

Welcome to a special Talking Istanbulilocks with a solo Jorma Kirkko doing a Q&A session from listeners, doing my very own kiss and tell this week, but without Ray having to judge whether I'm a pervert or not. This episode is brought to you in conjunction with EMU Today and Tomorrow magazine, the publication that teaches you all you need to know about starting your own EMU farm. Yeah, it reminds me actually, I never watched a TV program about EMUs yesterday.

I was watching, I think it's one of those days when you realize you must be bored when you find yourself watching consecutive episodes of Animal Park on the BBC iPlayer, but yeah, there was a feature on EMUs and they had something about ostriches as well. I think they said that EMUs are actually the stupidest bird in the world. I don't know quite how they measure it, but I know ostriches are up there as well and I should know that because I'm actually a qualified ostrich jockey, which is quite a frightening experience.

You can actually ride them quite easily but you need to put a mask on them. Their eyes are bigger than their brains and they're huge animals really, but if you let them see anything you can't control them, whereas if you cover their eyes up, put a mask on them, I suppose it's a bit like they used to do with falcons and hawks and things, or do with falcons and hawks. Yeah, and then you're in control of them, but otherwise they're going to turn around and bite you and do whatever the hell they like.

Anyway, I'm taking a breather from the local juicer, James Joyce Irish Pub, our main sponsor today, as tiredness, quite frankly, and a week's worth of medical and dental appointments have increased the need to have a drawbridge weekend, you know, one of those weekends where you pull up the drawbridge and you're not going to cross the moat until, until Monday morning at least. Yeah, it's hot in Istanbul at the moment but there's a nice bit of a, nice bit of a breeze. It's quite strange really because it's, you know, we're kind of halfway through August right now and what I am noticing is that whilst the weather is still very, very nice, a lot of the leaves are starting to fall off the trees.

They're orange and yellow, some of them. I was sitting at a cafe the other day and I watched two sycamore leaves just falling off a tree and dance their way onto the table. It seems a little early.

I went for a swim in the sea yesterday around half past six in the evening and it was actually cold, which is the first time I've noticed that. It was one of those where I actually wished that I'd got my shorty wetsuit on. I never normally feel like that until October, you know, so I don't know what's happening with the weather.

I hope that the weather's good wherever you are anyway. Yeah, so anyway, normally as you know we have a very fixed structure to this show. We start off with the Morgan Freeman poem, Ray Leeds, true or false, often based on themes that are brought up in the poems and the sketch.

We do a sketch itself and then we finish with post of the week, which is usually something that's been posted on Ray and Eamon's Black Milkshake Facebook page. I had loads of material ready today, an unusual amount actually, including a great kiss and tell story from a listener about how he met his wife in an SCD clinic and a great, great Caden Stokes sketch, our very woke bloke, where he defends and then offends some American Indians in his own unique style. Yeah, I recorded that yesterday morning before I knew that Ray's wife had booked him in at the health spa again.

So Ray's gonna be having a nice weekend of mud baths, manicures, hair extensions and anal bleaching I think. But to be honest, it feels a little weird and more than a little self-indulgent if I play these sketches without Ray being here, because I love how he takes things off in his own quirky little direction. So I thought we'd save them for next week and we'll have a bumper episode that's also going to include Hansi's horoscopes and psychic predictions for the month of August, so that's a lot to look forward to.

And by the way, Ray and I predicted last week, wasn't a huge surprise to us really, but we predicted last week that Malaysia would become our third biggest country for downloads in the next couple of weeks after Turkey and Ireland, and it's happened this week. Malaysia has overtaken the UK, the UK's down in not in the medal positions at the minute to keep up the Olympic theme of the last couple of weeks, so Malaysia is now in bronze, in the bronze medal position. So a big, big selamat pagi to everyone in lovely Malaysia.

So anyway, this week I thought I'd actually do a bit of a Q&A and answer a few questions that the listeners have emailed or texted in over the last few weeks as a bit of a change really, and gives you the opportunity to get to know me a little bit better, which some people like that kind of thing. How does that sound? I think that sounds groovy, I think it's just, yeah, I think that sounds very, very groovy indeed. So good skills as Ray would say.

Got it, the first question today is from Taslim in Dubai, and she asks, I assume she's talking to me, were you a naughty boy at school? Well what do you think? Within reason. I ever think I was, yeah, I think that I was somebody who, I think I've always been a round, what do they call it, a round peg in a square hole, or a square peg in a round hole. But I've always been very good at pretending to fit in, and I was always one of those kids that was quite good at school.

My uniform was always very, very neat, and to an extent it did look like the butter wouldn't melt, but I quite, yeah, I got up to quite a lot of mischief actually. I didn't often get caught for things, that was the really, really, really strange thing. I was that horrible kid who got the crazy kid to ask the dinner lady if she was a Catholic or a prostitute.

Alright, I was only 12, but I think I also gave a teacher a nervous breakdown at one point. I was in a maths lesson when I would have been, again, about 12 or 13. I think I either became more discreet after that, or started to behave a little bit better.

But this teacher, he was a really, really, really boring bastard, and he used to wear this brown donkey jacket that was covered in chalk, and he looked like he'd cut his, that he cut his own hair with those kind of scissors that they have in primary school art classes, and never combed it between haircuts. And he used to hate it when people's alarms used to go off on the watches, you know, and the Casio's would go beep beep on the hour. So we used to, me and a couple of friends of mine, we used to deliberately set our alarms, or synchronize our watches to be, not synchronized, the opposite of synchronized, whatever that is.

Can we a-synchronize watches? Don't know. To about ten seconds apart, so that at three o'clock, suddenly somebody's watch would go beep beep, and he'd turn around with anger. He may or may not react, but you could see it in his eyes.

And then a couple of seconds later, you get beep beep, and this would go on. Well, we did this a couple of times. We also used to, you know, that old trick used to spin coin on the desk, and so as it starts to wind down, it would make this really loud clatter, and it was great with the old heavy ten-pence pieces.

And then, just as he was about to turn around, you put your hand on top of it. We also do, used to do the humming thing as well, you know, where he would be talking about something incredibly dull, connected to triangles, or algebra, or something like that. And about eight or ten lads in the classroom just going, and of course, you've all got your mouths closed, so we can't exactly work out who's doing it.

But with the beeping of the clocks, I actually engineered that. A good teacher of mine that I really, really loved, a guy called Paul Pumford, said to me one day that I was a munitions factory, and I found other people to carry out the attacks with the guns. I think that was possibly quite realistic, but what we'd managed to do this Thursday afternoon, it was always hell.

It was always his worst lesson of the week, having this maths teacher, Mr. Booth, on Thursday afternoon. And I think we started the lesson, I don't know, twenty past two, and went until half past three. And of course, on this day, he didn't have any behavior problems at all.

We were all as good as gold, and I think he thought that he'd finally managed to win the class over with this smooth talk about Pythagoras' theorem, and whatever else. But I'd engineered it, that not only two or three of us had done this with our clocks, but that there were seven or eight boys who had done this with their watches. I also brought in an electronic stopwatch that I had at home, put the alarm on for this one, so after we'd had eight, beep, beep, beep, beep, suddenly this alarm starts going off.

Somebody else's watch alarm goes off, then somebody else's. And then just as he was starting to lose it, what he didn't realize is I'd brought a Mickey Mouse alarm clock from home, which I'd put in one of the lockers. And as this had gone on for about a minute, and then all of a sudden the Mickey Mouse alarm clock starts banging backwards and forwards in the locker.

And you know what those alarm clocks were like, the noise that they used to make anyway, is the, you know, the little ticker bangs against the two bells. But this whole thing was banging backwards and forwards in the lockers. I'd also brought my dad's alarm clock.

I don't think my dad ever found out about this. If he's listening, he will do. And I'd hidden it in those removable panels in the ceiling, right above where he used to sit.

And yeah, he ended up running out of the room. He ended up running out of the room and we didn't see him for weeks and weeks and weeks or weeks after that. And yeah, I guess I was a bit of a naughty boy at the same time though.

I think if a grown man can be bullied by twelve-year-olds, quite possibly, they shouldn't be in the classroom anyway. Yeah, okay, so I guess the answer to that one is yeah, really. Okay, the question, the second question, this is from Bernard in Middlesbrough.

He says, how well do you know Morgan Freeman? Well, that's a that's a good question. I think the simple answer is not very well, to be honest. We work quite well.

Nicely, what happens is people, people write in emails to us. We pass on the information to him and he comes up with something. It's as simple as that.

We actually keep, I mean, we wrote a song together but, or maybe two, but the thing is we work remotely. So I think it's actually better that we don't really have conversations too much. It's just a case of, this is what I've got for you, what can you do? Thanks very much, here it is.

So yeah, that's it. It's a very strange, very strange relationship, but not particularly, particularly close, I would say, but that's fine. Right, also got a question from Silvana in Istanbul, who says, how many countries have you lived in and which is best?

Yeah, that's one of those questions that's a bit like, what's your favorite music, isn't it? Very difficult to say.

Oh, I can tell you which countries I've lived in. Lived in England and Scotland, lived in France as a child twice, lived in Germany three times, lived in Malaysia, lived in Turkey and we spend a portion of the year in Greece as well, which is best, my god. I think often what happens, it's the best country that you, if you've lived in a few countries, the best country that you've lived in is often the one before the one that you're in now.

I don't, I can't ever see myself going back to live in the UK. I have a very, very mixed relationship with France, although I'm going to be going back there to see my old school when I'm 50 in February. The wife is going to take me, I'm going to visit some old haunts, so I think that's going to be nice.

Germany, I also had a bit of a mixed relationship with, you have a mixed relationship with everywhere, frankly. There are things that you love and things that you don't, unless you're Ray, who thinks that everything in Turkey is brilliant. But Germany took me a while to get used to and then I never intended to leave.

That might be a story for another day, but I think that ties in with Taslim's question about were you a naughty boy at school. Yeah, I ended up in a bit of trouble in Germany and getting dismissed from a job for something quite stupid that I did. But I took them to court and I actually won an unfair dismissal and was told that I could write my own reference, which I did and I thought, well that's absolutely fine, until I realised that there's always a phone call after a reference, so I kind of got out of there.

But I didn't really plan to leave. I liked it there, it was very comfortable. I lived in a great place called Potsdam, which is wonderful in the summer, full of lakes and beer gardens and things like that.

Yeah, it was great. Then Malaysia happened. I'm very, very fond of Malaysia.

Didn't really expect to go there. I was supposed to go to Kazakhstan and then something happened. Something went wrong, actually, that didn't really make a lot of sense to me, but there we go.

Then ended up in Malaysia. Malaysia is absolutely mad. It's totally bonkers, actually, but in a lovely way.

There are all kinds of weird things about being there. You know, you've got, you're not only a Malaysian citizen on your ID card, it doesn't only say what your nationality is, it also says what your race is and people talk openly about your race. And I found that quite odd, as a Westerner going there.

So, you know, it'll say Malaysian citizen and then it will either say Malay, which means you're an indigenous Muslim, or it'll say Chinese, or it'll say Indian, or my friend Nala is actually classed as others, which I find really weird and on his behalf, I find it deeply insulting. Could you imagine that as your ID? You've got to carry around a document saying that your identity is other. Really, really, really weird, but it's the best food in the world, without any question.

Nothing works the things, the way that you would expect it to. You can only use internet banking between certain hours. They give you bank cards that don't have a signature or a name on them.

You can use your bank card abroad, but only during Malaysian office hours, so that's something a bit strange in itself. Nothing works exactly the way that you would expect. It is a place where it's quite normal that there'll be somebody sleeping on the checkout in Tesco.

It's quite normal you'd be staying at a nice hotel and somebody would be sleeping on reception. Yeah, it's a really friendly, fun, gentle place. The heat's something to get used to, because it's the same weather all year round.

Dark at 7 o'clock at night, light at 7 in the morning, always between 28 and 32 degrees. Always around 90 degrees humidity, so you need to live in an aircon. Bonkers place, but I loved it.

As for Turkey, that's an interesting thing. As I say, Ray is 100% in love with Turkey. Relationship's more complicated with it than that, I would say.

Absolutely hated the first year here. Desperately wanted to go back to Malaysia. I think the bonkersness of Malaysia prepared me for here, because this is a bonkers country, but on the surface Turkey doesn't seem as crazy as Malaysia does.

Yeah, on the surface it can seem more European here. I think it's kind of a strange mix of Southern Europe, the Middle East and, you know, countries that were in the former Soviet Union. On the one hand, you've got this tremendous friendliness from people, but it can also be quite superficial as well.

A lot of it is just the local manners and things that you need to do. It's very much a country of nepotism, so if you want to get something done, you have to know somebody. And if you don't know somebody, or if they don't like you, it's just not gonna happen.

And that can be hugely frustrating. The work culture for that reason is something quite special, because you get to the top because of who your uncle is. There isn't a great deal of respect for talent or ability at all.

And this is also a country for rich people. You know, I think I heard somebody say last week that Istanbul is a city that only has 5,000 people living in it, and 16 million who just watch them. And I think that's what it's like.

There's an obsession with richness, with wealth, with status and reputation. And you have these 5,000 people and a few families who, you know, cars cost double here what they would cost in the West. And you get, you'll have people who have two or three Range Rovers and, you know, have all these servants.

And in that way, it's so incredibly not like Europe. Although those people tend to think of themselves maybe as a little bit more European. There isn't really a middle class here, which I find really strange.

But I mean, lots of fun things happen. We live in a little village where everybody's incredibly nice to us. Went to the dentist this week.

The dentist is 77. She's about four foot two. She's 77.

She's the sweetest lady that you could imagine in the world. Sad that she has to work at 77, but that's what happens when you've got such outrageous wealth at the top and not a great deal in the middle. This is absolutely great.

I mean, her equipment is spotlessly clean. But it reminds me very much of NHS dentists in the 1970s with what they looked like. Went into a shop last night to buy some booze and the card reader wasn't working immediately.

I don't know what the reason it was. And because this is Turkey, what does he do? He apologizes. It's going to take two minutes and offers me a cigarette whilst we wait.

Then I decline politely and get the beer, get into a taxi and the taxi driver drives off whilst before I've even closed. My wife's in the back of the car. I'm in the front.

My bottom is on the seat. My left leg is inside, but my right leg hasn't got in the taxi yet and the door's still open and he drives off. This is Turkey.

This is bonkers. I love the bonkersness of it. I think, I think really I've loved, loved everywhere where I've been.

I think it's, the thing is with Turkey, it kind of gets under your skin. I think when you've been here for a while.

Remember, if you enjoy this show, please give the link to three friends who you think would like it. And why not listen to one of the other shows, one of our other episodes right after you've finished doing this. I'm off to work on my other podcast now, You're Right, Hon, Jamie and Wally's show about mental health, where they hear the often tragic but sometimes very charming and heartwarming stories of people who've been hit by addiction, homelessness and other mental health issues and yet are still standing and still are determined to survive.

It's a beautiful show. Why not check it out? As they say, wherever you get your podcast, You're Right, Hon, Y-A, I'll write one word and then Hon, H-U-N. Yeah, it's heartwarming.

It's inspiring. And of course, because Jamie is the lead presenter, there's always a laugh or two thrown in. Yeah, I'll see you next week with Ray.

Special thanks to Marc Ee, our Chinese voiceover, Ray Mac, Uncle Eamon McAndrew. See you next week, Shakers. Good skills.