



An Aside with Joe – Literally being dull in four languages

Christine: Welcome to An Aside with Joe - Literally being dull in four languages.

Mr C: We have made it almost all the way through the F1 season, there are just two races to go and we have managed to catch up with Joe Saward just before this season comes to a conclusion. Joe, how are you feeling?

Joe: Rougher than old dogs.

Mr C: It's been a long year?

Joe: Has it ever, yes. The thing is, as I've said many times before, the people that make calendars don't live them. I was talking to one of the hospitality girls the other day and she just said "Hello I'm a zombie." And I thought, okay you don't look like a zombie. She said, I just can't function properly because we just don't ever sleep. And that's about it really. I'm sure that some people sleep if you take the right drugs probably, I don't know. I'm not a big drug taker myself on aeroplanes but I have to say I'm permanently jet-lagged at the moment. Which is fine, I've been permanently jet-lagged for about fifteen years so it's not a massive thing but it just seems very tiring at the moment. Maybe it's because I'm getting old.

Mr C: Are you happy that we're just two races from the end? Are you looking forward to the end of the season?

Joe: I'm enjoying it. I'm enjoying every race as I always do but I'll be happy when it's over. It just seems to be going on quite a lot. When you're there at races, you don't mind being there at races, it's fun. But it's quite tiring, not just in sort of physical sense, but in terms of having relationships with the rest of the world. It's not easy.

Mr C: And in terms of the championship, it must be a bonus that we've still got a fight on our hands.

Joe: Oh, vaguely.

Mr C: It's a fight! It's a genuine fight.

Joe: Mmm, yea. Yes it is. Lewis is doing the best he can but Lewis needs help from Max and Max is trying very hard, or should I say that "bleep" Max is trying very hard. The cars just aren't really good enough. Old Nico can cruise along, up to a point he can cruise along, and do it. It is amazing how much luck he's had and how he hasn't had any mechanical failures as Lewis... I mean, Lewis has had a ton of mechanical failures this year. If Nico wins, you don't knock him for winning but it will be a bit, dare I use the word, lucky. I'm sure the legions of Nico Rosberg fans out there will probably start marching on Paris to burn the city down if I say such a thing. If indeed there are legions of Nico Rosberg fans, that's another question. He's just been incredibly fortunate and you know, good for him. It's called champion's luck, I suppose.

Mr C: Verstappen almost helped at the first corner of the last race in Mexico. Also helped Lewis' cause.

Joe: I'm not sure that's quite the case. I think he was, he was, I'm trying to remember who was shoving off who at the time. I don't think it was really shoving anything off, he was just challenging away and Nico was keeping his boot in. It was a bit like the Sainz and Alonso incident, I really don't understand why Sainz was penalised for that. All he was doing was holding his line and Alonso was trying to go round the outside. It was Alonso who chose to take to the grass, I don't think it was Sainz pushing him off. But there you are, there are lots of disputes about what happened in Mexico and various places. Should Lewis have been punished at going off at the first corner? Should Verstappen have been punished at the end? There's a lot of this sort of stuff, there are judgement calls that have to be made.

Mr C: Let's tackle some of those head on then. Starting with...

Joe: Errrr, crunch.

Mr C: Starting with Lewis Hamilton, turn one, a heck of a shortcut.

Joe: Well, it wasn't a shortcut. He didn't do it deliberately. He locked up, he went off. Did he gain an advantage? No he didn't. The reason he didn't gain an advantage is because the two behind him were so busy falling over each other that they held everybody else up so my argument would be, and I think the stewards were right, in that Lewis didn't gain an advantage really, because everyone else was making a mess of things. You shouldn't really punish him, yes he did go across the middle of the grass, but Nico and Max were doing their thing and everyone behind them were sort of bottled up. So you can't say that Lewis gained an advantage because that would have been the advantage if he'd stayed on the track.

Mr C: Would you say that the real safety car as opposed to the virtual safety car being called almost immediately to deal with the stricken Manor, actually neutralised any advantage Hamilton pulled anyway?

Joe: Well that's another question, but that's actually not... that shouldn't be taken into account in the circumstances of the particular incident. I think that incidents like that, you know, this guy did not drive off on purpose. He was pushing hard. If you start penalising guys for pushing hard and making mistakes, you very quickly get to a situation where nobody will ever risk anything, and that's not good. So yes he braked too late but he did drive the entire first stint as though he was on a Flintstone-mobile. He did say he couldn't see anything and his eyeballs were going round in circles, he was very happy to get a new set of tyres. Despite that, he was still pulling away. I think you have to be sensible about these things. You can't have hard and fast rules, you have to have judgement calls, and I think that one was a good one. At the end, when Verstappen goes off, it's a little bit the same kind of thing. The question was, had he gained an advantage? The answer was, maybe. But not 100% sure. No racing driver in his right mind is going to hand the position over on the basis that maybe, the team told him they talked to Charlie about it, and so you can't shout at Max and say he's a nasty... well you can if you're Sebastian Vettel and losing your marbles. You know, you can't shout at him, blame him for just following instructions. You can ask why it took so long for Race Control to decide that Max deserved to have a penalty.

Mr C: Right.

Joe: That's an interesting point, but when all is said and done, the end result was that Max had a penalty but I don't think he did anything wrong beyond doing what anyone would do. If he'd given up the place



and said, after you Claude, the team would have fired him. You can't just say Max should know he should give back the place.

Mr C: Well, the team told him to though. His engineer was on the radio saying give back the place.

Joe: We only heard part of... the thing about radio on telly is you don't hear all of it.

Mr C: No, but I heard that though!

Joe: No but you don't hear the whole context of it. It could be a number of different things that were said that, you know, if you hear 'give back the place', it doesn't mean 'we're going to ask Charlie if you should give back the place'. It depends where they cut it. These are things that we don't know. And this is something that I don't think is right. It's a bit like a few years ago, they used to put the radio on and it was 'Come on Fisi, you're going too slow' and whenever you heard the word Fisichella it was always in relation to 'speed up, you're going too slow', I don't know why that was happening. It's a bit like some races, entire teams will disappear. There was a practice session in Bahrain a few years ago when Force India didn't exist. We've had a number of grand prix in the middle of political battles where Mercedes-Benz barely existed. You can say that there's a manipulation going on and the FOM television people will say 'absolutely not old chap, we'd never do a thing like that.' But sometimes it looks that way. And so there is a question, really, as to whether the commercial rights holder should be the person being the objective media, the coverage of Formula One. There's actually a philosophical question as to whether that's a sound idea or not. I don't think it is a sound idea, I think they should sub-contract it to somebody independent, because if you're a TV producer and you're employed by Mr Ecclestone and then Mr Ecclestone, if he were ever to say, 'I don't want to see those Mercedes'. What are you going to do? Are you going to show the Mercedes or are you going to obey your boss? That's not right, that would be a question of propaganda as opposed to proper filming. So there are a number of conflicts of interest that need to be examined, and I think that unless we know the full gist of every single, and we can't know every single radio call, because basically our screens would be jumbled up with people talking at each other. The FIA has, apparently they have seven or eight people sitting around listening to three radio feeds each in the course of the race, so they can actually... I mean, they record everything anyway. Anything the drivers say. But the drivers know this and so they say things like 'oh gosh, he's awfully hard to pass, he's mean. Ooh, that's nasty.' They do their best acting.

Mr C: That's what he said, yep.

Joe: They should actually wave their arms out of the cockpit with red flags, and go 'oi, Charlie, look at this.' Sometimes you'll see the team engineers going 'gosh, it looks like he got in your way.'

Mr C: What's the solution though? Mid-season there was no team radio and that was really boring, because the fans were excluded from what was going on, and you felt like you were further removed from F1, so you don't want to get back to the situation where there's no radio, so how do you come up with a good compromise?

Joe: Well, it's the finest traditions of all these things. What you don't want is when they're using the radio to create shows that aren't there. I'm not saying for one minute that Sebastian Vettel's tirade, which let's face it, you can get upset about Max but ranting and raving about Charlie Whiting is not the smartest thing that Sebastian ever did. He's an intelligent bloke and god only knows how he managed to get himself into a



situation where he was effing and blinding about the race director. It's really not smart. I think he was extremely lucky not to have his testicles removed and hung from Tower Bridge, or whatever the French equivalent of Tower Bridge is. Because it's just silly, what is he trying to achieve? For me, it was a sign of the levels of desperation that Sebastian has got himself into now at Ferrari, because I'm sure he's smart enough to realise that we're in the middle of what the Americans might call a cluster-Vettel. You know, fair enough, whatever.

Mr C: *laughs*

Joe: Calm down. It's just a mess that he's in the middle of and he knows it. You can invent new verbs for this sort of thing. Alonsification. Anyone who goes to Ferrari and expects them to win, is sadly dreaming it seems. I'd love to be proved wrong but I have a vague suspicion at the end of this season, the Ferrari team will be a bit like the Titanic with the band going over the side, you know. Taking their instruments with them.

Mr C: Before we talk about that, because I do want to come back to that one. Vettel, I understand from the point of view that you don't want people yelling at the refs, but at the same time, it does make for good entertainment and F1 has been lacking in that somewhat.

Joe: No it hasn't. F1 has got plenty of entertainment. If shouting at the ref is entertainment, god help us. Why don't all the guys go to the grid with red noses, you know? It's silly.

Mr C: It's nice to see personality, though, coming through.

Joe: Yea, but the thing is, that's not really Vettel's personality. It's just him losing his temper. There's plenty of personality out there. The major problem with personality is the drivers are curbing it themselves. That's what has to be overcome.

Mr C: Not PR people? Not the teams?

Joe: Well, PR people should instantly be taken out and shot anyway. No, that's not fair. The fact is they're doing the job that they think they're supposed to do, which is not what we want. What we want is drivers saying what they think. But you can't blame the PRs solely. They don't help by standing over the drivers if they're doing an interview, recording every word they say. Which they do. I think that's hideous, it's Stasi in action. But they're doing it because they think that's what you need to do. Just give the guys a bit of rope and let them get on with it. If they say something bad about the team, maybe the team deserve to have that said. If you look at NASCAR, I posted a thing the other day which had some interviews from NASCAR after a race. There was only a subtle difference between them and the F1 guys but it was a key difference which is, in NASCAR they were telling the truth. There was a lovely bit about, I can't remember who it was, I think it was Martin Truex saying 'I don't know how the hell we won today because my car was a pig, or a dog, or both. But we did and thank the good lord that we did.' And Joey Logano saying 'we should never have won today' or whatever it was, I think he came second. It was just people being honest and happy and saying goodness me, how on earth did that happen? It's that honesty that people relate to. If you want to engage with the fans, have racing drivers who are honest as opposed to people who are dull in four languages.



Mr C: So why have we got into this situation whereby the drivers are now...

Joe: They don't know they're doing it because it's just built into them now. The only guy who seems to have cleared that is Lewis.

Mr C: And Ricciardo, no? Not Ricciardo?

Joe: Well, Ricciardo has never been in it. Aw, mate, I'm an Australian, what do I know about all these subtleties? He just drinks champagne from his shoe and he has fans who dress up in budgie smugglers and get arrested. I think actually that is an interesting point about Ricciardo, he comes from Australia. Australians are not backward in coming forward, they're not the most subtle nation on earth. That is something that is good, if you listen to them in the V8 Supercars, they're all screaming at each other. That's great TV. We don't want to be dumbed down to the nth degree. It just makes it boring. Just let the people be themselves, and if they say something bad about the team then maybe the team deserves it.

Christine: Hamilton was being himself a few races ago when he, well, he basically fell out with the entire media.

Joe: Well, he didn't fall out with me.

Christine: Awww.

Joe: No, no. I mean, the thing is, this is what I mean. He was frustrated that a bunch of people were calling him names and he didn't want to accept it, so he thought he'd do something to make the point. But by making the point, upset a whole bunch of other people. These guys don't live in the real world, particularly not Lewis. He lives on a red jet with two dogs flying around the world. It's not entirely normal. I don't go to the supermarket with two dogs on a jet, do I? I go with a plastic bag, normally. It is something that they need to have a little bit more reality about them. But it's very hard. So he got that one a little bit wrong, but I still love the fact that he's doing great things, and he's bringing in whole new audiences that nobody else is doing. He's colourful, he's different, he says stupid things sometimes but that's him. And that's great that it is him. I'd much prefer that than having the Nico Rosberg school of blandness, which is just, it is literally being dull in four languages. I mean, Nico's not a bad guy, but he doesn't come across awfully well. He comes across like Action Man, press the fourth button on the left and I will speak Italian. That's just not great. It's so bizarre really, when you compare it to his father who was always the funniest and the wittiest and the bluntest of all racing drivers. He absolutely said what he thought. We see it too, also, we see it with retired racing drivers. Jacques Villeneuve when he was driving wasn't awfully interesting with what he said, but now he's retired, he's terrific. He says absolutely ridiculous things half the time. But the other half the time, they're intelligent things. So he makes a great commentator and he's doing it in two languages, he's doing it in French and Italian. It's always interesting to hear what he has to say. There's just this belief, and I don't know how you, maybe you just get the sponsors to say 'for christ's sake boys, just be normal' like Red Bull does. That's one of the things about Red Bull which I will praise them for, they don't control what the drivers say. If Max wants to say 'I'm just driving my race car, I don't give a toss about these silly old farts', that's up to him. And Daniel Ricciardo drinking champagne from his shoe, I don't know what he's planning to do in his old age, maybe he's planning to start a shoe company, or sell champagne, maybe both. But why not? Let him do it.



Mr C: How much do you think the backlash against Lewis Hamilton from the media comes down to the amount of pressure that the media are under at the moment, in terms of journalists not returning to the paddock en masse?

Joe: I don't think that's anything to do with it, to be honest. I think that journalists have been under pressure, the kind of journalists who have upset Lewis are guys who are employed to write negative things. If you are employed to write negative things, you're inevitably going to annoy people because you don't say 'that was a magnificent victory for Lewis Hamilton', you say 'look at that, Lewis Hamilton is wearing different coloured socks today'. It's a very small group of media that do that, they do it because there is pressure on them to get headline stories. Nowadays it's all about headlines, it's not about substance. We saw a great thing, the last few days about how Ross Brawn has joined Liberty. Guaranteed, Ross Brawn joins Liberty. Well, somebody should go and ask Ross Brawn. The BBC did. I did. And oddly enough, he says, well actually, it's not quite the case.

Mr C: What is the case?

Joe: Well the case is, he might do some stuff, and he's helping them out to understand what's going on, but there's no deals done beyond that. I think that journalism is the root of some of the problems because there is no, there are no rules anymore. You see something, you cut and paste it, and you go with it. There's not enough checking going on, even in some of the established magazines and established websites. You read absolute rubbish because people are not being rigorous in what journalism is. Journalism is not about, I saw that somewhere and therefore it must be true and that makes me look smart because nobody else has got it. It's about checking it first. There's so little of that goes on. This is why I rant and rave about poor journalism and people say I'm elitist, and blah de blah, whatever. I'm just saying, let's just do the job properly. If we do the job properly, we don't need to be abused all the time.

Mr C: Since we last spoke, there was a major, seismic shift in media terms, in that Autosport have been sold.

Joe: They have, yea.

Mr C: What kind of effect is that going to have on your job and also on coverage of Formula One, that fans can expect?

Joe: Well, it won't change my job at all, in fact it might make my job even easier because there will probably be a concentration of... put it this way, it makes very little sense to have competing organisations that you own both of.

Mr C: Yep.

Joe: Having said that, Haymarket Publishing that was owning Autosport has had a number of magazines for years and years and years, and to some extent they've been overlapping, and competing against one another. But motorsport.com and autosport.com, I really don't see the logic in having both of them. Now, maybe you turn autosport.com into something else, or whatever. I don't really understand any of it to be honest, because the business plan of collecting together every single website in the world in an effort to do what? Doesn't sound like a business plan to me, but that's motorsport.com. That's their business plan, is to



aggregate everything. I guess what they want to do is be able to go along to advertisers and say look at us, we've got x zillion readers, in the hope that someone will give them money. But I'm not sure you can sustain everything they're buying with the amount of advertising you'll raise. I don't know, we'll see. I don't get it.

Mr C: Do you know where the money's coming from?

Joe: It's coming from a man called Mike Zoi, who made lots of money in, I believe, on the hedge funds or something, in New York. He's a race fan, he used to race in the Ferrari Challenge, along with Lawrence Stroll, father of Lance Stroll, the new Williams driver. So it's a championship where rich blokes drive around and crash into each other and everyone has a good laugh because they're paying for it. But I don't know, there's nothing wrong with guys having money and spending it in racing, but I just don't understand the business plan. He's a successful businessman and I'm not, so perhaps he's right, but I don't get it.

Mr C: No, I don't get it either. Talk to us about Lance Stroll then, announced today.

Joe: He's a twelve year old Canadian. Actually, he's not twelve years old, he wouldn't be allowed to be twelve years old because he's selling Martini now, so he has to be at least eighteen. So, I think that's why they delayed the announcement until today because he only became eighteen very recently. He's quite a decent driver, he has a father who is a billionaire and pushy about it, and we'll have to see how he does. He seems to be quite good in the junior formulae, but a lot of the success of racing drivers in Formula One is about hunger and I always struggle when I see billionaire's kids and wonder how hungry they are for success. Because when it's all easy and given to them on a plate, they aren't necessarily as hungry as the bloke who has to scrap all the way up from Hatfield or wherever to make it. You see that in second generation drivers, you often lack the hunger.

Mr C: Do you know how long the deal's for? I didn't catch how long...

Joe: They probably didn't announce it but usually Williams deals are for five years, with Williams having the option. If you look at Bottas, he's still there. He was the last one they picked up out of Formula Three, he's in his fifth season and he will be leaving at the end of it, I'm sure.

Mr C: Okay, so one more year for Bottas.

Joe: Yes. This is one of the interesting things about the driver market at the moment, everybody is looking at the second Renault seat, going, that would be a nice one to have, apart from the fact you're going to get slung out at the end of the year because Bottas will have it next year.

Mr C: Right! Okay.

Joe: That's my gut feeling. I may be proved wrong. They tried to get him this year, and of course he's in the fourth year of a five year contract so Williams wouldn't let him go. That was certainly the Renault plan, so Renault is now looking around going, we need somebody for a year, and of course, if you're Kevin Magnussen or Jolyon Palmer, you're saying, well, why on earth would I do that for one year? So Kevin's off talking to Haas, and Palmer's off talking to anyone left. Everyone's talking to Force India, but I don't think... we'll see what happens there but I would suggest that probably what will happen is Ocon will go to Force



India on a long term deal, Nasr will probably go to Renault for one year and go to Williams the year after.

Mr C: Right.

Joe: That would be my feeling, now I may be entirely wrong. But that's the one that makes sense to me. I don't know where Palmer will end up, I don't know where Gutiérrez goes. I don't know who will drive the second Sauber, I have no idea about who is going to drive Manor but Pascal Wehrlein needs to fit in somewhere as well. There are a number of options that need to be sorted out, but you have to balance everything. I mean, Bernie's very keen to keep Nasr in Formula One because he's Brazil and Brazil's a very big market. There's been a big push going on for Nasr to get the Force India drive, but the team has to look at things from its own point of view, which is who is the best person to have if, let us assume, that Kimi Räikkönen leaves or Sebastian Vettel goes bonkers and retires to Elba, that they need to have somebody ready to move in. That person will probably be Pérez, and then Force India need to have a good second driver if Pérez is gone. Actually they need a good second driver even if Pérez is still there because Sergio is famous for being quick but not famous for being good at setup.

Mr C: Ah, okay. Are you keeping all this in your head, by the way?

Joe: Yea.

Mr C: Have you got a massive white board where you're shuffling drivers names around? There are so many seats and so many movements!

Joe: No, it's not that many. It's only a few.

Christine: Also, just checking, is Grosjean still in there somewhere? Because he needs to be there somewhere.

Joe: Grosjean's on a contract with Haas, he's fine.

Christine: Ah good, okay.

Joe: What Grosjean wants to do is, he wants to use the Haas as a springboard to get into Ferrari. The trouble is that the Haas hasn't been very good, or good enough this year, but it's his first year for the team so it's not, you know, it's not a complete disaster. We know that he can be very good, but he's had a string of brake problems, for example. Every time you hear his voice on the radio, it's always 'braaaaaakes' and 'this is the worst car I've ever driven' and things like that. I don't know if he uses the F word very much, but it is, nonetheless, he's a frustrated fella. But he's still a very quick frustrated fella. You can look at it and say, maybe he should go back to Renault but I don't see that happening. I think his path is set hoping to end up at Ferrari.

Mr C: And what of Kvyat being signed at Toro Rosso another year, Pierre Gasly not good enough to step up? Or never good enough to step up?

Joe: Well, Gasly has been inconsistent. It took him forever to win his first race, he kept screwing up. I think that the Red Bull people have looked back over his entire career, actually Gasly's been like that his entire



career, he's very up and down. He is quick, there's no question about it, but he can be a little bit excitable. Kvyat is pretty solid, it was tough what they did to him and he's survived it and I think he deserves a bit more time. He's up against Sainz who is pretty good. The trouble is, you've got Red Bull's scenario which is, they've got too many drivers. What are they going to do with them all at the end of next year?

Mr C: That's a good question, what would you do with them at the end of the year? Would you keep Kvyat, has he done enough? He's obviously done enough for one more year but...

Joe: I don't know the answer. It's a problem that Elf used to have of having, producing too many drivers, one after another, and having to drop them because you didn't have anywhere to put them. In those days, there was an element of what we dared to call natural wastage, which was people were getting hurt and killed, so there was always this sort of flow forwards, whereas nobody does that anymore, people have careers lasting 143 years now. Which means you tend to get stagnated with the same guys for almost a generation. We're just beginning to see a change now, we've got some young guys coming in. Only the best of the best are going to stay in, but when they stay in, they're in for fifteen years. It is difficult. You can't just keep promoting a new one every year because otherwise in fifteen years time, there'll be fifteen Red Bull drivers and you'll be paying for all of them. You can't do that. It is a problem and I think maybe in the end Red Bull will realise that it's a bit of a waste of energy promoting quite as many. But I guess if you throw your net wide, you're going to get the best ones. Either that or you have to choose the very best ones at the beginning.

Mr C: Be smarter about your early choices.

Joe: Well, the thing is you can never really guess because people develop in different ways. I've known some terrific racing drivers in Formula Three and the junior formula who have never made it in Formula One because they weren't developing at all. They were good at the level they were at, but never made it in the big game. It's a tough game trying to pick out the young guys who are going to be big stars of the future.

Mr C: Can we discuss Audi throwing in the towel on the World Endurance Championship and rumours, which I think have yet to be confirmed but seem very likely, that Volkswagen will also pull out of rallying?

Joe: No, no, Volkswagen's out.

Mr C: Oh, it's confirmed, they've gone, have they?

Joe: Yep.

Mr C: Okay.

Joe: I'm just a little bit suspicious about all this, because you pull out of two major world championship level programmes and you're going to go into Formula E. Hmm. Maybe they're doing more than we think.

Mr C: Oh!



Joe: I don't know, I'm just saying, you don't can two programmes at the same time and let all your engineers go running off into the world, unless you're entirely bonkers. I understood the WRC thing, sorry the WEC thing, because the word diesel was involved and no one in the history of Volkswagen ever had anything to do with a diesel.

Mr C: Right. Never wants it again.

Joe: Exactly. And I understand why they're looking at electric cars because they're greener than green and green and green. But I don't understand their complete lack of interest in any sort of hybrid, which is the first step before green, electric green. So I wonder, I'm just wondering to myself is there more to this than meets the eye. Is Audi actually going to surprise us all and produce an engine and give it to Red Bull, or something like that. Because the other thing I don't understand, I went to see Christian Horner the other day, I was reading Adam Parr and Ross Brawn's book about strategic thinking about Formula One, which is an unusual read, I have to say.

Mr C: That's the illustrated one?

Joe: No, it's called Total Competition.

Mr C: Oh, the new one!

Joe: Yea, and it's basically a conversation between Adam and Ross about how to be successful in Formula One. It's quite interesting, it's a bit ethereal for your average race fan who doesn't necessarily need to know about the strategies of ancient Chinese generals. It's interesting to go through the thought processes and the thought process that got me thinking is 'you always have a strategy'. So I'm sitting there reading this book, thinking most teams have a strategy but what about Red Bull? They don't have a strategy at all. So I went to see Christian, I said, 'where's your strategy?' He said, 'we don't really have a choice, we're sort of stuck here without any potential for an engine deal.' I said, 'well you must have tried this, you must have tried that, you could do this, you could do that.' He said, 'we've done all of these things.' But I don't get it. I don't get how you can be relaxed if you're driving around in an engine that will be the same as something that will be in a factory team, how can you hope to win? You may have a better designer for the car but ultimately there's no strategy there. The only strategy can be we'll embarrass the factory enough that eventually the factory will quit, but that's going to take five years. So that's not really a strategy. So I wonder if there isn't another strategy, which is, we'll just hang around and wait for Audi to come along. The fact that all these Audi teams are closing down may be the start of something else. Maybe we haven't seen all the shoes drop yet.

Mr C: Is F1, and F1 hybrid, clean enough an image? Is the marketing there?

Joe: It's the greatest breakthrough in the history of the automobile, the thermal efficiency of Formula One engines, so I don't see why it wouldn't be. The fact that they haven't bothered to tell anybody about it is just plain stupidity on the part of the so-called series promoter brackets, who wouldn't know promotion if it hit him on the head. Or the governing body, which is just being utterly useless in terms of spreading the word. We have this amazing, amazingly efficient engines which will do huge amounts without everyone needing to go to electric cars. It's all very well saying electric this and electric that, these batteries, everyone is producing batteries left, right and centre, what's going to happen to them? They're not very



green, are they? Just extending the effectiveness and the efficiency of petrol engines is enough to extend the carbon usage for another fifty years probably. There's lots of knock-on effects, we don't really know all of them, but just trying to switch over instantly to electricity isn't going to work because when you go down through Southern Italy, where are you going to find your next electric filling station? They haven't built it yet. You can't drive up to mama and papa's house and plug it in to the mains. At least, you can't at the moment. We'll have to see how it goes but I think there will be an era of the hybrid before there is full electric cars.

Mr C: Intriguing. Okay. Well, I can't wait to see this unfold. It would be a shame... I was going to ask you whether or not rallying should be considering electric but I guess the answer to that one is no. This shouldn't be a warning sign sent to the rally organisers that maybe they need to consider what they're doing in terms of power?

Joe: I believe there is a move going on towards having an electric rally-cross championship. That fits in with a lot of things, because apparently the youth of today can't watch a race longer than seven minutes.

Mr C: It's true.

Joe: Without getting bored and having to go off and eat popcorn or something.

Mr C: Yep.

Joe: So electric rally-cross would be a good thing, and I believe there's some people working on that as a concept. But having said that, cross country rallying, not rally raids but just normal world championship rallying, is still fantastically spectacular. Even the dullest of dull dogs who have spent their life in virtual outer space would be able to recognise the interest in rallying if we were able to invade their virtual space out there in wherever they live. That's a fundamental flaw of all motorsport is that we're just not connecting with the kids. I think we have to find a way of doing it, I think there's a lot of people working on doing that now because as we've discussed many times, Lightning McQueen is not popular because he's not a car. Does that make sense?

Mr C: He is popular AND he is a car?

Joe: Yes, that's what I'm trying to say in a sort of backward way, but I'm tired so I'm allowed to say things backwards.

Mr C: We get ya.

Joe: Fundamentally, Lightning McQueen is the coolest hip dude among the under eight year olds, and anyone who has got an under eight year old will tell you all about it. And billions is spent buying Lightning McQueen toothpaste, underpants, pillows, bed linen, you name it. Kids do like cars, we just have to connect with those kids before they go off and go to live with Luke Skywalker in virtual outer space.

Mr C: Well, Lewis is trying. We need more people like Lewis.

Joe: Steady on, are you saying Lewis Hamilton's a space cadet?



Mr C: I think he's the best chance F1's got connecting.

Joe: I like the idea, him going off and doing Call of Duty is terrific.

Mr C: Mm, oh yes! Ooh, I'd forgotten that.

Joe: It's particularly terrific when you look at the numbers because it's just a game which involves machine gunning lots of people, it seems to me. But there seem to be some levels of strategy involved, but it has got massive, massive numbers. They sold 250 million copies of the game, and they made 14 billion dollars out of it, so that's a big number of people. If we can connect to those people, I mean, half the people playing the game may not know who Lewis Hamilton is, even with his walk on part. I actually think that you need someone, I mean, he's fairly distinctive, but I think we should have Niki Lauda, nobody mistakes Niki Lauda, do they? It's like Yoda. He stands out.

Mr C: Niki Lauda is like Yoda! That's an interesting concept.

Joe: Well, he is a little bit.

Mr C: He is! A little bit. Yea.

Joe: If you walk into the supermarket and you pass Yoda on the high street, you don't miss him, do you? You go, blimey there's Yoda, he's four foot high and got strange looking ears. And if you walk past Niki Lauda you go, blimey there's Niki Lauda, he's got strange looking ears. There are lots of ways of doing these things. I am talking in jest here, of course.

Mr C: Of course.

Joe: All those sensitive souls out there who think I'm being mean. We just have to use the facets we've got and instantly recognisable people are quite useful. Lewis is quite instantly recognisable. Apparently I'm told you can mistake him for someone called Craig David. Being in France I don't know who Craig David is. Apparently he's some sort of humorist or something.

Mr C: No, he's a singer.

Joe: Oh, is he? I'm glad somebody knows. Listen, I live in the world of Johnny Halliday, what do I know?

Mr C: I guess they do look alike. I would say that Hamilton looked completely bad-ass in the Call of Duty screenshots, he looks the part. He looks amazing in it.

Joe: I don't know if he's a good guy or a bad guy to be honest. But anyway, the point is, he's connecting with new fans and that's what we need. And he's connecting with new demographics, new races, new ages, all these things. We're getting things from Lewis that nobody else is doing. This is where I think Sebastian has been absolutely terrible, he goes home, hides behind his hedge, and nobody knows anything about him. Which is fine for him, why are we paying him all that money? If you're going to be a star, be a star. And not just driving, because being a star involves actually being in the public eye as well. There are



things that are a complete mystery to me, like why is anyone interested in Kimi Räikkönen? The answer is just because he doesn't say anything. He is the silent DJ. He's the bass guitarist of every band. Because he never says anything, he's cool apparently. This is a strange concept, but there you are.

Mr C: It just dawned on me that if we had Fanboost in F1, Ferrari would never ever get any votes, surely? Because they have the dullest drivers.

Joe: I don't know if they've got the dullest drivers, because Sebastian is a very funny, and clever, intelligent guy. And Kimi's actually, I'm told, I've never seen it myself, but Kimi can be very amusing as well. But they both play their parts and this is it. What you get is not what the reality is. I don't know, I just wish people would be themselves, get on with it, and not be dull.

Mr C: Let's talk GP+ and your newsletter. GP+, I missed it at the time, but you mentioned Martin Brundle's support for the magazine, earlier in October...

Joe: Well, Martin mentioned it, not us. Somebody said to me Martin's written something nice about you, so I went to see him and said, Martin have you written something nice about us, he said, I don't want everyone to know, shush. I'll get embarrassed if I say something good about you. He was very kind, he said it was terrific, so good for him.

Mr C: It is terrific.

Joe: Yea, well. The thing is, we're coming to the end of the year now, so signing up for a subscription doesn't make a lot of sense at the end, at the sort of beginning of November because it is a year by year subscription, it runs from January 1st to December 31st but we will be signing up for next year very soon. So we don't want people signing up at the end of November and thinking they're going to get it for a whole season. So we're not pushing it hugely at the moment, but come December, you can sign up for next year. And you can always sign up for the archive. This is the brilliant thing about electronic magazines is that we've now got 201 of them and you can buy them all, I think it's £30 for the entire archive, you can put them in your computer and it's like having a complete, let me think, 200 magazines would be a very decent sized shelf in any normal house, and you can have all of that in your computer and you can look up any race you want. It's the magic of electronic wisdom or something like that.

Mr C: And it makes an ideal Christmas gift.

Joe: It makes an ideal Christmas gift as well, yes. If you have a mad racing fan in your family, it's a good idea to buy them. Listen, I've got hundreds of things I can sell you for Christmas. The Grand Prix Saboteurs book is brilliant, you know, all these things, people get bored listening to me plugging things. We have a lot of interesting products out there, it just depends how much of a fan you are. If you like stories about warfare, guns, parachutes and motor racings, the Grand Prix Saboteurs is the thing for you. It's all true, too.

Mr C: So you have books, you have magazines, you have newsletters.

Joe: Yea, I've been trying to find grommets and things like that to sell. I haven't got round to merchandising myself. Maybe I should sell green books, what do you think?



Mr C: Ooh! Joe's green notebook!

Joe: Yea, Joe's green notebook, you could have entire grandstands raising them up in the air like the shoe in the Life of Brian. I don't know. Who knows? We just have to find ways of selling things to make a living. I'm looking for the ultimate grommet. Maybe I should design something in... I know, actually, I'm going to design the world's perfect toaster, because I travel the world endlessly and every single hotel in the world has a bad toaster. And that means there's a massive opportunity for someone who's an engineer to design the perfect toaster. I've known it for years, I'm just not an engineer and don't know how to do it. There's a massive opportunity out there, someone please make a toaster that just toasts, where the bread only goes through one time, as opposed to five, which is most of the toasters in the world. So maybe the Grand Prix + toaster is the future.

Mr C: Globe-trotting toaster.

Joe: Well, no, but there are some things that... most grommets have been... there was somebody I heard of the other day who races historic cars and his fortune is based entirely on producing a plastic thing that you put into a hole in the desk where your wires go through?

Mr C: That made him enough money to race historic racing cars?

Joe: Historic Formula One cars, yes.

Mr C: Wow.

Joe: Yea, you just have to invent one thing that everybody wants one or two of, or five of. These little grommets, the grommet is the answer. Something that costs 1p and everybody needs it. Like a, I don't know, a garlic peeling device that works. There are millions of things, somebody somewhere will make a million, five million, ten million, twenty million, inventing them.

Mr C: In the meantime though?

Joe: In the meantime, Grand Prix + goes on.

Mr C: Don't buy it yet but do buy it for next year. And also, presumably the Business of Motorsport newsletter is ongoing, though. You could subscribe to that now couldn't you?

Joe: Oh yea, the Business of Motorsport newsletter you can subscribe to any time you like.

Mr C: That's monthly.

Joe: It's mainly for the industry and it's mainly for people who are busy. If you've got ages on your hands to swan around and read all the websites, you can say oh I've seen that before. You haven't seen all of it before, you may have seen some facts, you won't necessarily have seen the analysis of it all. But it's a newsletter that covers the whole of motorsport, which is why I can occasionally talk sensibly about some of these other championships. Because I actually follow them as well.



Mr C: This week, Honda GT's USA plans. Something I would never have come across normally.

Joe: Yea, it's just one of those things that popped up and I thought that's interesting. Next week there'll be a number of stories about people pulling out of things. Mainly Lada's pulled out of the World Touring Car Championship today as well.

Mr C: What's their reasoning, out of interest?

Joe: Well it's because it's a manufacturer who is not there anymore. Motor racing does rely, whether we like it or not, on manufacturers. To lose, as Oscar Wilde would say, WTCC has now lost two manufacturers, which is kind of careless, really. I know what I'm saying, not sure anybody else does.

Mr C: It's been a long season, Joe, we will not keep you for very much longer. But it would be remiss of us not to question, or not to put you on the spot and see if we can't get some kind of prediction on how this world championship is going to go in the final two races.

Joe: Well, judging by the last two races, I would suggest that Lewis Hamilton will win and Nico Rosberg will finish second, and if that happens twice more, Nico Rosberg will become world champion. Now, the only way that will change is if the lord looks down, that's the lord god of NASCAR because he doesn't exist in Formula One, but the lord god of NASCAR looks down and goes zap, and blows Nico Rosberg's engine to pieces, which could happen, why not? It's happened to Lewis a number of times this year. If that happens, the thing is blown wide open again. So, it's going to be tense all the way down. Nico might screw up and collide with Max. Max might get ahead, Max might have a bingle with Nico and allow Dan Ricciardo to get ahead. We don't know, all we know is that probably Ferrari won't be involved whatever happens.

Mr C: Aww.

Joe: Well, they keep talking a good game but they keep failing to deliver every week. When I was talking about strategy, no team has brought any serious upgrades to a race track for months because they're all working on next year's car and yet Ferrari turns up with upgrades on its car. Where is the thinking in this? There's no strategic thinking going on. Are they wasting their wind tunnel time doing stuff for 2016 cars when actually they're not going to improve their position? 2016 is done and they ain't gonna win. It's kind of odd what they're doing. I think if we're going to see, to go back to the point, if we're going to see Lewis as world champion, something has to go wrong for Nico. Or he has to screw up, you know, he can always make a mistake as Lewis has done on occasion. We'll just have to see how it works out. If everything stays as normal, Nico will be world champion. Now, will he deserve that? Yes, he will, because he's done it. Does that make him a better racing driver than Lewis Hamilton? That's a different argument.

Mr C: Does it?

Joe: Well, no, it doesn't, does it? If you then rewind and add up the number of engine failures or the number of mistakes, whatever, I don't know... the fact is you are world champion if you are world champion. If you are, therefore you deserve it. But that doesn't necessarily make you the best driver in the world. As I'm sure Sebastian Vettel would tell you in between his effs and his blinds. Because he probably thinks he's the best. Or Fernando Alonso will tell you as well. You might be the best driver in the world, but



if you're in the wrong machinery, you can't win.

Mr C: That's a good place to leave it, Joe.

Joe: Well, I hope so. I hope that made vaguely some sense along the way.

Mr C: No, that's good. That's fantastic. Thank you for your time. Thank you for enlightening us on current events. Will we catch up with you before the end of the year?

Joe: Who knows, who knows. I think it's probably quite unlikely you'll hear from me before Abu Dhabi but afterwards when things begin to calm down and I get a night of sleep, you never know, we might be able to chat through what's happening in the winter months.

Mr C: Wonderful, well, you know where we are, you know we always look forward to it, and we will see you on the other side.

Joe: Blimey, that sounds a bit rough.

Mr C: Slightly dramatic.

Joe: I'm not that far gone. I'll see you on the other side. Very good. Alright, bye bye.

Mr C: Cheers then.