

# JERMAIN DEFOE DON'T TALK TO ABOUT... ME

**MARTIN JOL, SPIDERS AND STREET DANCING WITH THE SCARFACE WANNABE...** ■ Words: RICHARD LENTON

**I**n the Samuel Beckett play, *Waiting for Godot*, two guys – Vladimir and Estragon – wait expectantly by the side of a deserted country road for a mysterious character, Godot, to arrive. In an attempt to break up the monotony of the day, and ‘hold the terrible silence at bay’, they argue, sing, swap hats and play games. However, as the clock ticks down, they run out of things to occupy their tired minds, and thoughts turn to suicide. They attempt to hang themselves using Estragon’s belt, but it breaks and eventually they decide to leave. More than half a century after the Beckett masterpiece premiered at the Théâtre de Babylone in Paris, a follow-up is belatedly in the works. It’s called: *Waiting For Defoe...*

In the sequel, a journalist arrives at the Jim Rogers bar at Harrow Borough Football Club – situated in the heart of a picturesque West London council estate – at 10.30am, ready for his meeting with the Tottenham front man. However, upon arrival, he’s informed that Defoe is running late because of a dentist appointment. ‘Really...?’ ponders the journo. Half an hour earlier he’d picked up a discarded copy of the *London Paper* on the train from Marylebone station, and seen pictures of the party animal leaving the Funky Buddha nightclub in Mayfair at 4am...

Realising that he could be facing an interminably long wait, the journo amuses himself by shredding beer mats and occasionally making polite conversation with

the barman. He’s staring longingly at the optics, but he’s desperately trying to remain professional and avoid sinking into the potential abyss of an all-day session.

A guy sat at the next table – the only other person in the bar not on the payroll – is snivelling and sweating profusely. He appears at death’s door. The journo, fearing that the Swine Flu pandemic has returned, swaps his table for a stool at the bar. He orders a bag of pork scratchings, but alas, unlike the tea and water he’d ordered earlier, they’re not on the house. He digs deep into his pockets.

**“WOMEN LOVE IT WHEN YOU SAY, ‘COME ROUND AND I’LL MAKE YOU DINNER’. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?”**

At that moment... “Jermain’s here now,” says the apologetic Adidas PR manager. “I’m so sorry he’s a bit late...” A bit late? Six hours is not ‘a bit late’... If Jermain Defoe had been a date rather than a star interviewee, it’s safe to say that I’d have been on my toes approximately five hours and 45 minutes before he finally showed up (mind you, I’d have given her a bit longer if she was fit or

rich – or a joyous combination of both).

I’d already decided that I hated him. Then a funny thing happened; within a minute of meeting the Spurs and England striker, I’d warmed to him. The ‘treat ‘em mean, keep ‘em keen’ tactic obviously works...

**Any pet hates, Jermain? Mine’s lateness...**  
“Yeah, yeah! Sorry, man.”

**Go on then, what do you hate?**  
“Spiders – can’t stand them.”

**Who was your childhood hero?**  
“Ian Wright.”

**Spurs players can’t idolize Gooners...**  
“He was the best though.”

**Fair enough. What’s your ideal holiday?**  
“I’m like a kid, I know, but I love Disney.”

**South Africa or Disney this summer?**  
“South Africa! Missing out in ‘06 makes it even more important to be there. I won’t miss out.”

**After your experience in 2006, did you doubt that you could play at that level?**  
“Never, but under previous England managers, I didn’t get a fair chance. With the current manager I’ve featured in a lot of games. Even when I haven’t started I’ve played the whole second half. That’s a fair chance. I want to play but, if I’m on the bench, I’ll be positive.



*Jermain wears the adidas F50i boots, scientifically designed for reduced weight and an incredible touch*

**“MY COUSINS PLAY PRO EVO AS ME. BARCELONA’S MY TEAM THOUGH, EVERYONE’S RAPID. ME AND MESSI UP FRONT, MAN!”**

You wait for a chance and take it when it comes because there are plenty of players who can come on and do something special.”

**Best bit of advice you’ve been given?**

“Wrighty (Ian Wright) told me, ‘You’re playing in a good team, you know you’ll get chances. Just hit the target. If you hit the target four times you’ll score twice.’ Simple.”

**What will you do when you retire?**

“Maybe stuff with kids, like TV programmes. I’d like to find talented kids, not just in football but dancing, singing, anything.”

**You’re into street dancing I hear...**

“The guys on *Britain’s Got Talent* last year were amazing. I loved doing it when I was young.”

**What’s your favourite food?**

“My mum’s West Indian cooking.”

**Are you any good in the kitchen yourself?**

“I try, but I don’t need to cook because my mum cooks! I’ll start cooking though it’s good when you can invite people over and cook.”

**It’s sexy – the new rock n’ roll...**

“Women love it when you say, ‘Come round, I’ll make dinner?’ Know what I mean...?”

**What car do you drive?**

“I’ve got a Range Rover and a Ferrari.”

**What makes you angry?**

“I try not to get angry.”

**Very sensible. Beer, wine or spirits?**

“Red wine. Easy drinking, quite sweet.”

**What was the last thing that you lost?**

“CDs. Always.”

**If you could play the lead role in a film...**

“Scarface, man – Tony Montana.”

**What was the last thing you saw advertised and just thought, ‘I’m having that’?**

“The new Pro Evo. I had to get on that.”

**Do you play as yourself?**

“Not really, my cousins do and give me banter. Barca’s my team; everyone’s rapid.”

**Would you be handy up front for them?**

“Yeah, me and Messi, man!”