



An Aside with Joe – A horse-choking wedge of wonga

Mr C: Welcome to An Aside with Joe – A horse-choking wedge of wonga. Welcome to what must be and unprecedented Aside with Joe show because it's unexpected and I'm completely unprepared for this. Joe you've caught me unawares. I wasn't expecting to hear from you today.

Joe: Well, that's life. Get with the program.

Mr C: It's only F1, I don't need to prepare, right?

Joe: Well yes, these are things that can be talked about endlessly. Hell, there's a whole bunch of people out there in the world who talk endlessly about Formula 1 and know nothing about it. If the people who have got some idea can't do it on the turn of a sixpence we're in poor shape.

Mr C: Well let's prove that we are not in poor shape. We are here today and we are here to talk about the first race of the season, a fantastic Grand Prix. What did you make of what you saw on Sunday?

Joe: I don't think... I think the mistake that lots of people are making is deciding that this is going to be the pattern for the year. I don't see any evidence that that's the case. Yes we know that the Williams, not the Williams, my brain is definitely asleep. We know that the Lotus is quite a good car. We know that Kimi drove an exceptional race. We know that Sutil's started on harder tyres than everybody else and rose to the top as a result of that and did a good race. Don't get me wrong but there was a reason he was there. We know that the Mercedes wasn't as good as the pre-season puff. We know that McLaren is in a bit of a mess. We're not quite sure what to make of Red Bull and we're not quite sure what to make of Ferrari and I think... I was speaking yesterday to James Allison the technical director of Lotus and he said we won't really be able to tell where we are until after Malaysia because it's a different kind of track and we may have a different kind of result. And if we find the same cars are competitive in Kuala Lumpur as were in Melbourne then we'll begin to understand the structure.

My feeling personally is that three races is a more sensible guide to who's going to be where, but I think two will help but I don't think, you know, Formula 1 media reporting these days is so reactive to what happened 10 minutes ago that if a driver has a bad weekend everyone is writing him off and he's going to get fired, and if he's successful everyone's whooping him up and saying he's going to be the next world champion, you know, there needs to be just a little bit more stability to get a sort of truer picture how things go. You are only as good as your last event but, you know, you've got to have a series of pretty bad events before teams start going – right we're going to throw him in the bin.

Mr C: So without drawing any conclusions then, what did you actually make of the entire event because there was obviously the delayed qualifying which, no doubt, put your schedule out of whack, and then we had an eventful Grand Prix. Did you leave Australia feeling good about Formula 1 this year?

Joe: Yeah, I thought it was terrific, I think that it's great for Formula 1 that we're having this. There are some people who whine on about the tyres being too important, but what used to decide races in the 1960s? Some of it was down to the tyres and how the drivers looked after them. You've got to bear in mind, ok, they could build better tyres than they do. But that's not the point. They build tyres deliberately so that we get better racing. From Pirelli's point of view that's an incredibly brave thing to do and we should salute them for doing it. But it is actually a PR exercise which is... the message they're trying to get across is to tell the world, look we can build any kind of tyre you



want. This is our expertise. Ok, you might hear the occasional driver whinging about how the tyres were no good, that was because he didn't know how to handle them, or couldn't handle them.

So I think that all these people who witter on about it's no longer pure have got their head up their bottoms, frankly. And you know, you have to understand that Formula 1 is a technical exercise but it's also a show. If we have five years of the same team winning every race what will happen to the TV audience? Duh. And what happens to the TV audience reflects upon how much money is available. These are all dominoes that are logical. Going down the purely technical route is not the answer because the sport will die out and the way they've found to make it an exciting sport is not affecting the ultimate success of, you know, it's not changing the fact that the good teams are winning and the bad teams are not. It just affects the way they go about winning, that is what a good regulation is. It's to set a challenge that's the same for everybody and to see who comes out of it the best. And, you know, people often say that Formula 1 could save lots of money if they just wrote rules for soapboxes and put them all at the top of hills and let them rush down and see who's fastest. And that's true because there would be one lot who were fastest. And you know something, almost certainly going to be the same lot who's fastest here.

Mr C: [Laughter] Yeah, I'd pick Adrian Newey in that fight.

Joe: Yeah. This is what... there's just a lot of talk going on, you know, it's just unnecessary and rubbishy really.

Mr C: Well let's not talk rubbishy. Tell us what happened, tell us how your Saturday played on then. What happened when qualifying was shelved?

Joe: Well basically for everybody, we were concentraed into one day which is not good, you know, to a lesser or greater extent depending on what you were doing people were up against it. Pretty much everybody came through alright in the end. Certainly from our part of view it was a complete nightmare. By the time I'd finished all my work it was about midday on Monday.

Mr C: Blimey!

Joe: I worked through the night and did occasional cat-naps, or whatever you call them, to survive. But, yeah, that was the necessary evil I had to do. It's not just Grand Prix Plus, I also produce a business of motorsport magazine and write for various other people so I had to do all of that and do it all in half the time or, or... I know what I mean anyway.

Mr C: [Laughter].

Joe: Basically, doing a lot more in a space of time available, but you know, you just, in that case, you just aim for the deadlines that are the most important ones, so Grand Prix Plus we managed to get out in six hours, which wasn't bad at all. We might have done it in four before, you know, but six was perfectly acceptable in the circumstances. But by doing that other things had to be sacrificed which then had to be caught up on. I was in a state of some discombobulation, there's a good word, by Monday lunchtime. And then I went out for a wonderfully absurd idea – a five hour lunch with some racing chaps in Melbourne. So by the time I came back from that at rush hour on Monday afternoon I was ready for a bit of a snooze, and I duly did. I created jet-lag without getting on a plane.

Mr C: [Laughter] Incredible. Presumably though you are Saturday afternoon was rather quiet?

Joe: No, not really. It was, well there wasn't much I could do on the one hand, but on the other hand my Saturday evenings are always busy. I don't go out and party, contrary to popular belief that all Formula 1 journalists do is party. There was a function which I would have liked to have gone to which was some sort of Infiniti ... actually I'm



not sure I wanted to go that much because it was a sort of night on a boat out in the bay and I dare say it was probably a bit blowy and stuff. But in theory I would have loved to have gone on it, but unfortunately I couldn't make it because I had other things to do.

Mr C: And was it the right call to delay qualifying. Would you have made that same call?

Joe: Well there was no choice, it was dark. [Laughter]. They didn't have any option but to call it off until the morning. Because even if sunset wasn't until seven, sorry, five thirty-eight, no it would have been seven thirty-eight.

Mr C: Yep.

Joe: You know, if you start the session at seven o'clock and you have to do Q2 and Q3 with the gap between them you've reached nightfall. What you have to bear in mind is given the cloud and all the rest of it, the light was terribly anyway. So, you know, the drivers would have been up in arms and saying it's not right for us to be driving in the dark without headlights. The key question really was what about the water, was it too much? A lot of people look at it on the TV and go, gah, there's no water there. And they don't understand that these cars are so fast and so close to the ground that it doesn't take an awful lot of water to get them aquaplaning, and you can't have cars aquaplaning everywhere. I mean you can if you want to go and smash up the entire field but it's not wise from anybody's point of view. First of all from a safety angle and second of all from a financial angle, you smash up cars, guess what, you've got to build some new ones and that costs a lot of money.

Fundamentally the decision isn't taken on the economics of it, it's taken on the safety of it. I think it was absolutely the right decision. Now you can argue that perhaps you should push the ride heights up and make it so that the cars can run on water but if you do that you open up an absolute can of worms in the regulations as to devices that go up and down trying to control them. Sometimes you have to take pain in one area to avoid pain in another area. That, I think, is a wise idea to avoid ride heights that change by all kinds of wonderful tricky things that get round the rules. Quite another to just say ok well occasionally we're going to have to run on the wet, or not run on the wet rather.

Mr C: Would it not have helped if the initial start time for qualifying was earlier and not delayed in order to appeal more to European audiences?

Joe: Well again we go back to the question of what is best for the sport and the answer is that if you run the race at a time when Europeans are awake, your live TV viewing figures are better and that reflects on the amount of money you can bring in. There is logic. And also to be quite honest it's actually quite a challenge to have to do it in different conditions and it gives the world championships a little bit of an extra edge. The fact that they race in the dusk in various places, they race in the night in Singapore and I'm sure we'll see some more night races coming in eventually once people have saved up the cash to put up lighting. So I think that it doesn't do the sport any harm to do that. Now obviously you could say if you're sitting in Australia you'd say the whole thing is being manipulated for TV in Europe, but if you're sitting in Europe you have to get up really early in the morning. So you please one lot of fans... that's the trouble with having a big round thing we're all standing on. Not everybody can be at the same time all the time. There's no way round it, I mean it's like having a Grand Prix in Hawaii, you know, we'll never have a Grand Prix in Hawaii because the time zones everywhere will be wrong.

Mr C: But it will be lovely for anybody who attended.

Joe: Absolutely. Over there in whatever the name of the islands are, they'd be having a lovely time with lots of dancing girls and hoola-hoola hoops and things. The trouble is everyone else it'd be 3 o'clock in the morning, 9 o'clock at night, it would just be a disaster. You've got to take the rough with the smooth. And, you know, from the



Australian point of view half the year they have to be the ones getting up at strange hours. We're trying to find ways to balance it all, but the truth of the matter is you can't, if you're a global sport you can't balance it all and get the live TV viewers everywhere, you just have to do the best you can.

Mr C: True story. Once the qualifying had run, once the final session, the flag had dropped on the final session the grid looked eerily familiar to, worryingly familiar to the grids we saw in 2011 with Red Bulls looking dangerously quick. But their pace didn't materialise or didn't sustain throughout the race on Sunday. What do you think happened to the speed of the Red Bull?

Joe: Well I think it was fairly clear, you know, speed is one thing, ability to survive on tyres is quite another. And that's, you know, half the skill of the game is you can have the fastest car in the world, but if the car eats its tyres it's not going to win races. Tortoise-hare syndrome, you know. So we just really have to watch and see if the engineers can figure out what it is they have to do with their cars to make the tyres last and in some respects that's in the car and in some respects it's in the driver 'cause some drivers are better on tyres than others. We just have to see who emerges and, you know, fundamentally you have to say that if a driver can handle tyres better than another driver does that make them better, is it down to style, is it down to genius, is it down to whatever, you know. I think in every always be fair for everybody. You know, it's like people say well we should put them all in the same cars. Well what the hell is the same car? You can't have the same car because the cars are always different to a lesser or greater extent so you just have to at the end of the day you have to accept that there are one or two things that don't necessarily work out in total fairness but you do the best you can.

Mr C: The collection of 2013 rookies had their first taste of a Formula 1 Grand Prix on Sunday. Who was your standout driver from the new boys?

Joe: Well I think that most have done a half-decent job. I don't think we really properly saw what Max Chilton could do, and Giedo van der Garde because the two of them managed to hit each other. There were one or two glitches on the TV front I felt, which were quite important. There was an incident on the, I think it was the penultimate lap. Something happened between Jean-Éric Vergne and Romain Grosjean because up to that point Vergne was screaming in at high-speed and going to gobble up the minor placings. And it looked like he was on for probably, you know, 8th, 9th or 10th places. Something happened which we never saw and he dropped back. Anyway there were one or two glitches and we didn't see certain things which rather, you know, didn't help tell the story. Obviously as things turned out Bianchi looked very good but in part that was because Chilton didn't look particularly special but then his car was damaged. It's pretty hard on one race but, you know, as I said earlier, this is how it's done these days and everything's judged on one race. I don't think there was anybody who stood out as being utterly useless. And certainly van der Garde's lap times weren't great, but then again he had a damaged car too. So, you know, I think they are a very talented bunch and although some people say there are too many pay drivers in Formula 1, you know, I pointed out on the blog already all those pay drivers are pretty well qualified.

Mr C: It is a fine line up. What did you make of, or what do you know of Hulkenberg's failure to start. That seemed like an unusual set of circumstances.

Joe: Yeah, there was something odd going on. But there was a fundamental, there was a pipe within the fuel system that had cracked and it was a fracture of some sort, but it was obviously, if you've got a cracked pipe you can't go racing around with petrol coming out, it's not a good idea. And obviously, I think, given the fact, I believe they're changing his car for this weekend, it's probably an integral failure of the chassis and I know they were very unhappy about it because they've ever seen such a problem before. That would point to probably, I don't know, it could be any number of things. It could be a manufacturing glitch, but then again the car's been running in testing a lot. I think to be quite honest I haven't checked which one it was but most of the cars have run a fair bit in testing so it might be



down to transportation problems, it took a hit at some point when it wasn't supposed to. You know, you never know with these things but at the end of the day it was a fairly big setback for Sauber and they were a pretty unhappy lot because Nico looked quite useful up to that point in the qualifying. So, it's just the way of the world sometimes, these things happen. I'm sure that they will get over it and they will fight back because they are a tough old bunch. Mr C: McLaren have taken the lion's share of post-race headlines. Much talk about what to do about their current trials and tribulations. Is it as bad as it looks do you think, is their situation fixable?

Joe: I think what they need to do is obviously to employ all the internet journalists out there to redesign the car for them.

Mr C: [Laughter].

Joe: It's a very obvious solution to the problem isn't it? I think the first thing you've got to have the data together before you start panicking, so you look at all the data of where the car is not working, what's wrong with it. Is it a question of tracking down a small thing or a big thing, you know, it's like a who-dunnit, you've got to go through whole series of things before you figure out whether the car's a dog or whether there's a little problem there somewhere which just needs to be tweaked and McLaren is a huge engineering organisation with a lot of very clever people and they will be working flat out to try and figure it and every race they get gives them more clues. So they'll be able to get rid of Colonel Mustard in the, in the, in the Kitchen with the lead piping and move on to the next thing and eventually they'll track it down what the problem is and when they get to that point then they can look and say is this a fundamentally flawed chassis in which case we need to change it, or is this something we can sort out pretty quick. And given their depth or resources, as we've seen with Ferrari in the past, as we've seen with McLaren for a number of years you can come screaming back once you know what the problem is. The key to it is figuring out what the problem is. It doesn't really help to have headless chickens hopping around going cluck, cluck, cluck. I don't know how they do that without heads, but there you go. And telling them, you know, that it's all a disaster and a huge great crisis. I think they're pretty well aware that things are not where they want to be. And it's just a matter of how that works. It's a question of how good they are at pretending to be Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot.

Mr C: [Laughter]. An interesting analogy. Mark Webber had a usual Mark Webber start but this time Red Bull placed the blame squarely on McLaren's new ECU. A storm in a tea-cup? Is a problem brewing there? Should we expect to see more issues on that front because it is a new device for this year.

Joe: Well I'm sure, you know, these things when you have prototype things and you have only X amount of time to use them you're going to have glitches. It was a most unfortunate glitch that occurred. They do always seem to occur to Mark. And they always seem to occur to Mark at the same place but there you are. It's odd. Sometimes a tyre has a puncture and Pirelli will say we're terribly sorry that the tyre had a puncture. It's exactly the same as that, now if Christian Horner's laying it on a bit thicker it's presumably just to increase some pressure on McLaren because these are the sort of games that team principal's play with one another, you know. But again, you know, if you bash the thing it is one bloke at McLaren it doesn't mean the other bloke at McLaren's fingers hurt does it? So in the overall scheme of things it's the glitch that happens and it happens to all kinds of suppliers, it shouldn't necessarily happen but in the early stages of development these things can happen so it was most unfortunate for Mark and, you know, but what can you do and that's why being a racing driver you have to be pretty resilient, keep your head down, keep fighting and give it the best you can.

[Christine: If you're enjoying this aside with Joe do not forget that you can find more from Joe at Joe Blogs F1 dot com. Recent topics include a big Lotus wind-up, a long night, a long lunch and a long view. And what is the F1 world coming to?]



Mr C: I tell you what I did year today and you may or may not have any more news on this but I just managed to get a headline from the Guardian before we came on air. Nick Fry on his way out at Mercedes. I'm guessing not a huge shock.

Joe: Well he didn't look on his way out here yesterday. But there you are.

Mr C: Ah, interesting.

Joe: And he was here and busy chatting away to journalists, I did see him chatting to the Guardian man now I think about it.

Mr C: Hello.

Joe: Well perhaps he is on his way, but you know, you can't have two CEOs can you? Well you can but it doesn't work. So he would be moving into a different role, it might be wise for him to prepare the ground for a change that may come. A lot of this is to do with PR image, he doesn't want Mercedes announcing his departure, it might be wise for him to announce it. Mercedes don't want to be seen to be kicking out all the... throwing all the babies out with the bathwater. They want to be seen to be sending serenely towards world championships with no one hurt and... anyway, it's all bonkers and, you know, it's all about PR so they don't want to be seen to be, you know, going in there and axing all the guys who set up the team and slaughtering everybody there. I'm sure there's, you know, you've got so many supermen in the telephone box already there's little room for manoeuvre inside in the box. Yes I can see Nick going but before anyone gets to feel too sorry for Nick, you know, poor Nick, he's leaving with X tens of millions in the bank from when he sold it to Mercedes-Benz so, you know, he's not exactly going to be busking down at Charring Cross.

Mr C: [Laughter] If only! He did get a fair windfall from the sale of Brawn GP, did he?

Joe: I believe that the Australians have a term for this, it's horse-choking wedge of wonga!

Mr C: [Laughter].

Joe: And he got a horse choking wedge of wonga, and he's very happy funnily enough, he can live happily ever after for as long as he cares to do so and probably several generations of small Fry can do in the long term. The question is for people like this is, you know, they need things to do in their lives. They don't want to go and play golf for the rest of their days. He's only a lad, well he's not really a lad, he's quite an old lad but he's well disguised and he's young and feisty enough to want to be doing other things. So, you know, if he is moving on, if he moves on I'm sure he will be looking for another challenge because otherwise, you know, he'll be sitting at home drinking gin and tonics and playing golf.

Mr C: That doesn't sound like such a bad life. Suddenly I don't feel quite as sorry for the man as I did when I read the headline earlier.

Joe: Yeah well, you know, watch out because the next headline you're going to start reading in a few months time will be all about Ross Brawn. There's an inevitability if somebody's going in to the team to join as team principal the person who is currently team principal won't be there any more. If one domino falls over another one will eventually fall over, in fact they do it quite quickly in those fancy shows don't they? Mercedes is wearing silk gloves and trying to let the dominoes fall over without actually making any noise but the dominoes will fall nonetheless.



Mr C: Wow, I love that. Ok. I know we are very, we are very tight for time today and you must leave us very soon but let us quickly talk about Grand Prix Plus. Can you tell us that lots and lots of lovely Aside with Joe listeners signed up to Grand Prix Plus as suggested this week. Did that happen?

Joe: I don't know because I didn't have a tick-box for – I'm signing up because of Aside with Joe. We've had lots of people signing up for different reasons and, you know, it's nice. I don't know whether you saw it but I put a little thing up the other day saying what do you think of the magazine. To get a little bit of feedback and, you know, we got a lot of feedback and some of it idiotic and some of it's reasonable. Some of it is rude, and I can be rude back too sometimes if I'm in a grumpy mood! Which is rare, but I do my best. It's good to hear what people think and, you know, people are signing up and we're very happy with the way things are going we obviously like it when more people sign up but when you're on a long term plan which involves word of mouth it takes a long time so every little bit helps and every Aside with Sidepodcast is really useful, and we love the product that we produce and we're enthusiastic. Sure we make some money out of it but we actually like doing it and we're happy when fans find it and read it. Because obviously it enhances their enjoyment of the sport as well.

Now we're not saintly figures, we're not doing it just for the thrill and enjoyment of race fans but it is part of the equation you have to take into account, you know, we have the strapline on it which is – it's all about the passion – and it really is. And, you know, we actually want more people to like it, we want younger generations to come and read, you know, look at it and then join the sport. We want to educate people about the past, you know, so they understand more about how the sport is and how it got here. So, you know, we are doing, we sort of, I don't know how to describe us really, we're sort of self-appointed missionary society for Formula 1 fans, you know, spreading the word in the darkness. You know, and at the same time making a quid, which is always useful when you have to pay out the kind of money we have to pay out to go around the world and do our jobs. We like it very much when race fans talk to other racing fans and say – why don't you buy this?

And, you know, that's the goal, it's to spread it, the whole thing around and it takes a long time to build up a following, if you look at the history of Autosport Magazine it started in 1950 and it was a long time before it got to really sort of serious levels of people, and that's just the way it is. You don't get sensations overnight, I suppose if we rented Justin Bieber to sing a song about it or something that would probably help us along the way but we can't afford to. I mean, you know, it's just the way of the world isn't it, you do what you can do. And, you know, we're just going about it and we're not experts, we're just sort of sucking it and see. But we're having fun doing it and that's the important bit.

Mr C: Indeed. And if you didn't subscribe last week, as suggested, you missed out on 71 pages of fantastic Formula 1 commentary, a class of 2013, F1 and the economic crisis, a profile and interview with Mike Coughlan, very insightful that one, I can't say that I'm his number 1 fan, giving the things he was involved in in 2007 but I found it very enlightening to hear from him. First interview I think I've heard since he returned to F1.

Joe: Yes, I think, I mean, teams tend not to allow people to have too many exclusives, I did suggest that it would be a good idea to talk to Mike and I think they allowed three people to do it, independent of one another, we all did it separately, it wasn't all sort of a joint interview, but from different walks of life. In other words, you know, a news agency was one of them and a specialist magazine was another and an electronic magazine was another. You know, so there was sort of what you call exclusive. If I had been one of the many websites out there in the world I would have screamed 'exclusive', you know, but that's just not my style. And I have known Mike for a long time. I didn't approve of what happened in 2007 by I think there are stories about 2007 as well that will have to wait a few years to be told. Mike obviously has his own thoughts on the subject and he's, it's hard to be able to say that's crazy, that's not crazy until you know what they are but he prefers to reserve judgement or reserve comment on that and I would



fully understand that, you know, having said that you can also see, what very often happens when people have utter disasters is they find redemption by doing the job properly afterwards. And, you know, you can see there's a desire there to be recognised as an engineering colossus.

And, you know he was always a very fine engineer, one must not forget that McLaren got the big fine and the big headlines and all the rest of it, but information flow between the teams hasn't stopped, it's not going to stop and sometimes people get sold down the river and become the scapegoats. I'm not saying that, you know, these things weren't happening because clearly they were but things are never as cut and dry as the internet would have you believe, you know. I think one of the things that you learn if you spend a long time in any business, not just motorsport but any business, is that black and white are not always black and white, there's lots of shades of grey. I think that people who are, you know, the current generation of internet journalists are very much sitting there in their youth and there's an awful lot of black and white going on and not enough grey. We'll have to see how many of them survive long enough to learn grey as a colour, I doubt they will most of them 'cause eventually after a couple of years of hard work they all sort of stop and go away, that's what's been happening a fair bit with the first wave of internet journalists, there's very few of them of who have the oomph to keep going when it's tough and when they're not making any money.

Mr C: Yep, absolutely. I mean in some ways talking to you has actually given us the motivation to continue, so we should thank you for that.

Joe: I mean, I, I, I, I, I, occasionally... the comments that annoy me the most on the blog I think are when, you know, people say I'm unpleasant to internet journalists because I feel threatened by them, I don't at all feel threatened by them I'm willing to help anybody who's willing to do the job properly. What I don't like are idiots who do the job badly and then complain about it and say that it's not their fault that they don't do the job properly. If they want to make it happen and become Formula 1 megastars they have to go out, get off their butts and go and do it and, you know, I will support anybody who does that and I want that. I want there to be another generation of Formula 1 journalists. I don't want Formula 1 journalism to be written by old farts, you know.

You want to have the life and young and the new technology as well, you know. I've spent my entire career since leaving Autosport however long ago it is now, 20 odd years, of applying Formula 1 to new technology or vice versa with e-magazines, websites and all the rest of it, even podcasting. I'd like to do webcasting too, I think what Peter Windsor's doing is great, obviously you can't do everything but pushing back the boundaries and working out how to use the new tools that are available – great. If I find people who come along and represent journalism as it should be done, properly, and not just these cut and paste monkeys, the propagandists and the man, sad lonely men living in garages who have their own opinions because nobody else talks to them. You know, I will always support people who are out there trying to do it the hard way, good for them, 'cause that's how it's done. My generation – that's how it was done. And in the generation before me that was how it was done. And people when I was young they helped me and there's no reason why anybody would... all we don't want is for these muppets to be taking over and ruining the whole sport because the quality goes down to such an extent that nobody reads anything anymore.

Mr C: That is a danger. Joe I cannot thank you enough, I cannot compliment you enough, you are a star. Even at very short notice.

Joe: It's only sort of 6 o'clock in the morning here in Malaysia, it's jolly nice. But, we're looking forward to the next race and hopefully after that I'm going back to Paris and I'm going to spend my week battling with the embassy over whether or not they should let me into their lovely country full of freedom of course to tell the world about it. And I dare say at the end of the week I'll probably get my visa, probably lose a few kilos in stress and then we'll be off



again to come back to Asia again. So it's all part of the fun and in the meantime we've got the races, trying to figure out what's happening, haven't we? So there you go.

Mr C: We will keep an eye on Joe Blogs F1 dot com. But it is a fantastic and fabulous resource. And we will speak to you whenever the mood takes you.

Joe: I dare say it will probably take me at some point, yes.

Mr C: You know where we are.

Joe: Indeed. It's quite a lot of fun actually doing it from far away, it all adds to the flavor, doesn't it?

Mr C: Indeed. What is the weather, can you give us a weather check? What does it look like out your window right now?

Joe: You think I've opened the window! I would suggest given that the... I've got pre-colonial slats so I can see the colour and I think it's probably going to be quite a nice day, but it will inevitably rain in the late afternoon as it does every time here. It'll be ghastly hot until then and just the kind of weather you just want to sit down drinking gin and tonics with some air-conditioning. Unfortunately it doesn't work like that, so we will get very sweaty and you don't tend to see many people in Malaysia because they're all hiding in their little boxes and you can go for the entire weekend and actually not see any key players. It happened in Australia too but, you know, Australia is just a lot of hard work because of the concertinaed programme this year.

Mr C: Well let's hope you have a nice gentle Grand Prix Plus publication. We look forward to reading it.

Joe: Well I can tell you now it won't be gentle because in the finest traditions of wanting to get back we're flying on Sunday night so it's going to be balls to the wall and keystones to the cops, and we'll produce a magazine and then we will rush with our suitcases in hand to the airport, jump on aeroplanes and return to Europe so that bright and cheerfully on Monday we'll be there arriving home, sort of kissing the dog and all the rest of it, and, you know, getting a bit of real-life in among the excitement.

Mr C: It sounds glamorous!

Joe: Does it?!

Mr C: [Laughter] Cheers Joe.

Joe: Catch you soon.

[Transcript by Robyn]