

## Spotted



British F1 driver Jenson Button tucking into a steak at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse in Dubai

**Marina.** Bollywood stars Kangana Ranaut and Darshan at the opening of new seafood restaurant Coastal Bites in Dubai Investment Park.

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### Behind the scenes at Chinawhite Dubai

Notorious nightclub entrepreneur Rory Keegan spills the beans on the new Dubai venue.

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The man behind Michael Jackson and Miles Davis gives us an audience during a visit.

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## Hot seat Jeremy Paxman

The notoriously ruthless interviewer proves equally prickly when the tables are turned, as *Rob Garratt* found on a recent meeting at the Dubai Litfest



**Hello Jeremy. You're in town to make a number of appearances at the Emirates Airlines Festival of Literature. One is entitled 'Getting Beneath the Skin', something you're renowned for doing...**

**No, I wouldn't say that. Others may say what they like but I think one's judgement of oneself is very inadequate. Okay, but you must be aware you're feared as a ferocious interviewer, when did you first become aware of that reputation?**

**I don't know. You've got a reputation for wearing glasses and having fair hair. It just happens. And once you're aware of it happening it's too late to do anything about it. Do you ever feel the need to live up to that reputation?**

**No I think it's perfectly straightforward. If you're in our trade, your job is to ask why things are as they are. If you have that opportunity then you [deserve] to get an answer. Right. So what makes a good interview?**

A good interview is where you learn something. If in the process it has made people gasp or laugh or cry, then that's a dividend, but the key thing is finding something out. **The way you channel all that ennobled rage on screen, there must be an element of caricature to the thing.** Is the whole thing an act? I've obviously failed to communicate to you. I think that if you ask a question you must get an answer.

**'I ask questions, that's all. It's no big deal'**

**And you enjoy it, that attack?**

Yeah. And those very frequent moments when you think 'what am I going to ask him now?' Or her now. I like that thinking on your feet.

**Do you ever look back and think you went too far?**

Yes, of course, everybody

must do. You wouldn't be human if you thought you'd done everything perfectly. I certainly have made many, many mistakes.

**Tell us about your next book. I'm thinking about something, and I've started a little bit of research.**

**What's it about?**

Mind your own business.

**You do realise you're being deeply hypocritical.**

Why?

**Because, as you've pointed out, journalists have the right to demand an answer.**

So demand away. I demand an answer, but it doesn't mean I always get an answer.

**Should I ask you the question 12 times? I could.**

You could carry on as many times as you like.

**And how many times would it take until you'd get up and leave?**

Well I don't understand why Michael Howard (former British home secretary whom Paxman famously asked the same question 12 times) didn't get up and leave! [Laughs]

**You have been described as 'aggressive, intimidating and condescending'. Is that a compliment or an insult?**

That is a series of adjectives that I didn't write. I can't do anything about it. To be perfectly honest, I don't care enough.

**So pick three words you would prefer**

'Workaday journalist' will do. It's a perfectly honourable disreputable trade, and I don't want it to be anything else. I just ask questions, that's all. It's no big deal.

*Jeremy Paxman's Empire: What Ruling the World Did to the British is on sale now.*

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