

Sixty Seconds with Jonathan Ross



by Paul Simper

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■ The TV stalwart, 58, on bum-calling celebrities, the prequel to Game Of Thrones and who he'd reject for his chat show

With all your showbiz contacts, have you ever bum-dialled a famous person by mistake?

I often bum-call people who would be considered famous but they're always friendly about it. I called comedian Alan Carr the other day and I phoned actor Stephen Graham using my bum when I was in Belfast earlier this year.

Singer Adele once called a person of 60 'old' on your show. How does 58-year-old you feel about that?

Next year [on November 17] that will be me. It's weird but I quite like getting old — I'm not someone who's hung up on it. I'm lucky I've still got all my own hair and most of my own teeth. I wouldn't be tempted to go down the surgery route, mainly because — without naming names — there are various high-profile people on British TV right now who have had work done that I'm sure they can't be entirely happy with.

How have you found spending so much time in Belfast while your writer-producer wife Jane Goldman works on the Game Of Thrones prequel?

Being there alone when Jane was working was great — I was doing all the shopping and cooking, looking after the house, reading and drawing. Her job is very demanding at the moment so the other day I baked her a cake. We're on a ketogenic diet — we try not to eat too many carbohydrates. It was a very light, spongy cake made with coconut flour. For the creamy top I used cream cheese mixed with stevia to sweeten it and a bit of vanilla essence. It was f***ing delicious.



Bottom line: Alan Carr PICTURE: REX

Does Jane trust you with Game Of Thrones secrets?

She doesn't need to trust me with secrets. I've seen a couple of early cuts of the pilot. It's very easy not to talk to people about it because I know how important it is.

What do you think has been the most significant change in your life in the time you've been on ITV?

I think in the past eight years I've spent a bit of time getting to know myself. I hadn't before. I had quite a strange upbringing — I was one of six kids. By today's standards we were a very poor family and it wasn't a household where you even considered emotional health. You survived in the world. Now I'm a bit more engaged emotionally and I've perhaps softened as a person. I think I'm a better person — certainly I pay more attention to my wife. Obviously she was always someone I was devoted to but now I spend more time trying to appreciate what her needs, ambitions and desires are, and trying to support her. I love doing this show and I'm happy working but if I wasn't doing it I'd also be really happy. Ten years ago I wouldn't have been. I used to tie up a lot of my own happiness and self-belief and self-confidence in my success as it was seen by the outside world.

Is there any chat-show question you wish you hadn't asked?

You know what, if I was to spend time looking back and trying to pick out the things I regret, that would be quite a depressing way to spend the afternoon. I try to be as careful as possible with the language I use now and with the kind of territory we go into and the material we joke about. Even though people roll their eyes about the current generation being woke, I think it's very important. You can be funny without upsetting someone. Obviously I've learned from my own mistakes but I'm not a mean person. I'm not someone who wants to be associated with causing people upset or, indeed, perpetuating stereotypes or making life uncomfortable for any group who might already have a difficult life. I certainly don't want to add to the problems in the world.



Recipe for love: Jane Goldman PICTURE: REX

Would you like to have Boris Johnson back on the show?

I would definitely have Boris on the show again. I wouldn't have Nigel Farage or Dominic Cummings on. I wouldn't have characters who I think have a negative impact on society. I think Nigel Farage does that — I think he plays, in a slightly less blatant way than Trump, to people's worst instincts. I wouldn't want to be part of that.

With the world in a mess, what still puts a smile on your face?

I still like watching good comedy and good comedy shows. I love Key & Peele — Jordan Peele is a brilliant director of horror films but that is probably my favourite comedy show. My dogs make me laugh, as does my daughter's cat Maur, who's a Devon rex. She was named after Maura Higgins from Love Island. That's the closest I've got to being a grandfather, looking after my daughter's cat. The person that really makes me laugh is Jane — she makes me laugh a lot. It's probably one of the reasons we're still going!

■ The Jonathan Ross Show is back on ITV on Saturday