the horsepower. Back in the 1980s when Formula 1 was last using turbos, turbo lag was a big problem. If you were a driver going round a corner waiting for the power to come in and if it comes in half a second behind where you want it, it gets kinds of exciting. But apparently with the modern turbos, these are very big turbos so therefore the lags going to be bigger, but on top of that you have all these energy gathering systems which are basically slowing down the speed of the spooling up turbos and so initially they've sort of worked out that the turbo lag is going to be a question of, not tenths of seconds, but seconds!

Mr C: Wow!

Joe: If they use it as it is right now. Therefore they're looking at, okay well we can't have that because you don't want power arriving three seconds after you ask for it.

Mr C: [laughter] It would be like a diesel!

Joe: Yes, exactly. So what they're doing now is they're looking at having electric power that the energy generating systems are creating being used to keep the turbos spooling at the right kind of level but all times. It's fantastic the number of different combinations of things they can do with the new engines with the hybrid systems. It's not quite infinitesimal but a massive number of combinations of how to use different systems in different combinations. And they have to work their way through all of this to work out what the best one is, and then they have to make it all happen with the right electronics. I think that will be fascinating to see and I think that's why also you haven't seen any new manufacturers coming in yet. They want to see... the pioneers, the three companies who are going to be doing it at the moment are going through all the pain to figure out what's best. The smartest thing to do is wait until they've done all their work and have a look at it.

Mr C: [laughter] I like the sound of that. Is there anything in the re-emergence of the Honda–McLaren rumours?

Joe: Yes, I think everybody in Formula 1 is looking for Gilles Simon. Gilles Simon is the Ferrari engineer who went to the FIA, wrote the regulations for engines for 2014 and then disappeared off to work for the Pure company which then didn't have the money to do the job properly and so shut down. And ever since then Gilles Simon has disappeared. Everybody wants to know where Gilles is. And the word is that Gilles is England working secretly for a project for Honda. And that would be logical because of all the car companies the ones most likely to come in would be Honda, BMW. Companies that have racing heritage and want the kind of technology that Formula 1 will be offering in the future. Now BMW left Formula 1 a few years ago saying they wanted to concentrate more on hybrid systems. Well hello, Formula 1 is going to be doing that so I would expect so see, so long as they're in vaguely healthy shape and most of these companies are doing alright now. Not necessarily in the European markets but in the global markets of today, the European markets are pretty stagnant, but Formula 1 can help your technology and it can help sell your cars in other places so it makes sense for these projects to actually happen.

Mr C: Have you heard anything of the 2014 engines, have you managed to hear one up close and personal?

Joe: I have. I heard one on the dynos at Renault. But you can't really tell much because the noise of an engine is really defined by the exhaust set-up and to a large extent you can actually design the kind of noise you want. I've heard simulations and they sound fine. People getting in a flap about this – the old turbo engines of the 80s sounded



terrific. I don't think it's going to be any different. A good engine is a good engine, a bit of engine noise is a bit of engine noise and the level of screechiness is like the speed. As long as it's screechy enough and fast enough you don't go, oh my god look at that it's a sewing machine going round at 12 miles an hour. It doesn't matter whether it's 180 miles an hour or 200 because it looks from a spectator's point of view, you can't tell the difference. In terms of the noise the pitch may be a bit different but it will still sound like a racing engine and that's what's important because noise, vibration, violence, mechanical violence if you like, that's what people go to races to watch.

Mr C: I can't disagree with that. Let's get back onto 2013, let's talk about drivers. So much change amongst the field of 22. We've lost the likes of Timo Glock. We've lost Heikki Kovalainen. But we've gained an awful lot of rookies. So far, as far as I can tell, only Bottas is just about the only guy who's come into Formula 1 solely on merit and not with some financial package to back him up.

Joe: I don't think that's entirely fair in as much as people talk about pay drivers and as Jamie Alguersuari was banging on about the other day saying it's not fair it's all about money, it's an auction. That's fine. When you're 22 years old and you've had two and a half years in Formula 1 and you can't get a drive I can see why you'd be saying that 'cause he wants to be driving in Formula 1 he thinks he's good enough. A lot of people would say after two and a half years if teams don't want to keep you you've had your chance. I don't think he's missing out because others have got money necessarily. I think that people have said, okay well he's had his go and we weren't that impressed so off he goes we'll go and find somebody else. If you look at all the guys coming in who are supposed to be pay drivers they've all won races at GP2 level. You don't win races in GP2 unless you're quite useful so, you know, to say that somebody is a pay driver. You know Pastor Maldonado is a pay driver, he won a Grand Prix. Niki Lauda started his career as a pay driver, but the level of quality in the field is still pretty high. Oddly enough the two guys who are coming into Formula 1 or returning to Formula 1 this year who haven't won GP2 races are Bottas and Sutil, both of whom have come effectively straight from Formula 3. And Sutil it has been such a long time, we sort of forgotten, he went to Japan for a year, but fundamentally he came in from Formula 3 level but he's been in the top six on quite a few occasions so, you know, we know he's quick and it's clear that Bottas is quick as well. So just to say that Gutiérrez or Chilton or any of these guys are pay drivers, yes they've had to find money to back up their candidacy but you can come in with all the money in the world and you won't get a Formula 1 drive this year because there will be a better package. You've got to have the combination of everything and, you know, that's the bottom line. If you have a good driver and a good driver with money you're going to take the good driver with money aren't you?

Mr C: You are, but Force India's decision, or Force India's late decision certainly gave the impression that what they were concerned about was money. Is that not the case?

Joe: Well, Force India is an interesting subject because, you know, the team says we don't have money problems and they choose a driver with money, so... How do you know if they're telling the truth? I mean, you know, teams don't want to go around saying we need the money. Having said that Marussia have effectively said that. But, you know, you don't want to give the impression that things are a bit desperate. I don't think things are a bit desperate, I don't know. Because when you're dealing with Force India you look at the sponsorship on the car and the owners, you look at the messes they're in in their own worlds outside Formula 1 and you think to yourself who the hell is paying for this? Because, you know, this is not a cheap business. Somebody has to come up with a hundred million dollars. Where does a hundred million dollars come from? I wish I knew, because if I had it I'd just go and pick it up and you probably wouldn't see me for dust! That's the kind of question, that's why... there's some people who say you've got it in for Vijay Mallya and Roy Sahara, you're always banging on about them. I'm banging on about them because I don't understand how it is it works. Maybe they've got hundreds of millions in offshore bank accounts that they can fund Formula 1 teams from. Maybe they haven't. But when you're bank accounts are frozen in your home country you do have to start worrying about whether or not the salaries are going to get paid at the racing team. You know, and that's serious worry. If you're working at those racing teams and you read about what's going on in the



background and you look at your car and you go, well that sponsor belongs to him and that sponsor belongs to him and if you look at those cars almost all the sponsorship belongs to those two guys. And the other thing is, you know, a lot of things have got spirits all over their car. Well he's sold the spirit company. Does that mean they're going to go on doing it? Is Diageo going to go on paying? Where Vijay was paying before? We don't know the answers to these questions. All we know is that they say they've got the money. Well the cars are running round, they're going pretty quick and they appear to have the money. So we have to believe that that's the case but, you know, if it comes to the end of the month and they don't pay their salary bills, then there's a panic on isn't there.

Mr C: Has that happened yet? Or is that something that just could happen?

Joe: Not with them, no. No, no. It certainly happened with another team, another fairly major team. They've had a couple of delayed salaries in the last year. You know, immediately that happens word gets out round the paddock. Uh, oh. Trouble's at this team. It doesn't take more than about five minutes before the salary cheque doesn't arrive for the alarm bells to start ringing. That's a worry. Now, we are in a time of recession and the economic situation is not great. As I've banged on many times in the past, it never ceases to amaze me that these Formula 1 team bosses can't get together and agree to cut things down a little bit more so that they can make the necessary payments. It's not fair to your employees to behave irresponsibly I suppose is the way of putting it. It's very hard to run these businesses because Formula 1 eats cash. If you have a machine that devours 100 million and that's for a middle-size team. The big guys burning up 300.

Mr C: Per year?

Joe: Yes, oh, yes. Yes. I mean it's scary. You're talking about not quite a million a day but certainly there's a couple of teams that's probably spending a million every two days.

Mr C: It's such an astronomical amount of cash!

Joe: It is. It's phenomenal and that's why I've been banging on for a long time that there has to be some kind of budget capping system because it is unsustainable. Well, you don't know it's unsustainable until it is. And the minute it becomes unsustainable then it's 'oh my god, we're in a panic'. At the end of the day you want to have 20 cars minimum running around and the money to pay for them. Now there are lots different arguments about this, people say if you have a budget cap people will lose their jobs, that's true. Maybe some people will lose their jobs but if they're good people they'll be reemployed by a smaller team, which can actually achieve more if the budgets are capped, because they've got more chance of being able to use the money. The trouble is, the fundamental problem is where do you put the cap, what is the number that works for everybody? And the big teams obviously, money is an advantage, it's a competitive advantage. So they don't want to give that away because they don't want to be beaten by small teams with less money because it makes them look bad. So they want to get that advantage, so that's the reason they won't agree to such things. And the smaller teams, some, you know, desperate to put a cap on it, but if you're talking of caps of 100 and 150 million it's still vast amounts of money.

Mr C: It's still more than the small teams even have.

Joe: Well, no I mean most of the teams nowadays have about 100 million. Last year the only one that was, well I can't say with any great certainty because, you know, you're always guesstimating these things, people will tell you a budget but you don't know if it's true. But fundamentally all but one team last year were operating at about 100 million or above. Now obviously it's not rocket science to work out what the other one, which is not there any more.

Mr C: No, they've vanished.



Joe: They couldn't afford to do it. So, you know, they were working on about 50 I think. But, you know, even 50 that's a million a week.

Mr C: It is, yes. Goodness me. So...

Joe: When you stop and think about it it's oh my god it's a million a week to create cars that cruise round at the back.

Mr C: [laughter] Yes. Yes. But then you have Marussia who have said we... they've obviously torn up Timo Glock's contract because they couldn't afford to keep him. They are now going in to this year with two, a dual rookie line-up. I think this must be the first time I've ever seen that in Formula 1. I don't know how long it's been since the last one, or even if it's ever happened before.

Joe: Oh it's happened before, but if you ask me to name... it's a while ago, yes. I think being the eleventh team in Formula 1 is an unfortunate position to be in because the Concorde agreement fundamentally covers ten. And until, well that's the financial arrangements of the Concorde agreement as had been agreed up to this point. If they get their main Concorde agreement finally signed off, there are elements within that which allow for eleventh and twelfth, and even thirteenth teams. But you get peanuts compared to the other guys and it's a big leap. You're going from 10 million in TV money to 30 or 40 if you go from eleventh to tenth. That's why at the end of last year there was such excitement going on at the back end of the grid where you got Caterham and Marussia fighting for tenth place because that was tens of millions of dollars worth of Charles Pic versus Vitaly Petrov. You know, these two guys going at it, spinning. It was exciting stuff simply because what was at stake.

Mr C: But having said that even though Caterham got that tenth position they still couldn't afford to keep Heikki for this year.

Joe: Well that's an interesting point. I mean if you are running a racing team you have to look at it not just on what's best for this year, what's best for next year. I think it's fair to say that the Marussia team and the Caterham team have probably put in capital investment of about a quarter of a billion dollars each since they started three or four years ago so if you've spent that much money there's a point at which you have to say to yourself well there's a new regulation coming next year, do we spend a lot this year or do we save this year and spend a lot for next year and try to make the breakthrough and catch up.

Mr C: Ahhhh, ok.

Joe: In both cases they're looking at it going what's more important, is it the importance in '13 or is it the performance in '14 and the answer is with the new rules in 14 there is a huge opportunity for the pecking order to be changed and therefore the thing one should really be doing is making sure you have the infrastructure in place to be in there and among them next year so if you're going to have a year of, dare I say, cruising along and doing the best you can and trying to hold on to tenth place being your fundamental goal and you get two pay-drivers who bring you a bunch of money which is saving you money, saving you more investment money if you like while at the same time still being able to build up the infrastructure you need for the future, that's a business decision. And it makes it entirely logical from a business point of view. Now from a sporting point of view you say well if it was Heikki Kovalainen it would be better. Well, would it? Heikki didn't blow Petrov away last year did he? And Timo Glock didn't blow Charles Pic away. You know, you have got to look at it that way. Is there performance sufficient to guarantee them a paid drive? These days the people who have been wiped out in Formula 1 were the guys in the middle who were just about getting by and being a low-paid drive. A low-paid drive in Formula 1 is still decent money, you know,





a couple of million here, a couple of million there. The low paid professional drivers, as opposed to the pay drivers if you like, are the ones who've been wiped out and that's simply because their performance level compared to their teammates hasn't been enough to justify their payment. So Kobayashi up against Pérez last year, sorry not good enough. I mean Kobayashi is no fool. But compared to the other bloke, it wasn't good enough and that's how you judge people in Formula 1. So Timo Glock's not there fundamentally because he didn't do enough to make Pic look... Pic was a new boy, Timo was a veteran, he should have blown him away. He didn't. Therefore the axe comes swinging at him. Timo had a contract, the team said look Timo we can't afford you any more. Timo said, yes I get that. The good guys who, you know, believe in helping teams, actually the best thing he could do to help that team to grow, as a team player, the best thing he could do was to step out of it. If you think about it.

Mr C: Wow. Yes, point taken.

Joe: And also from his point of view if you look at it in another way he's been around Formula 1 for a lot of years and his trajectory is not necessarily upwards. His trajectory particularly after the Pic, not being able to beat Charles enough, that means he was stationary or in a sort of low slow downhill glide. From a racing driver's point of view another season of that is not really going to help you a lot. Yes you'll still be a Formula 1 driver but you're not going to win anything. You'll be paid enough money, but money is not really the fundamental issue here. If somebody is saying to you we'll pay you a fraction, a percentage, whatever it was of your contract, you can go and find another paid drive somewhere else and you can win races. So he got a deal with BMW in DTM. He'll win some races maybe. He'll be in a competitive car. He'll probably have a career that will go on, in DTM they can go on for five, six, ten years, beyond the age of Grand Prix driving. And so he's getting paid twice and going into a next stage of a career which is he did his best in Formula 1. Not everyone can be a winner, so from a lot of respects his decision, and it was his decision, because he did have a contract, his decision to go was a decision that was as much about him and what he wanted in his life, you know he might have wanted to be a Grand Prix driver but he would have known that if McLaren were looking for a driver and he'd been in the pecking order they would have chosen him, instead they chose Pérez didn't they. And that's fundamentally because he hadn't done enough to earn that other drive. Kovalainen the same thing. Kobayashi the same. You know, the reason they're gone is logical. It may be brutal but it's logical.

Mr C: It is. I cannot argue with that, you talk an awful lot of sense. This is why we like talking to you Joe because suddenly it all makes sense. Let's look at the other end of the grid then. Who do you think has the strongest line-up? Which pairing are you most excited about seeing?

Joe: Oh I think that depends fundamentally on the car doesn't it. They're all pretty good driver line-ups at the top end. You know. People say well Massa is no good and Webber is no good and all that sort of stuff. But these guys can all win races in the right set of circumstances if things are going well. So I'd say that they're all pretty well balanced. I think the question marks we have at the front end are, how is Pérez going to do at McLaren against Button? You know because Jenson doesn't have the explosive speed that Lewis has but Jenson is consistently fast. And, you know, you used to see it sometimes in the McLaren days when they were together where Lewis would do some fantastic lap times and go whizzing away and then of course you have to have a bit of a rest after that you know, because it's all a bit hard going to keep up that level of speed. You turn around and there's bloody Jenson behind you. Because Jenson is just like a metronome, 'gadung, gadung, gadung', he's always there. And so people say, yeah that Button's rubbish, you know, he doesn't qualify as well as Lewis but in a race, wow. These are the kind of things people have to take into account. The fastest driver in the world over one lap is not necessarily the fastest driver in the world over ten laps and that is, you know, that is where you're worth a lot. Fernando Alonso is a fantastic race driver, he's a very good qualifier too but as a race driver he's always there. If there are things going on he generally manages to avoid them. Unless Grosjean comes flying through the air and lands on top of him! But generally speaking if there's anyway he can avoid it he can avoid it he avoids it. He is just a fantastic race driver and that's why



he's paid the big bucks. Because you turn around and there he is, he's still there. So while the average fans get together and say judging people that Felipe Massa's rubbish you've got to take into account all kinds of elements about what the teams want. The teams don't want two number one drivers killing each other, it doesn't make sense. What you want is a good number one and a good number two. And a good number two knows that his best interest is to be a number two, not a number one. It's a fascinating set of circumstances and what all the number two's are trying to do is to be in a position one day to be the number one's. Or if they get to a certain level of their careers they're looking at it going well, how many races can I win and how much money can I bank and how much fun can I have before I will stop. But those are guys who've accepted there, you know... I say this on a fairly regular basis at the audiences every racing driver comes up to a day when they go, oh my god I can't beat this bloke and it is the facing up to that fundamental problem and it happens to the best. Even Michael Schumacher, all those years of winning and winning and winning and then every race driver, you can't go on winning forever. You can't be Fangio's, you can't go on doing it in your fifties. So eventually every single driver gets to a point going, oh no I can't beat this guy, and it's how they handle that in their heads psychologically that then defines some great racing drivers. People say why has Massa been rubbish ever since Alonso turned up. The answer is Felipe found somebody who he couldn't beat and he has been amazing in as much as his fortitude of grinding on doing the best he can, getting his head round the problem, not letting himself get down, fighting back. By the end of last season he was pretty competitive but this guy Alonso is the bogey man if you like and Felipe's aim now is to try to beat him and if he can't, well he'll just have to settle to be the number two and eventually when Ferrari decide it's a good time to change they will change. There was a lot of talk last year of Ferrari going after Webber. Which made a lot of sense 'cause Alonso and Webber are mates. Mark knows how to play the game and in a Ferrari, you know, every driver wants to be a Ferrari driver at some point in his career and when you get to Mark's age it's a good time to be moving off to Ferrari. But in the end Mark looked at it and said well you know, who has got the faster car? Answer Red Bull and therefore what do you do? You stay with Red Bull, even if they tell you that Sebastian is going to win this race, but Mark can still win races don't forget that. He's still allowed to win, it just depends on the circumstances, so there's lots of different elements involved in the psychology of the teams and of the drivers and trying to work out why things happen and why they keep the combinations they keep is part of the whole game. We've seen it many times in the past where teams have gone for the super star line-ups and you've got to have some pretty rounded people for those things not to blow up. As we've discovered over the years a lot of racing drivers are not necessarily rounded people. And, you know, I think you see, with Jenson it's a good example of a guy who gets on with everybody. Jenson doesn't have fights with his teammates because he's relaxed enough within himself about being able to beat them or being beaten by them. So he doesn't get into a thing where he has to ram them off the racetrack when you get into the Prost-Senna kind of thing or the Piquet-Mansell fight of years gone by. I use the expression sometimes too many supermen in the same telephone box and that's what it is. You can't fit two supermen in the same telephone box. And so the teams have got to judge what is the best combination for them because we've seen the two number one syndrome too many times and if you're smart. And you're running a business and people are relying on you, you try to make decisions to avoid mistakes like that happening again.

Mr C: That said then is there anything that you can see that may shock us this year. Will there be any surprises coming the fans way this year because of a driver line up or a combination of factors that we're not anticipating?

Joe: Err, I don't know, it depends what we're anticipating doesn't it. Expectation – we can have great expectations but are they going to come true, we don't know. If you're asking me who do I think will show well this year, who will be the failures, who will be the successes, I don't know. We'll have to see. I think it will be interesting to see Bottas versus Maldonado at Williams. I think it will be interesting to see Hülkenberg and Gutiérrez at Sauber and I think it will be interesting to see... I mean Force India we've already seen this combination together already. I don't think that's going to be really that exciting, although we'll have to see whether Sutil is still at the same level of pace. But after taking a year out it's tough and coming back at the same kind of level. We'll have to see. I'm fascinated too by Jenson and Pérez and see how that goes and of course everybody wants to know how good are the Mercs and the



other one within that is Lewis Hamilton versus Nico Rosberg. This is the year that either Nico Rosberg or Lewis Hamilton will get found out. And I know who my money's on!

Mr C: [Laughter].

Joe: But the moving drivers around does give one the chance to... 'cause drivers are graded on the basis of who they've beaten and what car they were in, and you can't compare two drivers directly unless they've gone to war in the same machinery. So you can compare, for example, Alonso and Hamilton who were together at McLaren in that massive bloodbath they went through in 2007 to work out who was the better of the two. But then they go their separate ways and then it's difficult again to know who's going up in terms of developing, who's going down, what their mental state is. All these sort of things you know... at this level of racing, half of it is about confidence and half of it is about their ability to cope with difficulties. I think that, you know, the ability to be a great driver is a guy who can win championships in more than one car. That's why eventually Sebastian Vettel will have to move to another team to prove that he is a superstar. Yes he's won a bunch of titles with Red Bull Racing but until we see him winning titles somewhere else he's always going to be the bloke who won titles with Red Bull Racing. That's the way that Formula 1 drivers are judged and it's your ability in a bad car as well which makes you stand out.

Mr C: Which I think Fernando Alonso has proved his doubters...

Joe: Exactly. If you look at Alonso in some of the cars that he's had recently he's been fantastic in cars that have not been really up to it. But if you want another example you go back to Senna when he was in the McLaren with the Cosworth engine some of those results that he pulled out with that machine were just amazing. Utterly amazing. But this is how you judge the greats – by their ability to do things in different cars. I think that's part of the reason that Lewis set off on his odyssey to Mercedes which doesn't seem like a sensible idea but we have to wait and see, maybe he's cleverer than we are. Maybe he's luckier than we are. Whatever. We'll have to wait and see how it all pans out.

Mr C: I had a fantastic surprise in my inbox yesterday, a brand spanking new copy of GP+, first of the season.

Joe: Yes, yeah, I finally managed to get it out [laughter].

Mr C: It's cutting it fine.

Joe: Yes, no, it's just a matter of... the run up to the start of the season is always a very busy time because lots of people want you to see things they're doing and see things in advance and dah-dee-dah-dee-dah. So putting a magazine together is quite an adventure so we knocked that one up quickly and now we get to do it again this week. So hopefully people will enjoy it, it's got a bunch of interesting stuff in there. I think when we get round to what we're going to do for the next edition we'll do it. But it is in the finest tradition of Grand Prix+ it's the organic magazine that grows like horse manure!

Mr C: [laughter] I have only managed to read maybe 30 per cent of it, I've caught your column, David's column and Mike's column. Mike's, I especially liked Mike's objection to Lewis Hamilton's new best friend.

Joe: Yes, well animals and racetracks are not a good combination. I thought Mike was ranting a bit myself but, you know, whatever.

Mr C: It made for great reading.



Joe: Yes, I mean Mike writes beautiful stuff and, you know, the subject matter, he did send a sort of apology with it saying I think there might be a bit too much animal in this one but this is what I feel on the subject, and that's what columns are for isn't it. I was ranting and raving about Jaime Alguersuari he was ranting and raving about whatever the dog's name is, I can't remember...

Mr C: Roscoe I think.

Joe: Roscoe, thank you. And I can't remember what Dave was ranting and raving about but he's usually ranting and raving about something.

Mr C: 1.6 litre turbos.

Joe: Yes, that's what column writing is about isn't it. It's about giving your opinion daft as it may be.

Mr C: Grand Prix+ is a fantastic magazine, it never fails to impress. This was issue 119. We have signed up for yet another season and I do encourage anybody to give Grand Prix+ a look in because I think it's incredible value for money. This issue the season preview issue you've got everything we've already discussed, there was a piece which I haven't read yet actually on Australia's first F1 driver. An interview with Lewis Hamilton, and much, much more. There's so much more in this magazine. It is the finest digital F1 magazine in the world and I absolutely stand by that statement because I've tried them all and all the rest are rubbish. It's brilliant and it's the one that you need to sign up to. If you haven't signed up yet I'm disappointed in you.

Joe: Yes, tut tut. That's what I say. Send me your money.

Mr C: [laughter] Yes, I can't believe anybody listening to this show hasn't already done so. I would be hugely disappointed if you're listening to this and you haven't already signed up because there are no bad things about this magazine. Has anybody ever signed up and said you know this wasn't what I wanted, I want my money back? I bet nobody's done that have they?

Joe: No, that's true. I think I've had a couple of people saying they didn't get round to downloading some of them later in the year because they had too much to do or it was too much and they didn't have time to read it. I've had a couple of those I think over the six years or whatever we've been doing it now. But really not. Most people just say love it and, you know, that's what we like to hear but we're trying to build something for the long term and we're always amazed at the difficulty it is. It's a very hard thing to advertise obviously because you can't put an ad in Autosport saying, hey this magazine will kill the magazine you're reading right now. They don't really want to go for that. It's based very much on word of mouth, which makes it a lot harder to do. But the build rate is much longer time involved. But we like doing it, the motto of Grand Prix+ is "it's all about the passion" and you have to understand that that's what drives us all onwards with this wonderfully mad scheme we do.

Mr C: Well if that hasn't sold listeners I don't know what will. If you haven't signed up to it you're crazy, you're missing out. Now is the best time to do it because if you sign up now you get the entire season, the full set of magazines. This is the week that you want to do it. If people are listening to the show and thinking, right I'm going to sign up Joe, where do they go and how do they do it?

Joe: You apply a tad of logic and you go [www dot grandprixplus dot com](http://www.dot.grandprixplus.dot.com). [Laughter]. And that works. And the plus obviously being p-l-u-s 'cause the web being as it is you're not allowed to use plus signs but there you are that's how you do it, you just follow the instructions and the next thing you know, whooomph, it's in your magazine, sorry it's in





your magazine, in your computer. And the other thing is of course you can download, this is one thing I love about it, you can download the full five years of Grand Prix Pluses and you have your own personal shelf of magazines...

Mr C: I do. I have that.

Joe: ...in your computer. And when you want to look something up you don't have to go and dig through the cellar or the attic or the rubbish tip to find out what happened. It's all in the computer and I love that because one thing Grand Prix reporters tend to get into is these massive, massive banks of paperwork and books and god knows what. And I love that you can put it all in a machine, a little silver box and carry it around the world with you. If you don't tip coffee on it, it works fine.

Mr C: [Laughter]. Who would do a thing like that?

Joe: I don't know there are some strange people out there but I seem to remember some sort of disaster like that happening to me.

Mr C: It's worth having, you can also follow Grand Prix+ on Twitter. It's exactly the same Grand Prix p-l-u-s if that's your thing and that's the way you want to keep up with new issues and news. And I think that's basically us covered for this first show of 2013.

Joe: Yes well I think that's true. There's not much more we can say about the racing cars until we see what's going to happen so we'll have this weekend and then we'll all go whizzing up to Kuala Lumpur next week and probably after that at some point I'll come and have a chat and we'll see where things are at and we'll be able to say a bit more about what to expect from the season because right now we are a bit guessing.

Mr C: Indeed. What does the rest of today hold in store for you?

Joe: I have to whizz off now down to somewhere near a beach and there's a Mercedes lunch. They're going to jibber jabber about what a fabulous season they're going to have. And then there's back to the racetrack, the FIA has a press conference going on. There will be some on-track action today from the V8 supercars, the local heroes and other support races. I believe there's a bunch of Can-Am cars going to be doing some racing and demonstration runs and stuff, which will be fabulous. And, you know, it's a great event the Australian Grand Prix it's really fun, lots of activity all the time, so I'm sort of, I can't even remember what's happening this evening. I think I've having dinner somewhere, you know, the way these things are, rushing around from one place to the next and trying to remember where I have to be.

Mr C: Well it's very nice of you to remember to be here. Do come back any time. It's always enlightening to talk to you. We enjoy it so very, very much.

Joe: Well thank you for having me as we used to say when we were young when visiting. I'll be back soon!

Mr C: Cheers Joe!

*[Transcript by Robyn]*